

## "EVERGREEN" STUDENT LEADERS

I'M A BANGLA FILM HERO. I ACT AS A YOUTHFUL STUDENT AND PRETEND PERFORMING HEROIC DEEDS FOR THE COUNTRY.

I'M A STUDENT POLITICIAN. I'M JUST LIKE YOU.



## How better data can make garment factories safer?

SARAH LABOWITZ and NAYANTARA BANERJEE

WHEN nearly 1,200 workers died in a tragic factory collapse outside Dhaka last year, dozens of global brands and retailers faced intense public pressure to improve safety in their supplier factories. More than 200 of these global companies have agreed to join one of two collective initiatives to improve factory safety, the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh and the Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety.

Having just marked their one year anniversaries, both initiatives face significant challenges in fully addressing risks to workers in Bangladesh. But they have led to a significant collection of factory data that has the potential to fundamentally change the discussion about factory safety in Bangladesh and the broader supply chain.

Each month for the last year, the Accord and the Alliance have published lists of factories that supply Accord and Alliance brands and retailers. The government of Bangladesh has launched its own factory database, and the two Bangladesh trade associations have updated their websites and factory registries.

All of these are encouraging developments. Knowing how the apparel supply chain really operates is the first step toward fixing it. And while this information on its own will not make factories safer, more transparency is a necessary predicate to developing the kind of comprehensive action plan that is urgently needed in Bangladesh.

Last April, the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights published a detailed study of the garment industry in Bangladesh entitled "Business as Usual is not an Option." Among other findings, it revealed that brands, retailers, and their primary suppliers are reliant on a web of subcontracting factories to produce the enormous quantities of very cheap clothing that have made Bangladesh a key sourcing destination.

Over the last six months, we have been closely tracking the emerging stream of factory data from Bangladesh, which is beginning to provide a window into how global supply chains really operate. For example, Accord and Alliance brands and retailers have turned over about a quarter of their supplier factories in the last year. By making more data about its garment sector available, Bangladesh is now ahead of competitors like Cambodia, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka in terms of transparency.

But there are serious limits on the usefulness of the data because of the way it is being shared. The data could tell us so much more if it were posted in accordance with a few best practices for open data:

1. Make the data accessible. Existing databases and factory lists post data in a variety of formats that are not user-friendly. The Accord and the Alliance post data in lengthy PDF files, while the government and trade associations maintain databases that don't allow analysis of large groups of factory data. Data should be easily accessible in standard, structured formats to allow for "bulk access" and use. This means downloadable Excel or Comma Separated Value files, not PDF.

2. Standardize the way factories are identified. Identifying the same factory across databases is made incredibly difficult by inconsistencies in the way factories are listed. There are slight variances in the spellings of factory names and addresses, and there is no consistent convention to identify the same factory in different databases. The government and the two apparel trade associations assign unique codes to each factory in their databases. The Alliance and Accord also should adopt the use of unique factory identifiers, harmonized with the trade associations, the government, and each other. Additionally, all databases should use standard spellings for factory names, districts, and production zones.

3. Post historical data. None of the existing databases – those hosted by the government, the trade associations, or the Accord and the Alliance – post historical data. Each posts only a list of current factories, which makes it impossible to assess trends over time. Until September, the Alliance posted each of its monthly reports online. This was a best practice that all of the initiatives should follow. Unfortunately, the Alliance has now taken down its historical reports, which represents a step backward for transparency in the supply chain.

Increased focus on factory safety in Bangladesh is moving the country toward much-needed transparency in the supply chain. The adoption of open data best practices is a critical next step toward assessing the full universe of factories and ensuring the long-term sustainability of Bangladesh's primary export industry. Access to better data now will help drive the kinds of changes that ultimately will make workers safer: greater government oversight of the full garment sector, infrastructure and industrial development, synchronization among factory safety initiatives, and better supply chain management.

The writers are the co-director of the NYU Stern Center for Business and Human Rights and a masters' student at the NYU Gallatin School of Individualized Study, respectively.

# The "un-Islamic State"

FAKHRUDDIN AHMED

WHILE exotic and innocuous-sounding names like al-Qaeda (Arabic for "The Base") and Taliban (Pashtu for "student") disguises the terror organizations' true intent, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS/ISIL) flaunts "Islamic" in their nomenclature.

Some fall for it. Comedian and HBO talk show host Bill Maher argued recently that ISIS is not an outliers but represents the inherent violence and intolerance of Islam itself, and by extension its 1.6 billion followers.

Another panelist, Sam Harris, who claimed to have "read" the Qur'an, called Islam "the motherload of bad ideas." It was Ben Affleck, the actor and a guest on the show, who blasted these opinions "gross" and "racist." No Muslim was invited to the panel to refute and expose these inaccurate and bigoted arguments. Sadly, Maher and Harris, both atheists, are not alone in their beliefs.

Claims to have "read" the Qur'an immediately confers legitimacy to someone's views without answering a vital question: exactly what has he read? Qur'an is a very complex scripture. There is no official English translation. To comprehend it, it has to be read in its original Qur'anic Arabic text with mountains of contextual clues. Faithful are exhorted to adopt the best construction of its meaning.

Most Muslims have neither read, nor fully comprehend the Qur'an. They know only the basics. The objective of the critics who "read" the Qur'an is to look for "Gotcha" phrases to criticize it. Without appreciating the nuances and contexts, many of which are passé, they claim, for example, that unless a Muslim executes an apostate, he is unfaithful to his religion!

Assuming that there are 16,000 ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria, they would constitute only 0.001% of the world's 1.6 billion Muslims. It is silly to insinuate that 0.001% represents the whole.

A tweet from a Libyan-American woman, Henda Amry, demolished Maher's Islamophobia: "5 of the last 12 Nobel Peace Prize winners were Muslim. So according to Bill Maher, we're all Peace Prize winners!" (The five Muslim Nobel Peace Prize winners referred to are: Shirin Ebadi (Iranian activist, 2003), Mohamed ElBaradei (Egyptian former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, 2005),

Muhammad Yunus (Bangladesh's microfinance pioneer, 2006), Tawakkol Karman (Yemeni activist, 2011), and Malala Yousafzai (Pakistani activist, 2014))

Scoring debating points will not help the Muslims, however. They need to defeat ISIS and its clones in Iraq and Syria. World's 126 top Muslim scholars issued a "fatwa" (legal opinion) on September 19 denouncing ISIS's actions as un-Islamic.

Confronting ISIS theologically is a waste of time. So far they have executed soldiers who surrendered, butchered Shias, ethnically cleansed, starved and murdered minority Yazidis and Christians, kidnapped and raped women, and beheaded native and foreign civilians. As the Secretary of State John Kerry accurately pointed out at a State Department Eid-ul-Adha function on October 16: "There is nothing Islamic about what ISIS stands for."

The New York Times reported that ISIS beheaded the American and British hostages only after the two nations refused to pay ransom of about 2 million Euros per hostage. (The Spanish and French hostages were released after their governments paid ransom.) Leading Muslim clerics, even those opposed to the British government had pleaded with ISIS to spare the aid worker Alan Henning, stressing that killing innocent Henning would be un-Islamic. By dismissing theological entreaties, ISIS proved once again that they are really a criminal gang whose modus operandi is kidnapping for ransom, and that there is nothing Islamic about them.

Shia (Iran and Iraq) and Sunni majority nations (Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar and United Arab Emirates) have joined the coalition against ISIS. However, their motivations are different. Shias want to fight ISIS because ISIS promotes Sunni interests. Sunni states fight because ISIS wants to swallow them into its "caliphate." Turkey is more worried about the real intentions of the Iraqi, Syrian and Turkey's own Kurds (formation of a greater Kurdistan) than ISIS.

So, what gave rise to ISIS? The short answer is war. Wars, even just wars, have unsavory consequences. America-led war to oust the Soviets from Afghanistan spawned the Taliban. Gulf War I hatched al Qaeda. Gulf War II sired ISIS. Perhaps it is time to give wars a break.

The carving up of the Ottoman Empire after World War I left many countries in the Middle

East with artificial borders. Winston Churchill boasted that he had created Jordan "with the stroke of a pen, one Sunday afternoon in Cairo."

Many countries in the Middle East are ethnically fragile. Iraq is three countries: Shia Arabs (the majority), Kurds and Sunni Arabs, with a Christian and Yazidi minority. Syria has a Sunni Arab majority, Kurds and a Christian minority.

Brutal dictators had kept these countries together. Saddam Hussein, representing the Sunni minority, ruled over the majority Shias and Kurds in Iraq with an iron fist. Hafez and Bashar al-Assad, belonging to the minority Alawite sect, butchered thousands of their countrymen to maintain control over Sunni-majority Syria.

America spent billions of dollars, shed thousands of American lives to oust Saddam, rebuild Iraq and hold democratic elections that saw Nouri al-Maliki come to power. Maliki promoted the interests of the majority Shia Arabs exclusively. The Iraqi army is really a Shia militia, which petrifies the Sunnis. Out of the ashes of failed American policy arose ISIS.

Depending on their inherent complexities, societies evolve at their own pace. Some move slowly, like tectonic plates. If we attempt to speed those up, the fault lines within those societies surface. And some fault lines in the Middle East – tribalism and sectarianism, for example – predates and trumps love for Islam.

Middle Eastern nations generally have an innate mistrust of the West, and consequently the West's form of government, democracy. Although these nations are pluralistic, they remain far from embracing pluralism and true democracy.

While America emphasized democracy, it failed to appreciate that the Shia-Sunni sectarian divide is at the heart of the Iraqi conflict. Elections are not enough; for true democracy to flourish the majority must be inclusive of, and fair to their minorities.

Foreigners cannot want to defeat ISIS more than the natives. The duty to defeat ISIS falls on the Iraqis and Syrians. They must be as motivated as ISIS. They must stiffen their backbone and take ISIS head on. They face existential questions: Do they want to defeat ISIS and reclaim their countries? Or, do they want to live as ISIS's slaves?

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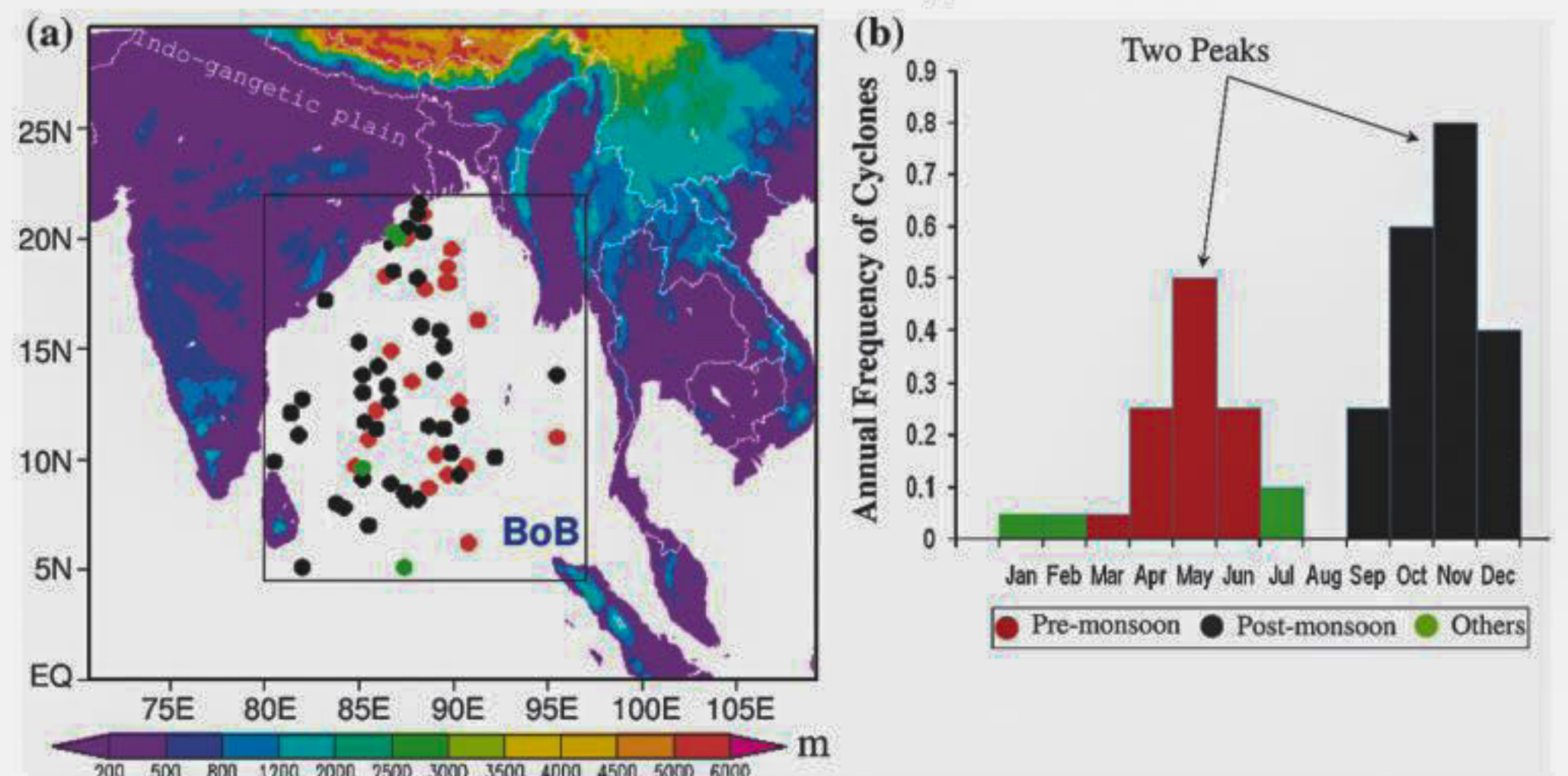
## Are cyclones formed in the Bay different?

DR. NASREEN AKTER

IN general, tropical cyclone formation areas of the world are divided into seven basins in which North Indian Ocean is one of them. It has two wings, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. According to global cyclone statistics, only 7% of tropical cyclones occur in the North Indian Ocean, but five to six times as many occur in the Bay of Bengal as in the Arabian Sea. By names, Gonu (June 2007) and Phet (May 2010) in the Arabian Sea and Sidi (November 2007), Nargis (April 2008), Giri (October 2010) and Phailin (October 2013) in the Bay of Bengal are recent strong, destructive storms that occurred in the North Indian Ocean. Cyclones occurring in the funnel-shaped Bay of Bengal are particularly deadly, because they often cause severe flooding of the densely populated low-lying coasts of Bangladesh, India, and Myanmar.

At first, I would like to put in plain words what tropical cyclones mean and when or what location they form. Tropical cyclone, also named as typhoon or hurricane (depending on location), is an intense rotating system characterized by strong winds that spiral cyclonically (anticlockwise) around the low-pressure centre. Tropical cyclone is formed only when the surface wind speeds is at least 62 km/hr (34 knot), before that it is called a depression (an organized system of clouds and thunderstorms). Some favourable environmental conditions such as wind surge to the depression can trigger the system turning into a tropical cyclone. Tropical cyclone is capable for self intensification like a heat engine that is fueled by the temperature gradient between the warm tropical ocean surface and the cold upper atmosphere. Development of tropical cyclone in the ocean area additionally requires some particular environment to be satisfied. High sea surface temperature, low vertical wind shear (change of winds with height), high relative humidity at mid-troposphere and low-level relative vorticity are the suitable environment for the formation of tropical cyclone in any basins.

During summer, direct heating of the ocean by the sun increases sea surface temperature,



which results in increased evaporation and, thus, increased amounts of water vapor in the atmosphere. Therefore, summer season in each basin is generally favorable time for the genesis of cyclone, however, exception is found in the Bay of Bengal. Here, a distinctly bimodal cyclone seasons are observed: March–May (pre-monsoon) and October–December (post-monsoon). During summer or monsoon season (June–September) many depressions are active in the Bay, but intense southwesterly monsoonal wind does not allow initiating them as tropical cyclones.

Fig. (a) Tropical cyclone formation over the Bay of Bengal (BoB) during 1990–2009 (dots): red premonsoon; black post-monsoon; green other. (b) Annual cyclone occurrence frequency (Akter and Tsuboki 2014)

The Bay of Bengal has another important characteristic in terms of the frequency of cyclone. Cyclone is more active in the post-monsoon instead of the pre-monsoon seasons with a primary peak in November. The secondary peak is found in May (figure b). Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) records shows that in the last 20 years from 1990 to 2009, a total of 65 cyclones formed over the Bay of Bengal, 32% formed during the pre-monsoon and 62% formed during the post-monsoon season which is almost double. The

remaining 6% tropical cyclones are the exception that formed in another time in the year rather than the two cyclone seasons (figure a).

It has been found that during pre-monsoon, solar heating is strong over the Bay of Bengal which increases high sea surface temperature and relative humidity. Then question arises in the mind why the number of cyclone is less in pre-monsoon than that in post-monsoon even though pre-monsoon has more favorable environment for tropical cyclone genesis.

The reader will be surprised to know that during pre-monsoon, dry and hot air from northwestern Indian region is moving into the Bay. This wind layer is vertically deep which blocks the rising of warm and moist air from the ocean surface. As the upward motion of air is prevented, no cloud can develop in the north and northwestern part of the Bay which, in turns, suppress to develop the depression. As a result no cyclone is formed in the north and northwestern part of the Bay of Bengal during pre-monsoon. On the other hand, in post-monsoon no such criterion is found for lowering the cyclone frequency. Note that research article of the same author is available in the link. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2F800382-014-2077-9>

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**QUOTEABLE Quote**

Go to Heaven for the climate, Hell for the company.

Mark Twain

**CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph**

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Heaped	1 Lobbying org.
6 Copy for pasteup	2 "—Believer"
11 Acid type	3 Math class
12 Patriot Ethan	4 Finish
13 Gung-ho	5 Elevator part
14 Make sport of	6 Scoundrel
15 Mark's replacement	7 Franklin's wife
17 Picnic invaders	8 Math class
18 Sandwich type	9 Take it easy
20 Last of the Stuarts	10 Addition column
22 Laugh sound	16 Granola bit
23 Patsies	18 Caprice
26 Start of a Caesar quote	19 Campaign
28 Minister to	21 Staff symbol
29 "Brand New Key" singer	23 Dispatched
31 Buckeyes' sch.	24 Naturalness
32 Courage	25 Make speechless
33 Feds	27 Schmaltzy
34 Ignored the limit	30 Belief, in brief
36 Stable mother	33 Tile holder
38 Poet Neruda	34 Health resorts
40 Roadside stop	35 Concord
43 Bitter	37 Band boosters
44 Liquefy	39 Bizarre
45 Kiosk	41 Sushi choice
46 Panache	42 Gettysburg loser

**Yesterday's answer**

STIR TRADER  
PANE REVOKE  
ANTE OPENED  
SKELETON  
RIG SUITS  
DOING TENET  
ADO FEE  
TORTE SCENT  
ARSON OAR  
STALLION  
DOES IN LOVE  
INSECT TRAM  
MESSES OSLO

**CRYPTOQUOTE**

RSJ BRNIXYRS GN VJCTXJBB GZ GIN  
DGXUODROGX WJKJXWB FCNJ GX GIN  
DGINCYJ RSXC GX GIN OXRJEEYOJXDJ.

— EID WJ DECKOJNB

**Yesterday's Cryptoquote: BIG SHOTS ARE ONLY LITTLE SHOTS WHO KEEP SHOOTING.**

— CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

**BEETLE BAILEY**

BOY! WE'VE BEEN IN THIS CAMP A LONG TIME

YEAH, REMEMBER GETTING OFF THE BUS?

GREG + MOBY WALKER 1-10

**by Mort Walker**

YEAH, IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY SEEING SARGE YELLING "GO HERE!" "GO THERE!" "SIT DOWN!" "SHUT UP!"

IT WAS YESTERDAY

**HENRY**

HONK HONK

HONK HONK

HONK HONK

HONK HONK