# Implications for Bangladesh

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VER the past several weeks, the world witnessed the #YouStink antigovernment protest in Lebanon popularly known as the 'garbage movement', comprising of people from across the sectarian and political spectrum. What led to such a movement? And does this movement bear any implications for Bangladesh?

This 'garbage movement' is a new instance to the world and in fact is a wake-up call to the world leaders that 'garbage' can also be a factor for a mass scale movement against the government. In fact, at the end of July this year, at least 1000 protesters gathered in Riad el-Solh Square demanding the government's resignation for what they called its inability to address a mounting waste management crisis. "More than 20,000 tonnes of rubbish fill streets," reported by Al-Jazeera on July 26, 2015. The movement gained momentum over the last two weeks of August, amounting more than 25,000 protesters, the single biggest rally in Lebanese history without religious or political affiliations.

Though it is argued that such protest arose due to the ineffectiveness of the government over garbage management, it can be argued that such a movement is a manifestation of the people's frustrations against the government over a number of issues including rampant corruption in the country, cronyism, sectarian politics and 'gang' tribal mentality. As one of the readers of New York Times wrote in August 27: "Sadly, the garbage in the street is the least of Lebanon's problems. The corruption and 'gang' tribal mentality has been with them for centuries. It is very sad as well that because of your 'sect' you are allowed to get a college degree, but not allowed to use it." In the words of Ali Swaidan, an analyst at the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, "Now it's a matter of living for Lebanese people, not just a matter of garbage. There are electricity problems, water problems, security problems. The people are fed up with this government, with this political



Lebanese protesters wear Guy Fawkes masks to voice their grievances against the government at a You Stink rally.

class in Lebanon".

Lebanon is a country which is severely divided by sect and class. After a 15-year long civil war ended in 1990, power and resources of the country were "essentially divided up among the former combatants in a system of sectarian political patronage." Besides, there has been no president in Lebanon in more than 20 months.

People of a country usually protest so that their grievances are heard by the state. Socioeconomic development has hardly been

noticed over several decades in Lebanon, leading people to feel angry. For instance, no new power plant has been built in Lebanon for decades. Moreover, despite having rich water resources, many families use salty well water to make up the shortfall, or buy water to fill tanks or purchase bottled drinking water for their daily use due to the absence of proper water management and utilisation. Teachers are hardly paid on time in Lebanon which also translates into regular protests.

The garbage movement might have some

internal as well as external implications for Bangladesh. From the recent protests in Lebanon, the Bangladesh government could learn that if the grievances of people are not addressed effectively, it could inevitably result in a people's uprising. In fact, the Shahbagh movement is a clear manifestation of the public's demand for justice. Today, people, particularly the 67 percent of the country's youth, is wellequipped with technology, a facility they did not have access to a couple of decades ago.

Now people are more well-aware about their rights than earlier. Our political class needs to keep in mind this.

Like Lebanon, can an issue like garbage management propel such a movement in Bangladesh? Along with the garbage and odour pollution, air, water, and food poisoning in Dhaka and other cities of the country has become very commonplace. It's thus unsurprising that Dhaka is often cited as one of the most polluted, uninhabitable cities in the world. Even though the mayoral election manifestos of the City Corporations promised a clean Dhaka once the aspirants were elected, the real picture remains unchanged. Thus, the absence of effective actions to address environment and health concerns in the country threatens the safety and health of the public. One can claim that such hygienic issues might be a cause of protest in the days to come.

In addition, the growing level of corruption in every sector of the country, the increased level of unemployment rates and the severe traffic jam problem needs to quickly and efficiently addressed as these are causes of grievances for the country's population.

Externally, Bangladesh needs to take good care of Bangladeshi expatriates in Lebanon. It is estimated that more than 10,000 Bangladeshi diaspora live in Lebanon. Hence, Bangladesh needs to take a look at the developments in Lebanon and take appropriate actions in that regard.

The bottom line is that even though the socio-economic development in Bangladesh is highly appreciable, the issues mentioned above need to be address at the earliest for the greater interest of everyone. Politics needs to be re-defined as a social practice 'of the people, by the people and for the people.'

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## BLUNDERS IN IRAQ AND THE BIRTH OF ISIS

## A WAY OUT OF EXTREMISM

RUBY AMATULLA

FTER the exhaustive de-Baathification process, disbandment of 300,000 Saddam's Sunni army, and imprisonment of many Sunni leaders, the occupying power, mainly the United States of America, flared up hatred and revenge among the Sunni group that governed Iraq since the Ottoman Empire. Sensing a power shift in favour of Shias and Kurds, the Sunnis went on the offensive. The ensued inferno of sectarian conflicts, among other factors, destroyed an enormous possibility of a country which contains the second largest oil reserve in the world.

Much of these could be avoided if some visionary steps were taken, such as setting up a power-sharing arrangement among the three ethnic groups: Shia [60 percent], Sunni [18 percent] and Kurds [21 percent]. Each of these groups, with long regional connections, is indispensable in keeping Iraq as one united nation. If power-sharing arrangements and national reconciliation processes have turned arch enemies into partners in governance in places like South Africa, Kosovo, El Salvador, and now in Afghanistan, why wasn't something like this even tried in

These steps, difficult in other times, could have been done relatively easily in the primordial period when there was a total power vacuum - except the occupying power [mainly America] - after Saddam Hussain was executed, and the Iraqi political factors and forces were just beginning to take shape. This is the way America's occupation created a total shift in the direction for Japan and Germany over half a century ago. Some of those steps were not democratic at all, but the initiatives helped turn these societies into democratic and successful nations in the long run. How did America fail to implement such a

Extremism does not rise where good governance and stability prevail. Al-Qaeda, Taliban in Afghanistan, Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabab in Somalia and ISIS in Iraq and Syria all originated in utter chaos, turmoil, repression and subjugation of certain groups, and due to poor or lack of governance.

Marshall Plan for Iraq?

In Iraq, under pressures from Shia and Kurdish groups and Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who - in order to attain the Shia dominance - played on America's democratic ideology, America was compelled to announce a premature election in 2005. America complied and the American neo-conservatives, who wanted to influence Iraq through Shia rule, were happy. Consequently, the

constituent assembly that the election produced consisted of 60 percent of Shias; however, the constitutional body framed was not acceptable by the Sunnis. Realising early on that this was a game they would invariably be made to lose, Sunnis boycotted the election and went on the offensive. Both Iraqi and American people paid a heavy price for this blunder.

Therefore, a step in the right direction could entail proper rehabilitation and integration of the Sunnis into the society. Similar integrating processes were undertaken for the Nazis and Japanese after World War II and later for South African whites. The integration of Sunnis would have saved Iraq from the horrendously destructive and bloody episodes following the Iraq War. America invaded Iraq, and so it was America's responsibility to take the right course of action and rebuild Iraq using a Marshall Plan.

The Muslim world, along with others, have been paying a high price for Western follies from a long time. The long reign and exploitation of colonial powers, the Treaty of Versailles of 1919 and the post World War II period resulted in a conflict-ridden Middle East. Puppet governments and consequent repressions during the Cold War, the propagation of neo-imperialism and later globalisation by the West have also caused immeasurable injustice and trouble for this region. A vast number of the young generation - 65 to 70 percent of the population of the Muslim world is 35 years or younger - is frustrated and angry about what was done to their societies and their gloomy future. The breeding grounds for trouble and extremism loom large. In the name of security and national interest, the West has also done tremendous disservice to its own people. Western powers in general, and America in particular, should now be seen as part of the solution and not a part of the problem. After being the cause of all these misfortunes, they cannot now conveniently excuse themselves by stating that they "don't want to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries."

No matter how wrong and oppressive a group was in the past, a substantial part of that can always be reclaimed and reintegrated into the society through a visionary process. In doing so, a win-win state of affairs ensues and the society becomes victorious. South Africa after the Apartheid, Europe after World War II, America after the Civil War in 1864, and many other examples in history remain a testament to this truth. Troubles ensue when these groups - the menaces of the past - are rejected and cornered.

One does not need reconciliation where there are no serious disagreements or a difficult past. Nelson Mandela

4 Gist

3 Enthusiastic

7 Kitchen pest

8 Daquiri need

11 Used up

15 Nullified

18 Increase

19 Some votes

20 Serpent's spot

17 Woes

5 Flea market unit

6 Elbows on the table

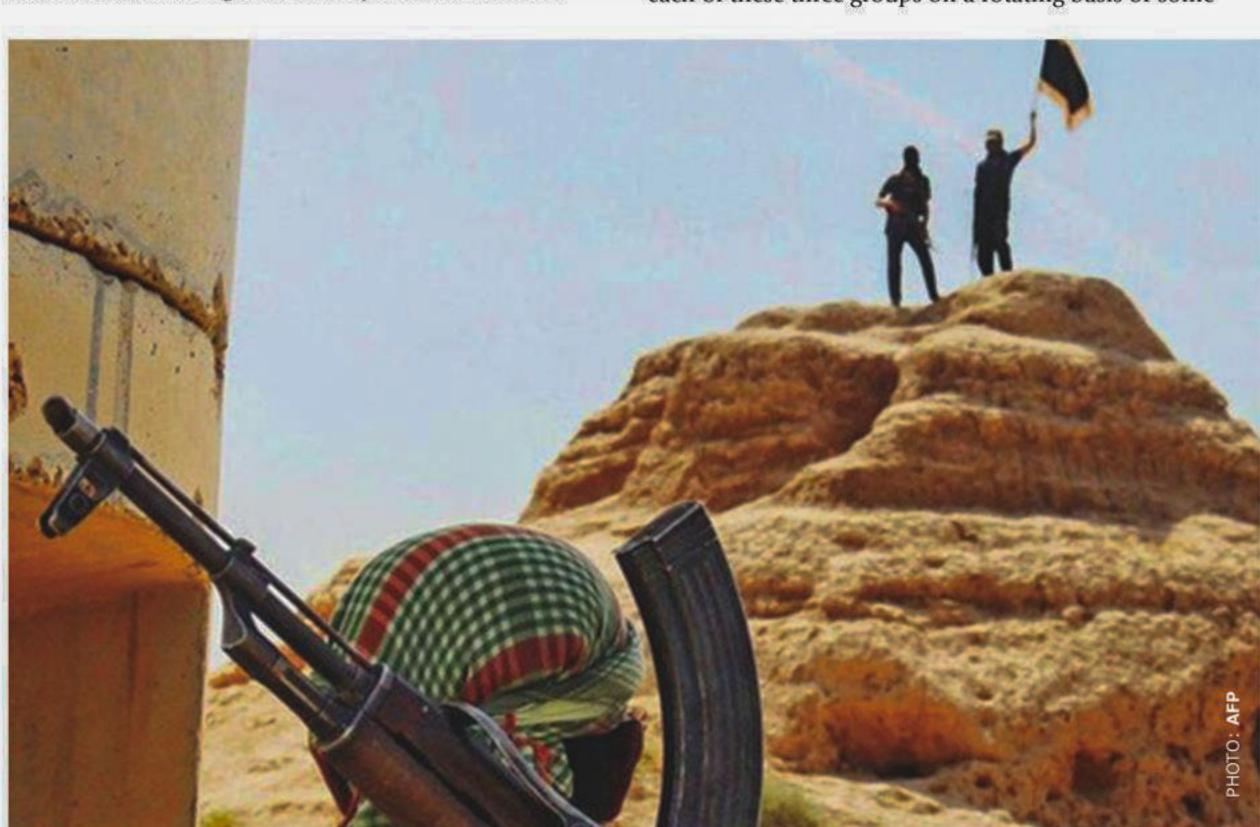
9 Homer's neighbor

realised that after seeing the consequences of Zimbabwe's failure to integrate. Right after he got out of prison in 1994, he created the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through which he punished only a handful of perpetrators but the rest were integrated into the society. This process of integration helped South Africa to become the 'rainbow' nation that it is now, and helped triple its GDP within twenty years. On the other hand, Sri Lanka and Nepal were on the right track but now they seem to be stumbling because they have still failed to

ments.

AFP

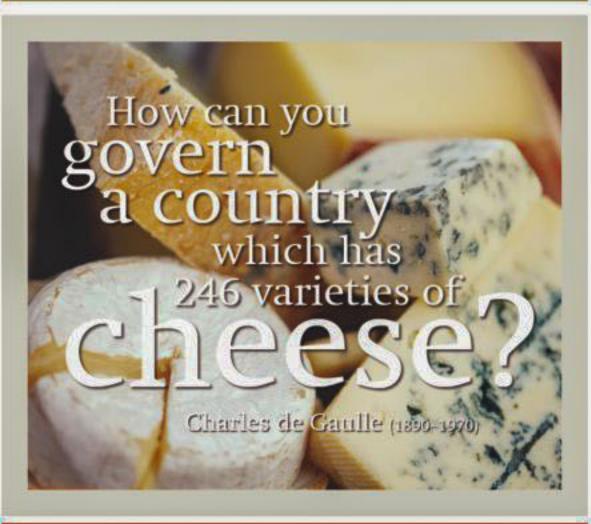
One way inter-dependency could be achieved is by setting two legislatures, the lower house elected on the basis of universal suffrage and the upper one consisting of equal number of elected members from each group, and striking a balance between the two houses under a presidential form of government. Furthermore, all important posts including that of the president, the Supreme Court judges, and army heads could be assigned to leaders from each of these three groups on a rotating basis or some



completely incorporate a power-sharing system. Tunisia, on the contrary, is becoming a success story of our time by marginalising the lurking extremism through inclusive politics and power-sharing via proportional representation. A lion's share of the credit goes to the visionary leadership of Rachid Ghannouchi.

As for Iraq, America, in collaboration with the international community, can still exert enough pressure to help bring about inclusive politics and power-sharing arrangeother preset formula as was done in Lebanon in the past. Striking a delicate balance between the national and provincial governments is also imperative. The army should consist of all three groups with specific quotas assigned to each group to ensure inclusiveness. Only then can groups like ISIS be subdued and transformed.

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### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 1 Counterfeit 5 Andorra neighbor 10 Pub orders

11 Position 12 Exploits 13 Stuck, in a way 14 Big nothing

16 Creamer variety 20 Draw out 23 Tall tale

24 Cut into cubes 25 Party dip 27 Punk rock offshoot

28 Neatnik's no-nos 29 Like some pans 32 Harmless, as paint

36 La Scala city 39 Designer Wang 40 Conjures up 41 Adam's grandson

42 Sorts 43 Crazy talk **DOWN** 

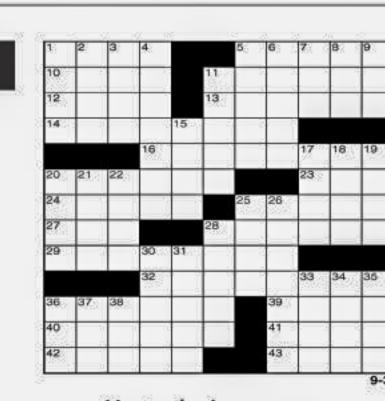
1 Satyr's kin

2 Not to mention

21 Prom transport 22 Clickable picture 25 Splinter group 26 Invite to one's place 28 King of Crete 30 Asp or adder 31 Musical sounds 33 TV's warrior princess 34 Pressing need 35 Play group 36 Got together

37 Vining plant

38 Cut off



Yesterday's answer LOAD ONION HORNE LETME OFAGE DUOSCUTTER SPUTTER BRA ADELE SALAD STUTTER SHUTTER TEE ELUDE PASHA LINED ICEIN CADS





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