

CONTINUED FROM MAJOR GENERAL MD. ABDUR RASHID'S SPEECH

Foreign nations' attitude toward Bangladesh is very important, and they shouldn't say something that has no basis. It is vital to share intelligence and work together since this is a global phenomenon and must be tackled accordingly.

There is no widespread terrorist network in Bangladesh. Most of the time splinter groups have political patrons. The foreign nationals who have been murdered were unprotected and that's why the killers targeted them. We have to be careful about the terrorists' tactics.

In the international context of terrorism, Bangladesh is still safer and is in a better position. The government should come up with a comprehensive strategy to fight the rise of radicalisation within the country.



DR ZIA RAHMAN
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There are two aspects of religious extremism in Bangladesh. One is related to domestic politics. Religious parties have a strong base in Bangladeshi politics. They exploit religious feelings of common people to pursue their parochial interests. Primarily, they are the patrons of religious extremist groups. During the regime of BNP led four-party alliance, they even enjoyed state patronisation. When the trial of war crimes began, we saw mobilisation of these religious groups to foil the trial process. Against this background, I try to connect the recent killings of two foreign nationals with the latest verdict of two war criminals who have a long history of association with religious extremist groups.

The main aim of these types of attacks is to destabilise the current regime. We saw similar types of attacks during the last national polls where indiscriminate attacks were perpetrated against common people to create panic and foil the election.

The other is related to international politics and the global war on terror. We saw the intervention of the US and its allied western powers in Iraq's internal affairs on the pretext of the presence of weapons of mass destruction. We should be very careful about these imperialist designs.

radicalisation which is also related to cyber security. Online radicalisation is fast becoming a critical challenge for Bangladesh.

Fourthly, we see an increasing footprint of regional and international groups in Bangladesh. Over the past few years, we have seen how LeT and Jaish-e-Mohammed have taken a keen interest in Bangladesh. We can downplay the ISIS threat, but the reality is people from here have gone to join ISIS, although the number may be small.

In the current context of global terrorism, no terrorist group can thrive entirely on domestic factors or domestic connections. International linkages of local groups must be probed with alacrity.

Lastly, there are other domestic issues that we must take into account. There is an emerging political vacuum in the country and there is squeezing of democratic space. If we look at the statements of Hizb-ut-

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Tahrir, it is clear as daylight that militant organisations see this as an opportune moment to capitalise on the dysfunctional politics of the country. I believe that it is



GOLAM SARWAR
PRESIDENT, EDITORS' COUNCIL
& EDITOR, SAMAKAL

These are not isolated incidents. Those who tried to oust the government through violence are not sitting idly by. We cannot rule out the possibility of international conspiracy. The prime minister has said that she will not run the country on the order of those who are threatening us and who did not help us in our Liberation War. This straightforward statement of our PM has not been received well by many western countries.

Whether or not IS is here is not the main question. The main thing is terrorist activities have occurred in the country. When Hefajat made attempts to oust the government, it was resisted by the government. But the harsh reality of politics is that the government had to compromise with Hefajat for the sake of election. This should not happen. The government should deal politically with political issues. We must declare an all-out war against terrorism.

The media can play a strong role in the fight against terrorism, and by keeping the people informed on these matters it can



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There are two views on the recent killings. One group links the killings to international terrorist groups while the other is in a denial mode. I wonder if we can conclusively link the two killings to the work of the IS. To link the recent killing of two foreign nationals with ISIS seems to me like taking it to the extreme. We should react carefully in this matter. Like the foreign diplomats our media has also overblown the issue. Creating unnecessary panic will only tarnish our image as a nation.

Media has a very important role in countering extremism. It should use its resources to find accurate information about activities of the extremist groups and disseminate it accordingly, so that general people can be made aware of extremism and policymakers can take cognizance of the problem. Media can also empower people and motivate them to fight terrorism.

I ask, what serious development had taken place in the country to force Australia to cancel the cricket tour? Despite repeated



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What exactly are we talking about – extremism or terrorism? Though terrorism and extremism are interchangeable and inter-related, extremism may not necessarily be terrorism. Terrorism is a physical act and extremism is a state of mind.

The motive behind the two murders could be to tarnish the image of Bangladesh or to destabilise it. But we can't say anything

We should not be too quick to jump to a conclusion because it will only

with certainty. We should not be too quick to jump to a conclusion because it will only help those who want to tarnish our image.

Unfortunately, if any negative incident happens in Bangladesh, it catches the attention of the western world very quickly. I have



SHAFIQAT MUNIR
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I see the current terrorist threat in Bangladesh as a four dimensional threat.

Firstly, we have an ascendant JMB and HuJI-B. HuJI-B is being reorganised under the leadership of Maulana Abdur Rouf. We have growing instability in the southeast of Bangladesh, the hinterland of HuJI-B especially along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border. This has been highlighted from the highest level of Indian government in their talks with Myanmar.

The second dimension is the increasing activities of splinter groups such as the Ansarullah Bangla Team, and there are several reports that suggest that their footprint could very well be found in the attacks that we have seen in the past few days.

Thirdly, we see a very ascendant and aggressive Hizb-ut-Tahrir. There is a tendency internationally to underplay the challenge that is posed by this group. We are extremely alarmed at its language and its target audience, the linkages between Hizb-ut-Tahrir and the increasing spectre of urban radicalisation in Bangladesh, and the sophistication in the strategic communication. That points us to the issue of online

not only a question of national security and stability; it is also a question of Bangladesh's survival. The ultimate bulwark against terrorism and extremism is social resilience.

ensure people's participation in combating extremism and terrorism. The government should take the media into confidence. I also notice with dismay the increasing tilt of a section of the youth towards the IS.

assurances from the host country to provide VVIP security to the cricket team they cancelled the tour. We are seeing cricket being dragged into politics and extremism. Now, the South African women's team has

seen foreigners going about their usual business. When we debate about extremism in Bangladesh, we must also debate about how it is different from other countries that also experienced extremism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Effective coordination between various intelligence agencies
- Proactive approach by intelligence agencies in counter-terrorism efforts
- Investigation of online radicalisation and measures to combat it
- De-politicisation of intelligence agencies
- Comprehensive threat assessment
- Revamp of counter-terrorism architecture
- Prevention of money flow into the hands of extremist groups
- Speedy, transparent and de-politicised investigation and trials of killings
- Vigilance of law enforcement, security agencies, and general public
- Eradication of sleeper cells in Bangladesh
- Greater control of important mosques and appointment of imams by Ministry of Religion
- Re-organisation of RAB to focus primarily on terrorism
- Technical assistance from foreign partners
- Political consensus on how to tackle extremism

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also called off their tour to Bangladesh. I think these countries are doing injustice to Bangladesh. Maybe there are some forces who are trying to bracket us as an unstable country like Pakistan. They have hurt the sentiments of cricket loving Bangladeshi people.

There were numerous instances where we saw the intervention of western powers in a country's internal affairs on the pretext of the alleged presence of terrorist groups and destructive weapons. We should be very careful about these imperialist designs. To me it appears that a conspiracy is afoot to meddle in our affairs. Our intelligence and law agencies should take this point seriously.

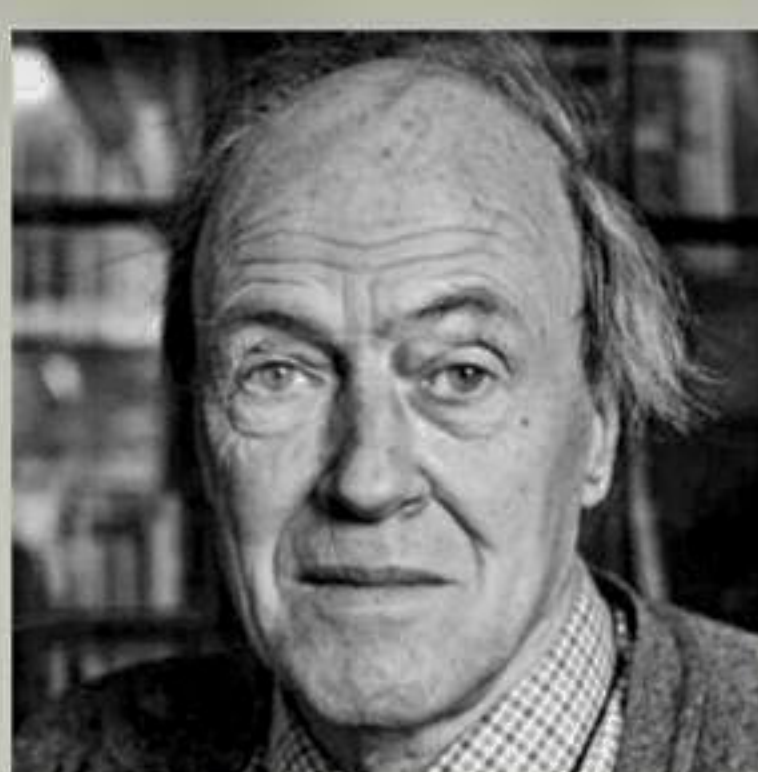


MATIUR RAHMAN
EDITOR,
PROTHOM ALO

Whether or not there is a connection between Bangladeshi extremists and the IS will be established in the future. Law enforcers have arrested 22 people for their alleged connection with the IS and the cases are now under trial.

Regional or international links of Bangladeshi extremists are not new; it has been in existence since the last 30 years. After the killing of Bangabandhu, many Bangladeshis were recruited by his killers. They were trained in Libya and later they came back and formed the Freedom Party under the leadership of one of the killers. Another few hundred Bangladeshis participated in the Afghan war, some of whom died there; but the rest returned to the country and formed the HuJI-B. The suspected mastermind behind the recent blast at Bangkok shrine stayed in Dhaka for several days. All of these examples prove that there have been links with regional and international terrorist groups.

QUOTABLE Quote

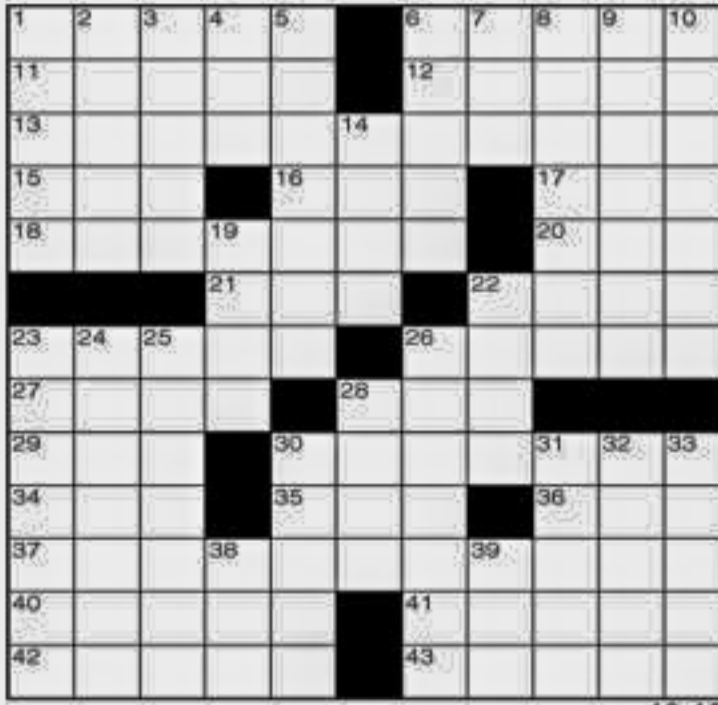


ROALD DAHL

Having power is not nearly as important as what you choose to do with it

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Suit pieces | 1 Essential |
| 6 Become prevalent | 2 Draw out |
| 11 Knuckle-head | 3 Ambulance sound |
| 12 Excellent, in slang | 4 Great weight |
| 13 Improve after difficulty | 5 Radio broadcaster |
| 15 Tennis feat | 6 Leopard features |
| 16 Young one | 7 Misstep |
| 17 Deli meat | 8 Petty braggart |
| 18 Soup veggies | 9 Parental warming |
| 20 "Put -- happy face" | 10 England invaders |
| 21 Curtain holder | 14 Chilly |
| 22 Amused look | 19 Paris home |
| 23 Chef's wear | 22 Heredity unit |
| 26 Body shop challenges | 23 Bon-! |
| 27 Hunted animal | 24 Musical intro |
| 28 Be victorious | 25 Calls it a career |
| 29 Parrot or puppy | 26 Entertains |
| 30 Early hunter | 28 Bend out of shape |
| 34 Quarterback Manning | 30 Brazier contents |
| 35 Valuable rock | 31 The Godfather group |
| 36 In the past | 32 Geriatrics study |
| 37 Make money | 33 Staff symbols |
| 40 Perfect | 38 Washington base-baller, for short |
| 41 Baling need | 39 Possess |
| 42 Lab work | |
| 43 Unforeseen problems | |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER



BEETLE BAILEY



by Mort Walker



BABY BLUES



by Kirkman & Scott

