

# Addressing the root cause of radicalisation

SHARIFUL ISLAM, back from Minneapolis, USA

The authorities in the US in partnership with private agencies are engaging community and religious leaders to free some Somali-American youths from their alleged inclination towards terror outfits like Al-Shabab and Islamic State (IS).

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had arrested six Somali-American youths between March and September in Minneapolis, home to the largest number of Somali migrants, before they left for Syria to join IS. They are now behind bars.

The Somalis are being supported by the American government to build resilience within the community to address the root causes of radicalisation.

"Law enforcement, investigation and prosecution are one solution to the problem, they are not the only solution... So with that I held meetings with community leaders to work with them to build resilience within the community to defy terror recruit," said Andrew M Luger, attorney for the district of Minnesota.

The Somali-American Task Force (SATF), a team of young thinkers, is also working with the Somali community to build a better relationship between the community and the local government.

Some SATF members have recently met a foreign press tour delegation from over a dozen countries at St Paul in Minneapolis. They discussed how they are working to identify why radicalisation is attracting the youths and how this obsession can be stopped.

Hodan Hasan, a psychotherapist based in Minneapolis, said there was a summit in the White House in February this year to discuss this issue.

"After the summit a 15-member SATF, including four women, was formed to look into it and come up with solutions," said Hasan.

They said feelings of powerlessness, isolation and humiliation are pertinent factors that drive youths to join IS. Besides, generation gap between Somali parents and their US-born children is also a cause, they observe.

According to them, children do not discuss anything with their parents and rather like to use social media to quench their thirst for learning. The recruiters send very sophisticated recruiting messages from overseas persuading those youths to join their radical groups.

Fariahio Khalif, founder and

executive director of Voice of African Women Inc, commented that depression, isolation and not talking to siblings could be a major reason for feeling lonely that sometimes converts into negative thoughts.

She said they are in constant talks with imams of several mosques, mothers of these children and community leaders. They meet mothers to discuss their children's mental and psychological condition, she added.

"Children come up with several questions to which mothers generally fail to answer," she added.

The SATF members claimed they are doing a lot of things to bring the Somali youths into the mainstream.

Mohammed Farah, executive director of KA-Joog, an NGO founded to look into the reasons for Al-Shabab recruitment and stop it, said their objective is to give the youngsters a platform and keep them away from negative thoughts.

The NGO was established in 2007 after many Somali-American youths left the USA to join the terror outfit, Al-Shabab.

"Our aim is to take students in a better educational system so that they could be kept away from negative thoughts and influences," said Farah, adding, none of the students engaged in their educational system has ever joined any extremist groups.

Pointing at some discrimination faced by the Somali youths, Farah said, "We need to change the airport mentality. The Somali youths face a lot of problems there."

The customs and security guys know who are good and who are bad. But still Somalis face problems and they are working for a positive change, he added.

Citing an example, Farah said one of his acquaintances went to the White House to meet President Barack Obama. "It was easier for him to meet Obama than passing the airport security check," he added.

Kyle Lovén, chief division council and media coordinator for FBI Minneapolis, said young men had travelled en masse from the US to engage in activities on behalf of terrorist organisations overseas, so this was groundbreaking for us.

"We immediately realised that we needed to forge relationships with members of Somali community within Minnesota. And we were able to do so as quite frankly we had the same objective in mind. We wanted obviously to prevent young people to travel overseas to join the groups," he added.

## Pay hike for high-ups

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discretionary fund of Tk 1.5 crore against the current figures of Tk 14 lakh and Tk 1 crore.

One of the draft laws seeks to increase the Speaker's salary to Tk 1.12 lakh from the existing Tk 57,200 and the coverage of air travel insurance to Tk 16 lakh from Tk 10 lakh.

The remuneration of the chief justice would be Tk 1.10 lakh, up from the existing Tk 56,000.

The salaries of ministers, deputy speaker, opposition leader, chief whip and Appellate Division judges would be hiked to Tk 1.05 lakh from Tk 53,100.

The insurance coverage for the air trips of the chief justice, ministers, deputy speaker, opposition leader, chief whip and Appellate Division judges, High Court Division judges, state ministers, deputy leader of the opposition and whip of the parliament, deputy ministers and MPs would go up to Tk 8 lakh from Tk 5 lakh.

Besides, the expenditure allowances, house allowances (in case of private houses), daily allowances, discretionary funds and other allowances of the holders of the posts

concerned will also be increased.

The six proposed acts are: The President's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Act-2015, The Prime Minister's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Act-2015, The Ministers, Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers' (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Act-2015, The Speaker and Deputy Speaker's (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Act-2015, The Members of Parliament (Remuneration and Allowances) (Amendment) Act-2015 and The Supreme Court Judges' (Remuneration and Privileges) (Amendment) Act-2015.

Musharraf said the remunerations and privileges of the holders of constitutional posts were revised after revision of salaries and allowances of public servants.

The gazette on the Eighth National Pay Scale is likely to be published by the first week of next month, he added.

The cabinet also approved a proposal for sending the Money Laundering Prevention (Amendment) Ordinance-2015 to the Parliament Secretariat at the earliest for enacting the law.

NAME OF POSTS	CURRENT REMUNERATION	PROPOSED REMUNERATION
President	Tk 61,200	Tk 1,20,000
Prime Minister	Tk 58,600	Tk 1,15,000
Speaker	Tk 57,200	Tk 1,12,000
Chief Justice	Tk 56,000	Tk 1,10,000
Minister	Tk 53,100	Tk 1,05,000
Deputy Speaker	Tk 53,100	Tk 1,05,000
Opposition Leader	Tk 53,100	Tk 1,05,000
Chief Whip	Tk 53,100	Tk 1,05,000
Appellate Division Judge	Tk 53,100	Tk 1,05,000
High Court Division Judge	Tk 49,000	Tk 95,000
State Minister	Tk 47,800	Tk 92,000
Deputy Leader of Opposition	Tk 47,800	Tk 92,000
Whip	Tk 47,800	Tk 92,000
Deputy Minister	Tk 45,150	Tk 86,500
MP	Tk 27,500	Tk 55,000



Locals collect dead fish at Khoiyar Khal in Ratargul swamp forest of Sylhet's Gowainghat upazila on Sunday morning, after criminals poisoned the lake the night before.

PHOTO: MINTU DESHWARA

## Poor quality wheat brought again

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Abdul Wadud, chairman of the parliamentary standing committee on food ministry, convened a meeting of the JS body on Sunday and said no substandard food grains would get into the country.

"There will be no compromise on quality. We've granaries full of rice and wheat stocks... There should not be any problem," said Wadud.

Earlier this year, the government imported 2.05 lakh tonnes of wheat from Brazil and the grain quality and insect infestation in the wheat sparked a huge outcry across the country. Even ruling party men put up barricades at places blocking entry of the consignments to public granaries.

In the last three months, two more wheat consignments (weighing 1.04 lakh tonnes) from France were rejected by the Food Directorate as the ratio of damaged kernels went beyond permissible levels.

Ataur Rahman, joint secretary at

the food ministry, said wheat import specifications had been made stringent after the Brazil experience.

Once the government decides to accept any consignment, all ports and customs authorities are notified accordingly, and suppliers would have to take back the rejected grains bearing the transportation expenses, Ataur Rahman explained.

Officials concerned said this year's wheat import has hit a snag due to bitter experience with suppliers providing below-standard grains. As a result, the government could buy only 4 lakh tonnes of wheat so far in 2015 against a planned import volume of 9 lakh tonnes.

Ilahi Dad Khan said his directorate would go for fresh international tenders soon to replenish the public granaries with wheat.

"If need be, we'll blacklist the suppliers who have repeatedly failed to provide us with quality wheat."

Interestingly, the 19,700 tonnes

of wheat that government declined to receive from a ship at Mongla Port yesterday was part of a 52,000 MT shipment anchored first at the Chittagong Port over a month ago.

Sources said after the offloading of 7,000 tonnes of wheat at Chittagong Port, food officials declined to receive the rest, raising questions over the poor grain quality. Samples were then sent to Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute (Bari) at Gazipur for quality test, and later 23,000 tonnes more were offloaded in Chittagong.

"In Chittagong, we also found 2,300 tonnes more with too many damaged kernels, and rejected those. Later, as the cargo, carrying the remaining 19,700 tonnes of wheat, wanted to offload at Mongla Port, the lab tests there confirmed the quality did not match the specifications set out in the tender," said Ilahi Dad Khan.

There is a provision that imported food grains can be offloaded at a 60-40 percent ratio at two seaports in the

country.

But as a committee led by Khulna regional controller of food found the wheat volume unacceptable, the government declined to offload that at Mongla.

After the nationwide outcry over the import and distribution of alleged substandard wheat, the food minister in June declared in parliament that they would not import wheat from Brazil anymore.

Since then at least three shipments of the government-imported wheat from France have so far been rejected.

Apart from the import hiccup, domestic procurement also fell short of target. Against a 2.55 lakh tonnes target set for procurement directly from wheat growers, the government could procure 2.05 lakh tonnes.

Bangladesh annually requires more than 40 lakh tonnes of wheat and three-fourths of it is met by public and private sector imports.

## Roads highly unsafe for pedestrians

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An expert, however, claimed that the figure of pedestrian deaths was much higher than what the WHO said. Hardly any facilities for walking and crossing roads were present in the country, said Prof Shamsul Hoque of Buet's civil engineering department.

He said 54 percent of the fatalities on the roads of Bangladesh were pedestrians, 70 percent of them were in the urban areas.

Experts say that the pedestrian fatality rate would climb higher as vehicles and population continue to rise in Bangladesh while significant road infrastructure and safety remained a far cry. They say that reckless driving, driving under the influence, using mobile phones while driving, and lack of enforcement of traffic laws were also to blame for the deaths on roads.

There were African and Latin American countries where pedestrian mortality rate was higher than that of Bangladesh, the WHO report said.

"Vulnerable road users, pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists, make up half of these fatalities," it says.

Low- and middle-income countries

have double the fatality rate than that of the richer countries and they contribute 90 percent of the global deaths on roads.

It said the country loses an estimated 1.6 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) due to road crashes that put a heavy burden on the national economies and on households.

"Many families are driven deeper into poverty by the loss of a breadwinner or by the expenses of prolonged medical care or the added burden of caring for a family member who is disabled from a road traffic injury," said the global report, adding that the economic costs also strike hard at a national level, imposing a significant burden on health, insurance and legal systems.

It reveals that 1.25 million people die each year on the world's roads and an estimated 3 percent of GDP is lost due to the deaths and injuries globally.

"Road traffic fatalities take an unacceptable toll - particularly on poor people in poor countries," said Margaret Chan, director general of WHO, in a press release.

The report shows that road safety

strategies were saving lives, "We're moving in the right direction," she said, "but it also tells us that the pace of change is too slow."

Even though 79 countries have seen a decrease in the absolute number of fatalities in the last three years, 68 countries have seen an increase.

Countries that have had the most success in reducing the number of road traffic deaths have achieved this by improving legislation, enforcement, and making roads and vehicles safer, the press release said.

African countries continue to have the highest road traffic death rates while the European countries the lowest.

Globally, road traffic crashes were a leading cause of death of young people.

Safe infrastructure and safe vehicles could help reduce road traffic injuries, said the report, adding that road infrastructure was mainly constructed with the needs of the motorists in mind, even though pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists account for 49 percent of all deaths on roads.

"Real, sustained successes at reducing global road traffic deaths will only happen when road design takes into

consideration the needs of all road users," the report said.

While vehicles in high-income countries were increasingly safe, the report provides worrying data showing that less than half the countries implement minimum standards on vehicle safety.

Changing the road users' behaviour is a critical component of the holistic "Safe Systems" approach which could be done through enforcement of good laws, the report mentions.

"Decision-makers need to rethink transport policies," said Etienne Krug, director of WHO's Department for Management of Noncommunicable Diseases, Disability, Violence and Injury Prevention.

In 2010, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020) with the goal to stabilise and reduce predicted levels of road traffic fatalities around the world.

The issue has also been included in the adopted Sustainable Development Goals with a target to halve traffic deaths and injuries by 2020.

## SQ Chy petitions for Pak witnesses

FROM PAGE 1

of such petition at this stage of legal proceedings was unprecedented.

Mahubey said he would move two petitions before the SC chamber judge today for setting a date for early hearing of the review petitions of Salauddin and another condemned war criminal, Jamaat leader Ali Ahsan Mohammad Mojaheed.

The five Pakistanis, mentioned in Salauddin's petition, are: Muhammad Mian Soomro, former Pakistani prime minister; Ishak Khan Khakwani, ex-rail minister; Amber Haroon Saigol, chairman of the Dawn Group; Munib Arjamand Khan, a social worker; and Riaz Ahmed Noon, grandson of Viqarunnisa Noon.

The three others are Osman Siddik, a former diplomat, Justice Shamim Hasnain, a High Court judge in Bangladesh, and his mother Zinnat Ara Begum.

Salauddin's principal counsel Khandker Mahub Hossain told this correspondent that they had earlier filed a petition with International Crimes Tribunal-1 to record the statements of these eight people, but the

tribunal didn't accept their prayer.

During Salauddin's trial at the ICT-1, the defence submitted a list of 1,153 witnesses to defend the former BNP lawmaker.

Considering all aspects, the tribunal selected five of them as witnesses.

It said the number of witnesses was reasonable, as it was the responsibility of the prosecution to prove the charges, not of the defence.

The defence then submitted a list of five witnesses, including industrialist Salman F Rahman, Justice Shamim Hasnain, Salauddin's maternal cousin Qayum Reza Chowdhury and his college friend Nizam Ahmed.

But it failed to produce Salman and Justice Shamim before the court.

Following a prayer from the defence, the tribunal, exercising its inherent power, later allowed the defence to produce an unlisted witness - former diplomat Abdul Momen Chowdhury.

Salauddin's counsels have repeatedly claimed their client was not in Bangladesh from March 29, 1971 to April 1974, as he went to Pakistan to study at Punjab University.

However, the ICT-1 in its judgment noted that Salauddin was indeed in Chittagong during the Liberation War and was guilty of committing crimes against humanity and genocide there.

The judgment said, "Since the accused proudly claims that he is not a Bangalee, it can be presumed that the accused as a non-Bangalee might have gone to West Pakistan as his first home during the War of Liberation in 1971.

"But the fact remains that the defence did not produce any travel or residential documents to show the date of the so-called visit to West Pakistan and staying therein during the War of Liberation of Bangladesh," read the verdict.

The court said the investigation officer of the case, Nurul Islam, provided it with a report of Dainik Pakistan of September 29, 1971 with the headline "Son of Fazlul Quader wounded in bomb attack: driver shot dead."

On the 14th of this month, Salauddin filed a petition with the SC to review his sentences after it upheld the ICT-1 verdict that the BNP leader would have to walk the gallows for

committing crimes against humanity in 1971.

Claiming innocence, 66-year-old Salauddin, now in Kashimpur Jail-1, sought acquittal on all charges brought against him.

On July 29 this year, the SC bench led by Chief Justice SK Sinha upheld Salauddin's death penalty, handed down by the ICT-1 on October 1, 2013, for the brutal killing of Natun Chandra Sinha, Awami League leader Mozaffar Ahmed and his son; and two acts of genocide in Sultanpur Banikpara and Unasattarpara villages in Raozan where 74 villagers were massacred.

It also upheld his 20 years' jail sentence on two charges: acts of genocide at Maddhya Gohira Hindupara and at Jagotmallopara in Raozan. At least 37 people were killed in the two villages.

Earlier in June, the SC also upheld the capital punishment of Jamaat leader Mojaheed after hearing his appeal against the ICT-2 verdict.

On September 30, the apex court published its full verdicts. The next day, the tribunal issued execution warrants for the two war crimes convicts.