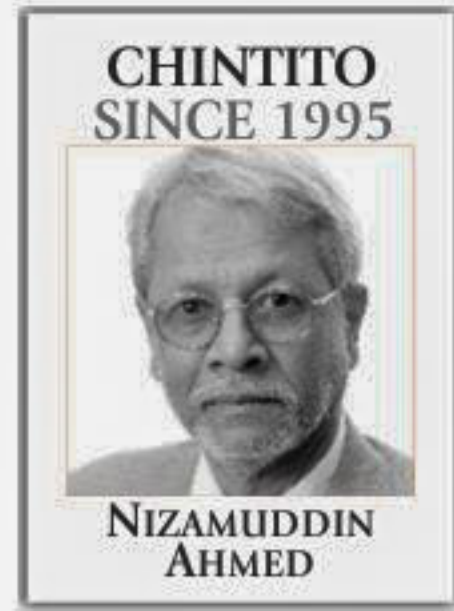


A tale of two committers



CHINTTO SINCE 1995
 NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

THE Muslim world is in agony each time there is a killing in a non-Muslim locale. Who did it? Why, is not important, and most often never known. Will it be a person carrying a Muslim

name? Will they then search for his terrorist linkage? Will it be a non-Muslim who carried out the carnage? Will they then trace back to his days of mental health medication. Why can't a Muslim be also considered a mental health patient?

Indeed, there are terrible despots among non-Muslims; from the Pharaohs to Hitler, from Mussolini to Augusto Pinochet - the list goes on. The Japanese imperialists committed severe war crimes during World War II. The Communists (Korean and Chinese) carried out atrocities against American prisoners of the Korean War. Africa has suffered dictators of the likes of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, Liberia's Charles Taylor, Guinea's Ahmed Sekou Toure and Uganda's Idi Amin, Central Africa Republic's Jean-Pierre Bemba and several more.

By 'logic' of the prevalent oft-abused Muslim label, all the followers of the religion pursued by those tyrannical rulers were all tyrants. That is obviously not so. If the wicked ruler can be singled out in each of the above and other such cases, and condemned for their criminality, why do some people, world leaders included, and a huge part of the media, consider every Muslim a sinner for acts of a handful who claim to be Muslims or

simply carry a Muslim name? American-born Omar Mateen (of Afghan parentage), gunned down 49 people and injured 53 others at Pulse (a LGBT nightclub) in Orlando, Florida on June 12. He has now been said to have homosexual tendencies (by his male lover 'Miguel' and also his ex-wife) and was known to have been using gay dating apps. He has been defined as a drug-pusher and an alcoholic. Mateen was allegedly a regular at Pulse before that ill-fated night and reportedly made advances towards men.

Islam does not approve of Mateen's way of life. Under the circumstances, it is

process of cross-examination and analyses of gleaned information.

Conceivably Mateen's personal agenda was a thoughtless end to his reckless life. His purported but unsubstantiated sympathy for ISIS does not make him their representative. Nor does ISIS have the mandate to act for the Muslim world. And yet authorities are investigating the attack as an act of terrorism by a 'Muslim'.

By reasoning of culpability, no other LGBT, or drug enthusiast or alcoholic is feeling the brunt of Mateen's murders. So, why should Muslims be made to feel responsible only because Mateen carries a

and file at the site of Jo's murder and at the specially convened parliamentary session to pay her due respect and recognition.

British Member of Parliament Jo Cox's white murderer has been named by police as Tommy Mair, but in a show of shameful foolhardiness gave his name in court as "death to traitors, freedom for Britain" only five days after he had carried out the gruesome assassination. 'Daring' Mair, who would not give his birthday or address to the court, had interests in establishing white supremacy and is being tried under terrorism protocols.

Unlike Mateen (cleared by FBI), Mair had ties with British nationalist, pro-apartheid and neo-Nazi groups, and subscribed to racist and anti-Semitism print material, but was surprisingly not known to be under any form of shadowing or investigation by any agency. And, of course, his brother said he was a 'mental patient'.

The police have pressed charges against Mair for "murder, grievous bodily harm, possession of a firearm with intent to commit an indictable offence and possession of an offensive weapon". Most importantly, the full life of a parliamentarian has been meaninglessly snatched. But, the point is, no one closely connected with him, no Christian in the world, or any Caucasian, is feeling the heat or the gaze because of Mair's terrorist act. Why should they? Mair is an individual, who worshipped far right radicalism, and will most likely pay with a life term. But, who knows?

The writer is a practising Architect at BashaBari Ltd., a Commonwealth Scholar and a Fellow, a Baden-Powell Fellow Scout Leader, and a Major Donor Rotarian.

Islam does not approve of Mateen's way of life. Under the circumstances, it is most unfair, ridiculous too, for the entire Muslim population to suffer the ignominy that the world may be blaming them for a dastardly act carried out by someone whose lifestyle is in no way Muslim.

most unfair, ridiculous too, for the entire Muslim population to suffer the ignominy that the world may be blaming them for a dastardly act carried out by someone whose lifestyle is in no way Muslim.

There is no so-called ideological group or cult behind Mateen's act. The man was dangerous as an individual, as defined by his ex-wife, and unfortunately slipped out of the FBI sieve despite surveillance and interrogation twice (in 2013 and 2014), but 'was not found to be a threat'. Hello! Perhaps the FBI too needs to upgrade its method of identifying terror suspects,

Muslim name due to his parents being Muslims?

By blatant contrast, four days after the Orlando tragedy, budding British Labour lawmaker Jo Cox was stabbed multiple times and gunned down in broad daylight at Birstall, West Yorkshire, England, by a Scotland-born white man. There is however no suggestion that white people all over the world, including the farsha ones in this country, or for that matter that all Scottish people have become radicals; rather we witnessed the heart-warming display of solidarity among rank

Britain exits EU

What impact on Bangladesh?

A 52-48 split in vote in favour to exit the European Union; it will have tremendous multifaceted implications for Great Britain. Obviously, it is a huge blow to the European experiment in post-second world war. Prime Minister Cameron stated in his post-referendum speech "I was absolutely clear [in the referendum] about my belief that Britain is stronger, safer and better off inside the European Union... But the British people have made a very clear decision to take a different path and as such I think the country requires fresh leadership to take it in this direction." The sterling fell by ten percent and European shares by 8 percent in one day. In the days to come a clearer image will emerge on the economic and political impact of the referendum. The public seemed to have focused mostly on the migration issue and this phobia may lead to a more inward-looking Britain as opposed to the multi-cultural British society we are accustomed to.

We in Bangladesh must carefully gauge the verdict. The immediate impact will be remittance as Britain is the third largest source (after the Middle Eastern countries and the United States) and the initial shock of devaluation of the sterling will have an adverse impact. The markets may rebound in the midterm but that is something we will have to wait to see. Till today we had 0% tariff access to the British market as Britain was part of EU. Now we will have to renegotiate market access all over again. The government must make all efforts through diplomatic channels to ensure that the trade facility remains intact with Great Britain. Yes, we have some time before UK's exit from EU is finalised, but there is no time to waste for policymakers to do the needful to ensure our interests.

Blocking roads for programmes and rallies

Common people suffer

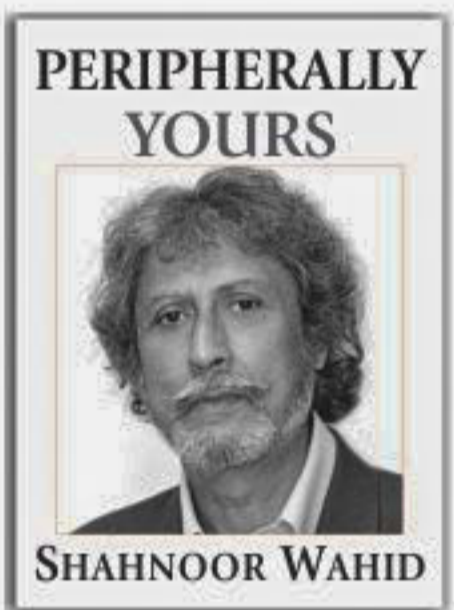
It is a common sight in Dhaka now to see roads blocked and the common people stuck in traffic due to rallies or programmes of political parties. The situation is further worsened by the disparity of the number of people in the city, and the number and condition of existing roads. Thus, due to these unannounced programmes, rallies, VIP protocols or even mass movements by sections of the society, it is the common people who suffer the most.

The condition is direr during the month of Ramadan and the suffering increase for the tired people trying to get home in time for iftar. Blocking off major roads and intersections unannounced increases the already bad traffic condition of the city. These are public roads, and to block them, no matter what the cause, is an irresponsible thing to do, especially when done by political parties whose mandate is to serve the public cause.

It is also common today to see students, unions and other sections of public block off major roads in protests. While it is the right of citizens to ventilate their grievances, causing suffering to the general people cannot be the way to go.

It is imperative that the government take action to demarcate a separate area where programmes, processions and rallies can be held and the aggrieved can go to place their demands without inconveniencing others. We would like to submit to the High Court to take suo motu cognisance of the matter and issue a directive regarding the blockade of public roads.

Beginning of the end of ISIS?



PERIPHERALLY YOURS
 SHAHNOOR WAHID

IT appears that ISIS is in big trouble in some of the major towns of Syria, where Iraqi and Syrian regular forces and Peshmerga fighters are closing in steadily, as we come to know from various Middle-Eastern media reports. A recent news release detailed how some ISIS jihadists have been trying to get out of the towns, alongside the civilian population fleeing from

violence. Another report that would hit a hard blow to the morale of the jihadists is the attack on their supreme commander Ali Akbar al-Baghdadi, who has reportedly been wounded in the attack. Media also reported deaths of some senior commanders of the outfit in the last two years. Many strongholds of ISIS around the towns of Raqqa, Mosul and Fallujah have already fallen to the advancing joint forces.

So, where does ISIS stand today in terms of its strength and ability to win the war against the well-armed Syrian and Iraqi army backed by their air force and that of Russia and the US? Can an outfit without artillery and air force support win battles against heavily equipped army? Can ISIS members keep on fighting if the supply lines of arms and ammunition, food and other logistics are cut off by the Syrian and Iraqi army? What about their back up strategy? What about medical help for the wounded?

To understand that, let us analyse the formation and structure of ISIS. The outfit has been hurriedly raised with young men of myriad backgrounds coming from every direction. These individuals were allured by the fiery slogans of waging 'jihad' against the enemies of Islam and promise by al-Baghdadi of establishing an Islamic Caliphate in Syria and Iraq, and subsequently conquering the entire world to bring every one under the flag of Islam.

The recruits have been given short training on firing automatic assault rifles, sophisticated weapons like AK-47, rocket launchers, bazookas and grenades. Some of them were selected to become suicide bombers. The field commanders of the units were former Iraqi army members who declared allegiance to Baghdadi.

So, how much damage can such an assorted group do to any regular army with only a week's training? According to experts, ISIS has little chance of winning a major war against a properly trained and equipped army. Years of training, intense study, discipline and experience in warfare play as important a role as weapons for any military to achieve their objectives. The young jihadists of ISIS, who didn't have previous experience of fighting with modern weapons or proper training regarding real warfare, are dying by the dozen in the streets and corn fields of Raqqa, Mosul, Fallujah and other towns.

According to various media sources, from over 30,000 ISIS fighters in 2014, the number has come down to around 20,000 now, mostly concentrated in the above three towns, and most of whom have been looking for a way out since the last couple of months. They are allegedly using civilians as human shields. With most of their senior commanders either dead or missing, these young jihadists seem to be in total disarray.

A huge amount of footage from ISIS's own videos are available on YouTube. ISIS has captured every engagement and in the process captured deaths of their own fighters on smartphones. With each group, one of

their own men was assigned to shoot videos of the fight that ensued. ISIS leaders used only selected parts of the fights for propaganda purpose to allure more young men. The horrific deaths of ISIS fighters were obviously not shown. However, the Syrian Army and Peshmerga recovered many smartphones from dead ISIS fighters, subsequently releasing them on YouTube.

In such footages, one can see young men, with long hair wearing hip-hugging jeans and Nike sneakers, jumping in the middle of the road in a sudden rush of adrenaline, firing sub-machine guns in a bid to "kill them all". They wished to go home one day 'as a hero'. But, the footage shows clearly that as they stood up to fire, they exposed themselves perilously to the enemy and were consequently shot. The Syrian army video of ten or twenty dead bodies of young ISIS fighters being pushed into a ditch by a bulldozer makes one think about their unfortunate mothers who would never know where their sons were buried.

The YouTube footages prove that parading the streets



A handout picture released by the official Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) on March 27, 2016 shows Syrian troops gathering around their national flag after they recaptured the ancient city of Palmyra from the control of the Islamic State (IS) group.

PHOTO : AFP

in pickups, brandishing AK-47 automatic rifles and bazookas to terrorise civilians is one thing, but facing real mortar shells and machine gun bullets is completely different story. The basic flaw of raising an army with assorted groups of people coming from different countries with different languages and customs is that they do not gel well enough to create a cohesive and orderly fighting force.

From the end of 2015 till mid-2016, the gradual waning of fire power of the ISIS throughout the areas under its control was noticeable to those who have been following the mercurial rise of this regime and its activities. Since the beginning of pounding on their positions by Russian jets, they fled from one outpost to another and ultimately concentrated in Raqqa, Mosul and Fallujah. There was less and less of the show of long convoys of shouting and chanting by young jihadists, and fewer and fewer public beheadings and ethnic cleansing in the occupied areas. Now, they are forced to

are losing faith in one another, and as a result many have turned spies or informants, and some have even been executed by their comrades. When some leaders die in precision bombing or air raids, a witch hunt begins for an informant. According to an AP report, after the death of a field commander in an air raid, his unit killed 38 of its own members on suspicion of acting as informants. Chaos and confusion has set in throughout ISIS.

The young men who had joined ISIS with the dream of establishing an Islamic Caliphate find the dream a bit costly in terms of human lives. As dead bodies continue to pile up on their side of the fence, and as uncertainty looms larger than before, these youngsters may give up the hope of fighting a jihad in the name of Islam, and rather want to reach a safer place within the bounds of this terrestrial realm. Could this thus be the beginning of the end of ISIS?

The writer is a senior journalist with The Daily Star, Bangladesh.

COMMENTS

"Know your medicine"

(June 22, 2016)

HM Shahneaus Raju

Thank for that initiative; it will really help the consumers. But at the same time, it should be free or have very little charge, so that it can't be a money-making option for the mobile operators.

"Illegal toll behind all"

(June 22, 2016)

Humayun Kabir

There are discrepancies between the statements of the two groups of workers. Who shall we believe?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Revert back to the old examination system

According to reports, the Ministry of Education is trying to streamline the SSC examination method. In the past, we used to have essay type questions which invoked creativity or creative writing. Then the MCQ system was introduced. Pass rates went up and quality plummeted. The main objective of education is to invoke and imbibe creativity in the student. Sadly, the creativity

factor has become elusive and redundant nowadays. Golden, platinum, diamond GPA have become the order of the day!

A friend of mine passed the SSC exam in the mid-sixties. He obtained five letters (when you score 80 or more out of 100) out of ten. He did not have a private tutor, never went to coaching. Another friend of mine secured the 18th rank in the merit list of Dhaka Board in

the mid-sixties, without any extra tutorial help. He went on to stand first class first in mechanical engineering in BUET.

In view of the ground realities and for the sake of imparting true education, we support wholeheartedly the effort to revert back to the old system of examination.

Dr. SN Mamoon
 Dhaka

"Trump says he is open to racial profiling"

This is in reference to the news report published in The Daily Star on June 20, 2016. This is nothing new on Donald Trump's part. From the very beginning of his political campaign, he has always been so racist. May be one day, he will come up with ideas for different symbols to be worn on dresses by the minorities based on their race/religion - like the

Jewish people under the Nazis were made to wear specific badges and armbands for easy identification and of course, persecution!

You are simply a disgusting racist, Mr. Trump, spewing nothing but hatred.

A horrified human being
 On e-mail