

Fighting radicalism in the global village

RUBY AMATULLA

IN March this year, when the supporters of the Islamic State wanted to establish a base in Ben Guerdane, Tunisia - a town along the Libyan border - it was the local population that rose up against them and worked with the security forces to defeat and oust them. They all vehemently worked against radicalism because they felt that it was a threat to their future, their newly founded freedom and self-rule that they all support.

Even though the government is still struggling with serious economic problems, the people in Tunisia, from all walks of life, fully support their government. There have been two peaceful change of hand in power since 2011; the elections were free and fair even according to the parties who lost. The first election brought the Islamists, the Ennahda party, to power. When they failed to quell radicalism and two secular leaders were murdered, they resigned, and the people elected a secular party, Nidaa Tounes, to govern and be tough with the troublemakers. Through these peaceful processes of change, people started to regain trust and confidence in their democratic system. The consensus building transitional process - after the Jasmine Revolution that ended the 23-year autocratic rule in 2011 - that successfully helped produce the most progressive Constitution in the Muslim world (gender parity, proportional representation to facilitate power-sharing governance, etc.), and the way the Islamists and secularists came together to establish democracy all helped gain the trust and full support of the people.

This is a glaring example of success for those societies who are still struggling with democracy to see how a polarised, conflict-prone, dysfunctional country that had been repressed by autocratic secular rules for some 50 years could change its course within a few years time only because the opposition forces decided to come together to govern through consensus. This very process of a nation coming together is the most forceful way to fight radicalism.

In spite of few incidents of violence in the last few years, radicalism is invalidated and almost defeated in Tunisia: many radicals transformed and many fled the country. The Salafist and Jihadist movements that originated and gained momentum during the repressive autocratic rules of Bourguiba and Ben Ali have been subdued and marginalised by the present democratic rule. The people are united behind the government: radicals and rebels do not get any sympathy or shelter from any segment of the society. This is how extremism and terrorism could best be defeated. With a consensus-building, power-sharing democratic rule supported by the people and the opposition, the government is most equipped to defeat terrorism.

In this global society, the operations of groups like al-Qaeda, Taliban and now the Islamic State, have all already created an aura of defiance and chivalry, fighting the formidable powers in the world that victimised the Muslim world by their colonial rule and unjust policies. Standing up to the onslaught of their 'War on Terror' and defying intimidations of the local and regional governments appear empowering and awe inspiring for many young Muslims - rich or poor, educated or uneducated - around the world that are deeply troubled either by their societies or by their own personal and/or family failures. This is an ever lurking destructive domain that is continuously seducing young

military solution to radicalism and terrorism. If a person is determined to give up his/her own life, he/she becomes a power bomb that can burst at the choosing of that person. It is extremely difficult to stop that person. He/she needs to be convinced of a better way out. The more ruthless and exhaustive the law enforcement agencies become, the more widespread radicalism may be. The widespread availability of arms worldwide due to reckless arms business for the last several decades is also fueling the fire of terrorism.

There must be a balanced approach: police and security forces should do their job exercising due diligence and care, and at the same time the society and the state must focus on the causes

needed to help bring about a moderate mindset. Visionary academic curricula are an imperative to reform a society and to challenge radicalism. This should be the top priority in the Muslim world. In Tunisia, it is the on-going dialogue between the Islamists and secularists, and the consequent changes in both that have been influencing the whole nation - that was previously polarised and confrontational - to come together. A constructive engagement between opposite forces empowers the moderates and marginalises the extremes on all sides. To expose democratic values and processes early on to help bring about future leadership and a moderate culture, the country is planning to incorporate

helped cultivate human bonding and values are all falling apart under the pressures of modernity.

Unfortunately, when young people increasingly turn towards religion for a sense of purpose and peace in life, they are again indoctrinated by the unenlightened and uninformed extremist clerics who propagate ideas that violate the very spirit of Islam and its universal message. They often teach intolerance against others by inducing ignorant followers to see the world in terms of "us versus them", believers versus the kafir and mushriq, the Muslim World versus the 'evil' West. Their negative voices remain prominent because the learned and enlightened Muslims have failed to bring up a discourse that establishes the true meaning of Islam, as they often resort to silence, either out of fear for safety or of losing their standing in society.

If a person or group can be convinced that they can achieve their economic, social and/or political objectives through their constructive work and efforts in life, they would refrain from a destructive course. The best way to fight terrorism then is to gain the confidence of people by offering them a fair chance and an impartial rule of law that they can count on. The problems arise when people, due to the deficiencies of a system and situation, fail to have that trust in governance.

Boko Haram in Nigeria grew during an utterly repressive corrupt rule of an autocratic regime. Al-Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and al-Shabaab in Somalia took root and grew in an environment of utter chaos, turmoil and dysfunction, where people become desperate and sympathetic towards rebellion. Injustice, the lack of rule of law, wide disparity between the few rich and the vast majority of poor populations, lack of jobs, a bleak future and frustration - all create circumstances where extremism and terrorism find the ideal breeding ground.

People rebel when they feel there is no other way out. When victims of oppression join the cause they can become ruthless. The core of the Islamic State consists of many of Iraq's Sunni army who were disbanded after the fall of Saddam Hussein.

In this global village, where there is an ever increasing awareness of human rights and dignity, leading to ever greater demand for democracy and liberty, no society could remain healthy if a segment is subjugated, humiliated and marginalised. The governments that ignore this ever unfolding reality are doing tremendous disservice to their own societies and to their own future.

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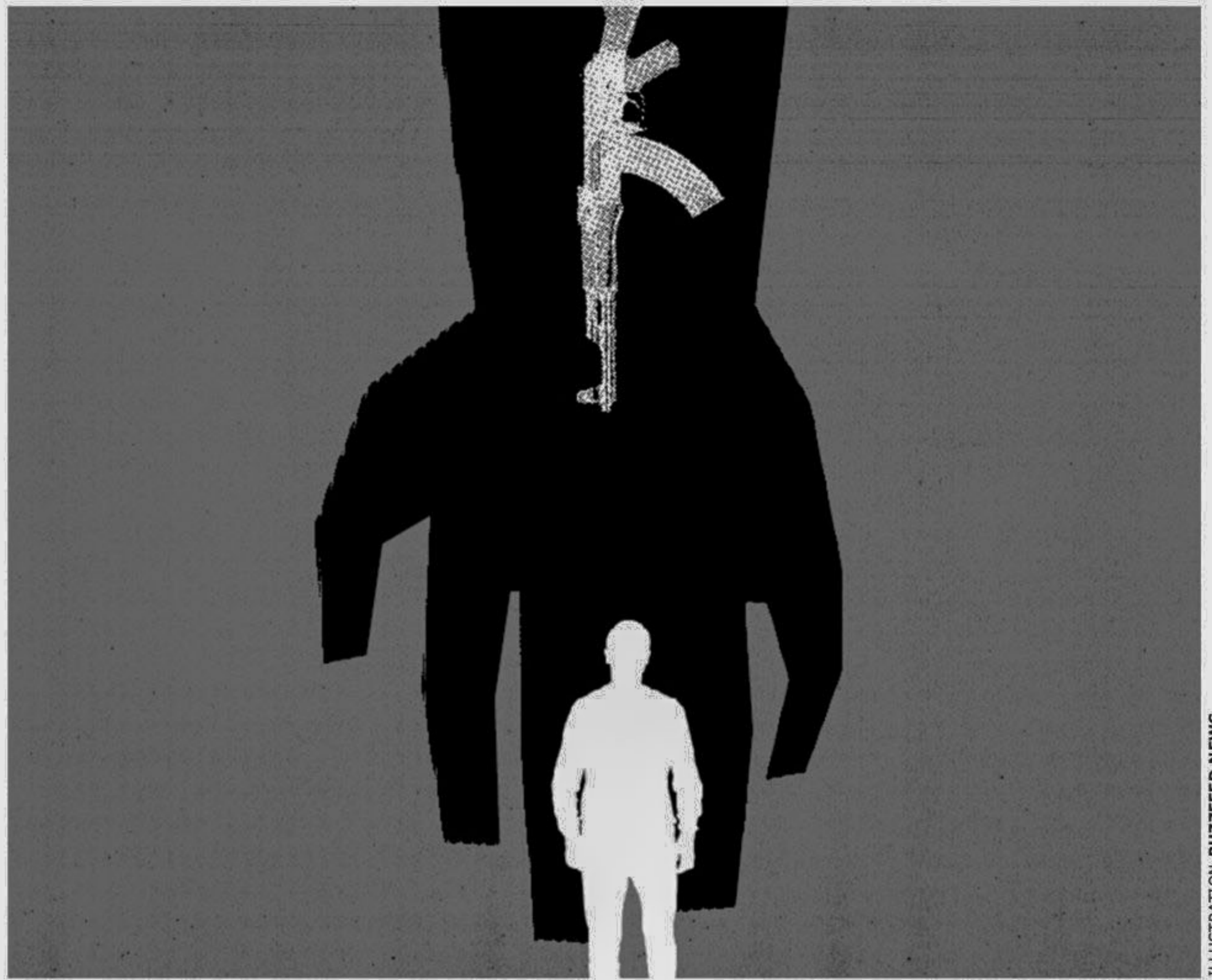


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minds to join them. If one group gets subdued, others spring up with more vicious agenda. This ever present call of 'jihad' appears as a way out of the humiliating and degrading reality a young person is often stuck with in an undemocratic, corrupt society. Without addressing the root causes of radicalism, a society would have an ongoing uphill battle against radicalism only through the use of the state power. Even the 'War on Terror' policy has largely failed to create a safer world, in spite of hundreds of billions of dollars being spent by the powerful countries and their transnational network of intelligence.

World leaders and experts, even army generals, concede that there is no

and help create a conducive environment, in which potential radicals would find it difficult to choose the radical path. A two pronged agenda is, thus, needed: hunt them down and help them reform.

When ignorance, false indoctrination and misconceptions of religion prevail, religion is conveniently misused by some to radicalise people to fight against a system that 'subjugate' and 'humiliate' them. In some societies, the religious culture can be too dogmatic, with too much focus on certain rituals, ignoring - and sometimes violating - the values and principles of Islam.

A forceful ongoing discourse among different segments of a society - including liberal and Islamists - is most

student body elections, not only at the university level but also at the lower levels, going down to the primary schools. This is an extremely important agenda towards building a democratic culture and to de-radicalise young people.

The worldwide decline of moral and family values is also a deep-rooted cause of increased frustration and derailment of many young people, thus leading to radicalisation. Greed and materialism and the encroachment of the global mercantile culture that defines success in terms of wealth alone, drives families to become disjointed and self-centered, ignoring greater family networks and neglecting social responsibilities. The greater family and social network that always

MEGA-QUAKE IN DHAKA

Challenging the earth shattering implications

SIRAJUR RAHMAN KHAN

A research study was recently shared across print and electronic media, which predicted that a 9.0 magnitude mega earthquake will hit the central eastern part of Bangladesh, especially in and around Dhaka city. This prediction not only puts the 140 million residents of the capital city at risk, but also raises grave concerns about the fate of costly public and private civil structures, industries, flyovers and other necessary public amenities.

In fact, the prediction is even more ominous because most of the recent infrastructure were designed and built to withstand about 7-magnitude earthquakes that may hit this region. Understandably, the prediction of a 9.0 magnitude earthquake is frightening news for the government, since most of the infrastructure projects, such as power stations, multi-storied garments manufacturing factories, airports, sea ports, mega-bridges, dams, satellite towns, economic zones, etc. in Bangladesh was undertaken to withstand earthquakes lesser than or equal to 7.0 magnitude, not 9.0! This could be a grave concern for investors in both the public and private sectors.

The outcome of the research and several interviews of the authors shared across the social media have become viral, causing quite a bit of anxiety among the residents. One of the authors even suggested complete abandonment of the city! Thus, in this pretext, it is necessary to examine the outcome of the scientific study, which was published recently in the reputed journal *Nature Geoscience*.

The research paper postulated the existence of a plate boundary in and around Bangladesh. This is somewhat of a strange finding, since other maps created by scientists from a number of reputed institutions and organisations across the world (GSB, USGS,

GSI, DU, RU, etc.) do not show any kind of plate boundaries (birth places of all earthquakes) or deformation zones in and around Bangladesh! As a matter of fact, the aforementioned maps, known as the Geological and Tectonic maps of Bangladesh, were prepared by many renowned local and foreign geoscientists in the past separately and jointly on the basis of geophysical, bore hole and outcrop data.

What is more baffling is that the researchers took the liberty of shifting the meeting place of plate boundaries several hundred kilometres west of the actual place known to the scientists of the world. They did it on the basis of ground movement which was estimated by several GPSs. Shifting of the subduction zone is also up for debate, as it is an established fact that the plate in the location of interest is moving side by side and not subducting (the downward movement of the edge of a plate beneath another plate). If the plates are not subducting, then there is an extremely low probability of earthquake, which contradicts the said published research. Additionally, the westward movement of the plates was ascertained using only the GPS data interpretation. But predicting earthquake of any intensity not only requires long-term GPS data observation, but also requires detailed geophysical survey (beyond basement), bore hole (for 3-D basin modeling) and outcrop data interpretation along with historical records of earthquake occurrences in that region.

Thus, to bring everything into context, the published research in *Nature Geoscience* clashes with the existing knowledge regarding the Geological and Tectonic maps of Bangladesh, such as: a) the existence of subduction or deformation zone which was never mentioned or determined before (there-

fore, not yet established); b) whether that locked up deformation zone can produce an earthquake of that magnitude; c) will the mega-earthquake have the intensity to shake Dhaka along with the Bengal Basin as predicted; and d) whether the casualties of life and properties will be as much as predicted or later opined by authors.

Government agencies dealing with earth science, especially geology (as earthquake is a geological phenomenon) needs to address this issue by undertaking projects to conduct detailed studies on an urgent basis. Detailed deep geophysical surveys of several tens of sq. kms, followed by drill holes that were done for oil and gas in the past, will help immensely in finding subsurface plate boundaries or deformation zones. A 3-D model of the Bengal Basin needs to be prepared from different deep drill-hole data of the country to fully understand the severity of earthquake in different parts of the basin. If data is gathered in this manner, then only will the people of the country, especially the residents of Dhaka city, come to know about the total scenario. This study will also help the public and private investors upgrade their project status.

It is advisable not to panic after reading the published research outcome at this moment, and there is no need to change the existing earthquake probability (seismic hazard zoning map), as long as further studies - like geophysical surveys especially seismic, bore-hole data interpretation and basin modelling - are conducted, as this will provide a complete scenario of the earthquake situation in the context of Bangladesh.

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তারিখ: ১৬ শ্রাবণ ১৪২৩
৩১ জুলাই ২০১৬

| উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি | | |
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| ১ | মন্ত্রণালয়/বিভাগ | ভূমি মন্ত্রণালয়। |
| ২ | সংস্থা | ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড, ঢাকা। |
| ৩ | সম্প্রদায়িক সত্তার নাম | ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড, ঢাকা। |
| ৪ | সম্প্রদায়িক সত্তার জেলা | ঢাকা। |
| ৫ | দরপত্র নম্বর ও তারিখ | ৩১.০২.০০০০.০১৪.০২.০০১.২০১৬.২৩৫৮ তারিখঃ ৩১-৭-২০১৬। |
| ৬ | সম্প্রদায়িক পদ্ধতি | উন্মুক্ত দরপত্র (OTM) পদ্ধতি। |
| ৭ | বাজেট এবং অর্থের উৎস | রাজস্ব বাজেট, বাংলাদেশ সরকার। |
| ৮ | দরপত্রের নাম | ল্যাপটপ, প্রিন্টার ও স্ক্যানার ক্রয়। |
| ৯ | দরপত্র প্যাকেজ নম্বর | এক (০১)। |
| ১০ | দরপত্র প্যাকেজের নাম | ল্যাপটপ, প্রিন্টার ও স্ক্যানার ক্রয়। |
| ১১ | দরপত্র প্রকাশের তারিখ | ০১-০৮-২০১৬খ্রিঃ। |
| ১২ | দরপত্র সিডিউল বিক্রির শেষ তারিখ ও সময় | ২৩-০৮-২০১৬খ্রিঃ অফিস চলাকালীন সময়। |
| ১৩ | দরপত্র গ্রহণের তারিখ ও সময় | ২৪-০৮-২০১৬খ্রিঃ বেলা ০১.০০টা। |
| ১৪ | দরপত্র খোলার তারিখ ও সময় | ২৪-০৮-২০১৬খ্রিঃ বেলা ০২.০০টা। |
| ১৫ | দরপত্র বিক্রয়, গ্রহণ ও খোলার স্থান | উপ-ভূমি সংস্কার কমিশনার-৪, ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০। |
| ১৬ | দরপত্রে অংশগ্রহণকারীর যোগাযোগ/অভিজ্ঞতা | The Public Procurement Act, 2006, The Public Procurement Rules, 2008 (সংশোধিত) বিধিমালা এবং সংশ্লিষ্ট কাজের জন্য প্রণীত দরপত্র সিডিউলে বর্ণিত শর্তানুযায়ী। |
| ১৭ | সম্প্রদায়িক মালামালের বিবরণ | সিডিউল মোতাবেক। |
| ১৮ | দরপত্র সিডিউলের মূল্য | ৫০০০/- (পাঁচ হাজার) টাকা মাত্র (অফেরতযোগ্য)। |
| লট নম্বর | | লটের নাম ও সংখ্যা স্থান |
| ১৯ | ০১ | ব্র্যান্ড ল্যাপটপ ক্রয়, ৪১৯ (চারশত উনিশ)টি ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড। |
| ২০ | ০২ | ব্র্যান্ড প্রিন্টার ক্রয়, ৪১৯ (চারশত উনিশ)টি ঐ |
| ২১ | ০৩ | ব্র্যান্ড স্ক্যানার ক্রয়, ৪১৯ (চারশত উনিশ)টি ঐ |
| ২২ | দরপত্র দাখিলের নিয়মাবলী | টেডার ডকুমেন্টের বর্ণনা অনুযায়ী। |
| ২৩ | যোগাযোগের ঠিকানা | সহকারী ভূমি সংস্কার কমিশনার-৪, ভূমি সংস্কার বোর্ড, ১৪১-১৪৩, মতিঝিল বা/এ, ঢাকা-১০০০। ফোনঃ ৯৫৬১০১৯ |
| ২৪ | এ দরপত্র The Public Procurement Act, 2006, The Public Procurement Rules, 2008 (সংশোধিত) বিধিমালা অনুযায়ী পরিচালিত হবে এবং কোন কারণ দর্শানো ব্যতিরেকে সংগ্রাহক সত্তা এ বিজ্ঞপ্তি বাতিল বা পরিবর্তন বা যে কোন দরপত্র গ্রহণ/প্রত্যাহ্বান/বাতিল করার ক্ষমতা সংরক্ষণ করে। | |

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