

## Extremism on the loose

### Why pre-emptive measures not taken?

WE condemn in the strongest possible terms what could be described as re-enactment of the Ramu incident a few years ago. A facebook post, allegedly by a member of the Hindu community sparked off violence against Hindus in Brahmanbaria's Nasirnagar upazila. The attack itself appeared organised resulting in widespread damage to property and temples also. The question we must ask ourselves is why the police did not act decisively given that the appearance of a doctored image was posted on facebook on October 29 and could be used to whip up religious sentiments, which it was. We understand that the youth was handed over to the police the day before the attack, and given the sensitivity of the situation and precedence like Ramu in 2012, why did the police not take proactive measures to ward off any repetition?

It is a major failure of intelligence when it was obvious that the atmosphere of the locality was being intentionally tensed up and prudence dictated that precautions be taken to protect religious sites like temples in the locality. It is inexplicable to us that a piece of information had been planted in the social network facebook and was viewed by thousands over 48 hours and yet the police had no idea of any scheme being afoot.

Although the police have filed cases over the Brahmanbaria incident, we must wake up to the fact that this wasn't a spontaneous attack and these are deliberate actions to disrupt the religious harmony in the country. We demand a quick trial and most severe punishment for the culprits.

## Congratulations, Tigers!

### England 'Mirazzed'

BANGLADESH'S 108-run victory over the much fancied English side in the five-day test has done us proud. We congratulate the team for the historic triumph and thank the England and Welsh Cricket Board for undertaking the tour, especially at a time when many test playing nations have shied away from playing cricket in this part of the world. The series has kindled hope for cricket, heralding once again the resilience of the indomitable spirit of the game itself.

And what a match it was. It has seen a seesaw of fortune, culminating in a well-deserved victory for the hosts, competitive cricket at its best. The Tigers had to fight every inch of the way to script a coordinated performance, surprising the English side in all the three areas of the game--batting, bowling and fielding. Also, it has atoned for the loss of the first test match. This was the first win against England in a test match.

Cricket in Bangladesh has indeed come a long way. Over the years, the nation has witnessed pockets of positive energy centring round the game that has manifested itself through a series of first class matches in domestic cricket along with our greater exposure to international cricket. We believe that this trend needs to be encouraged in order to sustain the positive cricket that team Bangladesh has been playing. The Tigers have to focus on its middle order that, of late, has batted in a rather erratic fashion. Having said that, the team needs to hone in on its bowling too. Also, we earnestly hope that in the wake of the successful completion of the series and our performance, the ICC would afford us more opportunities to play test matches more frequently.

# Bangladesh in the eyes of Americans

DR. MOHAMMAD DELWAR HOSSAIN

ONE day after the terrorist attack in France last year, one of my students came to me and asked how far geographically Bangladesh was from the countries where ISIS is strong. I replied, "Let's say from Mobile, Alabama to Brazil." The student continued to ask if Bengalis were different from members of ISIS. I explained most people in Bangladesh were tolerant Muslims, that Bangladesh was an example of a secular society among the Muslim countries in the world. The prime minister, leader of

limited knowledge about global affairs. My student could have found a lot of information about Bangladesh with a single Google search. Maybe the student would be more interested in doing so after talking to me. Regardless, the student wanted to make sure from me that Bangladesh was not like the other Muslim countries where ISIS was based.

This kind of ignorance about the Muslim world is not fairly common in the US. I have had opportunities to visit many American universities and talk to students. I usually introduce myself as a

(NGOs) in eradicating poverty and empowering women in Bangladesh. Several studies have been done in this area and countries around the world appreciate the achievement of Bangladesh in different sectors of social development including education and health. In a recent visit to Bangladesh, the World Bank president said Bangladesh has set an example in this area to other countries in eradicating poverty. The NGOs have played a very significant role in poverty reduction in Bangladesh. As I grew up in a village in

to observe the activities of NGOs in Bangladesh for two consecutive years. The students were amazed by the strides made by these organisations in addressing poverty and women's empowerment. Even though some of them were afraid to come to Bangladesh, many of them became very emotional when leaving Bangladesh at the end of their visit. Some of them later came back to Bangladesh after their first visit and worked for different international organisations. Based on my experience during my student life in the US, I tried to highlight the positive side of Bangladesh while planning to bring my students to Bangladesh.

Unfortunately, some religious fundamentalist groups attacked and in some cases, killed, progressive bloggers, writers and intellectuals before our scheduled visit to Bangladesh. The way fanatics were ferociously killing people reminded us of the mediaeval barbaric actions of the ISIS in the Middle East. American and international news media widely covered these incidents in Bangladesh, including the horrible terrorist attack in Gulshan, which was the lead story for leading television networks including CNN. Many people who did not know anything about Bangladesh before the Gulshan incident started to have a very negative image of Bangladesh. Recently, a senior official of my university asked me about the latest situation of Bangladesh. He said he learned from the media coverage that what happened in Gulshan was very unusual. I told him religious fundamentalism could not be sustained in the long term in a tolerant society such as Bangladesh. Many people have been vocal against the recent atrocities of the terrorist groups and government operations against these groups have been successful and going on.

My answer might assure this American professor about the future of Bangladesh. As a highly educated citizen, he might cross check the information that he would get about Bangladesh from the American media. Unfortunately, many ordinary Americans would believe the news about religious fundamentalism and the rise of terrorism in Bangladesh. They would not be inclined to search for alternative news sources or to dig deeper into the story. Although we had hoped the current situation in Bangladesh would have improved faster, based on its thousand-year old tradition, Bangladesh will surely uphold its image as a secular country to the rest of the world including the United States of America!

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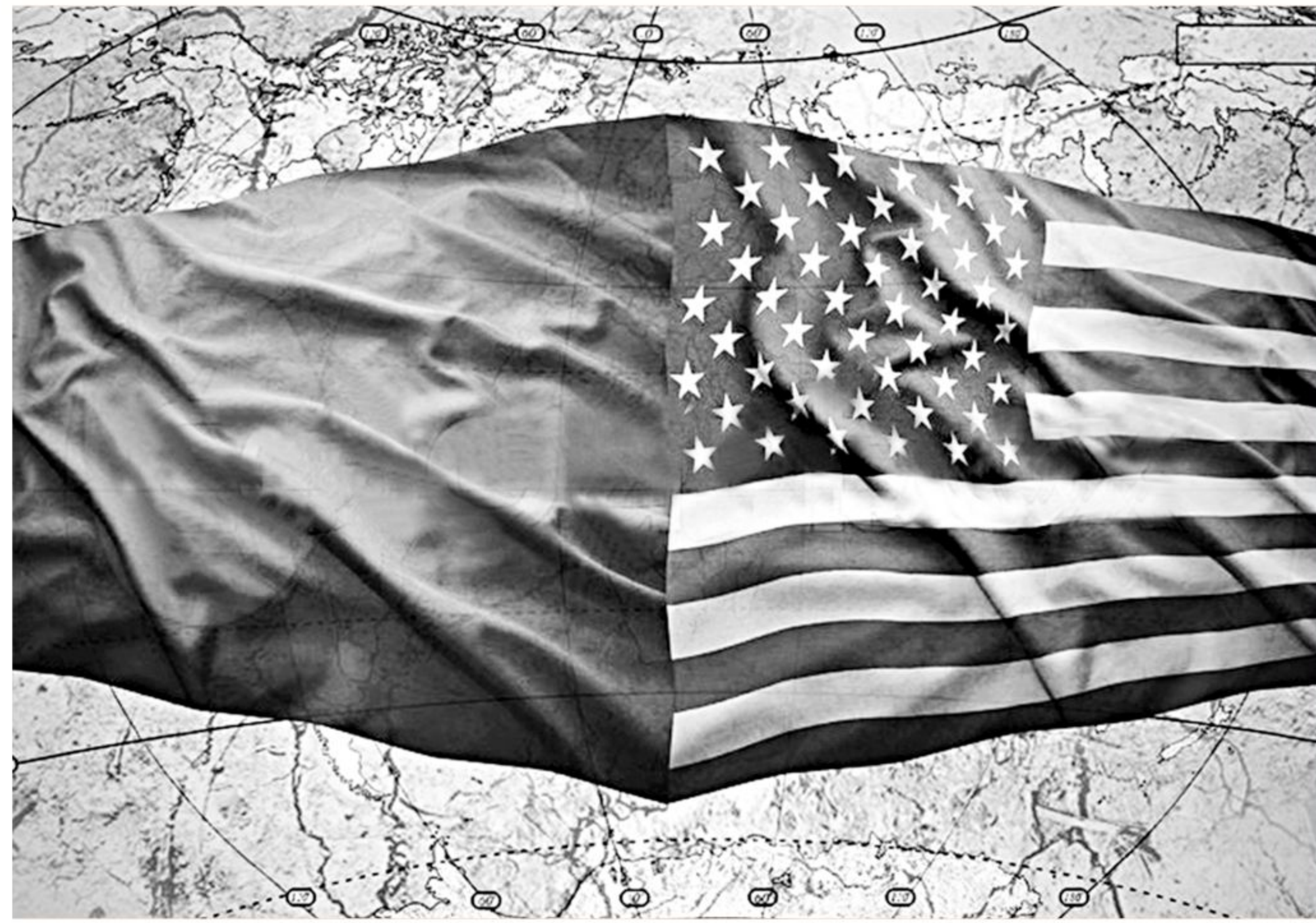


PHOTO: COLOUR BOX

the opposition, speaker of the parliament, as well as several cabinet ministers were all women. I asked him if he had seen any other Muslim country where women were in the several top government positions of that country?

You might be surprised by my American student's depth of knowledge (rather lack of) in asking such questions. I have faced these questions many times during my eight-years of expatriate life in the United States. Despite the fact that the world has become a global village in this age of rapid development of the Internet, many Americans have very

Bengali and tell them I am from Bangladesh. Then I ask them if they know where Bangladesh is. Many reply that it is "somewhere in the Middle East." Some say Bangladesh is on their left while a few say Bangladesh is on their right. Surprisingly, many of them might wear clothes with a 'Made in Bangladesh,' tag but few would ever wonder about the country named in those tags at the back of their clothes.

I had a plan to bring my students for a study abroad programme in Bangladesh in the summer of 2016 to study the role of Non-Government Organisations

Brahmanbaria, I have firsthand experience witnessing the role NGOs play in social development including poverty reduction. Based on my experience, I would say the contribution of these NGOs in empowering women to actively participate in politics should be highly appreciated. In this respect, we should be very proud and show other developed countries that we elected women leaders to run our country long before they did.

When I was a PhD student at Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, I had a chance to bring a group of students from different universities in the United States

## RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

# Trump threatens to challenge election results if he loses



MAHMOOD HASAN

FROM A BYSTANDER

THE American Federal Election Commission (FEC) has already started the Presidential Election process, which will culminate on November 8, 2016. The President is elected indirectly by the Electoral College of 538 electors. The candidate getting a simple majority of 270 votes will be declared the winner of the White House. Early voting has already

begun in 37 states to elect the Electoral College. However, these votes can be counted only on November 8. Going by the opinion polls, after the third Presidential debate on October 20, it appears that Donald Trump's fate is sealed. Towards the end of the debate when moderator Chris Wallace asked whether he will accept the election results, Trump without blinking said "I will look at it at the time. I will keep you in suspense. Okay". Hillary Clinton responded saying, "That's horrifying. I am appalled that someone who is nominee of one of our two major parties would take that position". Later the same day after the debate Trump raised questions about the election process saying, "I will totally accept the results .... if I win ..... I would reserve my right to ... file a legal challenge, in the case of a questionable result".

Trump's refusal to accept the results and his threat that he may file a legal challenge has created a furore in political and legal circle in the US and elsewhere. Legal experts on US Constitution have come up with several hypothetical scenarios.

Assuming Hillary Clinton wins -- Americans would expect Trump to publicly concede and congratulate Clinton. That has been the tradition in American Presidential elections. But, is it necessary that Trump has to concede? The answer is -- NO, according to legal experts. Conceding publicly means it ensures peaceful transfer of power to the new President and helps in smoothing the divisions that bitterly separated the two camps but there is no constitutional requirement that mandates this concession.

The Electoral College will meet on December 19 and the votes will be tallied on January 6 in a Joint Session of the US Congress, which is presided over by the President of the Senate. Trump may wait till then to say that he concedes.

Theoretically, if Clinton wins and Trump refuses to concede it may lead to an unsavoury situation. For months, Trump has been saying that the election system is rigged against him. However, even if rigged he would accept the results, if he wins. That is hypocrisy. Americans themselves on a reliable open election mechanism. Yet Trump can bring rigging charges and demand recounts in some battleground States. Has he not already hinted that 1.8 million dead people were

voting for his opponent?

Charges of election fraud will be dealt with by the State Courts and probably go to the Federal Supreme Court. This is what probably Trump has in mind. There are also serious fears that Trump may incite his hardcore supporters to get out onto the streets and resort to violence.

The Federal Supreme Court, the final interpreter of the Constitution, currently has eight judges, not nine as it is supposed to have. It is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans. In March 2016 President Obama nominated Merrick Garland to complete the 9-member bench of the Court. Republican Party, which controls the Senate, refused to hold a confirmation hearing for Garland, arguing that an outgoing President cannot nominate new judges for the Supreme Court.



PHOTO: BUSINESSINSIDER

The other twist in the story is that the eight judges can split 4-4, which means that the judgement from the lower court may be upheld. However, Trump cannot file just one case challenging the results. He must file multiple cases in various state courts disputing specific state results which, may, then be litigated at the Federal level. This would be a hugely messy and unprecedented situation. But Trump possibly may think he has another trick up his sleeve. He can demand liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to recuse because she made uncharitable remarks about him although this is very unlikely.

The other scenario is what happens if neither candidate gets 270 EC votes? According to the Constitution in such a case the House of Representatives will elect the President from the three Presidential candidates who received the most EC votes. The House does not vote as

a full chamber of 435 members. Every state has only one vote. Thus, South Dakota with only one member in the House will have the same number of votes as California with 53 Representatives. The Senate will elect the Vice President from the two Vice President nominees with the most EC votes. As the Republicans control both houses they may go for Trump.

This election will elect a new House of Representative of 435 members and 34 Senators (out of 100). Governors of 12 states plus two more from the US territories will also be chosen through this election. United States currently has a population of 325 million, out of which only 146 million were registered to vote in 2012, though 218 million were eligible to vote. Only 57.5 percent cast their vote in 2012.

Badly split in the middle the GOP is faced with dou-

ble stakes -- losing the Presidency and forfeiting majority in both the Senate and House. They currently control the Senate with 54 seats and 247 seats in the House. It will be an absolute disaster for the Republicans if they lose majority in both houses and the presidency, because of Trump's indecent campaign. Donald Trump has seriously damaged the Republican Party.

If the opinion polls are correct then Hillary Clinton, the first woman in American history, will be the 45th President of the United States of America. To secure this victory Democratic voters in the battleground States must get out in large numbers and vote, as they did for Barack Obama in 2012. On November 8, Donald Trump should concede with dignity and go home.

The writer is former Ambassador and Secretary.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## LETTERS

### TO THE EDITOR

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## Fiasco in Admission Test in DU

The standard of education in the country has nosedived with the passage of time. Educational institutions coupled with coaching centres and guardians have turned students into robotic examinees, not learners. No single person or party can be held responsible for this. Without casting random blame on Dhaka University authorities, emphasis should be laid on increasing students' knowledge, and analytical, cognitive and innovative abilities. Dhaka University teachers do not collect books from Nilkhet while preparing admission test questions. We should dispose of these allegations and work in unison to hammer out a time-bound solution to the crisis.

Nahida Farhana  
Student, University of Dhaka

## A noble initiative by Quantum Foundation

Quantum Foundation, a voluntary and non-profitable organisation, has been relentlessly and silently working for the welfare of our society. One initiative is a cleanliness awareness program. Starting from Banasree and later expanding to adjoining areas, volunteers cleaned mosques, playgrounds, parks, open spaces etc.

The programme will be extended across the country phases by phase. Quantum Foundation believes that mass participation could make this initiative more successful in making possible a clean and green Bangladesh.

Md Zonaeed Emran  
Resident, Banasree