

Long walk to coexistence



SHIFTING IMAGES
MILIA ALI

WHO would have thought that a car could be employed as an instrument of terror? Only twisted minds, demented spirits, and agents of evil can harness a seemingly innocuous vehicle to mow down innocent pedestrians going about their business...

The encouraging reality is that human cooperation and kindness are more prevalent than bigotry, racism and hatred. The vast majority wish to live peacefully and lead meaningful lives. Most people feel empathy and compassion for their fellow human beings.

August witnessed another spike in terrorist acts. First came the Charlottesville attack. This was followed by a copycat attack in Barcelona. In Charlottesville a 20-year-old man, linked to a white nationalist group, ploughed his car into a peaceful group of people protesting the assembly of white supremacists and fascists. A young woman was killed and several wounded. Days later a van rammed into a packed summer crowd in Barcelona's historic Las Ramblas district, killing 13 and leaving dozens more injured. While ISIS claimed responsibility for the latter attack, the driver was a 22-year-old Moroccan youth acting as a lone wolf. It would be a mistake to draw too neat a line across the two incidents, but similarities between Islamic terrorists like those in Spain and white nationalists like the man in Charlottesville are worth examining for what they reveal about the mutating nature of radicalisation across the globe.

Both acts of terror involved disgruntled young men radicalised by extremist ideas and the pervading culture of hate. British journalist Jason Burke, who has studied terrorism extensively, points to a commonality in the belief system of the Islamic State and America's far right—an overall "per-



verted sense of grievance." Burke suggests that anger over the loss of the Islamic caliphate may echo the Lost Cause of the Confederacy for the far right—not in real historical terms, but "as a mythic symbol of betrayal, of conviction and of what might, indeed should, have been." Whether we agree with this interpretation or not, the fact remains that terrorism has become a tool for discontented groups who believe that they have been wronged and denied what is "rightfully" theirs. The leaders of these groups have realised that isolated attacks—with an element of surprise—are easier to implement and have almost the same

impact as big ones. Hence, they are "using" frustrated young people as instruments of terror by playing upon their basic insecurities. Unfortunately, the Internet and other communication aides tend to facilitate the dissemination of recruitment materials which in turn shape the actions of impressionable minds. The prevailing threat posed by the Islamic State or far-right groups may eventually dissipate, but there is a high likelihood that it could morph into some other insidious cause. Hence, the danger posed by radicalised young men and women operating on the fringes of society and our difficulties in prevent-

ing them from being inducted into extremist causes is what should be a serious cause of worry, in the long term. The encouraging reality is that human cooperation and kindness are more prevalent than bigotry, racism and hatred. The vast majority wish to live peacefully and lead meaningful lives. Most people feel empathy and compassion for their fellow human beings as is apparent from the spontaneous rallies and protests all over the world against terrorist and racist acts. There is no denying that pacifists may also harbour anger, jealousy or even hatred toward someone they perceive

as an enemy, but rarely do they resort to violence against their opponents. Those who kill innocent people in cold blood are the outliers, for it takes a demented mind to deliberately run a car over innocent pedestrians. Hence, rather than labelling terrorists as Islamic radicals, white supremacists or neo Nazis let us accept that they all belong to the same group—they are psychologically disturbed individuals, unhinged by some internal or external evil force and motivated by hate.

I am not an expert, but the idea that social inclusion, community outreach programmes and proactive counselling for the disenfranchised youth may diminish the spread of terrorism appeals to me. Experience relating to the so-called "War on Terror" shows that armed resistance, finger pointing or social isolation is quite ineffective in solving the problem. Most European countries seem to pursue a double track approach to terrorism—take resolute action when the threat or potential threat arises, but also devote a high priority to addressing the issues faced by the marginalised, emotionally disturbed and economically disempowered youth.

Those who believe in this enlightened approach are often criticised for being "weak on terrorism". But they can garner strength and conviction from Nelson Mandela's advice. Despite the long years of hatred and discrimination that he encountered, in his autobiography "Long walk to freedom" Mr Mandela notes: "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

Milia Ali is a renowned Rabindra Sangeet exponent and a former employee of the World Bank.

The many benefits of agro-tourism

SHISHIR REZA

TOURISM has become one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world over the past six decades. Many developing countries—Thailand, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Kenya—have reconstructed their economy through the proper utilisation and management of the tourism industry. Bangladesh has the potential to become a leader in this area, being a land full of natural beauty.

The Bangladesh Economic Review (2010) states that Bangladesh has three sectors of generating revenue. Those are industry, agriculture and services. Tourism is a part of the service sector. Though the contribution of tourism to Gross Domestic Product was only 7 percent in 2004-05, it had increased to 9.44 percent by 2009-10. It decreased in 2014 to 4.1 percent of total GDP and contributed 4.7 percent in 2015. Tourism can ensure economic development, but only if political will and proper marketing strategies are implemented.

In general, tourism can be classified in a number of ways based on the nature of activity, location type or duration of stay. Such as heritage tourism, cultural tourism, historical tourism, geo-tourism, adventure tourism, eco-tourism, agro-tourism. Among others, agro-tourism is essential to save native crops, fruits, fishes and vegetables.

Agro-tourism is a type of vacation in which hospitality is offered to firms which may include the opportunity to assist with farming tasks during visits, where tourists have an opportunity to pick fruits and vegetables, ride horses, taste honey, shop in gift-shops and farm-stands for local and regional produce or hand-crafted gifts. Each farm generally offers a unique and memorable experience suitable for the entire family. People are more interested in how their food is produced and want to meet the producers and talk to them about what goes into their food.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh is a country of fertile land. 70 percent of the people are dependent on agriculture. We have some agro-ecological zones suitable for sustainable farming. Apart from that, some enterprises have established local farms—poultry, goat, buffalo and cow to eradicate poverty. It's a lesson worth learning as to how one should go about farming in an eco-friendly way.

University and college students can spend their leisure time to try out organic farming in rural areas. Students can share their thoughts

with farmers, teach them and gain indigenous knowledge from farmers in return. It is necessary now to cultivate our land in sustainable ways in order to have an organic future. Researchers and agro-tourists often share their experiences among indigenous farmers about climate change, global warming, crisis related to extract more ground water, arsenic pollution, importance of vermicomposting, bio-fertilisers, etc.

Both parties—tourists and indigenous groups exchange knowledge on poultry farm-

ing, importance of poultry manures in agriculture, etc. Our country is an extreme sufferer of atmospheric and land based degradation. International and national agro-tourists can exchange views with local farmers on how to reduce climatic impacts on land, water, forest, health and fish resources.

The government can take up projects to represent the indigenous capacities of our farmers to protect land, environment and ecology, among international tourists, in order to attract them which may enrich our

agro-tourism industry in return. The Bangladesh academy for rural development may take this opportunity to promote agro-tourism.

Lands of Kushtia are fertile for tobacco, Mymensingh for paddy, Chandpur and Barisal are known for fish, Sathkhira for prawn, Jessore for flowers, Dinajpur for its wheat, and so on. So, Bangladesh has a lot of options when it comes to promoting the concept of agro-tourism and find new means that can contribute to its overall economy.

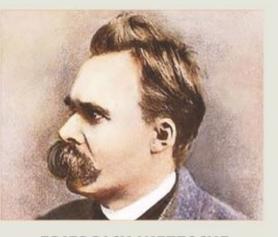
We have the capacity to compete with the other member countries of SAARC. But if we do want to take the matter up seriously, we must formulate a comprehensive strategy and look to involve the farmers and other local people. Bangladesh can easily increase its agro-tourism by a substantial margin, with the right kind of marketing initiatives and promotional methods. And with that, turn the tourism sector into a significant contributor to our GDP.

To market agro-tourism, geographical information systems (GIS) are very important. Through these systems, the tourism authorities can easily sell agro-tourism products and indigenous farming tools, show suitable localities for the incorporation of various plants and animals, elucidate geo-demographic characteristics and put in plain words, the cultural variety and socio-economic conditions of our farmers, fish collectors, poultry managers and indigenous peoples. This can help us to finally get to know the people who are most responsible for feeding the people of this nation and for keeping us alive.

The intensification of big global agricultural business has started to exterminate local farming systems across the world. Agro-tourism is only one way of integrating local farmers in the process of reducing local climatic problems. But it is something, that we should seriously consider.

Shishir Reza is an environmental analyst and associate member of Bangladesh Economic Association.

QUOTABLE Quote

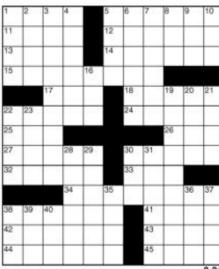


FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

If we affirm one moment, we thus affirm not only ourselves but all existence. For nothing is self-sufficient, neither in us ourselves nor in things; and if our soul has trembled with happiness and sounded like a harp string just once, all eternity was needed to produce this one event—and in this single moment of affirmation all eternity was called good, redeemed, justified, and affirmed.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| ACROSS | 34 Beautiful | 9 Mammie's mate |
| 1 Brain part | 38 Role for Damon | 10 Quarterback |
| 5 Unemotional | 41 Stir up | Marino |
| 11 Bank offerings | 42 Stir up | 16 Batter's star |
| 12 Kansas city | 42 Invisible | 19 Pen type |
| 13 Shaker fill | 43 "The King and I" | 20 Huron neighbor |
| 14 Early primates | heroine | 21 Hardens |
| 15 Dust, for one | 44 Oasis setting | 22 Animated fish |
| 17 Bush of Florida | 45 Marquee name | 23 Oscar winner |
| 18 Yokels | | Guinness |
| 22 Watts of | DOWN | 28 Grad's reward |
| "Birdman" | 1 Maggie's sister | 29 High fellow |
| 24 Extra | 2 Test type | 30 Witch |
| 25 Quarterback | 3 It allows rotary | 31 Met shows |
| Manning | movement | 35 Tenant's fee |
| 26 Tipsy | 4 High regard | 36 Arm bone |
| 27 Repairs | 5 Unescorted | 37 Blacken |
| 30 Jarlsberg feature | 6 Barflies | 38 Future flower |
| 32 Big singing group | 7 Knocker's cry | 39 Some person |
| 33 Phone download | 8 Writer Stanislaw | 40 Naval initials |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

DEFT CASTER
AXLE ACTIVE
SPAN CRANE
HOT AHOY
TAXES FBI
ADELE SALAD
TINA JAKE
OMENS HATES
ZED QUART
SUNG EBB
BROKAW ARIA
ONFIRE GENT
PATTED ODDS

BEETLE BAILEY



BY MORT WALKER



BABY BLUES



BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

