INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR TOLERANCE

We must embrace diversity for inclusive prosperity



→HE space for tolerance is shrinking in most parts of the world. From major conflicts to the more subtle acts of discrimination, minority groups, refugees and marginalised

communities are facing persecution and suppression in many forms, shapes and scales.

From turning away boats carrying desperate refugees—leaving them at the mercy of the unforgiving seas—to premeditated attacks on places of worship and violence against targeted religious and ethnic communities, the world is witnessing an alarming increase in conflicts in recent years. And most of these conflicts can be attributed to an all-pervasive, ever-present problem: intolerance.

Bangladesh is not immune to this social illness: in the last decade alone, there have been multiple cases of attacks on minority communities, with the most recent incident unfolding in October this year, marring the Durga Puja celebrations in the country.

In view of this situation, states and governments need to reflect on and identify the factors that are causing the rise in intolerance, and work towards minimising

Reduced access to resources due to climate change, rising authoritarianism and farright ideologies, increasing fundamentalist sentiments, unchecked human rights abuses, and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic could be some of the key factors that are clouding people's empathy and judgement, and leading them towards a myopic worldview.

Extreme weather conditions, leading to

brothers

and sisters

published

in this

droughts, salinity of cultivable land, land degradation, loss of productivity, frequent floods, and rising sea levels, among others, are making natural resources scarce. This is resulting in a number of factors that are triggering tension and creating scope for intolerance.

For instance, if agricultural land is impacted due to climate change in a region leading to limited productivity, the people in that area are going to bear the economic brunt of it. Many would lose their means of livelihood. There will also be food scarcity in the region due to the lack of agricultural production. Such scenarios lead to frustration, anger and hopelessness. The affected, deprived people might become more intolerant and hostile towards the others, and would be more disposed to engage in conflicts.

A Yale climate change communication blog titled "Does Climate Change Increase Risk of Conflict?" sheds further light on this: "Additionally, different groups are affected differently by climate change. Groups with pre-existing grievances—especially grievances related to ethnic discrimination or colonialist histories—are more likely to turn to violent conflict. Politically marginalised groups in lower socioeconomic brackets are less able to adapt to the effects of climate change and will thus have more grievances.

Not only the minority communities, but the majority might also become more prone to engaging in conflicts, as groups vie to establish control over lands and productive resources as these become scarce. It is likely that the majority would grow intolerant and exert pressure on the minority communities, leading to conflicts.

Similarly, the rise of the far-right nationalist ideas and authoritarianism are also directly resulting in intolerance. Authoritarianism by definition has very



Diversity is key to growth and intolerance is the root of destruction—people at all strata of society need to understand it and internalise it. SOURCE: JAVIER TELLEZ

limited room for tolerance, as no diversion from obedience to authority is tolerated. These forms of government are non-pluralist in nature and have zero tolerance for dissent. Similarly, far-right ideologies—on the rise in many parts of the world—are also highly intolerant of diversity as the rightwing nationalists believe in the "purity' and "supremacy" of the communities they represent, and strongly emphasise hierarchical relationship between groups. They look down upon people belonging to other races and ethnicities, and if needed, resort to violence to suppress the voices of the minorities

Because of the rise in such conservative, extreme political beliefs and their consumption by the people, democracy is becoming weak, human rights are becoming

more prone to abuse and violation, and certain groups are playing the religion card to manipulate the suppressed populations to further breed intolerance and violence.

In a world where we talk about diversity and inclusion, the growing intolerance of various groups towards the minorities and marginalised communities bodes ominous portents for everyone. The spike in conflicts triggered by intolerance, leading to loss of lives and livelihoods, sends a very wrong message to humanity: that people are losing their human values, their capacity to empathise, and their mental ability to acknowledge, appreciate and embrace what is unique, what is different.

This increase in intolerance depicts a picture of a society that is moving towards anarchy and destruction, because without

diversity, how can we evolve as a civilisation? How can we grow?

If we continue to subscribe to authoritarian, right-wing and fundamentalist ideas, we will never be able to harness tolerance. While external factors—such as climate change and the rise of fascism on a global scale—will try to take away from our ability to share and make our worldview one-dimensional, and while vested questers will try to take advantage of these circumstances by feeding the people extremist ideas, it will be unfortunate if we fall for these traps.

In democratic countries such as Bangladesh, India and the US, where tolerance is waning, the governments need to take this issue seriously and strengthen the democratic institutions, the statutory bodies, relevant public sector institutions and human rights organisations in order to combat this menace. By strengthening these bodies, the government will be empowering the diverse communities and reinforcing their rights. And this will also act as a warning for the groups that try to destabilise social equilibrium by instigating and exacerbating intolerance.

At the individual level, we must focus on the richness that diversity brings. We must champion the fact that diversity is an integral and indispensable part of our social fabric. We must respect diversity, and we need to allow diversity to flourish to facilitate a holistic growth of the human race. And in order to do all these, we must become more tolerant towards groups and communities that are different from us, that are unique. Let this be our realisation and commitment on the International Day for Tolerance.

Tasneem Tayeb is a columnist for The Daily Star.

The urgent need to battle the growing rise of hatred



photograph that is seared in my

Two Hindu women stand amid

religious bigots. On the left, a woman

Her eyes are dry. Her piercing gaze,

is crying inconsolably. It is the other

woman on the right, comforting

the crying woman, whose image

fixed somewhere on the horizon,

is filled with horror, pain and utter

incomprehension at the barbarity of

terrible havoc that hatred can wreak.

All over the world, purveyors

South Asia, vicious sectarian hatreds

and defenceless minorities bear the

brunt of the violence. Whether it's

Muslims in India, Ahmadiyyas and

Shias in Pakistan, Shia Hazaras in

Afghanistan, Tamils in Sri Lanka, or

of hatred are having a field day. In

manifest in many horrible ways,

This image is a distillation of the

continues to haunt me.

human beings.

the destruction wrought by vicious

the hatred fomented in efforts that are not covert or clandestine at all. Opportunistic politicians recent open from majority groups gleefully fan letter to Hindu the flames of fear and draw rich political dividends, creating a frenzy of panic and fear in the majority community, with dire consequences for terrified minorities. When hatred has a majoritarian edge, it becomes accompanied doubly dangerous. Now the levers of democratic power can be deployed to

> We see chilling examples of this in India and Myanmar. In India, brazen, sectarian remarks and vicious acts of violence are often greeted by a ruling party with what may be politely called callous nonchalance. In Myanmar, an inspiring leader who earned the world's admiration for her courageous leadership against oppression has lost her sheen after her refusal to acknowledge the plight of an aggrieved minority.

condone—if not legitimise—hatred.

Gone are the days when the West could cast a patronising eye on such developments. Like Covid-19, hatred is now a global pandemic.

In the US, where I live, one of my most distressing experiences in the recent past has been to witness all norms of civility in politics discarded scornfully. Former President Donald Trump is the first US president in history to refuse to concede after losing an election, and his debunked

claims of a "stolen" election has, in a

bizarre fashion, become a litmus test

of loyalty for much of the Republican

outlets fan the flames of incendiary

partisanship, hatred and violence are

Enters the Republican Mainstream,"

The New York Times reports: "From

congressional offices to community

meeting rooms, threats of violence

Party. Ten months after rioters

are becoming commonplace among a

significant segment of the Republican

attacked the United States Capitol on

president who often spoke in violent

January 6, and after four years of a

terms about his adversaries, right-

wing Republicans are talking more

openly and frequently about the use

of force as justifiable in opposition

to those who dislodged him from

Party. As a slew of conservative

In an article titled "Menace

sure to follow.

It's not just the US. The debate over Brexit in Britain has been so acrimonious that it has divided friends and families. Right-wing, antiimmigrant parties which were once in the fringes are gaining strength in France and Germany.

I honestly believe that the restoration of comity is a vital global challenge that is no less urgent than battling climate change or reducing poverty and economic disparity.

cholo re (If nobody responds to your call, then go forth alone)." Think of the US civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr. He led African-Americans at a time of racist violence, when his people faced egregious racial discrimination, but he drew inspiration from Gandhi and refused to meet violence with violence. Think of South African leader Nelson

30 Contact details of official inviting tender

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favourite Tagore song was "Jodi tor

dak shuney keu na ashey tobey, ekla

Mandela, whose beatific smile and genial patrician mien was unsullied by the bitter experience of decades of incarceration, as well as terrible racist violence and institutionalised discrimination against black South Africans. Mandela steered his black-majority nation to freedom in a transition that was remarkably, almost magically, free of rancour.

People of goodwill have their work

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

অধ্যক্ষের কার্যালয়

চট্টগ্রাম কলেজ, চট্টগ্রাম

College Education Development Project (CEDP)

How soon will we get there? I would like to cling to Tagore's credo: 'Manushey bishwas harano paap (It is a sin to lose faith in man)." But the jaded, cynical soul that I am, my cautious optimism is closer to former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban's wry observation: "Men and nations do behave wisely, after all other alternatives have been exhausted."

Ashfaque Swapan is a writer and editor based in

In a strange, toxic inversion of reality, a venomous majoritarian sense of victimhood and grievance is fanning the

In 1994, Unesco marked the 125th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth with its proclamation of November 16 as the International Day for Tolerance. Unesco suggests five guidelines for battling intolerance: laws, education, access to information, individual awareness, and local solutions. All true, if a little

the menace of hatred if we address the underlying causes. It is important to recognise that a broad sense of socioeconomic apprehension has given an opening to bigots and political rascals. Those who profess an abiding belief in tolerance and humanity will need to get out of their comfort zones and take on the purveyors of hatred. This is actually a challenge, because the challenge to hatred has to come from within the groups that are poisoned by hatred of others. This is what Marxist sociologist Herbert Marcuse called an "immanent critique."

So in Bangladesh, it is the task of Cheney, for instance, and say violence

Sure, it's a tough row to hoe. Cheney is treated more like a pariah than the brave hero that she is in this particular cause. We can draw inspiration from the great leaders of yesteryear who never moved from their commitment to tolerance.

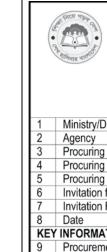
Gandhi literally gave his life for

flames of hatred worldwide.

We can make headway in tackling

humane, pious Muslims to create a groundswell of opinion that makes it clear that violent attacks on innocent non-Muslims will be considered an attack on their reputation and beliefs. Or in the US, it is incumbent upon Republican leaders to join Wyoming Republican Congresswoman Liz and disregard for the rule of law are anathema to democratic values.

his staunch belief in tolerance. His



Invitation for Tenders Ministry/Division Ministry of Education. University Grants Commission/National University Procuring entity name Principal, Chittagong College, Chattogram. Procuring entity code Chattogram. Procuring entity district Procurement of Books and Journal for Chittagong College, Chattogram Invitation for Invitation Ref. No ctgcol/cedp/otm(g)/ift-01/2021 16/11/2021 **KEY INFORMATION** Procurement method Open Tendering Method (National) **FUNDING INFORMATION** Development Budget (Government & IDA Credit). 10 Budget and source of funds Development partners International Development Association (IDA), World Bank PARTICULAR INFORMATION Project code College Education Development Project (CEDP) Project name Tender Package No. G-05. Tender package name Procurement of Books and Journal for Chittagong College, Chattogram. 16/11/2021 Tender publication date Tender last selling date 05/12/2021, Time: 4.00pm Tender closing date and time 06/12/2021, Time: 02.00pm Tender opening date and time 06/12/2021, Time: 2.30pm. Office of Principal, Chittagong College, Chattogram Selling tender document Receiving tender document Address: Office of the Principal, Chittagong College, Chawkbazar, Chattogram. Office of Principal, Chittagong College, Chattogram. Opening tender document Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional) INFORMATION FOR TENDERER 1. The minimum of years of general experience of the Tenderer in the supply of Goods 22 Eligibility of tenderer and related services as Supplier shall be 3 (three) years [years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper]. 2. The minimum specific experience as Supplier in supply of similar Goods of at least 01 (one) contract(s) successfully completed within the last 5 (five) years, each with a value of at least Tk 9.0 (nine) lakh [years counting backward from the date of publication of IFT in the newspaper]. 3. The minimum amount of liquid assets i.e. working capital or credit line(s) of the Tenderer shall be Tk. 10.00 (ten) lakh. 4. At least 80% of the Books listed in the Section 6: Schedule of Requirements. are to be quoted (priced) by the tenderer in the Price Schedule (Form PG3A-4A) and correspond at least to 65% of the total package value. For non-compliance of this requirement, tender shall be evaluated as non-responsive. Other criteria mentioned in Tender document. Brief description of goods or works Supplying of Books of multiple subjects like History, Economics, Science, Literature 24 Related services shall be in accordance with Section 4: Particular Conditions of Brief description of related services Contract, Section 6: Schedule of Requirement. 25 26 BDT 1,000.00 (one thousand) only. Tender document price Tender name Tender Completion time (in days) security amount (Tk) Procurement of Books and Journal for Chittagong College, Chattogram. 60 days Chittagong College, Chattogram. Name of official inviting tender Professor Mohammed Mujibul Hoque Chowdhury Designation of official inviting tender Principal, Chittagong College, Chattogram. Address of official inviting tender Principal, Chittagong College, College Road, Chawakbazar, Chattogram.

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The majority community must take a united stance to root out bigotry and hatred against the minorities, and to uphold equality and harmony in society.

Rohingyas in Myanmar—what makes all these attacks so reprehensible is that the attackers are members of the majority community. In a strange, toxic inversion of

reality, a venomous majoritarian sense of victimhood and grievance is fanning the flames of hatred worldwide. The seeds of this hatred may be in grievances real or perceived, but

a sinister set of circumstances have caused it to mushroom into a fullblown, global crisis. Sometimes, it is petrodollar-fuelled extremist Islamist groups like Islamic State and al-Qaeda, and a variety of fellow travellers like al-Shabab in Somalia, Boko Haram in Nigeria, and ISIS-K in Afghanistan. (The Taliban itself has Pakistani military intelligence's fingerprints all over it.)

More alarming, however, is