AN EMERGING MODEL OF COUNTER-TERROR INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ROLE OF MILITARY AND STATE SECURITY APPARATUS

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INTRODUCTION

Terrorism has turned out to be one of the most gruesome acts in the world today. It is said that brutalization of violence, generally symbolizing four 'A's (assassination, abduction, assault and arson), has given rise to a new menace called "terrorism", with all its horrendous ramifications. Such manifestation displayed by fanatic and premeditated acts of few individuals has no compunction for human life, especially for the innocents and non-combatants. Thousands of innocent victims who have no link, knowledge or bearing with the cause of terrorism are losing their lives in terrorist attacks. Brian Jenkins, Deputy Chairman of Kroll Associates, states, "Terrorist acts are often deliberately spectacular, designed to rattle and influence a wide audience, beyond the victims of violence itself". The amplitude and the frequency of terrorist attacks show no descending trend as yet.

Terrorism has taken different forms, tone and tenor, with the evolution of society, history of mankind and the concept of the nation state. Terrorists are often called sub-state or non-state actors. During the last decade of the 20th century,
terrorism stalked various multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious national societies. Be that as it may, Bangladesh is honour-bound to exterminate terrorism from its soil in any form or manifestation. It made its position known to all UN and international forums, including the Security Council and the Commission on Human Rights. The country strongly supported the UN Security Council Resolution 1373 on terrorism and remains committed to abiding by her obligations. Bangladesh is a party to 12 of the 13 UN Conventions on terrorism and is in the process of acceding to the UN Convention on Suppression of Nuclear Terrorism. At the regional level, she had been actively involved in the initiation and co-formulation of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, signed in 1987 and ratified by all SAARC countries, including Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is a relatively new-born country, which had to earn its freedom through a bloody war of liberation for long nine months in 1971 against the Pakistani occupation forces. It won the political freedom but its war-ravaged economy could not take the country along the direction it desired. Its people had to shed a lot of blood, but the trail of devastation that the freedom accompanied put the country in a spin. "If blood is the price of people's right to independence, then Bangladesh has overpaid it", commented the New Statesman, a British

1. The Resolution 1373 (2001), inter alia, expects every state to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in another state or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed towards the commission of such acts.

2. SAARC countries have also signed that Additional Protocol to strengthen the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism, and towards that end, State Parties agreed to adopt necessary measures to strengthen cooperation among them.
Bangladesh inherited a nascent economy that also impacted on the continuity of democracy in the country.

There was the imposition of one-party rule, which was, in fact, a dictatorship under the guise of democracy. It was followed by coups and counter-coups where it's military, divided in different groups, got directly or indirectly involved. Multi-party democracy was restored which again got overturned through the imposition of martial law in 1982. Democracy could not even reach its adolescence, not to talk about having a matured democracy. However, democracy was again restored in 1991 through a people's upsurge that dislodged autocracy. Although with certain hiccups, democracy is definitely the mode of transfer of power in Bangladesh now. Indeed, democracy can be called a core value of this great nation, although it is a soft state; and it should not be branded as a failing state, as a section of the international press, at times, tends to project it as such. Why should someone tend to equate Bangladesh with Somalia where there is no centralized control of the country? Bangladesh has a democracy that is moving, albeit with certain difficulties, its economy is growing at 5 percent per annum for the last about two decades. Bangladesh's contribution in different UN organizations and specially its contribution to UN peace support operations around the world have been acclaimed the world over. Bangladeshi people's resolve to live as a united nation under centralized control is reflected in the Preamble of its Constitution, "We the people of Bangladesh, having proclaimed our independence on the 26th Day of March, 1971 and through a historic war for national independence, established the independent sovereign People's Republic of Bangladesh". However, this resolve, at times, tends to get deflected because of its peculiar geo-strategic location.

3. Preamble of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. This was incorporated in the original Constitution
Geo-strategic location of Bangladesh shows that it is in an insurgency-prone area. India surrounds Bangladesh from all three sides, where insurgency problems persist specially in its Northeastern states since its independence in 1947. It is, in fact, a legacy of the British Empire. There are reportedly about 180 insurgent groups operating in different states of Northeastern India adjoining Bangladesh. Their spillover effect in Bangladesh cannot be ruled out. For India, militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, insurgency and ethnic violence in the Northeastern states, left wing extremist (Naxalist and Maoist) movements in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattishgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa and violence perpetrated by the private armies of Bihar are problems that continue to fester. To the northwest of Bangladesh is Nepal where the Maoist Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) declared "People's War" in February 1996. Maoist insurgents are running parallel governments in 68 districts out of a total of 75. The Maoists indulged in a series of militant activities ranging from abduction to looting of banks in violent and long-drawn-out encounters with the army. The LTTE's (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) superb terrorist tactics, that often off balance Sri Lanka's security apparatus, and their reported international connection in procuring arms and explosives are a cause of concern for the entire region. The ramifications of these insurgencies also affected southeastern part of Bangladesh. This, however, does not imply that there were no root socio-economic causes for such insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, which is located close to India's Northeast areas and to insurgency-plagued Myanmar. Various Arakanese insurgent groups of Myanmar may have their spill-over effect on Bangladesh also. Such insurgencies which came into force on 16 December 1972. However, later the words "a historic struggle for national liberation" was substituted by "a historic war for national independence".
could, in a way, be branded as terrorist acts, but the recent spurt in religious militancy has a different dimension and appeal.

Bangladesh’s emergence as an independent nation state in 1971 was based not on religion but on the call for right to self-determination and to free the people from the oppression of the western wing of Pakistan. It all along enjoyed a relatively benign period of religious harmony since its independence. The secular social practice of its people and their adherence to the Islamic or other religious faiths and values never criss-crossed each other. However, with the resurgence of political Islam world-wide and changes in the global politics, its impact was also felt in the domestic politics of Bangladesh. Few splinter religion-based parties emerged covertly and attempted to use religion in a violent manner to bring about changes that could threaten the security, stability and fabric of the state and society. This paper would attempt to portray the profile of an anti-terror apparatus as it exists today or in the process of emerging. Such apparatus is believed to be conceived and designed within the framework of UN Conventions, country’s Constitution and other Statutes, and also in keeping with the human rights in focus and overall hopes and aspirations of the people of Bangladesh.

BANGLADESH TERRORISM IN PERSPECTIVE

Bangladesh is the most homogenous country in the world after the two Koreas. There is some ethnic diversity, because of the presence of a small number of tribal groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and some other parts of the country. In general, terrorism in Bangladesh is not as destabilizing as that exists in some other countries of South Asia. This does not, however, mean that Bangladesh is free from terrorism or there exist no potentials for breeding terrorism in its different manifestations. This notwithstanding,
it is simply ridiculous to say or imagine that Bangladesh is emerging as another Afghanistan, i.e. as a base from which terrorists can plan and carry out attacks elsewhere, as contended by Sudha Ramachandran in the review of the book *Bangladesh: The Next Afghanistan?* by Hironmay Karlekar. The nature and severity of terrorism in Bangladesh is somewhat different from that in other countries of South Asia. Varied forms of terrorist activities have been observed in Bangladesh. The most severe type of terrorism is associated with activities of the groups who are ideologically and politically motivated. This includes: (a) activities of the outlawed political parties, (b) threat from the terrorist groups of religious militancy, and (c) the insurgency in the CHT.

Right after the independence of Bangladesh, few activist groups got involved in terrorism that was politically motivated to establish communism in the country. They targeted the rich people who had accumulated wealth within the capitalist system. Initially, they were organized as political parties. Since then, these groups got involved in terrorist activities. Although their terrorist activities were scattered around many parts of the country, they are now more organized in the southwestern areas. Activities of these terrorist groups have been declining in the recent years, although their remnants are still active in the southwestern part of the country. Many of the killings and bomb attacks in the past few years were believed to be conducted by these terrorist groups. Hill people of the CHT have been fighting to establish their rights and a hardcore group within them was asking for full independence since the early 1970s. Since then

5. Some of such parties are *Purbo Bangla Communist Party*, ML *Janojuddho*, Marxist Leninist *Lalpotaka*, etc.
they have carried out many terrorist activities in the Hill Tracts area.

The most common and routine terrorism in Bangladesh is the activities of the miscreants that generally impact the overall deterioration in the law and order situation. The miscreants appeared violent and virulent to the civilian population to have unlawful possession over their money and property. The mastaans, as they are called, exert threat, physical torture and force on the innocent people to compel them to surrender to their unlawful will. Severe unemployment problem, influx of illegal weapon, a kind of patronage from some political parties as also the reported inadequate, inefficient and corrupt role of some members of the law enforcing agencies are responsible for the rise in mastaanism in the country. Common people of Bangladesh become captives to these miscreants. Political confrontation also gives rise to terrorist activities. Even though Bangladesh has started its journey on the path of democracy, there is a degree of political instability as the democratic values and institutions are yet to mature. The two major political parties seem to be at loggerheads and intolerant to each others' opinions and activities. There are frequent calls for strike and other destructive programmes due to political fragmentation and conflicts. Sometimes political programmes give rise to terrorist activities like bomb attacks or setting fire to properties.

Majority people in Bangladesh are followers of the religion of Islam. They are basically moderate, peace-loving Muslims who do not support any terrorist activities. Despite this, a small group of Islamic militants has been alleged to be involved in terrorist activities; these groups are Harkat-ul-Jihadi-Islami (HuJI) and Jamatul Mujahedeen Bangladesh (JMB), committed to establishing Islamic hukumat (state/administration) in Bangladesh. However, the activities of these
groups were not known before 17 September 2005 (series bomb attacks by JMB). Some details of these parties are given below.

**Harkat-ul-Jihadi-Islami Bangladesh (HuJI – B)**

The mission of HuJI-B is to establish Islamic rule in Bangladesh. Some of the members of the group might have been involved in the fighting in Afghanistan, Palestine and Kashmir. HuJI-B was accused of stabbing a senior Bangladeshi journalist in November 2000 for making a documentary on the plight of Hindus in Bangladesh. The same group was suspected in the July 2000 assassination attempt on the then Bangladesh Prime Minister. The group has the estimated cadre strength of over several thousand members who operate and are trained in certain hideouts inside Bangladesh where it maintained at least six camps. Funding of the HuJI-B comes primarily from madrassas in Bangladesh. The group, reportedly, may have ties to the militants across the border that also might have provided another funding source.

**Jamatul Mujaheddin Bangladesh (JMB)**

Recently, an Islamic religious group named JMB has created panic among the innocent civilians. A group of people, in the name of “Islamic Jihad”, motivated few innocent Islamic-minded young people to go for violence against the government machineries for establishing “Islamic Rule”. In 1998 a few Madrassa students (17/18) of Mohammadia Arabia Madrassa, on being motivated by Shayekh Abdur Rahman, organized a Jihad party. After recruiting more members, he named the party as JMB. Initially, in 1998, a Central Committee was formed under the leadership of Shayek Abdur Rahman. All the members of this Committee started visiting the mosques and Madrassas of urban areas and motivating
people for Jihad by referring to wars in Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq.

JMB members are divided into 3 categories based on the contribution they provide to the party:

**Shathi/Sudhi:** When a person joins the party he is named as *Shathi* and those who support or help the organization financially is called *Shudhi*.

**Gayere Ehsan:** Those who are devoted to the party and work for it from home are called *Gayere Ehsan*.

**Ehsan:** Those who are expert and can work outside their local area are called *Ehsan*.

**Organizational Structure:** The structure was formed in April/May 2000. The Central Committee is called *Majlish – E – Shura*. The following shows the organizational levels:

**Unit:** Three to five members (*Shathi/Gayere Ehsan*) form a unit. The leader is termed as unit head.

**Thana/Sub-district Organization:** It has a number of units under its command. A dedicated and expert *Gayere Ehsan* is nominated as the leader.

**District Organization:** It consists of few sub-district committees. The leader must be an *Ehsan*.

**Zonal Organization:** It consists of several district committees.

**Divisional Organization:** It consists of an administrative division or part of a division. A member of the central committee is nominated as the leader.

**Financial Matters:** The main source of money is the toll given by the members and supporters of the party. *Jakat and Fetra*, given as donations by the Muslims in general as a religious ritual, of supporters are another source of income. Donations of the patrons from home and abroad could also be a source of their income.
The focus of this paper is generally to highlight the limited religious militancy that, nonetheless, tends to threaten the normal life of Bangladesh. In fighting such militancy, Bangladesh's experience in combating/containing other forms of terrorist/militancy activities both inside and outside Bangladesh paid rich dividends.

BANGLADESH'S EXPERIENCE IN COMBATING INSURGENCY/TERROIRSM AND RESTORING PEACE

General Law and Order Situation: Bangladesh Army was employed many a time in the past to fight the terrorists in the country. Immediately after independence the Army was tasked to fight the armed collaborators of the Pakistan Army and also to recover the illegal arms from across the country. In the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) they fought against the tribal insurgents. In 1975, the Army was employed against certain miscreants who took shelter in India and often crossed over to Bangladesh inside greater Mymensingh district in the central eastern sector. During all the parliamentary elections Bangladesh Army took active part to contain terrorist menace and political violence. In October 2002, Bangladesh Army was called in to restore law and order under the Operation code-named 'Clean Heart'. Certain quarters raised questions about the legality of such operation. However, the Constitution provides full executive powers of the Republic to the Prime Minister. As such, the Prime Minister, in exercise of her constitutional power, called in Army to restore normalcy in law and order that went beyond the control of the Police. Nevertheless, there had been some reported incidents of violation of human rights and legal irregularities were raised while working under Operation 'Clean Heart'. Appreciating the contribution of the Security Forces in the Operation, the Parliament passed a bill called Joint Forces Indemnity Act, 2003 which gave indemnity to the Security Forces personnel
whose actions in discharging their duties resulted in some accidental custodial deaths. The precedence of such indemnity probably was drawn from the "Manual of Military Law" which is the legacy of the British Indian Army in this country. By and large the actions of the joint forces were applauded by the general masses. The following were the significant achievements of the operation:

- About 11,000 miscreants were apprehended. Among those about 2,500 were listed/wanted criminals, 8,000 non-listed while the rest were suspected criminals.
- More than 2000 types of illegal arms and about 30,000 rounds of ammunition were recovered.

Bangladesh Government launched another operation codenamed 'Spider Web' in July 2003 to check law and order in the Southwestern districts of Bangladesh. It was also participated by the police, and other paramilitary and auxiliary forces.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT): The government of Bangladesh realized that a situation similar to insurgency was brewing up in CHT when Shanti Bahini (SB), the armed faction of Parbatya Chattagram Jono Sanghati Somity (PCJSS), a local tribal political party, ambushed a police patrol and later an army patrol in 1974 and 1975 respectively. Since then, long 23 years of SB offensive and PCJSS active propaganda led to their little achievement but bred more frustration. However, occasional and a few successful encounters by SB against the Security Forces had inspired the tribal to continue with the insurgency. The hardcore group of the insurgents wanted to carve out an independent state out of a small state like Bangladesh, although the mainstream group of the insurgents was fighting for full autonomy of the region. Due to massive minor operations, psychological operations and pacification works – intended to win the hearts and minds of the tribal
people - conducted by the SF, the insurgents were gradually overpowered and made to surrender after a series of prolonged dialogue. The historic Peace Accord was signed on 2 December 1997. The Accord is strategically important for a number of reasons. A few of these reasons are:

* "It has vastly improved the safety and mobility in the region.
* It adds credit to the country’s legacy and history of attempting conflict resolution through negotiations without international intervention.
* It has eased the government’s constant tensions over the insurgency that involved cross-border ramifications, incursions and implications.
* It has facilitated establishment of a potentially strong system of local government institutions in the region and growth of tribal leadership.
* It has opened up a new vista of development potential and opportunities in CHT and has attracted the interest of national and international quarters including donor agencies and NGOs". 6

Peacekeeping Operations: U.S. Senator Hillary Clinton in her autobiography *The Living History* has narrated that Bangladesh is well-known throughout the world for two things: one is the micro credit programme floated by Dr. Muhammad Yunus to eradicate poverty, which is being replicated in many parts of the world, and the other is Bangladesh's contribution to the UN Peace Support Operations around the world. Footprints

of its peacekeepers are evident in almost all the troubled areas of the world. Starting from Haiti to East Timor and from Georgia to Namibia, Bangladesh Military had been there almost every where and are committed to remaining so in the days to come. The rich experiences of the peacekeepers have greatly benefited the security forces in internal conflict management. Bangladesh Army stepped into the family of "blue helmet" through the participation in the UNPKO in Iran-Iraq in 1988 with 15 Military observers. Since then it has accomplished 19 Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) around the globe where about 40,000 Bangladeshi Peacekeepers have participated. Bangladesh can proudly claim it is the highest troops contributing country in UNPKO.

Currently, Bangladesh troops are involved in 12 of the 18 on-going operations worldwide with the strength of over 10,000 troops. Its peacekeepers have been operating in many of the beleaguered areas of the world, under difficult circumstances, even against serious threats to their lives. By now 48 of the 'brave sons of the soil' have laid down their lives for the cause of peace. Given the experiences of fighting insurgency in CHT, assisting the law enforcing agencies in maintaining internal security in other areas, and participating in peacekeeping and peace support operations around the world, Bangladesh Military is well groomed and poised to take on the terrorists, be it local, radical Islamists, or terrorists of any hue even having connections across the border. However, internal security duties, which are basically a policing job, should be covered by appropriate legislation, in conformity with the country's Constitution, that would authorize the handling of the terrorists. Bangladesh is gradually evolving an updated legislation that would take care of human rights and protection of innocent lives in the conduct of such operations. However, the right to self-defence, when the terrorists endanger somebody's life, is universally acknowledged.
Is Current Legislation Adequate to Combat Terrorism?

Although there is a need to enact some new laws to combat the menace of terrorism, especially for money laundering and possession of explosives, actually there are adequate laws to cover most of the other crimes committed by terrorists. The problem in Bangladesh’s context is more with implementation of the laws rather than enacting new ones. However, the political milieu and the lack of clarity often hinder the timely promulgation of new laws. Following the terrorist activities in Bangladesh a new Bill called Anti-Terrorism Act-2006 was introduced in the Parliament. The salient features of the draft Bill are as under:

* The clause containing provision for ‘preventive detention’ has been included following article 33 of the Constitution.

* Provision for preventive detention is the second section in the total 10 of the Bill. According to the sub-section 1 of the section (the second section) is if the government thinks that a person should be arrested to refrain him from committing any crime, it can order his or her arrest.

* Sub section 2 of this section says that in a mega city area, regardless of whatever is in the other laws, if a District Magistrate (DM) or Additional District Magistrate (ADM)
deems that a person should be arrested to refrain him from committing any crime, he can order that person's arrest.

* According to sub section 4, if the government does not approve an order applied by sub-section 2, the order of the DM or ADM shall not be effective for more than 30 days from the date of issuing the order.

* According to the Bill, the government, if necessary, can form a three-member advisory board with two judges of the Supreme Court and a joint secretary-level officer of government. The judge will be the chairman of the board. Within 170 days of issuing an arrest order, the board after hearing will submit a report to the government. The government can cancel or modify the arrest order following the board report.

* According to Section 8, the government for speedy and effective trial can form one or more than one Anti-terrorism Special Tribunal through gazette notification. After consulting the Supreme Court the government will form the special tribunal with the Sessions Judge or Additional Sessions Judge. The tribunal will be named Anti-terrorism Special Tribunal, and stay order shall not be applicable to its trial.

The relevant Parliamentary Standing Committee of the next Parliament is likely to submit its recommendations to the Cabinet after some more scrutiny.

**Bangladesh Rifles (BDR)**

The Bangladesh Rifles, a paramilitary force, is primarily entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring security of the border of the country. The soldiers of BDR are playing a critical role as ever vigilant sentinels in defending the long and porous border of 4,427 km of Bangladesh. This Force is also responsible for curbing smuggling. Some of the pertinent areas where BDR is playing a pivotal role in containing terrorism-
related activities, in addition to ensuring the security of the border, are shown below:

Anti-Smuggling Activities: Smuggling has been identified as a major socio-economic problem of Bangladesh, which is eating into the vitals of its economy. As a consequence, demand, supply and production balance are being hampered. There is also a nexus working between smugglers and terrorists who are involved in arms, explosives, narcotics, and women and child trafficking. The smugglers are, at present, applying innovative modern techniques. Bangladesh Rifles is committed to its tasks of checking smuggling. Having taken some stern steps, anti-smuggling drive has been strengthened in recent times. In 2003 smuggled goods worth 33 million dollars were recovered, 1544 smugglers arrested and 37,373 cases filed.

Recovery of Arms & Ammunition: Proliferation of illegal firearms is one of the main causes of deterioration of the law and order situation in the country. The BDR soldiers in coordination with other law enforcing agencies are very active in recovering illegal arms, even from inaccessible areas.

Combating Women and Child Trafficking: Trafficking in poor, destitute women and children is an alarming problem for a developing country like Bangladesh. BDR is putting its best to combat this menace. However, there are much more to be done in this regard.

Anti-Narcotics Operation: The influx of drugs and related items into Bangladesh through illegal means is a matter of great national concern, which is leading the young generation to an uncertain future. The BDR soldiers are actively resisting the channeling of drugs inside the country.

Internal Security Duty of BDR

Assist Police in Special Operations: The BDR soldiers are occasionally deployed for strengthening special police drive.
They are deployed to aid the police with a view to curbing terrorism, recover illegal fire-arms, especially in Southwestern and Southeastern regions of the country.

**Counter Insurgency Operation (CIO):** BDR is an active participant in Counter Insurgency Operation (CIO) in CHT right from the onset of the insurgency. Three Sectors of BDR consisting of twelve battalions are now deployed in CHT, who work under the operational command of Army to combat insurgency/terrorism, including recovery of illegal arms, anti-narcotics drive and border security.

**Bangladesh Police**

The Bangladesh Police, apart from maintaining law and order in the country, are also responsible for fighting terrorism and insurgency along with other security forces of the country. As has been observed, the Police are not that well-equipped or adequately motivated to tackle varied activities of terrorists who are upbeat to change the *status quo* of liberal moderate society of Bangladesh. These terrorists are armed with sophisticated arms and explosives, believed to be collected from across the border, which the Police find difficult to confront. However, the police force is being revamped to give it more punch, mobility and motivation. The Police have good reliable intelligence sources and network and prosecution system that are being directed to collect intelligence about the terrorists and subsequently prosecute them in the courts of law. They are also doing a commendable job in recovering illegal arms and explosives and controlling child, women and drugs trafficking. To reinforce the capabilities of the Police an elite force has been created under its umbrella to tackle the terrorists, especially the radical Islamists and other terrorists.

**Creation of an Elite Force – Rapid Action Battalion (RAB)**

Given the deteriorating law and order situation, the Government thought it prudent to create an elite force, whose
members are also drawn from the military apart from the other forces, which could take care of the internal security threat of the country. The creation of this elite force has provided rich dividends in almost breaking the backbone of the terrorists, especially the localized terrorists and the Islamic militants. The RAB was created through the "The Armed Police Battalions (Amendment) Act, 2003", published in the Bangladesh Gazette of July 12, 2003. Seven Battalions of RAB comprising of 5,521 personnel were initially deployed in Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna and Rajshahi administrative divisions of the country. Later on 5 more battalions were raised in two phases. The RAB members are especially screened for induction by considering their honesty, sincerity, professionalism and minimum required qualifications. The primary responsibility of RAB has been to apprehend the listed criminals and carry out surveillance in the crime-prone areas and simultaneously gather intelligence for necessary actions. In the process RAB has also been engaged in wide range of law enforcement duties including human trafficking, anti-narcotics and gun-running. Today RAB is deployed in almost all major cities of the country.

Capabilities of the Force

The Force is capable of undertaking the following duties related to security:

* Internal security duties.
* Recovery of unauthorized arms, ammunition, explosive and such other articles.
* Apprehension of armed gangs of criminals.
* Assisting other law enforcing agencies for maintaining law and order.
* Intelligence gathering in respect of crimes and criminal activities.
Emerging Model of Counter-Terror Infrastructure

* Investigation of any offence on the direction of the government.
* Such other duties as the government may, from time to time, assign. \(^9\)

Legal Aspects and Scope of Operation

The Rapid Action Battalion has to work under prescribed and statutorily laid down procedure. The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 is a prudently crafted and time-tested piece of procedural legislation. This procedure is still in vogue in the sub-continent and some other countries in Asia. The law regarding searches is contained in sections 102, 103, 165 and 166 of the Code, and those, as prescribed in the Code, must be scrupulously followed.

The Rapid Action Battalion, as distinguished from other organizations, has been entrusted with exclusive duties like "gathering intelligence in respect of crime and criminal activities" and "investigation of any offence on the direction of the government" as stated in the Act.

Section 6C clause (1) states: "An officer of a Rapid Action Battalion shall, while investigating an offence, follow the procedure prescribed in the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 (Act V of 1898) or in any other law, as the case may be, for the investigation of such offence".

Section 6C clause (2) in pertinent part states "The concerned officer shall, on completion of the investigation of any offence under this ordinance, file his report to the officer-in-charge of the concerned police station, and the officer-in-charge shall, within forty-eight hours of the receipt of such

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report, forward the same to the competent court or tribunal, as the case may be. Section 6D states: "An officer of any Rapid Action Battalion may, while investigating an offence or performing any duties under this ordinance with respect to the cases originated from that offence, exercise all such powers and perform all such functions and duties as may be exercised or performed by a police officer under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (Act V of 1898)".

**Concept of Operation**

The present concept of operation of RAB Battalions is as follows:

* Initial effort is directed to establish intelligence network and collect intelligence about the area, criminals and their activities. Units are making effort to apprehend the criminals specially the top terrors and curb their activities. On getting information about the criminals, efforts are directed to collect additional evidences. Once required evidences have been collected, the force is deployed to conduct specific operation on a specific target. During any such operation, teams in uniform are kept standby to meet the unforeseen situation.

* Battalions have worked out *modus operandi* to prevent crime within respective Area of Responsibility (AOR). Battalions are also conducting patrols in various crime spots within their AOR in order to create deterrence. On occurrence of any incident, RAB carries out shadow investigation and helps other law enforcing agencies by providing necessary inputs.

* RAB has already collected and prepared bio-data of hundreds of criminals of different types across the country. At present RAB is in the process of making a software-guided digital list of country's criminals
incorporating their criminal records and backgrounds. Primarily, the list will include the terrorists and gangsters roaming the six divisional cities of the country. The intelligence wings of the twelve battalions of RAB are preparing the lists based on the reports published in different daily newspapers in the last 10 to 15 years, gathering records of criminals in their respective police stations and grass-root information and complaints of the local people.

Achievements of RAB

Since its inception the RAB has generally proved its worth and established credibility within a short span of three years. Recent statistics show that crime rates have gone down significantly throughout the country with the deployment of RAB. The presence of RAB has significantly curbed violent crimes, murders, kidnapping, drug trafficking, and extortion from the society. Now, ever since its official launching on 28 March 2004, the Rapid Action Battalion has been highly acclaimed by the people at large for its tangible performance in maintaining law and order.

Curbing Criminal Activities: Since its inception, RAB has apprehended 7782 terrorists and criminals and recovered 1571 lethal weapons. It has also seized huge amounts of ammunition and explosives. Such actions have succeeded in considerably reducing criminal activities in the country. It has provided the people a sense of security that they so desperately sought so long.

Eliminating Drug Trafficking: Right from its very outset, RAB launched a vigorous drive against drug trafficking and narcotics smuggling. Their constant endeavours have led to the capture of 2022 drug dealers and 42 smugglers till March 2006. They have seized 49 kg of heroine, 816 kg of various other narcotics, 25,412 litres of prohibited local whisky,
2,03,326 bottles of Phensidyl (a prohibited drug), etc. Such actions have significantly controlled the trafficking and smuggling of drugs.

**Success of RAB against JMB:** Countrywide series bomb blasts on 17 August 2005 and subsequent terrorist bomb attacks at various places led the security forces of the country to carry out investigation and take appropriate actions to prevent recurrence of such incidents. In the process RAB and other law enforcing agencies arrested 7 *Shurah Members* (the top seven decision making leaders of JMB) including JMB Chief Shykh Abdur Rahman, Second in Command Siddiqui Islam alias Bangla Bhai, Commanders of Divisions, Districts, Thanas and many more active members. RAB also recovered huge amount of various kinds of bombs, explosives, bomb making materials, various arms and ammunitions from different caches of JMB.

The near extinction of JMB threat is the greatest success of RAB till date. The sheer magnitude of the danger posed by Jamaatul Mujahideen of Bangladesh (JMB), a government-banned extremist group, came into the open on 17 August 2005 with their simultaneous countrywide bombing operation. Under the veil of religion, this extremist group blasted bombs in different places, killing innocent people indiscriminately. As many as 29 persons died and about 200 were injured as a result of the heinous activities of this group. These fanatics were threatening the constitutional polity of the state and the lives of the common people. This group was undermining the image of the state and of the religion of Islam internationally. Assigned by the government to quell JMB terrorists, RAB launched a countrywide drive to uproot JMB from the grassroots. With the assistance of the other law enforcing agencies, RAB collected detailed information about their activists, hideouts and their stock of arms and ammunition.
They then went on hauling up the terrorists at different levels and also secured huge amounts of explosives and lethal weapons.

That was not all. Using the intelligence gathered and with the help of advanced technology, Rapid Action Battalion forces arrested JMB chief Shayekh Abdur Rahman and the second-in-command Siddiquil Islam alias Bangla Bhai by launching a difficult and tortuous operation. RAB action against the JMB has effectively curtailed the subversive activities of this extremist group. RAB has been awarded the prestigious Shadhinata Podok 2005 (Independence Day Award) by the Government in recognition of their outstanding performance in curbing terrorism across the country. At a juncture in history where different nations of the world are engaged in fighting internal terrorism, Bangladesh, in spite of being a soft state, has virtually wiped out the kingpins of terrorism from its soil. American officials praised Bangladesh’s achievements in tracking down militants.10 However, Bangladesh should not still feel complacent about it.

In-House Intelligence

Major focus needs to be laid on developing individual intelligence skills of the RAB members. Intelligence successes of RAB forces till date have been generally the outcome by the officers. Necessary coordination with mother organizations is being done so that contributing forces can workout a training schedule catering to the needs of the RAB forces. Efforts are being made to provide the Government with necessary inputs so that a number of legal frameworks can be amended or introduced without which certain intelligence functions cannot be carried out, particularly concerning terrorism and

interception. The Force will endeavor to establish its own strategic and tactical interception, provided it is legally covered. Focus will also be laid on establishing community-based intelligence cells involving selected civilian personnel.

Investigation

Much work is needed to improve the existing investigation capability of the Force. This will require educating the Force’s personnel on legal issues and procedures and establishing a unified procedural structure. The primary objective will be to entail higher degree of prosecution successes. The projected Forensic Laboratory will be established, which is expected to meet the world standard. Such a project will obviously need trained forensic personnel at the headquarters and battalion levels. This laboratory will provide forensic evidences which are expected to achieve higher conviction rates.

Communication and MIS

As understood, RAB Forces has given priority to establishing an efficient communication & MIS network throughout the country within the next 3 years. The plan includes the following:

• National Backbone: The Ministry of Home Affairs, reportedly, has worked out a plan to develop the national

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11. Bangladesh Telecommunication (Amendment) Act, 2005 authorizes the Government (meaning here the Ministry of Home Affairs) to empower, from time to time, the officers of the intelligence agencies, investigation or law and order agencies to record or create impediments or collect related information of the conversations or messages, for a specified period, of any telecommunication service user, in the interest of the security of the state or of the public interest.
backbone connecting divisions with 63E1, districts with 8E1 and all sub-districts with 1E1. Within the next one year RAB Forces network will cover two-thirds of the country connecting all Battalions all over the country and Headquarters with 8E1. Most advanced network comparable to that in advanced countries will be established with the following services:

- **Communication**: The most advanced communication infrastructure consisting of MPT trunking protocol and integrated conventional nets will be established covering two-thirds of the country.

- **Data Communication**: The Force is expected to be connected with LOTUS application modules similar to that of the UN. The entire administrative, intelligence and operational planning and coordination will be supported by integrated software applications customized for the Force.

- **Biometric Database**: RAB Forces is establishing the first ever biometric database in Bangladesh and first of its kind in the sub-continent consisting of integrated Automatic Finger Print Identification System (AFIS) and Automatic Photo Matching System. These particular systems will allow establishing FBI/INTERPOL and UN standard criminal database. The Force is planning to extend its database to establish immigration control, access control, passport control, prison control, etc utilizing the same server.

- **Government to Client (G to C) Connectivity**: As reported, RAB Forces has laid much emphasis on establishing G to C connectivity through its Communication and MIS infrastructure. Dynamic website is expected to be developed within the next year so that citizens of the country can communicate (both in voice and data), share information, raise complaints and provide intelligence from anywhere
in the country. Furthermore, for the first time in the country, 111 Emergency Calling System, as available in developed countries, will be implemented in the country as a pilot project. Subsequently, this facility will be developed further integrating all cell phone providers so that citizens of the country can communicate for any emergency.

Air Wing

Newly approved Air Wing of the Force is expected to be functional within the next year. It is expected that the Wing will induct 2 to 4 helicopters soon. The Force is currently working to develop the procedural steps in coordination with Army Aviation, the Bangladesh Air Force, the Civil Aviation Authority and the Police concerning airspace utilization, operational deployment, maintenance and financial and legal aspects. Modalities of training of air crew and battalion personnel are being worked out.

Training

The RAB Force's overall efficiency in all areas of functionalities will greatly depend on training, as the duration of service of RAB personnel in the force is between two to three years. Elaborate planning is needed to devise a comprehensive training module for in-house training. Its training package includes training its members on human rights also. A project paper for establishing a modern and purpose-oriented training school has been approved by the Planning Commission of the Government which is likely to be implemented in the next few years.

Media Policy

Effective media policy needs to be developed and flexible procedures to be implemented concerning handling of the
print and electronic media. Officers are to be trained in this regard, which is a prerequisite in defeating the terrorists psychologically. The overwhelming public support, the sense of patriotism as well as the *de-facto* improvement in general law and order situation of the country have been the main source of motivation and inspiration of the RAB members engaged in their challenging task. RAB’s introduction of ‘Digital Crime Records’ with the help of sophisticated software in the near future would hopefully be yet another milestone in curbing the crimes in Bangladesh. However, RAB’s success would greatly depend on the continued support it gets from the Military, apart from other sources.

**THE ROLE OF THE MILITARY IN THE PRESENT SITUATION**

**Providing Leadership and Trained Manpower:** Most of the Command Echelons and Staff Officers of BDR are provided by Bangladesh Army. Bangladesh Armed Forces is also providing trained officers and men to RAB. Most of its command echelons are also coming from the Military. Bangladesh Navy and Air Force are also providing manpower and other relevant support to the para-military forces. Bangladesh Coast Guard, which takes care of the terrorists in the territorial waters, mostly depends on Navy for men and materials. Bangladesh Naval Ships deployed for anti-smuggling and fishery protection patrols also keep continuous watch on illegal arms trafficking through sea routes. However, due to certain legal limitations, such tasks are gradually being taken over by the Coast Guard; in any case the active support of Bangladesh Navy could continue to be there.

**Intelligence Gathering Support:** All the Military intelligence agencies provide and share information with the civil intelligence agencies especially on terrorist and subversive activities. However, there are certain lacunas especially in
terms of coordination in the system. A method has to be devised, where better coordination can be worked out for intelligence sharing, especially in respect of the terrorists.

**Training Support:** Bangladesh Armed Forces, especially Army, is providing training support to BDR, RAB and Police. Bangladesh Military's different Schools of Instructions, specially related to intelligence, explosives handling, adventure, physical efficiency, diving, specialist weapons training, rappelling training, etc, are providing support to the Para-military forces. This support is critical in combating the emergent aggressive militants/terrorists carrying relatively more sophisticated weapons.

**Back up and Logistics Support:** Bangladesh Military keeps on providing varied kinds of the following back-up and logistical support to the Police and Para military forces in counter terrorist operations whenever called upon to do so by the Government.

- Bomb disposal and their neutralizing. RAB is also in the process of acquiring bomb disposal equipment.
- Detection of mines, booby traps, firearms and other arsenal.
- Protection of Key Point Installations whenever impending threat is appreciated.
- Providing of military Dog Squads to detect explosives, weapons, drugs and criminals. It may be mentioned that RAB has also developed its own Dog Squads.
- Providing helicopters to detect terrorists' hideouts and monitor their activities and, at an opportune moment, assist in apprehending them.
- Providing watercraft, vessels etc to capture the terrorists operating in the river routes, especially in the mangrove
forest areas in southwestern Bangladesh like the Sundarbans, or coastal areas and offshore islands.

- Military doctors are providing treatment facilities to military personnel serving in BDR and RAB. Critically injured personnel from the paramilitary forces are also provided in-door medical support in the Combined Military Hospitals.

INTELLIGENCE APPARATUS

Bangladesh's security intelligence apparatus includes National Security Intelligence (NSI), Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), respective Services Intelligence, Special Branch of Police and the intelligence wing of the newly created elite force RAB. Most of these agencies have elaborate organization but they are mostly manpower intensive, depending on human intelligence. Although human intelligence is still one of the major sources of intelligence collection, it needs to be augmented by technology-based intelligence. Again, there are problems in formulating the direction of intelligence gathering and their coordination. Countrywide bomb blasts by the Islamic militants in August 2004 in almost all the district headquarters of the country went unnoticed, much less could be preempted by the intelligence agencies. This was acknowledged by the then Prime Minister in her interview with the Time Magazine\textsuperscript{12} and in her address to the nation. There is, therefore, a dire need to revamp these organizations to enhance their efficiency and synergy in intelligence collection and assessment, especially in respect of the newly emergent Islamic militants. However, with such realization, efforts are underway to go for more sophistication in intelligence collection, assessment and their dissemination.

\textsuperscript{12} Time, 10 April 2006.
Foreign assistance is also being sought to update, revamp and refurbish the intelligence agencies of the country.

NSI established a separate cell named “Counter Terrorism Cell” in May 2004, as part of the fulfillment of relevant protocol of the UN Charter, which Bangladesh signed, to cooperate with member countries on trans-national terrorism. The cell, among other functions, determines which specific populations, areas and institutions within Bangladesh are most susceptible (at risk) to extremist/radical influences, with major emphasis, at this point in time, on religious extremism. A Counter Terrorism Bureau under the aegis of DGFI is also already working to evaluate, analyze and frame counter terrorism policy at strategic and operational level with focus on operational counter intelligence and counter terrorism capability. Its objective is also to educate other agencies and coordinate with them in achieving the expertise on operational level of proficiency on terrorism, anti-terrorism, counter-terrorism and operational intelligence.

DIFFICULTIES FACED

Lack of Trained Manpower: Bangladesh’s Armed Forces do not have sufficient trained personnel on counter terrorism; especially the junior officers and soldiers are not well acquainted with intelligence gathering system and handling the apprehended persons. However, intelligence gathering training is being beefed up to cater for anti-terrorist activities.

Lack of Intelligence Gadgets: As highlighted above, the intelligence gadgets used by the agencies need updating. Even whatever current gadgets and equipment received from allied sources are not being utilized to their optimum limit.

Inexperience in Handling Money Laundering: Rules and regulations regarding the transaction of illegal money are not known by the military personnel. As such, such illegal
transactions should be handled by the Government and the Bangladesh Bank (country’s central Bank). A team of Bangladesh Bank officials, reportedly, are being trained on anti-money laundering operations by the Americans. Illegal money transactions should, as such, be reported to different intelligence agencies for follow-up action. Over here coordination among different agencies is sine quo none to effectively control the source of financing for the terrorists.

Lack of Legislation: Due to the delayed judgment and weakness in anti-terrorist laws the terrorists sometimes escape due punishment. Until an anti-terrorism law is enacted the existing Special Powers Act, which authorizes preventive detention for certain period, can be invoked for apprehending any suspected terrorists.

Negative Image: Bangladesh has an image problem abroad, which is often fabricated and concocted deliberately by certain interested quarters. It is given an image of being Talibanized, which is simply far from the truth. It is deliberately hyped. Bangladesh’s weak publicity network could be, to some extent, responsible for this.

Cyber Terrorism: There are now about 0.3 million website hackers around the world. They could launch attacks on the information system of various financial, military and medical networks. Lack of cyber security is a cause of concern for Bangladesh. This might lead to intelligence/information leakages of both the intelligence agencies and financial institutions – an eventuality that could be catastrophic. General awareness and adequate training could be the panacea for such lapses.

RESPONSE

Bangladesh’s response to terrorism is strong and resolute. However, in a globalized world, her efforts need both external
support and internal capacity building. In light of the discussions made so far, the major areas of response mechanism for an emerging counter terror infrastructure in Bangladesh may include the following:

**Regional Cooperation-Diplomatic Initiative:** Internal security situations in South Asian countries are unique and, at times, interrelated. The top terrors have some kind of links in other countries on common areas like drug trafficking, arms smuggling and sanctuaries. Without meaningful political commitment and wholehearted cooperation, process may not be set into motion to fight and control terrorism in South Asia. The following steps may be undertaken immediately under the aegis of SAARC.

- **Dialogue:** Once the regional leaders are committed to peace, meaningful dialogue may be initiated to identify the root causes and breeding ground of terrorism. It can then initiate region-wise response to combat terrorism which has, in fact, engulfed the entire region.

- **Exchange of Data:** The countries of South Asia should increase formal contact at the ministry and department levels to exchange experience and expertise, and thereby enhance cooperation to combat terrorism. As part of effective regional mechanisms to monitor terrorism, Bangladesh has already established its national focal point for exchange of information on terrorist activities among the SAARC countries. Bangladesh also supports the establishment of the proposed SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk in Sri Lanka to coordinate action among SAARC member countries for control of movements of arms and other contrabands within and outside SAARC countries with the objective of suppression of terrorism in the region.
National Security Council: It is necessary for Bangladesh to have a national security council to fight, *inter alia*, terrorism. A number of disintegrated successful operations against terrorists will not be able to wipe out terrorism in the country in its entirety; it needs coordinated efforts by all agencies. For that a body may exist to coordinate national resources, suggesting formulation of policy and showing direction for war against terrorism. A National Security Council, as an organization, exists in Bangladesh, although it is non-functional now. What is notable here is that such council in a parliamentary system may negate the supremacy of the Cabinet. Therefore, given Bangladesh's security threats emanating from both within and without, a kind of National Security Council, in an advisory role, consisting of representatives from different strata of the society may be constituted. India, being a parliamentary democracy, has also formed such a body. This council would not be an executive body as that exists in the United States.

Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs: A Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs in line with Indian system may be formed in Bangladesh, which would coordinate the security matters of the state and issue policy directives to different agencies of the government for effective and quick implementation. Anti-terrorist measures would also implicitly be a focus of this committee. The committee would work as an executive body and could also coordinate the activities of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Armed Forces Division of the Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Law and other related agencies as far as counter-terrorism measures are concerned.

Apex Body for Intelligence Coordination: There is a dire need for an apex intelligence coordinating body, in line with the newly established American intelligence coordination body, for Bangladesh. This is *sine quo non* for better
intelligence assessment and coordinating of the inputs provided by different intelligence agencies. What is needed is better synergy, coordination and efficiency. This apex body would be able to provide necessary inputs to the cabinet committee on security affairs.

Reform of Police Force: Law and order is primarily the responsibility of the police force. Internal terrorism is supposed to be tackled by them. Unfortunately, they find it difficult to perform their tasks effectively because of lack of motivation, inadequate training, non-sophisticated equipment and reported involvement in corruption. The police force should undergo thorough reforms. The police personnel's service benefits need to be reviewed and improved. Sophisticated arms have to be authorized, so that the police are not outgunned by the terrorists. To promote the right environment for the police professional attitude, moral uplift and extensive training are some of the imperatives. The organizational structure also needs to be modified. There should be more officers in the supervisory role in the police and the police to public ratio should be increased. In fact, some of such measures are already underway.

Creating Database of Terrorists: The police work procedure and investigation in the country is still following primitive methods. However, Special Branch of Police has a good database of terrorists that needs to be updated continuously and developed into a way that could be meaningfully used in the ground application. The facilities of information technologies with data bank of terrorists are to be used by law enforcing agencies. The unclassified part of database may have webpage to remain open to the public so that terrorists are socially degraded and general mass can give inputs without endangering their personal security.

Anti-Terrorist Campaign: A coordinated effort by all political parties and all sections of the society has to be undertaken for
Emerging Model of Counter-Terror Infrastructure

combating terrorism. Political will has to be generated at all levels. This should be taken as a social movement by the people at large. As a matter of fact, during the recent spurt in religious militancy, Imams and other religious leaders of the society played an active role in awakening the general masses to guard against the evil designs, not supported by the religion of Islam, of the militants. This is very much a feasible option for Bangladesh, given that the Muslims of this country are moderate and liberal in their religious practice and rituals. Inter-faith harmony is an age-old practice of the people of this country.

Up-gradation of RAB's Capabilities: RAB's achievements have been laudable. These accomplishments need to be sustained with the induction of more trained manpower and sophisticated weapons, as already highlighted.

Using Modern Technology to Track Terrorists: The Police functioning in Bangladesh is still based on traditional methods. The facilities of Information Technologies have to be adopted by the law enforcing agencies. Finger print and other high-technology methods have to be adopted for better, accurate and quicker response.

Support from Developed Countries: Support from the developed countries in the form of training support for the military, para-military, intelligence and police forces, intelligence sharing, technology transfer, creation of database for the terrorists would greatly enhance the anti-terrorist capabilities of Bangladesh security agencies. Bangladesh is already receiving such assistance from about 10 different countries, especially in terms of sharing information and capacity building.

Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Various Alert States in Vital Installations/ Facilities: All the vital installations should have SOPs to take care of the
contingencies. Some coloured coded alert level may be selected to inform all concerned about the state of preparedness required at each level to face the probable threats, if at all, like the ones used by the US Department of Homeland Security. However, Bangladesh's scenario is not comparable to that of the United States.

**Cyber Security:** Bangladesh needs to upgrade the system of protection of computer and data systems by adopting measures like: Firewalls, Virus Protection, Password Procedures, Information Encryption, Computer Access Control, Intrusion Detection System, Redundant and Backup System, etc.

**Post-Disaster Operation:** Bangladesh should have a robust post-disaster operating system that should take care of the damages wrought by terrorists to the individuals or to the installations. Damage control system should be readily responsive where the coordination of different agencies including medical services is quite critical. Incidence response training module of different related agencies of the government should be meticulously planned and conducted.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To conclude, one can certainly say that Bangladesh, though a soft state, is nevertheless a nation with a moderate

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<th>Alert Level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Severe Risk of Terrorist Attack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>High Risk of Terrorist Attack</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Significant Risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>General Risk</td>
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<td>Green</td>
<td>Low Risk</td>
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outlook and resilience of its people. The nation, always a separate entity with unique nationalist aspirations as known from the recorded history, has weathered many turmoil and upheavals, both man-made and natural. Its resilience and determination to live and stand on its own is amazing. The people of Bangladesh always resisted any subjugation, oppression, upheavals that might disturb its fabric and nationhood, social stability or harmony and national unity when the crunch time came. As stated earlier, it is the most homogeneous nation in the world after the two Koreas; and its social inter-faith harmony is an age-old accepted practice, although, at times, some interested quarters tend to tarnish this image. Bangladesh is emerging as an economic powerhouse with almost 7 percent growth rate last year. It is in the process of consolidating its nation- and state-building, with some hiccups though. Bangladesh has proved wrong Henry Kissinger’s statement that Bangladesh is a bottomless basket. When he made this statement Bangladesh’s population was half of what it is today. Bangladesh is feeding its 140 million people on its own, which in itself is a miracle. Frequent natural disasters hit this unfortunate land but the unbelievable coping mechanisms of its people, that far surpass those in many other countries, help them restart their lives like business as usual. Nothing could deter this nation to stand distinctly as an independent and vibrant entity.

Bangladesh has done marvels in terms of social indicators, it has earned laurels in UN peace support operations around the world, it is sustaining a pluralistic democracy, although one may say it is limping, its micro credit programme is being replicated the world over and it nourishes and sustains commendable social and religious values which would not tolerate extremism or militancy. Its deep-seated nationalistic fervour, coupled with its difficult but steady state-building capacity, can comfortably take care of terrorism in its different
manifestations and forms. One can rest assured that Bangladeshi Muslims, in general, to quote Abdur Rahman Wahid, former President of Indonesia, strongly believe that "the essence of Islam is tolerance and that is the right Islam". They do not believe "in the Islam of intolerance, hatred and bloodshed". This is reinforced by former Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mohathir Bin Mohammad's remarks - that echo Bangladeshi Muslims' sentiments - "Terrorizing people is not the way of Islam. Certainly, killing innocent people is not Islamic"