

## Acts of Terrorism in Bangladesh: A General Assessment

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**Abstract:** Terrorism per se is an act of senseless violence by one or more individuals to create an atmosphere of fear and helplessness. At one level it is argued that some terrorists may be individuals with personality disorder looking for a cause. At another level a sense of alternative ideology motivate them to change the prevailing world order. Terrorism is a tactic to achieve a goal but this tactic should not be employed because no one can force another person to liberate their lands from foreign rule. Many believe that terrorists do not fight for the independence of their lands but fight for an extreme ideology to succeed. The September 11 attacks on the US were motivated not to free their lands but by ideological reasons. Ideological fight is not winnable easily because it is based on commitment to a misconceived faith. The fight against terrorism is for a long haul because one can easily defeat a conventional enemy but not an idea. This article attempts to identify the extent and nature of terrorism and the government action against terrorism in Bangladesh.

**Key words:** Terrorism in Bangladesh, General assessment

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### INTRODUCTION

To say that Bangladesh is facing a crisis in public order and the rule of law would be an understatement. It is very disappointing that instead of uniting to weed out terror from Bangladesh, our politicians, journalists and intellectuals both within and outside the country have not yet shown the maturity, civility and decency to condemn terrorism with objectivity, integrity and honesty. They, instead, have been showing their narrow, tribal/peasant rusticity and bias in explaining the attacks with a view to gaining some political leverage. They have unfortunately failed to realise that the reactionary forces behind these heinous attacks will be more than happy to see whatever is left of liberal democratic, secular and patriotic forces in the country, constantly fighting among themselves instead of trying to find out the real culprits.

The report of a human rights organisation mentioned that 238 murders and 119 rape cases occurred all over the country during the month of March 2002. According to the report of the human rights organisations Odhikar and the Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights, 1,219 people were murdered, 6,890 were injured and 1,290 people were arrested all over the country between October 2001 and February 2002. The present law and order situation is a great obstacle to the all-out development of the country. But ultimately the responsibility for safeguarding human security must lie with the state and in Bangladesh, this responsibility remains unfulfilled.

**Conceptual net:** Terrorism has no consistent profile, that

it has many variables reflecting the increasing complexity of human society. What the people of Bangladesh aspire for is nothing but the slightest ray of hope regarding normal life. But an increasing darkness is still falling all over the land. Gun battles, murders, acid throwing, oppression of women, issuing of fatwa (religious edict), blackmail, campus violence, etc., have become everyday incidents and people have little hope of their ending soon. The perpetual polarization between the Awami league and BNP and between the so-called patriots and traitors, will only bring more disasters finally turning the “dysfunctional” state into anarchy. It is high time that comes out of their Awami-BNP cocoons to mobilize mass support against terror, Khaleda-Hasina together, for the sake of the country. One may only guess if and when the terrorists will again hit the divided polity. And the next time leaders from the ruling party may fall prey to such attacks. So, both the BNP and its “Islamic” allies should also stop the blaming game with a view to fighting terror. Both the ruling coalition and the opposition have the responsibility to find out the real terrorists and their motives. Bangladesh is getting a reputation as a lawless and violent place abroad. In September 2002, the United Nations issued a voluminous report expressing “mounting concern over the breakdown of law and order in the country.” International donors are threatening to hold foreign aid if the situation is not improved. Soon after the UN report was released, the World Bank representative to the country declared there was a “high level of human insecurity in the country and an ‘anti-poor’ criminal justice system,” and warned that the deterioration of law and order now poses the greatest threat to the country’s

continued development. Even more serious for a country traditionally regarded by the West as “a moderate Muslim nation,” is that many Western civil-society groups and media outlets have recently warned that the country is home to growing Islamist extremism. Amnesty International and other human-rights organizations have charged that the government has been persecuting religious minorities, which tend to favor the opposition Awami League. Two Dow Jones publications, *The Wall Street Journal* and the Hong Kong-based *Far Eastern Economic Review*, have run a series of reports questioning whether Bangladesh is becoming the next “Cocoon of Terror” (to use the *Far Eastern Economic Review*’s headline). Last week the Indian government claimed to have conclusive proof that Pakistan’s intelligence service is funding Al-Qaeda operations out of Bangladesh to support insurgents on India’s northeastern border.

It should be mentioned that Bangladesh is party to a number of international and regional instrument on terrorism and currently we are in the process of examining the remaining instruments with a view to early accession to them. We also support the ongoing process of elaboration of a comprehensive convention on terrorism, as we believe, there is a need for an overreaching instrument to provide for a possible basis for global consensus for dealing with terrorism.

**Meaning of terrorism:** A US Army manual defined terrorism as “the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature. through intimidation, coercion or instilling fear”. America’s foremost intellectual activist, Professor Noam Chomsky of MIT, has interpreted the definition as follows: “It is a common practice that allows for the conventional thesis that terror is a weapon of the weak. Another problem with the official definitions of terror is that it follows from them that the US is a leading terrorist state” (*Hegemony or Survival: America’s quest for global dominance*, 2nd edition, 2004, Allen and Unwin).

**Incidents of terrorists violence in Bangladesh:** The creation and development of terrorism has taken place in this country in a special political climate. Daily *Ittefaq*’s editors wrote. Its creators are a class of politicians. They have used the state to grab millions of dollars. And terrorism has spread its branches under their protection. These terrorists have also helped themselves to great wealth like their creators. In a nutshell, the birth and propagation of this terrible politics of terrorism has established this complete lawlessness and uncontrollable

crime crisis.

Continuous reportage during the first three quarters of year 2003 indicating the existence of Al Qaeda operatives in Bangladesh and their subversive activity in conjunction with local Islamist groups validated claims that the country had emerged as a major safe haven for Islamist terrorist formations.

There has been spurt in the activities of Islamist extremists in the year 2003. Some of the major incidents were:

- August 14: Police in Saudi Arabia arrest 21 terror suspects, including 11 Bangladeshis, from a house in the southern province of Jizan.
- June 16: A Time report in its June 16, 2003, issue indicates that Islamist extremists in Bangladesh may be attempting to make a radioactive "dirty" bomb.
- May 18: Police arrest five suspected Al Qaeda terrorists from the Deudoba Baniapara area in Rangpur. An unspecified amount of Saudi Rials (currency) is also recovered from their possession.
- May 7: HT cadres set ablaze a mosque of their opponents at Shakokati village, Gouranadi subdivision, under Barisal district, to avenge the killing of a HT cadre at Bhurghata on May 5.
- May 5: A Hizbut Tauhid (HT) member is killed and 25 others, including some Tauhid cadres, are injured in clash between the HT and villagers at Bhurghata in the Barisal district.
- March 15: Media reports indicated that there are at least 12 Islamist militant groups and some of them are training youth in armed combat. These militants are suspected to be involved in a series of bomb blasts in he preceding four months.
- March 11: Police destroyed a training centre of the Islamist group Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen (JuM), Bangladesh, in the Hujrapur area of Chapainawabganj district. Five cadres were arrested and manuals on 'Jehad', Talibanism' and guidelines to make time bombs were recovered.
- March 1: A policeman was killed and at least 10 others injured in bomb blasts at the International Trade Fair in Khulna.
- February 25: Police recovered 16 bombs from the residence of a religious leader, Maulana Fazlul Karim, in Charmonai, near Barisal, on the first day of an annual religious celebration.
- February 13: At least seven powerful bombs exploded in quick succession inside a house in Chhoto Gurgola area of Dinajpur town, leaving three persons injured. Police recovered four revolvers, 50 rounds of ammunition, six petrol bombs, bomb-

making chemicals and a 'subscription' receipt of an unnamed Islamist group from the blast site. Two persons, said to be employed at a madrasa (seminary), were arrested.

- January 17: At least eight persons were killed and eight others wounded in a bomb blast at a carnival in Dariapur village, Tangail district, 70 kilometres north of the capital Dhaka.

Meanwhile, Serious tension developed in Indo-Bangladesh relations in January 2003 over attempts by India's Border Security Force (BSF) to deport a number of Bangladeshis who had been staying illegally in India. The Bangladesh Government maintained that the alleged illegal migrants were Indian citizens and vehemently denied the presence of any illegal Bangladeshis in India. Dhaka claims that India is attempting to evict Bengali-speaking Muslims from their country by branding them as Bangladeshi migrants. The Indian Government, on the other hand, has rejected as 'baseless and absurd' the allegation that India was trying to push in Bengali-speaking Indian Muslims into Bangladesh. There are fundamental differences between the two countries over critical issues such as illegal migration and the use of Bangladeshi territory for terrorist and subversive activities directed against India. The current BNP Government, led by Begum Khaleda Zia has been insisting that her Government would not allow anti-India activities from its soil.

Violence and fighting are increasing on the campuses of colleges and Universities all over the country. Armed fighting between rival student organizations, clashes between the wings of the same organization, etc., are going on regularly and much academic time has been lost through compulsory closing of institutions. Deployment of police on the campuses, a new development last year, frustrating the popular expectation failed to minimize the campus-violence. Apart from this, the overall situation in educational institutions is rapidly deteriorating. Neither the ruling party nor the opposition parties are doing the least thing to control violence on the campus. The same holds true for other major national and social science. Among the people a growing dissatisfaction with all the major political parties is spreading and their credibility is being eroded. Social discipline in general is on the decline and with the increasing laxness in enforcement of the laws there is a growing disregard for observance of the laws and regulations.

Bangladesh continued to be a transit route for arms and narcotics trafficking and the country's Home Minister, Altaf Hossain Chowdhury, (2002) validated this

while he was speaking at a national workshop on drug control in Mirpur in February 2002. Chittagong district, especially its port area, remained a major route for arms smuggling. Rohingya refugees also supplied arms to extremist groups and criminals in Bangladesh, including those in Dhaka.

Resentment against the Chittagong Hill Tracts Treaty grew further during year 2002 due to a lack of initiative in solving the outstanding problems of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT).

- The CHT Regional Council Chairman Shantu Larma accused the Government of failing to make the Council effective, to start the functioning of Land Commission, to withdraw Army camps, to assign the three hill district councils due responsibilities and to rehabilitate the repatriated as well as internally displaced Jumma (hill people) refugees.
- Internecine clashes continued between the pro-Accord Parbatya Chattagram Jano Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and its opponent United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).
- As the frustration of Chakma tribals with the Bangladesh Government continued to grow, the leader of PCJSS Shantu Larma during its seventh conference in November gave a call to Chakmas to continue with the struggle for upholding their separate Jumma identity. He also said that the signing of the accord was a 'mistake' and alleged that the Government was attempting to 'Islamise' Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- The grievance of Chakmas became further apparent on the fifth anniversary of the Accord in the first week of December when all the major parties of the region vowed to push ahead with their conflicting programmes. This development could revive insurgency in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.
- Replying to a question in the Parliament on September 14, 2003, M.K. Anwar, Minister-in-Charge of the CHT affairs, stated that the Government was reviewing the CHT Peace Treaty of 1997 to determine if its clauses were in conformity with the Constitution. He asserted that the Government would amend any Article, which would be contrary to the features of the Constitution.

Tribal leaders have alleged that the lawmakers of the ruling party are instigating violence against the indigenous people. One such incident erupted on August 25, 2003, in Mahalchhari in which two persons were killed and nearly 1500 tribesmen were rendered homeless after their houses were allegedly torched by Bengali settlers. PCJSS chief Santu Larma held the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Table 1: Some of the major bomb blasts which Islamist groups are suspected to have carried out during year 2002-2003 include

Date	Place	Killed	Injured
August 21, 2004	Bangabandhu Avenue, Dhaka	19	200
May 21, 2004	Hazrat Shahjalal shrine, Sylhet	3	100
January 12, 2004	Hazrat Shahjalal shrine, Sylhet	5	50
March 1, 2003	International Trade Fair, Khulna	1	10
January 17, 2003	Dariapur village, Tangail district	8	8
December 7, 2002	Mymensingh	21	300
October 11, 2002	Rangmati town	3	2
September 28, 2002	Sathkhira town	3	125
May 1, 2002	Gurdaspur sub-district, Natore	1	25
September 25, 2001	Shullah, Sunamganj district; Sylhet town	6	Unspecified
September 24, 2001	Awami League rally, Bagerhat district	8	100
June 15, 2001	Awami League office, Narayanganj town	22	100
June 3, 2001	Baniyachar Catholic Church, Gopalganj district	10	25
April 14, 2001	Dhaka	10	Unspecified
January 20, 2001	Dhaka	6	50
January 10, 2001	Dhaka	7	Unspecified
December 24, 2000	Dhaka	2	18
October 8, 1999	Ahmadiya mosque, Khulna	8	40
March 7, 1999	Jessore district	10	106

Source: Computed from reportage in the English language press of Bangladesh

Development Board (CHTDB) Chairman and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) legislator Wadood Bhuiyan responsible for these incidents. He has also threatened to cancel certificates of permanent residence of the settlers in the CHT area.

But the present government and most Bangladeshi newspapers have denounced the allegations as politically motivated. But the Awami League's criticisms of the breakdown in law and order in Bangladesh have proved harder to dismiss. For past two years, Bangladesh has ranked the world's most corrupt country in the Berlin-based watchdog Transparency International's annual survey. Bangladeshi journalists frequently charge that political parties are hiring thugs to intimidate or kill opponents and to terrorize hostile constituencies. Worse, the papers allege, the police force is underpaid, understaffed, ill-trained, highly susceptible to bribes and completely incapable of waging Bangladesh's battle against domestic terrorism.

### Major incidents of terrorists violence in Bangladesh, 1996-2003:

**2003:** March 11: Two police personnel are killed and two others injured in a series of bomb blasts in Khulna.

March 1: A police personnel is killed and at least 10 others injured in bomb blasts at the International Trade Fair in Khulna.

January 17: At least eight persons are killed and eight more injured in a bomb blast at a carnival in Dariapur village, Tangail district, 70km north of the capital Dhaka.

**2002:** December 7: 18 persons are killed and approximately 300 others are injured in serial bomb blasts at four cinema halls in and around Mymensingh, 150km north of the capital Dhaka.

September 28: Approximately 125 persons are injured in two bomb explosions at Sathkhira town.

September 16: Four police personnel are killed and nine others injured in an attack on a police camp under Belkuchi upazila (sub-division), Sirajganj district, by an estimated 40 left-wing extremists of the outlawed Purbo Banglar Communist Party (PBCP).

**2001:** September 25: Four persons are killed in an explosion near the venue of an Awami League election meeting at Shullah, Sunamganj district.

September 24: Eight persons are killed and more than hundred others injured in a bomb blast at an election rally at Mollarhat, Bagerhat district.

June 15: An estimated 21 persons are killed and over 100 others injured in a bomb explosion at the ruling Awami League Party office at Narayanganj town.

June 3: Ten persons are killed and 25 others injured in a bomb blast at a catholic mission church at Baniachar, Gopalganj district.

April 14: Eight persons are killed in a bomb explosion set off by suspected Islamist fundamentalists at a Bengali New Year cultural function in Dhaka.

February 6: Seven persons are killed and approximately 100 others injured in a clash between Islamic Okiya Jote (IOJ) fundamentalists and security force personnel at Brahanbaria bordering the Indian State of Tripura.

January 20: Six persons are killed and approximately 50 others injured in two separate bomb blasts in Dhaka.

**2000:** December 24: Two persons are killed and 18 others injured in an explosion by suspected Islamist terrorists near Dhaka.

August 21: Prominent Opposition Leader Habibur Rahman Mandal of the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) is assassinated in Dhaka.

July 21: An attempt to assassinate the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed in her home district, Gopalganj, is foiled.

**1999:** October 8: Seven persons of the Ahamadiya sect are killed and at least 40 others injured during a bomb explosion at the Kadiani Mosque in Khulna.

March 7: Six persons are killed and approximately 100 others are injured in two bomb explosions at a cultural function in Jessore district.

January 18: Harkat-ul-Jehadi-e-Islami (HUJI) terrorists make a vain bid on the life of Shamsur Rahman, renowned poet.

**1996:** September 11: Shanti Bahini rebels abduct and later kill 30 Bengali settlers near Rangamati.

**Government action against terrorism:** Bangladesh is an important ally in war against terrorism. The government has obligations to take measures to protect persons within their jurisdiction and bring to justice those responsible for any type of violence. Bangladesh consider prevention and justice to be the twin objectives of this struggle. We are glad that the long engagement of the United Nations in the fight against international terrorism has been acknowledged. At a recent conference Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia also referred to the growing menace of terrorism and said that we should have an unequivocal stand to fight this global menace and take steps to deal with the root cause of terrorism. The major political parties, members of civil society, media stood in unity to form a broad national consensus to condemn the attack and to support global action against the perpetrators of such violence. The present government is firmly determined not to allow any terrorist or organised group of terrorists to work in the soil of Bangladesh, Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan told a news briefing at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He again ruled out the possibility of the existence of any networks of terrorists in Bangladesh. On Oct. 16, Bangladeshi Prime Minister Khaleda Zia unveiled her response. During year 2002, there was a major decline in the law and order

situation. To improve conditions, the coalition Government launched "Operation Clean Heart" on October 17, 2002.

- The Government issued a directive on November 5 asking all licensed arms holders to deposit their weapons by November 15.
- It banned trading in firearms of all types until further orders and furthermore, security forces began raiding 'crime zones' in all parts of the country, including the capital Dhaka.
- However, only a small number of the legal arms were deposited, though the deadline was once advanced by a week till November 21. The Government also declared illegal all the legal arms, which were not deposited by the deadline.
- Though Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury informed Parliament that the Army would be deployed on law and order duty as long as it is necessary, the Government formed a Rapid Action Team (RAT) and began training them to tackle terrorists and criminals, once the Army was withdrawn.
- The joint forces were withdrawn from 'Operation Clean Heart' on January 11, 2003.
- During the drive, 24,023 Army personnel, 339 Naval troops and a large number of the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) and police personnel participated. Security forces arrested 11,280 people, including 2,482 listed criminals/terrorists and seized 2,028 weapons and 29,754 rounds of ammunition.

Operation Clean Heart, as the program was dubbed, set out to coordinate the efforts of the country's military, paramilitary, police and civil administration to crack down on corruption, violent crime and domestic terrorism. Within hours after Zia signed her name, 50,000 soldiers were deployed across the country and told to get to work. Their task: to round up all suspected domestic terrorists and violent criminals on the government's list and recover all illegal weapons. United States is encouraged by the Bangladeshi government's resolve to curb crime; it is concerned that the army also needs to respect human rights. Bangladeshi journalists from across the political spectrum seemed desperate for any measure to stop the violence and cheered Operation Clean Heart as a welcome start. Faced with deteriorating law and order, marked by unabated murders and other heinous crimes, the government was left with no alternative but to call out the army in aid of the civil administration to come down heavily on terrorists irrespective of their political hue and to recover illegal arms. Within the first day of the

campaign, the army killed at least one person and arrested more than 200 others. Within a month, according to the Nov. 18 edition of Dhaka's left-wing *Ajker Kagaj*, 5,772 people had reportedly been arrested. Twenty-five people had died in custody. Eight hundred fifty-eight illegal weapons had been collected. The civilian administration and the police were incapable of dealing with violent and political crime, there was debate as to how long the army should be allowed to act as a domestic police force. Dhaka's *Daily Jugantar* (Nov. 18) argued that the military campaign should continue "until (crime) is completely eradicated," whereas *The Daily Inquilab* (Nov. 3) argued that, "In a democratic setup, the fact that the army is relied upon should not continue for a long period. In the end, the police forces have to be resurrected and strengthened to handle the situation without requiring such drastic measures as these army operations."

The Bangladesh Government launched another operation condemned 'Spider Web' on July 19, 2003, to check the decline in law and order in the southwestern districts of Bangladesh after all regular defensive measures and combing operations by police had failed. The area of operation was limited to the southwestern region covering Jhenidah, Kushtia, Chuadanga, Meherpur, Jessore, Khulna, Satkhira, Bagerhat and adjacent districts. This Operation primarily targeted the outlawed left-wing extremist parties' active in the region. During the drive, 14,000 personnel from the police, paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles, the Ansar militia auxiliary force and the coast guard participated. However, media reports from Bangladesh have indicated that the operation failed to produce the intended results due to a faulty strategy, lack of intelligence and alleged police tip-off to criminals. Police had also made a grave mistake by publicizing the drive prior to its launching and this acted as a forewarning for the top leaders and prompted them to go into hiding. Police failed to catch any of the major ringleaders or to recover any significant amount of arms and ammunition.

Article 32 of the Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh provides that no person shall be deprived of life or personal liberty save in accordance with law. However, legalisation of extra judicial executions has reduced such constitutional guarantees to mere inscriptions. As many as 111 people were extra judicially executed by the law enforcement personnel in the country from 1 January to 30 September 2004 in comparison to 56 killings in 2003. At least 43 criminal have been killed by Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) alone mostly in the so-called 'crossfire' since it launched operations against the criminals on 21 June 2004. Based on press reports, Asian

Centre for Human Rights documented 11 cases of alleged extra judicial killings by the RAB in October 2004 alone.

Formed by an executive order of 1 March 2004, the RAB has reported strength of 4,525 personnel drawn from five military and para-military forces - army, air force, navy, Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar and Bangladesh Police. The deployment of members of the armed forces in combat areas amounts to imposition of undeclared emergency. The members of the armed forces, which are not disciplined in policing, have been responsible for blatant extra judicial executions of the alleged criminals. The notoriety that the RAB earned with in a short period is evident from the fact that alleged criminals were reportedly surrendering before the courts to go to jail to avoid being killed by RAB in so-called cross fires. To resolve the problem, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia has now asked the Home Ministry and concerned agencies to launch a 'massive manhunt' for these clandestine extremist groups. But how can the Government act effectively against these militants groups?

## CONCLUSIONS

Terrorism and anarchy in Bangladesh are getting worse day-by-day. We see this by looking at the present situation of the country. After the 8th parliamentary election in Oct 2001, everyone thought that the situation of the country would return to normal and that the law and order and peace and justice would reign again. But actually we observe the opposite. Oppression, repression and injustice are found everywhere. The defeated party is constantly being harassed, threatened and repressed by the ruling party. The terrorists of the ruling party have attacked many minority communities and made their life miserable, simply because they were considered to have voted for the Awami League. Secularism is threatened by rising intolerance. Up to now the government has failed to protect the country from the clutches of terrorism. Bangladesh is an over-populated country with high levels of illiteracy and unemployment and has been targeted by vested interests for a kind of political adventurism. Nevertheless, despite being deeply religious, the common people of the country have no special love for the *jehadis*, though a section of the extremely poverty stricken may be vulnerable to their blandishments if their activities and agenda are not effectively challenged. The militancy may also cash in on the discriminatory nature of the country's educational and economic systems. It is, consequently, necessary to make an objective assessment of the political, economic and cultural factors that enable and sustain the growth of these forces and effective action

must be taken to rid the nation of this menace. If the Government is not sympathetic and their funding and communication linkages are shut down, these groups would not be able to operate and would certainly not be growing in strength. The donors at the annual meeting of the donors and Bangladesh government in Paris in April have set certain conditions in order to keep up their present level of help. These are as follows: 1) establishes good governance, 2) maintain law and order, 3) remove corruption, etc.

Bangladesh joined the international community in strongly condemning those senseless acts of violence. Terrorism today is a global phenomenon posing serious threat to international peace and security. The fight against terrorism therefore requires international understanding and concerted cooperation and action. In this context, I believe that the United Nations provides the best forum to bring the people of the world together to combat by all means, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, this menace. We share the Secretary General's observation that it alone can give "global legitimacy" to the long-term struggle against terrorism. Political parties in Bangladesh will put an end to violence and they will actively take part in parliamentary process to accelerate democratic governance in the country. We should make every effort to build on this momentum to intensify our fight against terrorism. In fact, we should turn our grief into a collective strength. We have to win the fight against terrorism with "sense and sensibility". Our actions against terrorism should not in any way compromise the safety and well being of the innocent

civilian populations, particularly women and children. Many believe that once the proper grievances have been dealt with through political dialogue, some of the terrorist activities will cease. One cannot eliminate terrorism by eliminating the terrorists in the field, the objective would be to get to those who fund terrorist activity and plan it. Another matter that merits attention is that fighting terrorism is more than soldiers and weapons. Some say that if the parties are serious about terrorism, they have to address poverty and thus win the hearts and minds of poor and frustrated youths. How well the present government in Bangladesh translates theory into practice will be the measure of our success against terrorism.

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