

## DU drifts into avoidable trouble

Students' demands logical, response comes too late

STUDENTS of science and biological science faculties of Dhaka University went on indefinite strike from yesterday pressing a four-point list of demands arising out of the introduction of a four-year honours course for an immediate implementation by the university authority. The general body of students, including the student wings of national political parties, have expressed their solidarity with the striking students of Curzon Hall. The decision for an academic shutdown was taken on Wednesday in the wake of uproarious student demonstrations on Tuesday. The latter strayed into the VC's house being ransacked; his car's front glass splintered; and the pro-VC's attempts to engage the students in a dialogue floundered. Neither any classes nor any scheduled examinations have been held since the trouble began.

The students' four demands are: first, declaration of the present four-year honours degrees as equivalent to the previous three-year honours plus one-year masters degrees and four-year Medical, BUET, Mymensingh Agriculture University and BIT degrees. Second, certificates awarded on completion of the honours course must clearly mention that it was of four-year duration. Third, shifting the dates of the special BCS examinations to be held to recruit teachers under the education cadre on a priority basis as per directives of the prime minister. Fourth, making sure that all government and private sector institutions recognise the four-year integrated honours as a professional degree at par with other such degrees.

The students' demands are logical and rational, something which even the embattled DU Vice-Chancellor SMA Faiz has admitted, albeit belatedly. But the 'procedure' or the method applied for articulation went awry. Prior to the adoption of the integrated or special honours course, sufficient thought should have been given to the imperative necessity for introducing it with a complementary package of equivalence to other four-year university level degrees. Their eligibility for recruitment to government, public sector autonomous organisations and the corporate sector ought to have been guaranteed. But they could not appear at BCS examinations which set master's degree as the criterion for candidacy. Now, the university authorities are writing to the Public Service Commission and some public and private sector organisations urging them to recognise four-year honours course degree as a fully fledged professional degree. We wonder, why this exercise was not undertaken earlier on. Does it not sound like eating the humble pie that the university authorities have had to ask back the honours certificates already issued, which did not mention that it was a four-year course as a matter of fact?

Anyway, as the crises boiled over on Wednesday, the VC met with the Prime Minister. He had also talked to the President. An emergency meeting of the Dhaka University Syndicate was held in which all the demands of the students received positive consideration. A notification affirming that the students' demands have been met was circulated by the Dhaka University authorities. In spite of the assurances, the students stuck to their guns and announced the indefinite strike since Thursday, saying that they wanted to see clear signs of implementation of the VC's commitments contained in his declaration before relenting on their programme.

The overarching question here is this: how could the university authorities, or for that matter, the Education Ministry, be so oblivious of the fact that any alteration of the course-length towards attainment of an important degree without guaranteed equivalence to similar degrees would be meting out step-motherly treatment to a segment of the student community? It conjures up such an image of unfairness that it could have landed the university authorities on court cases. So, our point is that which could be done administratively with ease at the appropriate time was left to the vagaries of student demonstrations to sort itself out. At what cost? It is learnt that the students sat six times with the authorities, but nothing came of the sittings. Why? There is cause for self-searching. The maturity, sagacity and credibility of the university authorities have been once again put on the line.

The problem with snowballing is that we may not have seen the last of it. For, a university divided along political lines always bears the portents of many fishing in the troubled waters.

We have a word for the students. Since your demands were so logical and justified, you should have had no use for bellicosity or violence to win a point.

# Lacunae in law enforcement

## Protracted ailment calls for a major operation

MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

VIOLENCE and criminal behaviour, being aggravated by the dynamics of the contemporary society, have registered a manifest increase and the maintenance of law and order has become very difficult. The balance of power within our society is, for understandable reasons, not poised itself very favourably for the advocates of peace or the practitioners of law enforcement. Policemen remain vulnerable to criticism for the manner in which they exercise their discretion and to condemnation when their judgement does not work. The policeman is damned whether he acts or not. Many are of the considered view that such a situation is the end-result of the malpractices prevalent in our law enforcement machinery for a long time. We should, therefore, try to look into those elements of malpractices and hope to seek remedies.

**Suppression of crime :** There is no denying that some elements in the police evade registration of cognisable crime. For evading registration they behave discourteously with the victims of crime. A police station officer resorting to suppression of crime commits an offence under section 166 of the Bangladesh Penal Code and renders a disservice to the citizens. Unregistered offences are thus left unattended and have an adverse impact on prevention and detection of crime. The concealment of cognisable crime, a statistical suicide which the police commit, continues to be a source of weakness and embarrassment to police administrators. This is criminal behaviour.

**Proportion of wrong-doers :** There is no dearth of right-thinking, right-doing, cool courageous and conscientious policemen as can be seen from the reading of the citations for the award of the police medals. However, timely and just action taken by the good policemen in many cases cannot wash out even one of the image shattering misdeeds of the police. In reality good work done by the police over

There are indeed few jobs as demanding as that of police and that is why misconduct of the police severely pinches, irks, annoys and angers the people whereas good deeds performed by police most often prove ephemeral. The sweet taste of appreciation is, thus, more rare to a policeman than is the bitterness of the complaint. But that is the uncomfortable reality of police culture as of today, may be not without justification.

the years pales into insignificance in the face of their illegal actions and uncivilised conduct which really hurts the susceptibilities of the people. The policemen often do not realise that the public expect a high standard of integrity from them. Persons belonging to many other professions fall from the pedestal of public respect but the citizen is ready to dismiss this as one of the frailties of human nature. However, in the case of a police officer such frailties would make headlines. There are indeed few jobs as demanding as that of police and that is why misconduct of the police severely pinches, irks, annoys and angers the people whereas good deeds performed by police most often prove ephemeral. The sweet taste of appreciation is, thus, more rare to a policeman than is the bitterness of the complaint. But that is the uncomfortable reality of police culture as of today, may be not without justification.

**Expected role of police :** In our democratic polity the police is an institution under the hegemony of the legal system with a basic commitment to the rule of law. Police officers are sworn to uphold the law. The enforcers of the law must not be allowed to violate the law. If they are permitted to win cases by dirty methods they will make the law dirty. If the enforcer becomes a law-breaker, it breeds contempt for law. Securing conviction illegally would bring terrible retribution. Law is the means and justice is the end, however painfully long it may be.

**Civil liberty, police brutality and frustration :** The police are authorised to use reasonable and necessary force to arrest a person, to defend themselves or others and

to maintain order. How much force is reasonable and necessary depends upon the facts of the situation and definitely not all instances of use of police force are unreasonable and unnecessary. It may be noted here that the rule of law is primarily concerned with the protection of the accused persons and not of the victims. The dice, it would appear, is, from the very beginning, loaded against police effectiveness. It often becomes difficult for police effectiveness and civil liberties to co-exist in a society governed by rule of law. Such a society feels constrained to sacrifice

police effectiveness at the altar of civil liberties which indeed is as it ought to be.

In the foregoing idealistic backdrop, police officers become defensive and frustrated. The result is often scapegoating of others in expressions as under :

a. "Confessions made before police officers are not admissible in law".

b. "Prosecutors are not under the control of the police."

c. "Even hardened criminals are granted the benefit of the provision of anticipatory bail by the magistrates and judges."

d. "The courts turn criminals loose

as soon as we catch them."

e. "The standard of evidence required by courts is too high to be realistic."

f. "Prisons, instead of being reformatories, are manufactories of criminals."

g. "The government does not give us the resources we need."

h. "Political interference does not allow us to function."

**Possible remedies**

i. Since statistical-result orientation of police department is damaging, this has to be replaced by real disposal along with simultaneous efforts to improve scientific investi-

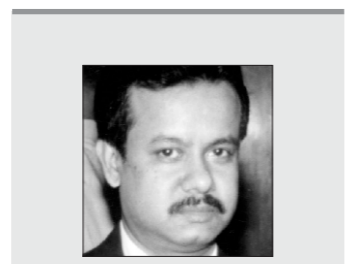
gation.  
ii. Slackness and looseness in supervision must be strictly dealt with. In incidents of policemen committing cognisable offences in particular, the superior police officer should lose no time in getting a criminal case, if prime-facie made out by the facts of the case, registered and investigated by CID/DB. Delay in taking action should be adjudged as supervisory negligence with concomitant penal measures. Swift action will be appreciated by the taxpayers and will be a deterrent to errant police officers.  
iii. Police inaction has to be dealt with seriously because inactive officers mostly go scot-free. In reality, inaction deserves greater punishment because this behaviour encourages police officers to avoid facing situations on one pretext or other and in taking initiative. Inaction, undoubtedly, is image-shattering and carries the risk of becoming an ominous trait in the police culture.  
iv. There must be noticeable reduction and minimisation of corruption and interference in police work. Immediate necessary police action on public complaints could be a salutary illustrative action. Police and public leaders should be able to impart a sense of direction and discipline to the sprawling police administration.  
v. Last but not the least, the police functions of investigation and prosecution have to be separated from functions of prevention of crime and maintenance of order. We should be ready to remove functions of investigation and prosecution from the control of the executive and make it as autonomous as that of the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

If our ailment calls for a major surgical operation, it has to be performed without any more tinkering with the palliatives. Prudence demands bold conceptual and structural changes.

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## Why does evil happen?



MOHAMMAD BADRUL AHSAN

IF God is on good's side, why does evil happen? Why do corrupt men go to power and the greedy ones make money? Why are the children molested, the innocent persecuted and the chaste dishonoured? Why do criminals roam free, while their victims live in fear? Why are thorns made so sturdy and flowers wilt by suns? Why is the pure ignored and the profane given the emphatic glory?

St. Thomas Aquinas writes in *Summa Theologica*, "If all evil were prevented, much good would be absent from the universe. A lion would cease to live, if there were no slaying of animals; and there would be no patience of martyrs if there were no tyrannical persecution." What does it mean? Is good to bad what sun is to shadow, night is to day, soul is to body and heat is to cold, a kind of necessary condition for each other?

In other words, can we say that good is good for the same reason bad is bad? Can we say good is virtue in so much as bad is vice, both intrinsically involved in the expres-

sion of the same mystery that wavers in light and darkness? God is the ruler of the universe, the source of light that sustains truth and virtue. Satan is the Prince of Darkness, the Great Tempter, who is out there to seduce. Is it the conflict between God and his cosmic rival, the Satan, which is manifest in the conflict between good and evil?

W.H. Auden wouldn't agree. He believed in the normality of evil, which means that "evil is unspectacular and always human", which "shares our bed and eats at our own table." Good is also normal, its

good? In fact, good and evil come in pairs: honest and dishonest, truthful and treacherous, piety and perfidy, kind and cruel, and so on. There is an evil for every good, and vice versa. And good and evil also coexist not only in the cosmos like sunshine and storm, but also in the conscience of man like a ruthless killer who loves his children.

Often good comes in the disguise of evil. Snakebite could save you from enemy bullet if it causes you to fall down and miss his aim. Again, the opposite also happens. The away some of his ill-gotten money in charity. A prostitute might be kind to the sick. A rogue man might save someone sinking in a river.

What is evil then? According to American car manufacturer Henry Ford, evil is ignorance bumping its head in the dark. If ignorance is bliss, then evil is when ignorance becomes adventurous and tries to go beyond its limit. In that sense, evil is ignorance two times over, when ignorance is ignorant of itself and has lost its head over that blind rage. But how does it explain why parents would kill their own children? How

Evil is then of two types, impulsive and compulsive. Impulsive evil is like the bubbles, which grow and vanish on the spur of the moment. Frustrated by the arrogance of his former friend Thomas Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, King Henry had shouted in outrage: "Who will rid me of this meddlesome priest." Four knights hunted down Becket at the altar of a church and struck him down with their swords until his skull split open. Four years later, in an act of penance, the king donned a sackcloth walking barefoot through the streets of Canter-

from good and for how long. It is amazing how good and bad are standard bearers for each other, how one is the measure of another, how denial of good is the affirmation of evil, how each has the essence to enunciate other.

Why does evil happen? The answer is that it happens because good happens as well. There are days and nights in human hearts, where the sun rises and sets in the diurnal motion of virtues and vices. Destiny acts like gravitation that pulls together man's faith and fate, as his life goes through the force fields of right and wrong. Why are there saints and scoundrels amongst men? Why are there monster and messiah, righteous and rascal, angel and demon?

Good and evil set the parameters of human instincts, which come under moral judgement. Evil is misguided good, like a mad scientist is a misguided genius. Evil is reckless pursuit of good, when one is hell-bent to secure one's wellbeing without consideration for others. The rapist, thief, robber, usurper, liar, killer, the whole association of evil basically originates from selfish self-aggrandisement, when one is desperate for one's own good with utmost disrespect for others.

Turn the evil to yourself, and think of yourself, as your own victim, there will be no moral judgement. Molest yourself, steal from your own wealth, tell a lie to yourself and even take your own life, the world might take pity on you, but it will not call it evil. The thorn is not evil until it has pricked the hand, which plucked the flowers.

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## CROSS TALK

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manifestation enmeshed in our daily life, in everything we speak, think or do. Yet evil is more convincing than good. Yet evil is more attractive than good.

Why? The French philosopher Andre Gide explained that evil acts could be as gratuitous as good acts. But how is it possible? Can evil happen as normally and naturally as good? Do people love as gratuitously as they hate? Do people destroy as gratuitously as they create? Does the impulse of virtue flow as instantaneously as that of impulse of vice? Is evil ingrained in the human nature as intimately as

gunshot might scare the snake, while you are still standing tall in the line of fire. Hence, good and evil are correlated; one not only diminishes but also develops the other. Robin Hood robbed the rich to help the poor, an example of good being accomplished by evil means.

Now bad and evil are like urn and ash. The evil inhabits the bad and the bad holds the evil. You can say that bad is like a house, which has been occupied by evil by evicting the good. At times, it's not the whole house but a room or two in that house, where evil has displaced good. A dishonest man might give

does it explain why a deranged son would kill his father who refuses to bankroll his drug addiction?

How is ignorance responsible for either of these evils? Are the perpetrators of these crimes ignorant of their dire consequences, or are they under the influence of a darkness, which overshadows their judgement? When an adult man contemplates to ravish an underage girl, what exactly is he ignorant of? Is he ignorant of the moral consequences of his act? Is he ignorant of its legal implications? Is he ignorant of how badly he was going to bruise the mind and body of his victim?

bury while eighty monks flogged him with branches.

But compulsive evil is recurrent, it being manifest in the propensity of the serial killers to kill again and again. Criminals make a career out of compulsive evil, repeating their terrible acts under the influence of habit. These are people who cannot give up, because evil holds them in a straitjacket. Compulsive evil revolves like a vicious circle, crime perpetuated by crime into an endless repetition.

Which shows that evil has a range of its own, one that varies on the basis of how much it deviates

## OPINION

# Defence spending and development: Is there a correlation?

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STUDIES on defence spending and its impact on development show that defence spending has a positive effect on national development. A pioneering work in the field includes a study-- *Defence and Economic Growth in Developing Countries* (1972)--that was authored by Emile Benoit, a Professor of Columbia University. Benoit's econometric study encompasses data analysis from 44 less developed countries (LDCs) during 1950 to 1965. The findings show a strong positive correlation between defence spending and growth rate in those countries.

Janne E. Nolan, a defence economist, asserts in his book *The Military Industries in Taiwan and South Korea* (1986) that, "At the most basic level of political economy the process of national defence and development are inextricable: the former exists as a condition for the later. This is true because secure borders provide the modicum of stability necessary for

economic endeavour."

In fact, defence spending not only sustains and promotes development activities of the nation by preserving freedom and securing borders, it also generates economic and socio-cultural benefits. Such findings are equally applicable in the context of Bangladesh too.

The defence spending in Bangladesh creates new jobs and renders welfare to millions of people by increasing the purchasing power of those whose earning members are employed in the military services. Military training and education also immensely contribute to the development of human resource. Most of the money spent out of defence budget-- like pay, pension and purchase of stores-- gets recycled into the mainstream economy.

Over the last decades, parts of the country were developed as townships and economic/commercial activities were being generated in those places following establishment of cantonments. Instances of poverty in the vicinity of military garrisons are few and far between all over the world.

As defence spendings have reinforced national development in many fields over the years, investing in national defence has become an integral part of our overall development strategy.

The World Bank and The Asia Development Bank Document of May 2003 on *Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review* notes that, "The role of Bangladesh's defence forces in the international peace keeping is a source of significant foreign exchange resources (about US\$200 million a year)."

In the budget speech for FY 2002-2003, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman noted that the receipts from the United Nations on account of Armed Forces services and use of military equipment was Tk. 601 crore [*The Daily Star*, June 7, 2002].

That aside, disaster-coping mechanism in Bangladesh is now much stronger, as can be seen from the reduced impact of catastrophic disasters in recent past. Despite the scale of damage, normal life could be restored quickly and the

development process sustained. A substantial part of this success may be reasonably ascribed to the armed forces.

Bangladesh Army has also executed numerous programs for the socio-economic and infrastructure development in the CHT region, besides maintaining order. At different times the Armed Forces assisted the civil administration in restoring law and order in the country, curbing smuggling, combating terrorism and unearthing illegal arms.

Bangladesh Army has been conducting counter-narcotics operations over last couple of years to combat illicit drug production and trafficking in greater Chittagong. The benefits derived from military's deployment for law and order stabilization and to rein in anti-social activities can not be measured in

terms of money alone.

A strong deterrence to anti-social elements is itself a long-term investment. Foreign investors' knowledge of our ability to curb in hooliganism and extortionist activities helps building our image as a credible nation.

Money saved by reducing the instances of smuggling and poaching in the land and sea borders of the country is a staggering amount, if one must believe the volume of illegal trading in bordering areas. While a lot needs to be done to stop such activities, much progress has been underway. The cost of captured smuggled goods is Taka 15,000 crores per year, according to some estimate.

Soldiers of Bangladesh Army are now constructing or reconstructing 15 roads (500 km) under four

projects at a cost of Tk 600 crore, which is much less than the costs estimated initially by other organizations.

Bangladesh Army personnel have also helped in the construction, re-construction and protection of a number of embankments, including the Dhaka Flood Protection Embankment and the Dhaka-Narayanganj-Demra (DND) Embankment.

In the industry, Bangladesh Armed Forces have been making vital contributions to national welfare since the inception of the nation. Sena Kalyan Sangstha (SKS), a self-financing welfare organization of Bangladesh Army, renders very commendable services to the nation by producing quality consumer goods, depositing large amount of taxes in the government exchequer every year

and providing employment to the people of different classes.

Bangladesh Machine Tools Factory (BMTF) was handed over to the Bangladesh Army management on 4 July 2000 in the face of recurring losses incurred by this leading engineering enterprise of the nation. Under army management, the factory has turned into a cash cow in two years' time, repaying its outstanding debt of Tk. 443.48 crore [*The New Nation*, 11 June 2003].

Similarly, Khulna Shipyard Limited, another losing enterprise, turned into a profit-making concern under the management of the Bangladesh Navy.

Following military deployment in 1998, the revenue income from Chittagong port increased by Tk 700 crore and the military's deployment in PDB stations in 1998 increased daily production of electricity from 1788 megawatt to 2680 megawatt.

The Bangladesh Navy has had a vital role in resisting smuggling and piracy, checking drug trafficking, policing illegal fishing in our marine zone and curbing *Jalka* catch. Since March 2003, Navy alone has

recovered goods worth about Tk 44 crores by launching anti-smuggling drives in our territorial waters.

In addition, contributions of Bangladesh Armed Forces in the promotion of education, health care, conservation of environment, development of forest resources and construction of dwelling houses for the poor people are major moves toward socio-economic development.

The military also serves as a vocational institution for the nation by improving the human development index of its personnel. The technical skill imparted to every soldier adds to our overall national skill.

As defence spendings have reinforced national development in many fields over the years, investing in national defence has become an integral part of our overall development strategy.

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