

Public participation and cost-effective policing



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

HERE is no denying that there exists a need for ensuring a system of law enforcement commensurate with the requirements of self-sustained economic growth. Policing in Bangladesh is based on a paramilitary, paternalistic, colonial, empire-building and capitalistic exploitation of a colony. In Bangladesh, retrogressive steps with mounting distrust of the police and changes in recruitment policies with political considerations have demoralised and frustrated the police personnel. Policing in Bangladesh has thus always faced a crisis of legitimacy. The public perceives the police as cruel, callous and corrupt while the police regard the public as illegitimate. This is a natural outcome not only of the colonial past but also of a tendency on part of successive dictatorial regimes to deviate from 'due process' to perpetuate their power. The legal principle of rule of law, which gives the practical expression to citizen's rights and obligations and determines the style of policing, is the first casualty.

Integrated approach and cost effectiveness

Experts in law enforcement are of the considered view that an integrated system envisaging multi-agency approach and broad-based consultation can radically change public perception of police performance, improve police morale, reduce fear of crime, and incidents of violence and create an environment congenial for effective interest identification, interest formulation, and interest integration.

The police are responsible for the protection of life, liberty and property of citizens. For the performance of this basic function the resources of the police, in advanced countries, have always been quite substantial. Computerised data-bases covering a large variety of policing functions, especially incident logging, control and command operations, automatic fingerprint recognition with the ability to make a million comparisons in hours, helicopters and various types of photographic and video equipment are used by the police forces in these countries. Voluntary public resource-input has supplemented budgetary allocations.

The police in Bangladesh, on the other hand, suffer from the limitations arising out of resource-

STRAIGHT LINE

In Bangladesh there is a conflict and hostility between the police and the public. The reasons are not hard to find. When the people are fighting for realisation of constitutional goals, the police are used to subjugate them. Our police are police without consent. To enlist public support for police operations is not an easy task, especially because of the long-standing reservations about the honesty and efficiency of the police. For cost effective policing in Bangladesh, public identification with police tasks has to be facilitated for ensuring a greater degree of police responsiveness to public demands.

constraints. Resource inadequacy, large population and budgetary constraints characterise the economy of the country. Not only is there a huge public debt and the concomitant debt servicing draining out the niggardly resources available with the exchequer, there is also rampant corruption found all over the country.

Bangladesh economy does not have the benefit of buoyancy. Naturally, the cost of controlling crime and conducting investigations is colossal. Thus there is a need for not only a substantial increase in the budgetary allocation for the police but also adding it to the resource-input of the community. The development of the community's self-policing role ensures cost-effective policing because it augments limited police resources. Thus the addition of the community's resources to police resources definitely reduces the burden on the public exchequer and makes the concept of police performance commensurate with the value for money thereby reducing overall policing costs a reality.

Public involvement

The cause of crime are complex and multifarious. Everyone agrees that the criminal justice system (comprising the police, courts, prison and probation services, and the prosecution), on its own cannot hope to succeed in reversing the upward trend in crime figures. The underlying causes of crime lie within society itself, and therefore, if the concern of the public can be transferred into positive action then much can be achieved.

Within the criminal justice system, the police are basically responsible for the prevention and detection of crime implying, of course, the protection of life and property and the preservation of public peace. The perform these functions in accordance with the fundamental principles of 'consent and balance' and 'independence and accountability', police forces in advanced countries have evolved strategies ensuring close involvement of the public in their crime control functions. This is so because information flowing from the public to the police is of vital importance in the crime solving function of policing. If adequate

information is provided to pinpoint the culprit fairly accurately, the crime will be resolved. This is borne out by various studies, whether conducted by observation, analysis of records or both.

Public and crime solving

Experience indicates that a high proportion of crimes are solved immediately because either the offenders were caught in the act, or were still at the scene of the crime when the police arrived, or their identity was given to the police by the victim or a witness. Of the rest, a high proportion was cleared up through questioning of offenders who admit other offences to be 'taken into consideration'. It is often found that the majority of offenders are detected in circumstances that do not involve the exercise of detective skills.

The benefit of many studies convince us that where the community is supportive, police requests for members of the public who saw the incident concerned, or 'saw anything suspicious' to come forward, can be expected to yield results. It such a community the close relationship between the police and the public as regards the sharing of information and thus the likelihood of successful detection act as a deterrent to the potential criminal. After the event, it is the same close sharing of information that will lead investigative policing to a likely successful conclusion. The more the information the more the police can begin their investigation 'following actual leads and the less the recourse to stereotypes becomes the basis for starting investigation'.

Experience in UK

In UK, since the adoption of 'policing by objectives' strategy, the tendency in the police forces of England and Wales to give prominence to crime prevention through public involvement and community-based policing in setting goals and objectives has been clearly discernible. This approach is backed at an institutional level by 'multi-agency' policing, crime prevention panels, and other police-initiated forums where the community's self-policing role has been developed. In addition, many forces, particularly the London

Metropolitan Police in the early 80s, had also seen a greater media profile, with an enlargement of public relations department and the use of videos and glossy materials to get the police message across'.

Holistic approach and our problems

The 'multi-agency' approach involves police collaboration with other agencies, 'social, economic, cultural and educational' to develop solutions which address the root causes rather than the symptoms of crime. The assumption is that through better understanding of all the facts of any type of anti-social behaviour, the community, including the police, should be able to produce constructive, co-operative ventures to prevent or reduce the phenomenon, thus avoiding costly reactive policing.

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Failure of the political institutions to develop in the aftermath of independence and breakdown of the system at short intervals did not create conditions conducive for the legitimacy of the police. The situation, more or less, remains the same today. The community does not support the police because it sees them socially and politically oppressive and in no way fulfilling a protective role.

The flow of information from the community to the police is most often activity aimed at obtaining information, comes to be regarded as the random harassment of the community at large, irrespective of involvement in crime. For efficiency, the necessary information has to be extracted out of the community, often by force. This is done by the field officers either through a network of 'paid informers', payments being made out of money extracted from parties always willing to pay bribes to harass their opponents through the agency of the police or high profile activities such as stopping people randomly in the streets, raiding premises, taking people in for questioning, not on the basis of information already

received, but as part of an attempt to secure information. This stop and search method creates deterrence and gives information at the expense of public alienation.

The desired course

In Bangladesh the pressure to solve crime is indeed very great. In the absence of effective community policing or crime prevention through the willing co-operation of the public, smooth flow of information is replaced by arbitrariness. The result is unscientific investigation and random use of preventive section of the law. The objective condition in Bangladesh encourage the police personnel to ignore the need for an open and co-operative attitude towards the public. In fact, our police have become 'marginalised' from the community.

Since large financial outlays for policing expenditure will not be forthcoming in the years to come, Bangladesh police should be in constant need for reviewing its concepts and its operational techniques. However, in the ultimate analysis, police cannot cope effectively with crime without the willing and conscientious co-operation of the public at large.

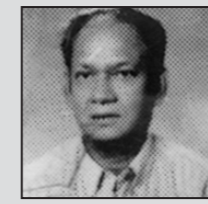
To enlist public support for police operations is not an easy task, especially because of the long-standing reservations about the honesty and efficiency of the police. Community policing may be desirable because it is a condition for success but is not an alternative to law enforcement. A visible effectiveness of police actions and sharing of aspirations between the police and the community for curbing crime would be necessary. The police, on their part, must also identify themselves with the community's thinking.

It has to be admitted that police resources are finite and therefore, too heavy a reliance on police power to solve basic social problems is unwise. In fact, policing in a democratic society has to seek a fresh ethical basis and come to rest on a form of social contract between the police and the public.

For cost effective policing in Bangladesh, public identification with police tasks has to be facilitated for ensuring a greater degree of police responsiveness to public demands. One cannot ignore the positive outcome of the addition of the resources of the community to the meagre resources of the police. The intertwined perception and action of the police and the public will result in cost-effective policing which is a basic requirement of resource-poor economies like Bangladesh.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former Secretary and IGP.

Curtain drawn on a great event



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

WITH the curtain falling on the Football World Cup in Germany after full one month, when the world remained spell bound, a great event has come to a close. The next will be the first in Africa, in South Africa.

To begin with it is the scale of the sporting event. Since it is pure sport there is no controversy. There is camaraderie on a world scale. The event attracts the best footballers of the world. A healthy, happy wind blows through the whole event and it is a feat to keep up the tempo for an entire month. If the footballers are the greatest attraction the public is equally important.

Glued to their seats in the stadiums in various cities in Germany culminating in the grand final in capital Berlin, it is an event that will be long remembered. Football fans and fanatics and there are millions spread over the world. And of course there are many more millions watching the event in their home on TV screens. It's the joy of sharing moments of the football match with friends and family alike. World Cup brought moments of both unbounded joy and huge disappointments, to see the fancied team losing.

Bangladesh has lived sleepless nights, thanks to World Football. The matches were played at nights according to our time and most of them between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m. How

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

Bangladesh, with its football playing dreams left for the future, nevertheless got involved as if its own team was playing. The country was decked with flags from all over the world. They were flying atop high buildings. There was also a brisk sale of flags. There was fierce rivalry amongst fans and the country was evenly divided between Argentina and Brazil, two top football playing nations of the world. Their unexpected early elimination from the Cup, spread gloom within Bangladesh.

could one miss Ronaldo heading the ball in the corner of the adversary's net? Bangladesh, with its football playing dreams left for the future, nevertheless got involved as if its own team was playing. The country was decked with flags from all over the world. They were flying atop high buildings. There was also a brisk sale of flags. There was fierce rivalry amongst fans and the country was evenly divided between Argentina and Brazil, two top football playing nations of the world. Their unexpected early elimination from the Cup, spread gloom within Bangladesh. The fans would have great difficulty in locating these countries on the map, but that did not matter. The names conjured ideas of affinity.

Football, the glorious game of uncertainty, along with high drama, brought the most unexpected two teams face to face -- France and Italy -- in the World Cup final. People could easily identify with Zinedine Zidane, the Algerian born, who all his life has played for France and = of the highest kind. This World Cup was his swan song. And from a hesitant start on the road to final, Zidane, the Captain steered his team to the final to face neighbour Italy. France had just done the dragon slaying by sending packing Brazil by a brilliant goal engineered between Zidane and Thierry

Henry.

Then began the nerve tingling final at the stroke of midnight Bangladesh Time. Zidane scored a magnificent goal from a penalty. Shortly thereafter the Italians scored an equaliser from a spectacular header. This situation continued for the full ninety minutes and on one occasion a sure goal bounced back from the cross bar denying a victory to the Italians. Similarly a powerful header from Zidane was saved by the Italian goalkeeper in an awe inspiring fashion. It was 30 minutes of extra time. The deadlock could not be broken. Meanwhile the good natured Zidane made a bad foul on an Italian player and was shown the Red Card. Thus ended in ignominy a great career of a brilliant footballer.

It was penalty time. How the French team must have waited for Zidane to put the ball deftly in the corner of the Italian net. But he was sitting on the spectators. The goalkeepers had to face the penalties. Italians scored all five and the French, Oh! Horror, they missed one of the penalties. The Berlin stadium became a sea of Italian flags and the Italians, naturally, went wild!

Arshad-uz-Zaman is a former Ambassador.

Cowardice act of extreme cruelty

As would be expected, the Bush administration, seized on the events to try to promote its "war on terror" -- the pretext it has invoked in seeking to establish, through military conquest, strategic dominance in the oil-rich Middle East and in mounting sweeping attacks on democratic rights at home. "We will stand with India on the war on terror," declared Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

BILLY I AHMED

THE coordinated bomb blasts of 11 July in Mumbai Railway Transport Network is a grisly and cowardice act by any count. Mumbai is India's most populous city with eighteen million people and is its financial hub.

The Western Railway Transport Network stretches up to twenty kilometers into the suburbs, commuting some six million people to and from work daily. At least 200 were killed and more than 400 injured, when eight bombs exploded, in quick succession, on or near seven commuter trains traveling along the Western Railway during the Tuesday evening rush hour.

The bombs were timed and placed to inflict maximum loss of life. They blew apart railway cars packed with passengers. The police investigators said that many of the bombs were placed in overhead luggage carriers.

"The aftermath was televised across the nation, with images showing the wreckage of mangled trains, torn limbs and mangled, injured commuters, some with blood-streaked faces." Whatever the so-called aims of the bombers, the deliberate cruel slaughter of commuters is a horrific crime and can only promote political reaction in India and around the world.

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The Indian government has ordered security forces to go on high alert in all Indian cities. In a statement released to the press, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh vowed that state authorities "will work to defeat the evil designs of terrorists and will not allow them

to succeed."

No group had claimed responsibility for the terrorist attack. But Indian media are reporting that unnamed high-level government sources have said that the bombings were "clearly" the work of Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT), an Islamist terrorist organisation that is opposed to the Muslim majority state of Jammu and Kashmir remaining part of the Indian Union. The bombings, according to these sources, were aimed at provoking communal strife within India, in the belief that a Hindu backlash against India's Muslim minority would rebound to the benefit of the anti-Indian insurgency in Kashmir and undermine peace negotiations between India and Pakistan.

India's security forces have sought to crush the insurgency in Kashmir and separatist agitations in other parts of the country through ruthless repression. Torture, murder, infiltration and provocation, and campaigns aimed at uncovering "terrorists" through mass detentions are routine.

A spokesman for the organisation has denied it had anything to do with Tuesday's terrorist attacks in either Srinagar or Mumbai. According to 'The Hindu', LeT representative Dr. Abdullah, condemned both attacks as "inhuman and barbaric" in a telephone call to several media organisations in Srinagar. "Blaming the LeT for such inhuman acts is an attempt by the Indian security agencies to defame the freedom struggle in Jammu and Kashmir," claimed Ghaznavi.

Indian Home Minister Shivraj Patil has said authorities were warned that an attack was coming, but the "place and time was not known."

In December 2001, India's government, then led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), seized on a terrorist attack on India's parliament, blamed on the LeT, to push through a draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and to threaten war on

long-time arch-rival Pakistan, which it accused of supporting the LeT. In an attempt to force Pakistan into making major concessions, India's government kept a million troops in battle formation near the Pakistan border for almost a year.

The United Progressive Alliance, which replaced the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, as India's government following the May 2004 elections, repealed POTA, but many of its anti-democratic provisions were included in the legislation that it introduced in its stead.

In contrast to the reaction of the BJP government in December 2001, the Congress Party-led UP government has -- at least thus far -- leveled no accusations of Pakistani involvement in either the Mumbai or Srinagar terror attacks. Islamabad, for its part, was quick to denounce the Mumbai bombings.

The Shiv Sena -- the BJP ally and fellow proponent of Hindu supremacy that control Mumbai's municipal government and forms the official opposition in the state of Maharashtra -- responded to the terrorist atrocity by demanding that the Congress Party-Nationalist Congress Party state government resign, since it had failed to ensure the safety of the citizenry.

Shiv Sena party chief Bal Thackeray sought to blame the bomb blasts on the Congress' pursuit of better relations with Pakistan. "The Centre is busy operating bus services to Pakistan and Islamabad, on its part, is busy pushing terrorists into India," Thackeray told the Times of India. "I wish to warn Congress that people's patience is wearing very thin. If the terrorists are not dealt with firmly, there will be an explosion of discontent against Congress governments not only at the Centre, but in the states as well."

Billy I Ahmed is a researcher.

Universal literacy must for manpower development

There is no doubt that the proposed nation-wide programme on literacy will involve a huge amount of fund. Government may mobilise fund from all sources to finance the programme because the return form such investment will be manifold in the long-run. In this case the Chinese proverb, "If you lend me a fish you feed me for a day, but if you show me how to fish, you feed me forever" should be remembered.

DR M ASHRAF ALI

PERHAPS nobody is going to deny that education is the process which unlocks the door to modernisation. It has been found through research that there is a positive correlation between the rate of literacy and per capita income of a country. It is 'obvious that now we are feeling the pinch of neglecting the education sector in the past. No country can be expected to move ahead or make any headway in its effort for development with about 60 per cent of its people being illiterate.

According to the census report published recently, it is estimated that there would be about nine million illiterates in the country. Needless to mention that some of the vital national programmes, such as population control and family planning, increased food production, etc, are greatly hindered due to non-participation by the general masses who lack even the minimum of awareness needed for voluntary participation in these programmes. It does not need to be emphasised at great length that in order to involve the general masses in nation-building activities, minimum of education to raise their level of awareness is urgently needed.

Manpower development does not mean only the development of high-level manpower. It also

means the development of capabilities of every citizen of the country for meaningful utilisation. In order to do this it is essential to gear up the primary education and at the same time organise adult education on a massive scale. It has been proved that sporadic efforts by voluntary organisations cannot be sufficient to educate nine million illiterates. Nation-wide planning and mobilisation of resources, both financial and material is essential for such a gigantic endeavour.

Basic education which includes both primary and adult education was never taken seriously in this country. We had heard of introducing universal primary education in the country even during the Pakistan days, but in reality very little progress had been made toward achieving this goal. Adult education also met the same fate. Only half-hearted efforts were made in this regard with no positive results at all. Many people believe that learning the alphabet and being able to sign one's name is enough of education for the adults. It is clear that in these days of technology literacy of this standard will never be useful and functional in order to participate in the development programmes. In order to be useful and functional, the standard of literacy should be of the standard of class V of the primary education level. Since this factor

was totally ignored and literacy of a very low standard was imparted to the illiterates, they reverted back to illiteracy within no time resulting in no progress in adult education.

We talk of democracy, but it is not understandable how democracy can function in a country where 60 per cent of the people are illiterate. It is not clear whether we give lip service or we mean business when we make statements. There is, however, the other side of the coin which means that an educated citizenry can cause trouble for those who engage in exploitation and is easy to keep one in dark and exploit. If we are serious about the need for developing our manpower, why it is that we are not assigning the proper priority to education sector, particularly to basic education which is vital for raising the level of awareness of the masses?

Since it has been proved that spoon-fed and paternalistic development approach has failed, the only remaining alternative is to let the people feed for themselves by providing the basic knowledge and skills required for survival. Toward this goal the following strategies are suggested.

It is necessary to determine the learning needs of the rural people before a programme is launched. This is very important to ensure that proper type of knowledge and skills are being provided to the

illiterates. Different types of literacy programmes by different organisations without clear-cut goals are most undesirable.

On the basis of determined needs, a suitable curriculum has to be prepared which should be aimed at providing the needed awareness as well as skills that can generate some income for the participants. Appropriate textbooks and supplementary reading materials should also be prepared by specialists who are experienced in writing for the adults.

There is a notion that any one can teach in a literacy class. This is far from the truth and probably this has been the reason why literacy efforts have failed in the past. Training of special type is needed to teach the adults and such training should be undergone by all persons engaged in literacy programmes. In this regard the experience of BRAC who have been engaged in literacy work may be very useful.

Preparation and implementation come next which involve proper mobilisation of manpower and financial resources to launch the programme on a nation-wide basis. Appropriate management systems and monitoring and control devices should be established in order to ensure positive results as well as quality of the programme. An intensive course of three months to six months may be enough to make the literacy level quite functional for the participants.

Unless proper follow-up materials are prepared and supplied, the literacy newly attained by the participants may not be retained by them for long. In this respect, supplementary books with useful content should be printed and supplied to the neo-literates for