

The Daily Star

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Industrial Policy Linkages

In setting ourselves goals and targets we are perhaps second to none but when it comes to implementation we are found wanting. The reasons for this hiatus between aims and their attainment are not far to seek. When we announce long-term policy goals we often leave out ground realities of the sector we are setting these for. Also, we ignore the variables, both the self-created variety like the political unrest factor as well as the extraneous kind like, for instance, aid or investment climates. The only footnote we add to these factors is that 'a policy is not the last word,' if need be, this will be finetuned and adjusted to obtaining conditions down-stream.

A new industrial policy has been announced by the government for the next five years, but with goals set for the whole of the coming decade. It seeks a 25 per cent enhancement of the industrial sector's contribution to the GDP and achieve a 20 per cent share in employment creation in next ten years' time.

This is a tall but not necessarily an impossible order provided we can operationally link it up with the agricultural policy. This because of a need for a strong agrobased bias to the industrialisation process. Secondly, if our costs of industrial production are higher than those entailed by the neighbouring countries then their products are likely to sell cheaper in our market. In that context local entrepreneurs will shy away from making fresh investments in the industrial sector. Those countries' costs of production are less than ours largely because they are not as dependent on imported inputs as critically as we have been. On top of it they gain a low tariff access to Bangladesh markets.

No wonder the country remains so vulnerable to a deluge of smuggled goods, its industries are falling sick and new investments are hard to come by.

The standard response to the oft-repeated complaint that the local entrepreneurs are not getting a level playing field with their counterparts in other countries has been that 'well you raise your efficiency level by curbing waste and improve the quality of your products, you will get better domestic and external markets for your products'. While agreeing that the local enterprise does need to be more efficient there is also a concurrent imperative on the part of the government to ensure steady supply of power to the industries. Frequent power stoppages have played havoc with industrial production much the same way that voltage fluctuation below a certain band is damaging to the plants and machineries.

So, an industrial policy divorced from an energy policy is a figment of imagination. The way the energy sector is behaving now has earned us bad name not just within the country but overseas as well. Potential investors, foreign and local alike, never tire of pointing it out as one of our major infrastructural drawbacks. That, by association of thought, leads us to other infrastructure deficiencies which need to be corrected sooner than later.

Content-wise the new industrial policy sounds perfect. Tax rebate on export gains of a plethora of cottage and handicrafts units; creation of a 200m dollar export credit fund by floating bonds to expatriate Bangladeshis, bank loans to entrepreneurs on a priority basis; importance to gas-based industries and power plants for more value addition; emphasis on computer software and IT, withdrawal of development surcharge on cotton import; and development of backward linkages are good features. But the policy package will get us nowhere unless we have the backing of a sound and effective energy policy.

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Kosovo Crisis, International Community and Bangladesh

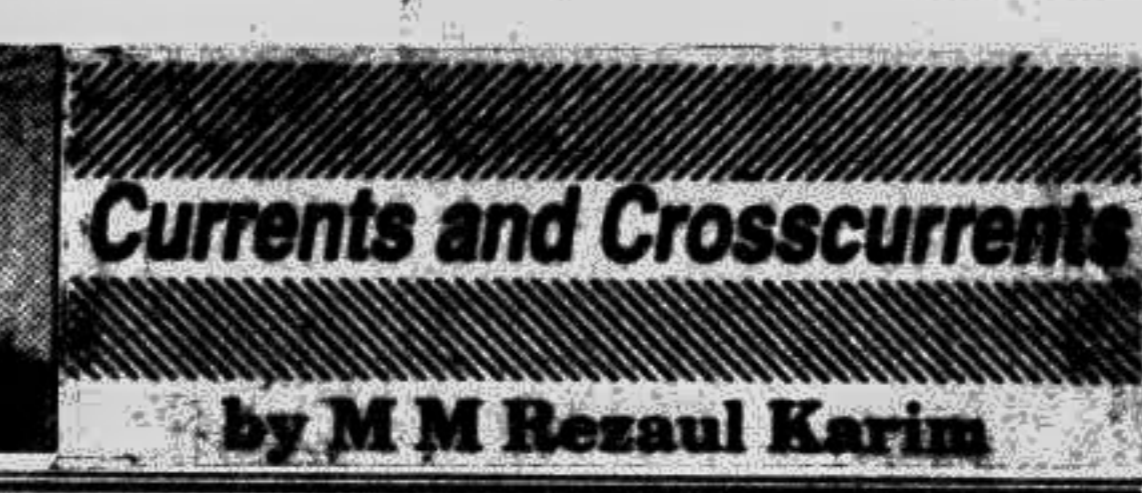
Least the Bangladesh government could have done was to express sympathy for the plight of hundreds of thousand of refugees and to support the policy and actions by which the Kosovan refugees could return to their homeland in an atmosphere of peace and exercise their right to profess and practice democracy without fear and hindrance.

THE graphic description of the continuing trail of human misery, as it has been seen, to unfold itself on television screens to the horror of ordinary viewers, is reminiscent of many of the great tragedies inflicted on human beings by their fellow homo sapiens. The effect is more intense in the present case due to the visual impact of the horrors perpetrated. The heinous practice of ethnic cleansing of parts of former Yugoslavia is by no means a new phenomenon. Since the beginning of this decade, the world witnessed another horrendous episode of such criminal operations on the Bosnian Muslims and Croatian Christians. Although some of the accused have been apprehended and dealt with by the War Crime Tribunals, the leader of the Serbian, Radovan Karadzic is still at large, enjoying protection of Serb mentors.

Now, Serbia itself under President Slobodan Milosevic unleashed a reign of terror in the constituent province of Kosovo whose population, largely ethnic Albanians wanted to free themselves from the clutches of the ruling Serbs and demanded autonomy. With the refusal to meet the demand and in the name of fighting against the regrouped Kosovo Liberation Army, the Serbian troops started a reign of terror in the province. The international community was outraged. The UN Security Council seized with the situation but was rendered impotent to make adequate and effective resolution in the teeth of the opposition of friendly Russians. The protracted diplomatic negotiations among the parties concerned that ensued resulted in the drafting of the Rambouillet Agreement, from which Serbia backed out at the last moment mainly on the plea of not accepting a multi-national peace-keeping force in Kosovo to ensure implementation of the agreement. All subsequent efforts in diplomacy came to naught. Even the celebrated American diplomat and international trouble shooter, Richard Holbrooke failed to bend down the inflexible Milanovic to a compromise.

The NATO came into the picture only as the last resort as being the alternative force to require the unbending

Milosevic to agree to a compromise under which the Kosovans could live in peace and dignity and freely exercise their democratic rights. This was a unanimous decision of NATO to make air strikes on the military and strategic targets of the Serbian war machine both in Kosovo and other parts of the country. This prompted Serbia to intensify their acts of inhuman atrocities on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo by way of a method of systematic and well-planned killing, torture and arson in order to drive the living ones across the frontiers to other places. The purpose of the ethnic cleansing appears, as it does, to attempt an ultimate demographic change by reducing ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo. The tale of horrors of these atrocities was told by streams of refugees, who left their homes in search of safety for foreign lands. The neighbouring states of Albania and



Macedonia as well as the province of Montenegro provided havens for the fleeing refugees, which has now come close to half a million within a period of a few weeks. A million is stated to be hiding in the mountains. The queue of refugees awaiting entry into foreign lands has been stretched to as long as 20 miles. The conditions of these unfortunate people, many of whom had lost their near and dear ones, are almost indescribable. Accentuation of repression by the Serbs reinforced the resolve and action of NATO by intensifying missile attacks and bombing with more sophisticated and heavier weapons. NATO, however, has all along maintained that their targets had been the command stations,

in any case, some spill out effects on civilians are bound to cause aggravation of the tragedy. The intense air attacks finally compelled Milosevic to announce unilateral cease-fire by the Serbs and return of the troops to their barracks. NATO found the proposal inadequate and did not fulfil the conditions which will enable the refugees to return to their homeland and live in peace. They rejected the move and vowed to continue with their air actions until Milosevic agreed to reason.

The NATO action has, indeed, been subject to criticisms from countries like Russia, China, India and a host of demonstrators from all over the world. Russia, for ethnic and historic reasons, was

expected to support the Serbs in their operation as she had supported earlier actions for ethnic cleansing from Bosnia and Croatia. China went against NATO actions in order not to set dangerous precedents on matters of international security by way of somehow passing the United Nations. The UN Secretary General was outraged at Serbian atrocities and condemned it but his organisation had much less teeth than what NATO has. India has always shied away in a situation which smacks of any movement for autonomy and self-determination, obviously having been beset with so many separatist movements in its own country.

But it is strange, rather unfortunate, to learn of the reaction of the Bangladesh government. Commenting on NATO attacks on the 25th March, the government spokesman was reported to have stated, inter alia, their regrets that diplomacy was not allowed to succeed and that they wanted a peaceful settlement. If all the prolonged negotiations at various levels, including the level of Heads of Government at Rambouillet and the subsequent talks by seasoned diplomats were not allowed to succeed, it is clear that the continued intransigence and obduracy of the Yugoslav President was solely and directly responsible for the failure. Least the Bangladesh government could have done was to express sympathy for the plight of hundreds of thousand of refugees and to support the policy and actions by which the Kosovan refugees could return to their homeland in an atmosphere of peace and exercise their right to profess and practice democracy without fear and hindrance.

After all Bangladesh war of liberation provides a glaring example to all of us. Our movement for autonomy till the 25th March 1971 was transformed into the liberation war only after the military crackdown by the Islamabad regime and this caused millions of our citizens to seek refuge in a neighbouring country. We do not, however, want further disintegration of Yugoslavia. What we want is simply to uphold human rights, dignity and freedom of a people and their right to choose the shape of their destiny.



Heart of the crisis: Leaving without the hope to come back

Follow Me, If You are My Leader

by Mohammad Badrul Ahsan

THE holy narrator laments in the Bible, 'I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd' (I King, ch. 21, v. 17). This divine dismay evinced the ethos of an abstract analogy that leaders are to people what shepherds are to flocks. Rollhalbia Nelson Mandela ingested that truth early in his life. As a herd boy in his village in South Africa he had observed that, 'When you want to get a herd to move in a certain direction, you stand at the back with a stick. Then a few of the more energetic cattle move to the front and the rest of the cattle follow. You are really guiding them from behind. That is how a leader should do his work.' If history is the ever unfolding pastureland of human struggles, leaders are shepherds who drive home their people by nightfall.

And history creates its own shepherds as much as it creates its own nightfalls. Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a paralyzed man who inspired in optimism and buoyancy in a nation crippled by the Great Depression. Winston Churchill, a lovelorn child who weathered many defeats before his rise to power, inspired victory in England during World War II. Mahatma Gandhi, an under-dressed politician-saint, stripped the British Empire of its glory in India through passive resistance. Charles De Gaulle, the lanky backbencher, stood robust at the forefront of the French resistance against the Nazi invasion. Leaders often emerge like the nonsense syllables in seat singing, and dominate the music. Joseph Stalin played a modest role in the Bolshevik coup d'etat in 1917, yet he emerged as an important member of the Politburo and dominated the Soviet history.

Thus history produces leaders in so much as they also propel it. The leaders rise through the layers of time like a rocket in its trajectory and last for so long as the course of their destiny. William Pitt became the British Prime Minister when he was not even 25 and died unmarried at 46. Again, Adolf Hitler consistently failed in his studies and grew up as a half-educated young man, untrained for any trade or profession. This man who was seemingly doomed to failure in his youth, eventually created one of the most organized dictatorships in history. A college-dropout haberdasher from Missouri with a congenital eye defect, Harry Truman became US President by accident when Franklin Roosevelt died three months into his fourth term. Never taken seriously even by his own President, the ineffectual former Vice President took tough decisions during his own presidency, one being the firing of

General Douglas MacArthur, the most celebrated war hero of his country.

What are the credentials of leaders then? Obviously, they are the valiant men of vision who get greatness thrust upon them by luck. Zhou Enlai was drawn into politics after he had failed to rank high in the entrance examination, which would have sent him to the United States for college. Lenin accented revolution by the way of his vow to avenge the death of his brother Alexander who was

The leaders are decisive men whose lives embody great causes. It may also be true in the other way around: the great causes often embody decisive leaders. Thrown out of a train in South Africa for the colour of his skin, Gandhi spent the rest of his life fighting against the white domination of India. Martin Luther King's life shaped a dream, which culminated in his death. That dream endures despite scandals of King's womanizing and plagiarism in his doctoral thesis.

hanged for taking part in a plot to assassinate the Czar. More often than not, tragic events deflect the course of life to make redoubtable leaders. The history of the twentieth century could take a different turn had the Vienna Academy of Arts not twice rejected Adolf Hitler who wanted to become a painter. But above all, the leaders are decisive men whose lives embody great causes. It may also be true in the other way around: the great causes often embody decisive leaders. Thrown out of a train in South Africa for the colour of his skin,

'And when we think we lead, we are most led.'
—Lord George Gordon Byron, English poet, *The Two Foscari*

'Ah well! I am their leader, I really had to follow them.'
—Alexandre Auguste Ledru-Rollin, French politician (1807-74)

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Oswald Spengler, the German philosopher, wrote in *The Decline of the West* that 'zucht or breeding had a significant influence on the leaders. He argued that no matter if the leaders came up from the people, the mighty tide of tradition would take hold of them and rule their conduct. He believed that although the English had one William Pitt over a period of 200 years, their tradition enabled them to survive Ramsay MacDonald and Lloyd George.

Thus tradition sets apart the leaders from the rulers. It ordains the leaders and sustains the rulers. The social order transformed from slavery to feudalism to democracy because the same tradition, which upheld the rulers also ushered in leaders who toppled them. The contingents of the Roman army conquered land after land turning their residents into slaves while giving their lands to the Roman settlers. Eventually, a paroxysm of slave uprisings weakened the Roman Empire, and disrupted it completely after the murder of Emperor Maximinus. In modern democracy elections transform a leader into a ruler overnight and sustains him until there is a voter uprising against him.

In that sense the leaders are more of a twentieth century phenomenon. One will not find too many references to leadership in the earlier centuries, except occasional interchangeable allusions to great rulers or warriors who challenged the rulers. Spartacus of Rome, the An-Lushan rebels of China, and Stenka Razin of Russia were viewed as renegades, who had risen against the legitimate authority of their rulers, and were crushed. Peter the Great of Russia brought about many reforms, but he was a cruel despot as well. Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Napoleon Bonaparte, and Chengis Khan were great conquerors who led great armies while their people learned and obeyed them.

Intelligence, instinct and prescience were the essential qualities, which would help a leader keep that balance. Intelligence enables a leader to recognize a challenge and instinct helps him understand it. The latter is what Alexander called his 'hope', Caesar his 'luck' and Napoleon his 'star'. And when the right equation is achieved between intelligence and instinct, the leader is prescient to know which way to lead. But to know where to lead is only the science of leadership, while the art is to know how to lead. De Gaulle tells us that a leader needs authority to per-

suade others to follow him on the chosen road. And authority is derived from prestige or charisma, which emanates from mystery, character and grandeur. Mystery is the measured aloofness of the leader

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from his followers, which is augmented by an economy of words and gestures and a studied manner in bearing and movement. Since, mystery only intrigues, the leader will need character to attract others. De Gaulle defined character as more than moral strength and fortitude. Character of a leader is the fervent desire and inner power to exert his will. Lastly, a leader must exude an aura of grandeur about him to appear animated, spontaneous and masterly.

Machiavelli writes in *Prince* that in the absence of any guiding principle, politics becomes a naked struggle for power. The greatest test of a leader is whether he uses power as a means or an end. Zou Enlai is said to have killed thousands by his own hand and smoked cigarettes in cold blood afterwards. As a revolutionary, his guiding principle was to snatch power from the Goumingdang to embark on the ideological path. But Stalin killed millions more to stay on that path than Hitler killed in World War II. When power is the guiding principle of a leader, it turns him into a desperate ghou, who, as Grotius and Hobbes predicted, would devour the members of its own herd.

A flock is often guided by a bellwether, a sheep that wears a bell and walks ahead of the rest. The politicians who lead demagogues or contest elections wear the partisan bell that rouses the mass. They are the demagogues who gain power by arousing people's emotions. But the true leaders, on the other hand, are aroused to gain power because they want to address people's emotions. Mohandas K Gandhi is perhaps an extreme example of how a leader disciplined his life to become one with the mass. Charles De Gaulle reaffirmed that oneness in his death. In accordance with his wish, he was buried in a seventy-two dollar oak coffin, which was carried to his grave by his fellow villagers — a butcher's assistant, a cheesemaker and a farmer.

That's the ultimate thing about being a leader. Unless his guiding principle is people, he isn't worthy of being followed. Such a leader may know where to lead, because he has intelligence, instinct and prescience. He may also know how to lead with mystery, grandeur and character. But he certainly doesn't want to lead his followers so much as he wants to lead them on. Bob Dylan sang in 1965, 'Don't follow leaders/Watch the parking meters'. I for one wouldn't follow a leader who doesn't follow me first. Instead, I would watch the parking meters or do whatever Bob Dylan meant by that.

Friday Mailbox

Oppressors in khakis

Sir, The BBC has recently reported that a British woman working in Bangladesh was raped at one of the police stations in Dhaka some time in 1998, when she went there at midnight to report a case of theft of property at her residence. The report was based upon an Embassy cautionary note circulated in the Bangladesh press urging its female citizens not to go to any police station alone. This has unfortunately generated a lot of unnecessary heat in the Home Ministry. The newly appointed Home Minister seems to be angered by such an 'unfounded charge' against his 'uniformed men'. He has almost categorised the event as a conspiracy hatched to tarnish the image of the government. The authorities have perhaps forgotten or perhaps does not wish to remember the recent activities of our mighty cops in every nook and corner of the country. Only the records of last year show that no less than 16,000 policemen were punished for various offences, lapses and breach of discipline.

Dr A Z Mia
Azimpur, Dhaka

Skeleton in the closet

Sir, The news item about the discovery of a decomposed body in the overhead water tank at the headquarters of the DB is so macabre that it is hard to believe. What prompted the policemen to do such a horrible act, may be they were becoming bored with the common place killings like Rubel, Sajal, Mujibar and others and wanted to create mystery and suspense by doing something different. We feel sorry for those persons who had to drink and use the water of that tank, just to think of it makes one sick with revulsion. What has got into our policemen, have they gone berserk to act so abominably?

Nur Jahan
Chittagong

Dropping dead at DB tank

Sir, Queer things are happening these days. A dead human body was found in a overhead water tank.

All police tanks and offices have now to be inspected, cleaned and disinfected. That means police reforms at the fastest possible speed; noting the observation by WB and other UN and donor agencies that our police appear to be superbly corrupt (perhaps beyond redemption).

The ball is in the court of the Prime Minister. We are looking at her through the Home Ministry.

A Zabr
Dhaka

The PM with the power portfolio

Sir, Well, it is about time that our PM should come up with a direct clear-cut statement on the power situation of the country — after all she is holding the portfolio. We read in the DS that she had said: 'if it's needed I will bring in readymade power-plants...'. Well, it is being needed for a long long time now! So, Madam PM, just do it!

An Anxious Observer
Chittagong

Autocratic global leadership

Sir, The global leadership is in a crisis, as seen from the NATO bypassing of the UNSC on Kosovo issue. The world's only super-power has started misusing and over-using its powers against big and small nations. The WTO is polarised in favour of the 'big brothers', using undue leverage to pry open the markets in the Third World on the plea of open market philosophy. Many of the latter clauses do not suit the DCs and LDCs, who lack the structure and the infrastructure to compete at the global level. This has become an issue of hot debates. The UN financial agencies are veering around to the objections, but the G7 countries appear to be dehumanised in their approach to grab the virgin markets without a fair playing ground.

Might is right is the message, direct or indirect, whether it is Kosovo, the bus links across the South Asian subcontinent, or the energy pipelines from CIS to Dhaka, and later up to Singapore (Burma or Myanmar has to be made seamless during the first decade of the millennium).

The capitals of the South Asian nations are being pulverised to toe the line through economic and financial pressures. The riots in Indonesia have some genesis which can be identified; and similar seeds are being sown in Malaysia (Bangladesh beware!). Once the Hong Kong financial capital collapses, the balkanisation of the South Asia may start-phase by phase, to ensure divide and rule policy. Bangladesh and Pakistan are likely to be used for leverage against the largest democracy in the world, which is a very rich consumer market lasting the whole of the 21st century.

It is markets, not guns. The turbulent areas in Europe will be levelled out to discourage diversion of interest, as is revealed by NATO militarism against Yugoslavia or Serbia.

South Asia is going to play a hub role during the next century, and Bangladesh will be kept busy as the only available base in Asia of the super power, like it or not. The guest has to be serviced, invited or uninvited. They also serve who stand and stare.

A Husnain
Dhaka

University woes

Sir, The admission in the government universities has become a serious problem, as the students who succeed at the Medical Colleges, IBA and BUET also apply for Dhaka University. This will create a problem for the students who will appear for the test. Like every year these students will occupy the top-most positions and depart after the results of BUET and Medical College are announced. This creates a vacuum and also deprives the students who could have had a chance there.

This system appears improper. Therefore I request to the heads of institutions that a rule should be implemented so that the admitted students must submit their original mark sheets or certificates. The students once admitted should not be transferred to other institution unless the parent's service is transferred.

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