

Understanding with Tokyo widens

Follow-up important

PRIME Minister Begum Khaleda Zia's visit to Japan began on a symbolic note and has expectedly ended with a wider understanding on different areas of cooperation. The PM's opening of a plaque for construction of a Shahid Minar in the likeness of the Dhaka one on the soil of Tokyo goes to lay the foundations of a new linguistic and cultural bridge between Bangladesh and Japan.

Japan is one country with whom Bangladesh has had an essentially two-layered relationship from the very inception: people-to-people and government-to-government. The inter-people empathy dating back to our liberation war days mingled with the then Japanese government's unflinching moral support to our cause to lay a solid foundation to the bilateral ties.

As if in a tribute paid to the long-standing good relations with Tokyo, Dhaka has reaffirmed its support to Japan's bid for membership in the United Nations Security Council. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi reciprocated the friendly overture by praising Bangladesh's role in the UN peacekeeping missions and her initiatives for greater regional cooperation.

The exchange of pleasantries, one cannot fail to notice, took on a down-to-earth character which, to our mind, is a welcome sign of maturity attained in the relationship.

In purely practical terms, the two governments have signed three agreements -- on apprentice training for Bangladeshi workers in Japan, disaster management and cultural exchange. Early warning system being our weak point in the disaster preparedness area, it is good to know that Japan will provide us with high-tech meteorological instruments. The accord to stage cultural events annually can help bolster relationship at the people's level. The youth training programme will benefit our small and medium sized industries.

Some new areas of cooperation that have been already identified but would require further collaboration concern law enforcement, human security, environmental protection and development of small and medium enterprises in Bangladesh. Follow-up is of critical importance.

We want the third dimension of bilateral relationship e.g. private sector-to-private interaction to bloom and add up to the people-to-people and government-to-government ties between us.

Stop studying, start solving

Those who created water-logging must set it right

THE Dhaka city coming under deluge even with 152mm rainfall which would be the norm rather than an exception in the thick of monsoons, the deep-seated causes of water-logging are coming to light.

But while people suffer the excruciating hardship, their exasperation knows no bound at the theorisation, wrangling, blame-trading that go within government circles and between its different agencies. They have allowed themselves to be in a state of beleaguered desperation. Whereas actions are needed, immediate solutions warranted, they are proving to be past-masters in the art of probing with the pretense of a scientific approach to a vastly aggravated water-logging problem.

Grounds beneath their feet have already slipped for any planned approach, only a high cost partial salvation maybe possible. It is revealed by virtue of an expert committee report that a havoc has been wreaked on the entire drainage system by unplanned roads and illegal structures attributed largely to none other than the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC).

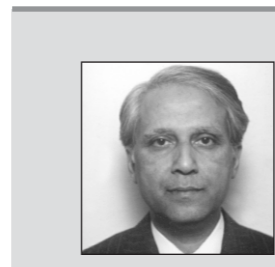
The probe committee has spotted at least ten major points where water run-off is blocked with the rains inundating the adjoining areas. This, by and large, involves removal or demolition of structures at cost to the exchequer. In addition, there will have to be some by-passes with sizeable amount of money spent on their construction.

It is learnt to our horror that DCC ward commissioners had felt pressured to build those roads without drainage links to meet public demands. As if they themselves were reluctant to do it!

It is an open secret that authorities in charge of issuing work orders, engineers and contractors are all beholden to any construction project like butterflies would be to flowers, because it holds out the prospect of making tons of money. They got it when laying the roads, they might do it again when demolishing or altering them; never mind the act of removal itself implying waste of scarce resource.

Let the responsible be held to account for the unplanned roads while an oversight body makes sure that the new spendings will have been properly audited.

The United Nations: Reforms and challenges



MUHAMMAD ZAMIR

SIXTY years have passed since the signing of the UN Charter on 26 June, 1945. The United Nations, within this period, has grown and evolved into a complex international organisation. It has been praised for its efforts in various areas of public life. It has also been criticised for its inability to save the world from conflicts. It has gained in its socio-economic and cultural dimensions but has not scored sufficiently in the carrying out of its political responsibilities. In fact, in many parts of the world, the United Nations Security Council is viewed not only as having lost its moral authority but also as being anachronistic and unrepresentative.

Critics have also pointed out that the United Nations has failed to exploit conditions that emerged after the end of the Cold War. It has been suggested in this context that the United Nations could have done much more in a unipolar world -- particularly in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Iraq and in many countries in Africa. Many have also underlined UN failures that persist through occupation in Palestine.

This catalogue of underachievement on the political front has been accompanied by charges of mismanagement, corruption and lack of transparency in a bloated international bureaucracy.

US legislators have particularly reiterated their criticism more than once. A bipartisan task force led by former Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Democrat Senator George Mitchell, supported by Representative Henry Hyde has not only raised the question of

reforms within the United Nations but also suggested that unless this was done, there could be possible withholding of US dues to the United Nations (a totally irresponsible and controversial threat).

All these factors created great pressure on the United Nations and its policy formulation elite. The UN Secretary General and his close advisers, not insensitive to prevailing international criticism, undertook efforts not only to tackle the situation

UN peacekeepers in Congo.

This Report has also dealt with the very sensitive question of expansion of the Security Council. The UNSG believes that the SC membership should be raised to 24 from the existing 15. He has given two options and left it to world leaders to make their own choice. These are -- (a) add 6 new permanent members as well as 3 new two-year term members, or (b) create a new tier of 8 semi-permanent members chosen for

known as G4 -- and other aspirants like Egypt, Nigeria and South Africa would obviously prefer the first option within the Report, and if possible, with veto powers. They however face, for obvious reasons, serious challenges from Argentina, Italy, Pakistan and South Korea. There is also simmering discontent from China with regard to Japan's inclusion into this expansion exercise. Members of the OIC have also gone on record and have asked for one permanent seat for a Muslim country.

knows that it is not going to be very easy. Any expansion of the Security Council would involve amendment of the UN Charter and an approval of at least two-thirds of the total members of the UN.

One thing is clear: The future ahead is complex and that the attitude of the US will be critical for this process. The US till now, has openly expressed support only for Japan, given the fact that Japan is already paying 19.5 per cent of all expendi-

coordinate and sustain the work of helping countries making the transition from war to peace. This would be particularly helpful is Central and West Africa.

After this comes several other issues that are continuing to challenge the UN: the environment, international trade, fighting AIDS and HIV and poverty reduction. In all these areas, the US has proved to be the pivotal factor. Its absence from the Kyoto Protocol, withdrawal from the International Criminal Court, insistence on subsidies in agriculture, opposition to the sharing of R and D related to generic medicine and insufficient support for reproductive health and family planning -- have all contributed to serious delimitations for multilateral initiatives.

We in Bangladesh have been concerned about UN reforms for some time. We have also pointed out that the consultations for the reform process should be broad-based and not be guided by perceived interests of the few. In addition, we have also strongly endorsed the UNSG's call to developed countries to increase development assistance and debt relief, grant of immediate duty-free and quota-free market access to all LDC export and the raising of their ODA.

The UN is an important crucible for fulfilling aspirations. Despite many setbacks, the UN has made the world a better place over the last six decades. We have to move forward and overcome shared problems and threats still affecting global peace and security. We cannot afford to fail, as we did, in the latest review conference on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. In more ways than one, it was irresponsible. We have to find least common denominators and overcome the threats posed by poverty, disease, environmental degradation, bad governance and civil conflict.

Nearly 180 political leaders will assemble in New York later this year. They will have to rise over their individual interests and forge a common platform. Only then, will be have true reform within the United Nations.

Muhammad Zamir is a former Secretary and Ambassador -- any response to mzamir@dhaka.net.

POST BREAKFAST

We in Bangladesh have been concerned about UN reforms for some time. We have also pointed out that the consultations for the reform process should be broad-based and not be guided by perceived interests of the few. In addition, we have also strongly endorsed the UNSG's call to developed countries to increase development assistance and debt relief, grant of immediate duty-free and quota-free market access to all LDC export and the raising of their ODA.

but also to introduce reform through stronger and more independent oversight mechanisms.

The UN Secretary General constituted a Committee to recommend measures that might bring about reforms within the United Nations. Their Special Report has since been circulated. It proposes several important steps for re-structuring the UN, for initiating reforms within the Organisation and for restoring its credibility.

Inter-alia calls for expansion of the Security Council, adoption of guidelines to determine when military action can be authorised and proposes radical changes in the existing mechanism for stricter observance of human rights, boosting of global trade and the much-needed overhaul of the UN bureaucracy.

It was felt that such a study was required given the growth in UN membership (from 51 to 191 in sixty years), drastic changes in world order (unipolar), threats and challenges and charges of corruption and mismanagement in the oil for food programme, human rights violations in Sudan and elsewhere and revelations of sexual exploitations by some

renewable four-year terms and one additional two-year term seat added to the existing ten. Importantly, the right to cast vetoes under both the options has been restricted to the original five permanent members. It may be recalled here that the last expansion of the SC took place in 1965, when the membership was raised from 10 to 15.

In short, the Report has unleashed a political cyclone within the United Nations General Assembly ahead of its Regular Session that is expected to start later on in September this year. Sub-regional groups, regional organisations and vested interests have all surfaced with their often conflicting demands. Enormous attention is particularly being given to the prospect of an expanded Security Council with additional permanent members. Some countries have banded themselves together as potential saviours while others are busy discovering reasons as to why inclusion of such candidates will not properly reflect the strategic nature of contemporary international relations.

The prime contenders for the permanent membership -- Brazil, India, Germany and Japan (also

Anticipating disagreement, the G4 is now proposing that the existing 15-member Council be expanded to 25. It is also being suggested that six new permanent members would first be added, and then four non-permanent ones (with special attention being paid to Africa and Latin America). This plan also anticipates that the new permanent members will have 'the same responsibilities and obligations' as the current five permanent members, without the right of veto (at least for the time being). It also envisages that if the G4 resolution is adopted, then countries, interested in obtaining a permanent seat, would be asked to submit their candidacies to a vote by a secret ballot of members.

It is understood that the G4 resolution submitted in this regard for the consideration of the General Assembly has the backing of about thirty co-sponsors including France. G4 countries feel they have a reasonable chance. They have already received the support of the 15-member Caribbean community (Caricom) and expect the majority of the 53-member African Union to vote in their favour. The G4 group however also

ture undertaken by the UN (including peacekeeping operations). Despite several Summit level discussions, open support has still not been indicated for the other three among the G4. Consequently, the scenario, as it stands today, is still fraught with sensitive implications.

The next UNGA session in September this year will be interesting, but at the end of the day, might not be as completely productive as anticipated by the G4.

Nevertheless, there are other areas where reforms could be introduced within the UN structure without too much of ado. This includes the following -- streamlining the agenda and committee structure of the UN General Assembly and making the UN's human rights machinery more credible and more authoritative.

Kofi Annan, the UNSG has already correctly suggested that the present Commission on Human Rights could be replaced with a Human Rights Council, whose members would set an example by applying the standards they are charged to uphold. Similarly, it would be useful and meaningful if an efficient mechanism could be created within the UN to

Malfesance of the law-enforcers

MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

THE recent arrest of a serving police sergeant on charges of robbery is a matter of heightened concern for the citizens and undoubtedly puts the entire enforcement organisation into great shame. The only redeeming feature in an otherwise deplorable scenario is the laudably speedy arrest of the criminal in uniform by fellow colleagues entrusted with the duty of detecting the crime. One hopes that the black sheep would be dealt with in an exemplary manner in the departmental proceedings in addition to being subjected to the law of the land. Criminal conduct of a section of policemen for the last couple of years have worried many. What, however, is unfortunate is that we have not adequately ventured to find out the causes of such behavioural aberrations and try to understand the dynamics of a police sub-culture. Most often we have treated the symptoms only by punishing the individual delinquent. At times, that has also failed on account of procedural shortfalls or evidential insufficiencies. All in all there is very little comfort for the taxpayers or the distressed citizens.

Dimension and concern

The malevolence of policemen justifiably scare the public because defenders and enforcers are increasingly turning into deadly villains. Experiences show that incidents of teachers being hauled up in brothel during block raid or caught in the act of accepting illegal gratification or religious teachers apprehended for unnatural sexual act and similar other offences committed by other professions do not raise a furore of the same dimension as in the case of police misfeasance or strike the news headlines. The media and other watchdogs do not blame the non-police deviant's act as the crimes of a particular class or occupation. While well intentioned

policemen may feel demoralised due to the wholesale accusation of their occupation due to the despicable acts of some of their wayward colleagues, the fact remains that the scenario of law-enforcers breaking laws automatically assumes heightened significance thereby attracting wider publicity. One has to appreciate the urgency and concern.

Entry and bitterness

The informed public entertain grave doubts about the credibility of the recruitment process of lower functionaries in the police department. The amount of political interference

training schedule wherein also there are allegations of subjecting the trainees to undue pressures. It is not, therefore, unusual that the appointees turn into bitter individuals who could care less in their job. The dehumanising experience at the formative period of one's career take its toll. The sergeant accused of robbing could be one of those bitter figures. Whether that suspicion is well-founded or not, the unfortunate fact is that with increased criminalisation of politics it is becoming difficult to control the delinquent policemen who nurture a close nexus between themselves

not risen to the occasion but that does not mean that the unhealthy practice should continue to the detriment of a vital profession.

Administrative and political imperatives

Recruitment standards must improve by strictly curbing corrupt practices at the time of recruitment. Officers with a record of commendable honesty and integrity should be entrusted with the responsibility of conducting police recruitment. This is important because the crux of good policing is the efficient and amiable presence of

man performs. At the same time, corruption should be dealt with an iron hand. All these are tall orders and therefore, in order to reach the objective of much needed attitudinal change, the proper environment has to be created so that policemen can perform with a sense of pride and fulfilment.

The political imperatives for creating a truly professional police force are of utmost importance and demand the attention of all segments of the society. It may be of interest to know that the French police do not act and behave like their English

action of our policemen cannot be treated lightly under any circumstances. However, the point to draw one's attention is whether in a predominantly reactive culture characterised by rampant impropriety in public life we are expecting our policemen to behave in a phlegmatic manner.

It also needs to be ascertained whether the aggressively acquisitive behaviour of the influential along with the criminalisation of our political process have encouraged the potential delinquency lurking in many hearts including those of policemen. Our policemen with hopelessly low pay enjoy wide ranging powers to curtail liberty. In these circumstances, it is difficult to keep them immune to the virus of get-rich-quick disease. This is a field reality with which conscientious police managers are grappling. The conspicuous consumption of the arrogant new rich has its impact on the policeman who, on account of the nature of their job, are witnesses to the reckless and lavish spending of the former. This dimension of our socio-political scene has to be kept in consideration while deliberating on issues of corruption of public servants including policemen.

The deviation of policemen in the form of criminal acts and other illegal activities are always deplorable as they shake the foundation of the society by eroding faith and trust in the rule of law. The most visible symbol of authority can never escape criticism for malfunctioning of any description. They cannot ignore public opinion. This needs to be constantly impressed upon the rank and file. At the same time it needs to be seriously examined at the earliest whether the bulk of our police force should continue to be ludicrously equated with the unskilled workers and whether police modernisation schemes will remain an area of low priority.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former Secretary and IGP

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in such exercise is allegedly shocking and disgusting during all political regimes. Politicians remain under the erroneous impression that their chosen candidates being recruited in police department will be an asset. Such appointees mostly become a liability for the individual politician and the public at large. Whatever be the case, the unfortunate reality is that often recruitments have been made on considerations other than merit and ability. In this act, some police officers also collude to satisfy their political masters. The net result is that undesirable elements find entry into positions that do not need them. Such recruits who are suspected of entering the service by greasing the palm of influentials do not ever realise the gravity of the society's trust reposed in their job. They try to recoup their police investments at the earliest without any qualms of conscience.

Following recruitment there is the

and the politicians in power. Equally culpable are the lax supervisors.

We have to unfortunately agree that the standards of recruitment in police have declined over the years and many undeserving candidates have managed to secure entry through unfair means. Once in uniform, this lot lets the lure of the lucre take its toll and never hesitate to deviate from the expected norms of behaviour. The training, specially of the lower ranks, has been sadly neglected and there is a distinct lack of emphasis on the various aspects of desired police behaviour. Our training is too much punishment -- oriented and regimented with excessive stress of discipline and subordination.

In effect, we have to appreciate that the responsibility for failure to improve the standards of police recruitment and training must fall squarely on both the politicians and the police professionals. They have

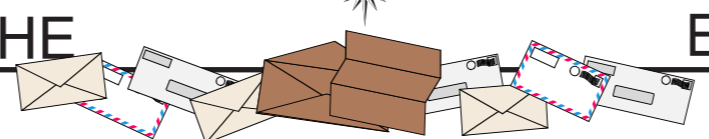
a well-qualified, trained and motivated constable. The need is to change training programmes from isolated, closed rigidities to integrated inter-disciplinary programmes for the preparation of sensitive enforcement professionals. 'Ethical awareness' training can be introduced to address corruption as a form of socialisation in police work and confronting officers with simulated situations involving a decision-making process. The minds of the field functionaries should be constantly fired by holding training courses at the district and police station levels.

There should be a concentrated drive to make it difficult for a dishonest person to remain in focal position. Superior officers have to set examples by maintaining their private lives above board. Since maximum corruption is due to poor service conditions, it should improve commensurate with the nature of job a police-

counterparts, largely because of historical reasons, although the two countries are separated by a channel only. Multiple revolutions in France had their impact on all institutions there including the police and interestingly the French are not particularly fond of their policemen. The English 'Bobbies' still retain their composure and professional elan although their reputation too was tainted by the criminal conduct of some policemen in late 70's and early 80's. The 'Blair Pitch incident' relating to the death of a teacher by police action in London and 'Operation Countryman' conducted for detecting criminal policemen involved in bank robbery and other crimes may be recalled.

These incidents are cited not to justify the malfesance and misfeasance of our policemen but only to highlight the historical perspective in which our policemen's behaviour pattern has to be judged. The criminal

TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR TO THE EDITOR



Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Yield curve swings up?

Rejaul Karim Byron's fairly informative story on recent interest rate hikes ("Interest yield curve swings up", DS July 10) is marred by its title. The story has nothing to do with the yield curve. As any student of finance should know, the yield curve depicts the relationship at a given point of time between interest rates and maturities of debt instruments. Normally, the curve rises gently with the length of maturities, debts with longer maturities yielding higher return (earning higher interest) than shorter debts. A rising curve "normally" suggests investor optimism about the future of the economy, a flat curve suggesting the opposite. Mr. Karim's story focuses only on interest rates being raised by banks in Bangladesh in recent months and has no bearing on the shape or movement of the yield curve in the country. His

choice of the title is thus misleading. While perhaps in some future article he will enlighten us with his analysis of the actual yield curve in the country, in the present story he does nothing of the sort.
Mahfuzur Rahman
New York

Human resource

Human resource can be made by human capital formation, which is associated with investment in man and his development as a creative and productive resource. Bangladesh is burdened with a huge population. However, men are born not only with a mouth but also with two hands. Why will not the two hands be able to meet the demand of a mouth?

For acquiring production power or creativity, humans need proper education which provides them essential knowledge, efficiency and vision of development. So man can

be transformed into human resource through standard education and can have production capability.

Education system is needed to be changed, which was initiated by the British in the colonial period. It is sad to see a university graduate or master degree holder losing year after year while searching for a small job, and ignoring their own ability to be self employed with handsome monthly income.

Moreover, many govt. educational institutions are clogged up with student politics and violence. Sometimes, tension and clashes between rival groups of students lead to serious disruption of academic activities. Such condition greatly hampers academic progress and prolongs the academic span.

So human resource development through education for facing the challenge of globalisation is being hampered. We need an up-to-date education policy. If we can convert

people into competent human resource, they will be the keyboards of development, rather than a burden.

Md. Manirul Islam
KDH College, Chandpur

Load-shedding

Bangladesh is a beautiful country but it also a poor country. There are many problems in Bangladesh. We are suffering these problems in our daily life, such as traffic jam, pollution, population, crimes and so on. Among these problems load shedding is newly added. It specially occurs in the summer season. It is very harmful for the country. Every day the production of many industries is hampered, many electronic instruments are being damaged because of load shedding.

Students can't properly. Now-a-days load shedding is very much hampering life of lower and middle

class people because the rich people can easily buy generator or IPS to escape load shedding but the poor and middle class can't. Because of load shedding we don't get enough water from the WASA. So I request to the authority to solve the problem as early as possible. I also request the authority to please wake up, don't sleep, we're suffering from load shedding very much.

Md Kabir Hossain
Shabujug, Basabo, Dhaka

Security of small states

Concept of security of small states is used to be based on UN intervention in case of aggression by any external force. But the concept is now outdated if not invalid altogether. Earlier a small state would have a defence force which the state could afford and it was so designed and developed

that in case of external aggression the force would be capable enough to hold the aggressor at bay till intervention by the UN. But the role of the UN has since changed and it has become merely a tool in the hands of great powers to serve their interests.

Another change has taken place in the international scenario. Earlier disputing parties having clash of interests would usually agree to third party mediation. But it is no more. Bilateralism and unilateralism have replaced multilateralism and mediation by third party. That is to say the parties have to either negotiate among themselves to arrive at a solution or else the stronger party would force a decision on the weaker one.

In the above circumstances that should the small states do to safeguard their legitimate interests? Ostensibly, there could be only two alternatives. Surrender to the stronger power and be happy with what-

ever it offers. Or else, develop such covert force, which would compel stronger power to be just and fair on a negotiating table.

What is this covert force? Before going any further it must be clarified that a covert force is not a substitute for conventional defence forces rather it is complementary to the conventional forces. A highly efficient covert capability could perhaps be obtained by spending a very minor fraction of a defence budget. Ironically, most great powers have this capability. Whereas, small states needing them most do not have it. But there is one exception i.e. the state of Israel. Some examples of these covert force/agencies are CIA, KGB, MI6, ISI, RAW, Mosad etc.

Mosad is a covert agency of the state of Israel concerned with espionage, intelligence gathering, and covert political operations in foreign countries. Mosad is the most important and efficient Israeli intelligence

agency, and its head reports directly to the prime minister. The Mosad maintains numerous Israeli secret agents in Arab and other nations, and its operatives are believed to have carried out undercover operations against enemies of Israel and former Nazi war criminals living abroad. Mosad has also been linked with several assassinations of Palestinian leaders in Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Mosad plays a vital role in keeping both friends and adversaries of Israel maintain a softer posture towards the state. For example it has been reported that Mosad has acquired such capability that it can monitor the entire telecommunications of the US.

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