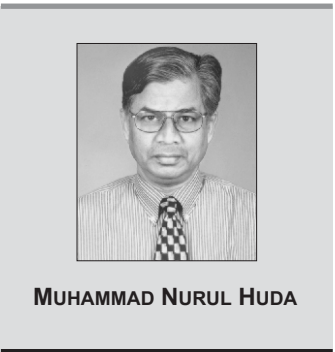


The combative cops and terms of endearment



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

THE hard-hitting policemen are attracting adverse media attention once again in our volatile polity. This does not come as a surprise as most Bangladeshis appear to have accepted police excesses as a normal phenomenon of our social existence. In such a scenario there is no thinking in concerned quarters whether the police in Bangladesh are showing clear signs of work-related stress and experiencing its negative impact on mental and physical health. Nobody seems to care if role ambiguity, role conflicts, work overload, conflicting orders, abnormally extended hours of work both in day and night shifts, criminalisation of politics, close nexus among criminals, politicians and bureaucrats, public apathy and collapse of other agencies of criminal justice system are causing worrisome stresses for our police personnel. In Bangladesh, the presence of stress among policemen is still not recognised as a major enemy of law-enforcement professionals.

Media reports of police brutality can be perceived as warning signals of job stress, emphatically pointing to the mismanagement of this crucial problem. However, the democratic society expects our policemen to act as agents of social change and the protector of rights and duties of the people. The numerous incidents of police brutality and high-handedness, excessive use of physical force and verbal abuse should prompt a curious observer to look beyond the surface and discover the underlying strain that exists. The highly paradoxical nature of the policemen's job makes it like tight-rope walking and deserves a closer scrutiny than accorded to it so far in our country.

Real life policing

STRAIGHT LINE

The endearment process of our police to the community has to be consciously divorced from past traditions. The police have to get closer to the people and at the same time deal with the challenges to the authority which is inherent in a pluralist society. So, the ruling politicians and the courts have to ensure the right use of authority.

Law enforcement in Bangladesh entails upon the police to perform in the worst of conditions and with such rigour that the glamorous exterior image of the police overshadows the challenges encountered in role enactment which are often life threatening and endanger the personnel on duty and also off-duty. The functions of police encompass preservation of law and order, to safeguard people from attack and to protect property, among others. The society expects the cop to play the varied roles with equal elan. He helps and saves but also uses force and makes arrest. This roller-coaster ride is a process difficult to understand functionally and incomprehensible emotionally.

The rigours of working for long hours without rest, meagre remuneration and inadequate living conditions and rotating shifts make it clear why policing is a high stress occupation. The police are expected to accomplish mood swings from loving father, understanding spouse to a lathi wielding defender of law combating a riotous mob. The job makes great demand on the mental, emotional and physical capabilities of the officer; demands that are all too often so stressful that they begin to destroy the individual.

Law enforcement tends to impose a higher degree of stress and a multiplicity of stressful situations on the individual than do most other professions. In the course of his duty, the cop encounters the dark side of human nature and thus with the growing incidence of crime and widening role expectations, the mental and physical health of policemen assumes greater significance than before. In Bangladesh, stresses are frequently triggered from social change, economic conditions, police organisation, the total criminal justice system and the demands made on policeman's time and of his family.

The organisational culture and the impact

It is a sad commentary that up till now for a policeman in Bangladesh the focus is always on the job to be done. People have to last a lifetime and strenuous tasks such as policing eventually become too arduous and exacting. Therefore, the special vulnerability of the police as an occupational group to job stress and burnout deserves recognition with a view to looking for the solutions to the problems. The search may impact on operational procedures and future training and illustrate the potential dangers of certain physical and psychological responses which may be amenable to modification through training and other interventions.

On the street level the police job is fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies. The duties of the police officer depend upon such diverse factors as the law, court decisions, the political climate, community pressures and personality of the commander, amongst others. The consequent role ambiguity is associated with high job related tension.

A police officer's role in contemporary Bangladesh is rather paradoxical in nature. He comes across conflicting situations when he finds that he has to enforce directives which are not strictly legal and which the public wishes that the police would discreetly ignore. Fulfilling the expectations of the public and obligation to his organisational role poses a very difficult situation causing stress to individual officers. This role conflict occurs when simultaneous advent of two or more sets of pressures are such that compliance with one would make more difficult compliance with the other. Therefore, the greatly increased conflicts of role expectations, organisational and institutional constraints, unrealistic demands and dilemmas of the cop

in uniform need to be examined explicitly.

The work situation and the image

Looking into the travails of the police one would find the police work is arduous, often dirty and unpleasant and sometimes dangerous. Night work is a standard feature of their life. They are not paid for overtime work. They too often work on holidays and during festivals. While illustrating the process of dehumanisation in the departmental culture of the police, it has been observed that prolonged absence of any family life and absence of nearness to children deprive the policeman of the feel of family life. Absence of reasonable vacation coupled with increasing task pressures drive policeman to do wrong things. A little bit of sadism also creeps in as he is made to sacrifice all he has and receive public condemnation as reward.

Most of us in Bangladesh are familiar with the sloppy, discourteous, rude, aggressive and bully figure in police uniform but we do not seem to realise that policemen are largely underpaid, overworked, demoralised, inadequately trained and equipped and subject to political interference, feared as a persecutor rather than respected as a protector, often callous and corrupt. Analysts have found that the police unrest is a cumulative result of managerial mismanagement, absence of a sense of accomplishment and growth, neglect of basic physiological and psychological needs, absence of effective grievance redressal machinery, emulated leadership, absence of participative management and unsatisfactory working and living conditions.

From brutalisation to endearment
Police organisation in Bangladesh

needs to sit up and take note of the crucial problem of job stress. A comprehensive plan for the recognition, diagnosis and management of stress and stress control programmes for police personnel might help resolve the problem. The subordinate officials who are the most stressed groups should be given counseling for better coping. Both the individuals and the organisation must participate in the stress resolution process.

The police organisation should be engaged to employ the services of psychologist at the time of selection and placement and choose individuals more suitable to perform the job effectively. Right job redesigning may help reduce the stress levels. Clarifying the organisational goal in consonance with law may reduce stressful situations.

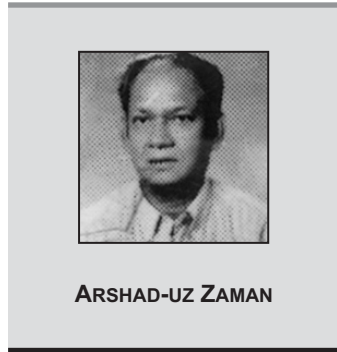
The police organisation must look beyond the military model; reorient its structure, policies and procedures; provide adequate support and organisational intervention to the management of stress within the law enforcement agency. Our policemen are truly a stressed lot. Psychological services and trained psychologist must be made an integral part of the organisational setup.

The role of stress management training and intervention strategies in handling police stress should be an area of study. Longitudinal studies may be suitable to investigate the impact of police work on the individual's life and its impact on health, social and psychological well-being.

The endearment process of our police to the community has to be consciously divorced from past traditions. The police have to get closer to the people and at the same time deal with the challenges to the authority which is inherent in a pluralist society. So, the ruling politicians and the courts have to ensure the right use of authority. Instances are plenty where political interference with the administration and work of police have caused serious management and image problems. Our policemen need support from the guardians to minimise public suffering.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former Secretary and IGP.

The PM's visit to Turkey



ARSHAD-UZ ZAMAN

PRIME Minister of Bangladesh Begum Khaleda Zia has just completed her official visit to Turkey.

During her visit she went to the magnificent mausoleum of the founder of Modern Turkey Mustafa Kemal Ataturk and laid a wreath. While standing in front of that majestic grave, did the thought cross her mind that here lay a great son of the soil, who had freed his nation from the clutches of foreign occupiers and literally threw them in the sea. That was in the early twenties, when the Great Ottoman Empire had been dismembered. Mustafa Kemal took to the hills and rousing his people waged a relentless battle and brought victory.

Our National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam, sitting in an obscure corner of Bengal sang the victory of Mustafa Kemal in his immortal poem Kamal Pasha. Nazrul was known as little outside his Bengal as Mustafa Kemal to the Turks. Does the music: "Kamal tu ne kamal kiva bhai" not reverberate in our ears even to this day?

In 1953, I started my career in the Pakistan embassy in Istanbul. In my office there was a fresh graduate from an American University, Turkayya Atav, as translator. He and I translated Kamal Pasha into Turkish and it took Turkish literary circles by storm. They could not believe that sitting in the backwaters of Bengal a poet would sing the song of victory of an unknown fighter named Mustafa Kemal! Atav and I have traveled long distances and Atav is a doctor of letters and famous professor of Ankara University. His contact with Nazrul remains as lively as ever and he came last year as guest of Nazrul Institute and delivered talks.

Kazi Nazrul Islam remains the unbreakable bridge between Bangladesh and Turkey. After the death of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in 1938 in the Dolmabahce Palace at the banks of the Bosphorous, a magnificent mausoleum was erected by the Turks in Ankara at the

THE HORIZON THIS WEEK

More than thirty years have gone by since the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu, his family and political associates. He lies in a forlorn corner of Bangladesh. Is it not time to bring him to the heart of the country which he freed by his incomparable leadership? Like Mustafa Kemal, he galvanized his Bangalee nation into a magnificent fighting force. But governments of Bangladesh have failed to show the sensitivity that it was high time to build the most magnificent mausoleum for the great leader.

highest point Cankaya, overlooking the capital built by Ataturk. Ataturk was laid to rest within the mausoleum in 1953. The grandeur of the mausoleum has to be seen to be believed. Its vastness, the sweeping view of the city, the soldiers guarding the mausoleum, they all attest to the deep devotion and respect of the Turks for the saviour of a fiercely proud and independent nation. No wonder the world gives the Turkish nation the respect that they have earned by holding their saviour in the highest position of respect. A nation earns the respect that it gives its great sons of the soil.

One of the first acts of the father of the Bangalee nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was to bring the revolutionary poet, Kazi Nazrul Islam, who sang the song of victory and rebellion and had suffered imprisonment in the hands of the British rulers, from Kolkata to Dhaka. The poet had lost speech since a long time. But which Bangalee could ever forget the soul stirring poems of that fiery poet: "Ore tora joydohon kor" (oh, you sing the song of victory) Bangabandhu showered affection, highest esteem, and put the poet in the highest pedestal of the Bangalee people. The bond between Nazrul, Ataturk and Bangabandhu is established.

More than thirty years have gone by since the brutal assassination of Bangabandhu, his family and political associates. He lies in a forlorn corner of Bangladesh. Is it not time to bring him to the heart of the country which he freed by his incomparable leadership? He dedicated his entire life to freeing his long oppressed and suffering Bangalees from the clutches of the Pakistani occupiers. In that relentless struggle imprisonment was his constant companion. Like Mustafa Kemal, he galvanized his Bangalee nation into a magnificent fighting force until on

March 7, 1971, he thundered in the Suhrawardy Uddayan: "Ebarer songram amather mukti songram, ebarer songram swadhinotar songram" (the fight this time is for emancipation, the fight this time is for independence).

Governments in Bangladesh have come and gone and we have spent more than three decades for our identity. Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman created Bangladesh and those of us who had the great privilege to serve as his ambassador can only recall with pride how we strode the universe. The governments of Bangladesh have failed to show the sensitivity that it was high time to build the most magnificent mausoleum for the great leader, who built for the first time for the Bangalee nation a state of its own. Where else could that mausoleum be built than in the vast field of verdant Suhrawardy Uddayan from where rang the greatest song of all times -- the song of freedom.

If our political leaders have not shown the guts to fulfill the destiny of the nation, regrettably our civil society has been totally silent. We see them involving in all kinds of issues and strangely utter not a word on this task of the nation, which should have top-most priority. Is it not true that the nation remains incomplete until we bring our beloved Bangabandhu to the heart of Bangladesh?

"Bolo bir chiro unnata momo shir" (say, oh courageous one, my head is always held high).

Arshad-Uz Zaman is a former Ambassador and Acting Secretary General, OIC.

Hiring lobbyists to boost image



ANM NURUL HAQUE

THE government of Bangladesh has hired lobbyists to boost its image in the United States. According to media reports, the government has appointed two US firms and an individual to project its positive image. Bangladesh ambassador in Washington, Shamsher Mobin Chowdhury has signed a deal with the lobbyists on behalf of the government. The expenses involved in hiring the firms as well as an individual as lobbyists, is reported to be \$75,000 per month.

The Awami League has made available to the media the copies of document hiring lobbyists in United States for boosting the image of the government and has also brought the charges against the government that it has taken recourse to another corrupt practice through appointing the lobbyists.

The foreign minister M. Morshed Khan has defended the appointment of lobbyists in US saying it was done to protect the nation's interest by countering adverse campaigns to portray Bangladesh as a Taliban and fundamentalist state: "Some of our political leaders have launched false campaign abroad against the country and the people and tried to brand Bangladesh a Taliban, Al-Qaeda and fundamentalist state ... being in the government, it is our responsibility to uphold the nation's image by foiling that vile propaganda," he said.

Earlier, the government decided to get some supplements published in 10 important dailies and weeklies of the US and UK, at the

BY THE NUMBERS

It is pertinent to call into question, how far the hired lobbyists will be able to sway the opinion of the US government in favour of Bangladesh, unless the performance of the government is improved. Is it naive to think that the US government is not aware of the sensitive developments in Bangladesh and it can be motivated to form an idea contrary to the reports of its State Department. The best way to brighten the image of the country is to improve the performance of the government on the home ground. Hiring lobbyists for advocating such a cause will only spend a considerable amount of money from the public exchequer, nothing else.

cost of our hard earned foreign exchange, in order to improve its image and publicise its "successes." The supplements were scheduled to be published from 1 October 1, on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the government. An "Image Salvaging Committee" comprising of selected journalists and intellectuals also prepared articles lauding the "successes" of the government. Finally the government abandoned the idea in the face public criticism.

The US government has already increased monitoring on issues related to intimidation and other forms of pressure on minorities, especially Hindus, in anticipation of the next general election in Bangladesh. A US State Department report entitled: "Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The US Record 2005-2006" said weak political and governmental institutions, pervasive corruption and general indifference by ruling parties to human rights continued to under mine basic civil liberties.

The report released on April 5, and submitted to Congress said extra-judicial killings, torture and other widespread abuses by law enforcement personnel such as the police and Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) went largely unpunished and the BNP exploited its position to gain unfair advantage over the opposition.

On religious freedom the report said, while the constitution guarantees freedom of religion, the government's record of protecting

religious minorities was inconsistent, and police were often ineffective in assisting members of religious minorities who were victims of crime. About the members of Ahmadiyya sect the report said, the under secretary of State for Political Affairs and the assistant secretary of State for South Asian Affairs met with leaders of all religious minority groups to under score support for their rights and safety against persecution and violence. The government last year took concerted steps to protect the Ahmadiyyas, under US and other diplomatic pressure.

On corruption the report said, the US last year worked with other donors and the government to design a long-term, government-wide anti-corruption strategy, which led to a draft national integrity strategy. This draft was under review by several ministries and once adopted, will set the road map for the government's overall approach to combat corruption.

There is certainly no denying that Bangladesh suffers from poor image abroad and its image really needs a boost. The rise of Islamic militants in the country and eventual denial of the government of their existence, grenade attacks and grisly killing of some important political leaders, extra-judicial killings by RAB, and all pervasive corruption in the government functionaries, have severely damaged the country's image abroad.

The sensational incidents of arms hauled in Chittagong and Bogra which still remains as mystery and

the most recent unfortunate development at Kansat in Chapainawabganj district, killing at least 20 power-hungry people and other widespread abuses by the police, no doubt have tarnished country's image abroad. Of course this is not the way of governing a country.

The growing rhetoric between the two major political parties, resulted from the long-standing power struggle and war of attrition, has led the country to a perplexing socio-political situation. Neither the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia nor the leader of opposition Sheikh Hasina has been able to go beyond the narrow partisan territories they have shaped up for themselves. In this backdrop, The Economist in its forecast on Bangladesh said: "The battle of the two Begums in its third round since 1996 between the Prime Minister Khaleda Zia, and the Awami League's Sheikh Hasian, will be fought against the background of a rise in Islamic extremism. But the political mainstream will remain firmly on secular ground."

Bangladesh runs at least 58 diplomatic missions abroad. The main task of these missions is to project the country's positive image and safeguard the country's trade interest in a complex global political and trade scenario. But over the past many years the country's diplomatic missions have not been playing the role the nation has expected of it. Country's image has not been adequately projected before the global community by our

diplomats for lack of their initiative.

The parliamentary standing committee on foreign affairs has also expressed its discontent over the serious deterioration in professional standard of those who run our foreign missions. A very potent reason why our diplomatic missions have been under-performing, relates to the quality of the officials sent to man the various missions. Worst officers have also been posted to some of the most crucial mission to put premium on loyalties than merit and these officers have been failed to demonstrate the professionalism needs to project the image of the country abroad. What therefore needs to be done is thorough reform in our foreign ministry to bring about changes to such a system.

One must recognize the fact that the image of a country largely depends on how its government performs within the country. Image gets easily obliterated when its government continues to misgovern. A press release issued by the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Dhaka on April 6 said the US State Department report submitted to Congress contained weak political and governmental institutions, pervasive corruption and general indifference by ruling parties to human rights in Bangladesh.

It is pertinent to call into question, how far the hired lobbyists will be able to sway the opinion of the US government in favour of Bangladesh, unless the performance of the government is improved. Is it naive to think that the US government is not aware of the sensitive developments in Bangladesh and it can be motivated to form an idea contrary to the reports of its State Department. The best way to brighten the image of the country is to improve the performance of the government on the home ground. Hiring lobbyists for advocating such a cause will only spend a considerable amount of money from the public exchequer, nothing else.

ANM Nurul Haque is a columnist of The Daily Star.

TATA AND GOB

A dissenting view

There are 3 inherent disadvantages in the steel plant proposed by Tata: 1) The small capacity of the plant. 2) Inherent high cost of production in a gas-based over a coal-based plant. 3) The high cost of transporting the ore instead of piping the gas. All these diseconomies have to be compensated by lower gas price to make the investment viable.

I have noted the continuing debate between Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud and Mr. Alan Rosling. I differ with both of them that natural gas is not a traded commodity and as such cannot be priced on market considerations alone. In the energy market, it is the energy content, Btu or Kilojoules in any hydrocarbon fuel that matters. The fact that we will have to import costly gasoline or crude oil, using hard currency, to run cars and buses because we opted to sell our gas dirt-cheap for a steel plant is an unpalatable proposition.

Further, considering the size of the steel mill, 480,000 tons per annum, it is not a strategic investment. No country in the world will extend sovereign guarantees for energy supplies to such a project with most of the products to be exported, as there are few downstream industries in the country to consume it. The size of the plant is too small and the gas based route is inherently costly making it globally uncompetitive.

As a steel industry professional, my interest is on the route selection Tata has adopted in its investment proposal. From the size of the power plant, 250 MW, and the small steel-making capacity, it is probably a sponge iron or Directly Reduced Iron (DRI) plant linked to an Electric Arc Furnace (EAF). This is known as DRI-EAF route where the cost of production is inherently high.

On the other hand, around seventy percent of global steel production is through the coal based Blast Furnace (BF) and Basic Oxygen Furnace (BOF) known as the BF-BOF route. The rest is through recycling of ferrous scrap, using high-powered Electric Arc Furnaces (EAF) coupled with casting machine. Investment-wise this is the cheapest route. The drawback is ferrous or steel scrap is a scarce commodity and tends to be consumed in regions where it is generated. It is natural that the industrialized nations generate and consume most steel scrap. Only about 5% of global steel production is through the DRI-EAF route, which TATA seems to have opted for.

The investment in a BF-BOF route is 3 to 5 times higher for the

same capacity DRI-EAF plant and the economies of scale dictate that such plants have a capacity of at least 1 million tons per annum (tpa). By contrast, the economies of scale for a DRI-EAF based plant is somewhat lower, but the cost of production is nearly twice that of a coal based plant.

In fact, Tata's Indian steel plant uses the coal-based BF-BOF route. Tata does not have a single gas-based plant anywhere in the world. Gas-based DRI plants are concentrated in regions of the globe where there is plenty of natural gas as an off-shoot from oil production, mainly in the Caribbean region, Venezuela, and in the Gulf countries. In India, Essar in Gujarat has a gas-based DRI plant and downstream steel plant as well. The gas is piped from the off-shore oilfield of Mumbai to the iron ore mines. Pumping gas to an iron ore mine is inherently less costly and more efficient than bringing iron ore to the gas source. The arithmetic is simple. Three tons of iron ore yield one ton of finished steel.

Therefore, there are 3 inherent disadvantages in the steel plant proposed by Tata: 1) The small capacity of the plant. 2) Inherent high cost of production in a gas-based over a coal-based plant. 3) The high cost of transporting the ore instead of piping the gas. All these diseconomies have to be compensated by lower gas price to make the investment viable.

In a hypothetical scenario, if we had huge proven reserves of gas and bad politics was out of the way, the proposed plant could have been somewhere near Tata's iron ore source, in India, and we could have charged a better price for the gas and earned foreign currency as well. This is plain good business sense. This is how Russia has successfully modeled its gas industry by exporting gas to Europe.

Even if our gas reserves are as large as the most optimistic projections; for a nation of 150 million people which needs to feed itself by intensive farming, nitrogenous fertilizer production, not steel production, will always be a strategic industry. As global energy prices are set to rise inexorably in the long

term, it is obvious that we will have to use gas for fertilizer and as a substitute for imported crude oil. Any other use will be suicidal for this nation. Even power production should have a secondary consideration as we have good proven reserves of coal. Further gas, like crude oil is a finite natural resource.

In the absence of any market forces in the nation's petroleum sector where the price of gasoline and diesel is kept ridiculously low, gas as a substitute fuel is also priced below its cost of production. With market forces in play, gas would have displaced imported petroleum fuel and prices would have rationalized along purely demand, supply and cost considerations. Current pricing and subsidy has encouraged a roaring trade in petroleum smuggling across the border.

Markets, not esoteric economic theories, should determine energy prices. Had the energy market been free of any state intervention, Tata would have never broached the issue of gas pricing. In attracting FDI, governments from Cambodia to Ireland publicize: Tax breaks, low taxation regime, good governance, low wages, trained and educated manpower, ease of doing business, good infrastructure, English speaking population etc. etc. but never, never any promise of guaranteeing energy or raw material supplies. The very concept of settled and fixed prices smacks of a socialist planned economy era rather than a free market one.

The \$2.5 billion investment is a mirage, as most of the money will be used up importing plant and equipment. Steel is a capital-intensive industry and the skilled work force will be expatriates, paid in hard currency, with Bangladeshis filling a few entry-level and menial jobs.

The product, hot rolled steel coils, will be exported, probably to countries in Europe and North America where as a Bangladeshi company Tata will enjoy unfettered duty free and quota free access. In the past, Tata had to face punitive anti-dumping tariffs in the US market for its exports from India. The benefits to the country will be few, if any.

M. Firoze is a general manager in the country's largest steel company, BSMR.