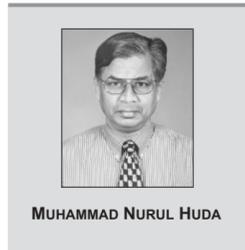


Strategic vision for police



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

PRACTICAL and timely planning for future activities, whether in the domestic life or in the national arena has not been one of our strong points. Unfortunately, it would appear that we are culturally unable to look beyond our immediate environment or times. Somehow ad-hocism or 'strike when the iron is hot' policy has characterised our socio-economic ventures affecting the nation's collective existence. No wonder, therefore, that we do not have a five-year plan since at least 2002. In the planning parlance, as of now, we have a three-year rolling plan which is primarily based on the donor-driven PRSP (Poverty Reduction Strategy). Interestingly, we do not have an updated national training policy for public institutions.

Why strategic planning?

In a national scenario as enumerated above, one might feel surprised or amused at the thought of a strategic vision and that too for the much-maligned police organisation of Bangladesh. However, ground realities in our country and similar situation elsewhere in the past and present would perhaps indicate the necessity of a long-term structured plan along with a mission statement and goals for a vital state organ like the police. If maintenance of law and order is the pre-condition for sustainable development as has been given to understand time and again by experts of all descriptions, then it is only appropriate that we sensitise and modernise our principal law-enforcement outfit by enabling them to understand, appreciate and fulfil their constitutional obligations and the community expectations.

There is no denying that the demand for police services of our rapidly growing society has increased at a faster rate than the growth and expansion of its service delivery capacity. We have, undoubtedly, a pressing need to elevate the sense of security of our people for ensuring harmonious socio-economic development of the country. In a scenario of competing demands for police services, there is a requirement to impress upon the importance of operational policing for combating the increasing crime in the society. The whole process would require the identification of the strengths and weaknesses of our police organisation. Functionaries at the service delivery points need to have a well-defined understanding of the priorities in the work situation. In sum, the organisation

STRAIGHT LINE

The planners and policymakers that include our political leadership have to appreciate that lack of adequate complementary infrastructural facilities compared to our population growth and the unemployment-related youth unrest have a serious adverse impact on crime and order situation and that in such a tight situation the unethical influence of politically powerful pressure groups further complicate the enforcement scenario to the detriment of public interests and service ethos.

tion requires a clearer sense of direction.

Benefits of a long-term structured approach

It would follow from the above that introducing a structured approach to the future would necessitate the development of a strategic plan. This does not mean that one is oblivious of the immense difficulties of the field situation, particularly in view of our unique enforcement imperatives, to step outside the immediate and day-to-day policing problems and pause to take a look into the future. However, venturing to look ahead and beyond present times and compulsions is an essential prerequisite of a strategic plan. The police in Bangladesh need to set targets for achieving professional excellence. At the least, they need to know themselves, their potentialities, deficiencies and opportunities.

The elements

Assuming that the advantages of having a strategic plan for Bangladesh Police are considered beneficial as against having no planning document at all, the first priority should be to formulate strategic intention for the service embodying and promoting a statement of common purpose and objectives. Such statement should establish the nature of upcoming demands and problems likely to be faced. It would enable clear objectives to be laid down and identify the path to be followed to meet these objectives. The process would involve the determination of priorities and the fixing of initiatives to be considered and pursued by the service. The formulation of the strategy would be the visible expression of the wisdom and direction embodied in the statement of common purpose and objectives mentioned hereinbefore.

Our police and strategic plan

The above discussions may sound very lofty and impractical and even undesirable to many otherwise well-meaning citizens. They cannot be faulted for reasons better left unsaid. The inescapable reality, however, is that the ominous dehumanisation process of our enforcement machinery, whether or not in its incipient stage, has to be halted for the good of a democratic and civilized polity. It is with this objective in mind that the police organisation of Bangladesh and its

well-wishers should strive to see things in the correct perspective.

Coming to specifics of law-enforcement, one may find that there is an increased appreciation of police priorities (organisationally speaking) by the policy makers, although not supplemented by adequate budgetary allocation. A contrasting dimension of the police profile is that despite comprehensive criticism of police behaviour and practices, there is a popular demand for police presence in the form of new police stations and outposts. The inherent goodness, patience and resilience of our common folks need to be harnessed by sensitive leadership in the enforcement. Simultaneously, we need to take note of the preponderance of diligent and committed personnel in different police ranks, particularly in the subordinate positions, who have demonstrated strong capability and commendable adaptability to face diverse situation. These fine individuals need encouragement and exposure to stimulating environment for nurturing the work ethic.

Reality and the myth

While the corrupt and improper behaviour of a section of police personnel cannot be condoned, our planners would do well to notice the deficits in terms of inadequate human resource development, meager technical and scientific support for crime detection, disproportionately greater emphasis on controlling public order situation than crime control, irrational pay structure, outdated laws amongst others. There is also a realistic need to demolish the malevolent myth that the police can be successful in every situation whatever the odds are. Such myths demoralise and denigrate the upright elements because the police are human too and have their limitations in all societies. The mischief or luck of some questionable smart fellows of yesteryears and may be of recent times should not be an acceptable basis for rational appraisal.

Politician's role

The planners and policymakers that include our political leadership have to appreciate that lack of adequate complementary infrastructural facilities compared to our population growth and the unemployment-related youth unrest have a serious adverse impact on crime and order situation and that in such a tight situation the unethical influence of

politically powerful pressure groups further complicate the enforcement scenario to the detriment of public interests and service ethos.

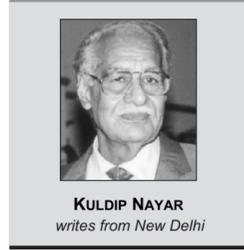
Police leaders and politicians have to appreciate that with an increasing dependence on policing, characterised by more emphasis on enforcement than observation of law, we are willy-nilly fostering and patronising authoritarian practices. Such practices and the resultant reactions clearly stand in the way of accepting democracy as a mode of life. Tolerance, unanimity and consent as values are the casualties, unfortunately, in such an environment. If obedience to law is to be the norm rather than the unfortunate exception, then amongst others, one principal focus should be the educational curricula where suitable inclusion for promoting lawful conduct shall have to be made. This would be no mean effort to culturally internalise the compulsions of lawful and orderly society.

The important aspect that should engage our attention is the appropriate empowerment of the police organisation through provision of modern equipment including scientific tools for investigation and enforcement and inculcation of humane attitude of enforcers made attainable through institutional intervention. That would require larger resource allocation. We would need a serious O/M study to determine the realistic requirement of personnel. Senior supervisory complement needs to be augmented in an organisation that exercises immense powers affecting human liberty and social peace.

The addition of community's resources to the police resources is expected to lessen the burden on the exchequer and make the concept of police performance commensurate with the value for money thereby reducing overall policing costs a reality. This perhaps makes sense in our economy which does not enjoy the expected buoyancy. It has to be admitted that police resources are finite and therefore, too heavy a reliance on police power to solve basic social problems would be unwise. In fact, policing in a democratic society has to seek an ethical basis and rest on a form of social contract between the police and the public.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former secretary and IGP.

Politics of aggrandisement



KULDEEP NAYAR
writes from New Delhi

I have nothing against the MPs who have prevailed upon the government to curtail parliament's session by three days. My worry is over the cause for which they have done so. This is for the Ganapati festival, associated with warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji, and celebrated mainly at Mumbai.

At a time when religious, caste or regional identities are increasingly taken for nationalism, the assertion of parochialism is nothing new. Yet, I do not think that the Ganapati festival should have had precedence over important problems awaiting parliament's attention. It does not send the right type of message across the country which is incensed over the spread of terrorism and rising prices.

Still more reprehensible is that no MP, not even anyone from the Congress Party, raised the question of recalling the Quit India day - August 9 - now entering its 65th anniversary. The session, I believe, is being suspended on that day not to commemorate the Quit India movement but to celebrate Raksha Bandhan festival. Both Quit India day and the Ganapati festival fall in the same month of August and have Mumbai as their home. The difference between the two is that the first represents the non-violent struggle for independence and the second, the conquest by sword. One is pluralistic in content while the other is sectarian in appeal. MPs should have got it right. The new generations should remember that on August 9 began a movement which, no doubt, rose and fell but culminated in an avalanche that swept off the 150-year-old foreign rule. It was such a heady atmosphere of self-confidence and dignity on that day that thousands in Mumbai dared the British to shoot. Hundreds of people sacrificed their lives. The Union Jack was hauled down and the country heroically faced the ruthless

BETWEEN THE LINES

Whatever we may think about effecting changes in the region or, for that matter, the world we have arrived at a stage where any attempt to impose ideas or points of view through violence is bound to fail. This is as true of Israel as of Hizbollah even though the former is more powerful and more provocative. Those who want to decide things through force are, in fact, in the way of democracy, development and dignity. They have no tolerance for a different point of view and believe that a principle can only be defended by the language of violence and by condemning those who do not accept it.

oppression by the government. The Ganapati festival has its importance but it cannot match the significance of Quit India movement, the triumph of the common Indian over the armed action of the British. So afraid was London of people's discontent that it sent Lord Stafford Cripps, a leading minister a few months before the movement, to win India's support to the war efforts. But he was equivocal about its future status. Both the Congress and the Muslim League, the two main political parties, rejected the Cripps offer because it did not even promise freedom after the war.

America was a different country those days, both in tone and tenor. Having won freedom from the British forcibly, the US wanted India to cast off the English rule. Winston Churchill stuck to his imperialist policy of sustaining the empire. However, President Roosevelt did not relent and saw to it that India became free. (The Congress thanked Roosevelt through a letter).

For those who still regret the division of India, I can only say the Cripps mission provided an opportunity if the British had been willing to ladle out more powers. Both the Congress and the Muslim League might have come together to run the government at that time. After all, Cripps had conceded that the states could be autonomous, the kernel of the demand for Pakistan. He had also suggested that the Congress and the Muslim League could sort out their differences after independence.

When Cripps returned to the UK, he said that his mission failed because of the criticism of "Hindu press." The comment betrayed the same imperialistic game of divide and rule. Even a liberal person like Cripps could not resist the tempta-

tion of using the stock argument that the differences between Hindus and Muslims had kept India enslaved. The fact is that Cripps tried to reconcile the aspirations of people for independence with his limited brief: Indians could replace the whites in the Viceroy's council. That was not adequate.

My purpose is not to hark back on those days but to tell people that they have not appreciated the importance of August 9 as they should have. That day began the journey towards freedom which ended in the mid-August 1947. Even the founder of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, repudiated the theory of religion determining the nationality. Hindus and Muslims were either Indians or Pakistanis, he said, and religion should not be mixed with politics.

Post-independent religious factions and innate differences among the political parties have of late been occupying the centre stage and pushing out in the process the national struggle's ethos: pluralism and democracy. In today's world, there is no place for religiosity or for the system which denies people the right to rule themselves.

The purport of the Quit India movement and similar stirs was that violence cannot possibly lead to a solution of the problem. Violence produces an atmosphere of conflict and of disruption. It sets into motion a chain of events which harm people and divert their attention from real issues. The much-needed time -- and money -- is frittered away and the real task of building the country is clouded. That is what is happening in South East Asia.

The Naxalites in India, the Maoists in Nepal, the LTTE in Sri Lanka and the fundamentalists in Bangladesh have not yet realised

how outdated they are in their thinking and action. Their violence is not only unproductive but it also does an irreparable damage to the cause they claim to be serving. It is absurd to imagine that out of a conflict, the socially progressive forces are bound to win. Adolf Hitler defeated both the Communist Party and the Social Democrats at the polls in Germany.

Whatever we may think about effecting changes in the region or, for that matter, the world we have arrived at a stage where any attempt to impose ideas or points of view through violence is bound to fail. This is as true of Israel as of Hizbollah even though the former is more powerful and more provocative. Those who want to decide things through force are, in fact, in the way of democracy, development and dignity. They have no tolerance for a different point of view and believe that a principle can only be defended by the language of violence and by condemning those who do not accept it. For both of them there is no shade, there is only black and white.

The basic thing, I believe, is that wrong means will not lead to right results. This is no longer merely an ethical doctrine, but a practical proposition. Mahatma Gandhi was right when he said that if methods were vitiated the ends were bound to be vitiated. His assessment and what August 9 represents are more relevant today than the Ganapati festival. The MPs who have reduced the duration of parliament session are not seeing beyond the electoral politics.

Kuldeep Nayar is an eminent Indian columnist.

Remove barriers to FDI flow

JAHANGIR BIN ALAM

FOR Bangladesh to catch up with rest of the world, and to achieve its millennium development objectives by 2015, inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) in larger volumes is extremely critical in view of the dearth of necessary domestic resources and technology. This is more so in the backdrop of the existing scenario of globalisation and liberalisation coupled with gradual decline of foreign aid inflow into the country.

Although the existing investment and trade related policies of the government on paper and the incentive package for foreign investors are attractive and macro-economic indicators are favourable, yet, the inflow of FDI into the country remains much below the expected level, vis-à-vis other countries of the region, in spite of campaigns and road shows to the effect held by relevant quarters of the government for long.

The situation remains unchanged because of factors like mismatch between written policies of the government and ground realities at the implementation stage, disturbing political and law and order situation, absence of good governance, rampant corruption at almost all levels of the administration and judiciary, inadequate infrastructure and last, but not the least, non-observance of contract sanctity.

Of late, some new factors like dramatic rise of terrorism and religious militancy coupled with procrastination daily-dallying on the part of the government in taking prompt decisions with regard to FDI propos-

There have been some missed opportunities over the years as far as attracting FDI is concerned due to lack of political will, failure in taking timely decisions and the myopic view of successive governments coupled with short sighted group and self interests of the vested quarters. Complacency in this regard would lead the country nowhere.

als have added to the country's woes, thereby, adversely impacting on the already existing image problem of Bangladesh. This is worrisome for the country because such a phenomenon has been sending the wrong signals to prospective foreign investors, and the non-resident Bangladeshis abroad, willing to participate in the development process of their home country.

In addition, unstable fiscal and monetary policies of the government, bureaucratic procrastination coupled with inefficiency and corruption, lack of negotiating skills and time consuming judicial dispensation process also create road blocks to investment in general, and foreign direct investment in particular, and frustrate existing investors, both foreign and domestic. The fiscal and monetary policies of the government change quite frequently and at times dramatically, thereby, seriously disturbing the business plans of the investors.

Although it has been more than three decades since Bangladesh appeared on the global map, yet, basic infrastructures like power, port facility, surface and air transportation and, in the present day context, high

speed data transmission facility, which are vital for development, remain in shambles.

Visible lack of determined efforts on the part of the government and its apathy towards improvement of the situation are frustrating. Repeated wakeup calls by the country's business community, civil society and its development partners so far appear to have fallen on the deaf ears of the relevant quarters of the government.

There is no denying that there has been marked improvement in the infrastructure sector of the country over the last three decades in spite of severe resource constraints. But, simultaneously, one can see that the improvement process has failed to keep pace with the demands of the time. It is also true that there has been a significant inflow of foreign direct investment during the last decade and a half. But these are peanuts compared to the volume of FDI inflow to other countries of the region. According to a recent UNCTAD report, Bangladesh ranks ninth in respect of FDI flow to LDCs which also below countries like Chad and war torn Somalia. In respect of per capita inflow it ranks some where

between 16th and 20th.

There have been some missed opportunities over the years as far as attracting FDI is concerned due to lack of political will, failure in taking timely decisions and the myopic view of successive governments coupled with short sighted group and self interests of the vested quarters. Complacency in this regard would lead the country nowhere. Of late the fate of two substantially big investment proposals, from industrial giant Tata of India, and Asia Energy of U.K. respectively, have become uncertain apparently due to indecision and lack of farsightedness of the incumbent government.

It may be noted here that, in the not too distant past, another big investment proposal from SSA of USA for constructing private container terminals at Chittagong and Narayanganj had to face a similar fate as successive governments failed to withstand undue resistance of the vested quarters and ultimately the investors had to abandon the projects. Had these projects been implemented, efficiency of cargo handling at the Chittagong port would have improved manifold to the benefit of the national economy.

It is obvious that unless the government takes appropriate measures to correct the situation without any further delay, Bangladesh could miss the bus and prospective FDI's will move to other favourable locations of the region. Positively may not forgive us for the current inaction.

Jahangir Bin Alam is former Secretary, Foreign Investors' Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

Fighting poverty with khas land

MD ABDUL KADER AND AYUB HOSSAIN

SOME called it bottomless; to some it was possibilities. Not only for antagonism but they had their own logics. However, the pessimists could not diminish the optimism of the resilient people. Their negative notion rather made the people more determined. They looked for ways to overcome the uncertainties and hindrances. They looked for prospects and possibilities. And within years some doors of possibilities opened to drive the proponents of bottomless basket away.

Bangladesh is a small country with a big population. It's quite problematic posing poverty. But we also have lot of resources, judicious distribution of what can surely reduce poverty to an acceptable level. Besides the natural resources, the size of khas land and water bodies is not insignificant. The high prioritised development activities could be attained with these resources and subsequently at least half of the poor people freed from the curse of poverty.

The government khas land and the khas water bodies are public assets. The poor landless people do deserve these khas resources on priority as per government rules. But the poor here still remain far from such valuable assets. They don't have any access to these resources. The local influentials backed by political goons have kept most of these resources under their control. As per report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Land, the amount of khas land in the country is about 50 lac acres. As per statistics of Dr Abul Barkat, an eminent land resource researcher and economist, the amount of khas cultivable land is about 33 lac acres. As per other research statistics the amount of khas land in the country is not less than 40 lac acres.

There are three administrative tiers for distributing the khas land among the poor landless people. Three committees exist at union, upazila and district level. The distribution of khas land could be smooth and effective if these committees are made active. But experiences

As we know an enormous amount of khas land is lying under the control of the government. Its proper and justified distribution among the ultra poor landless males and females is the appropriate way for their poverty alleviation and empowerment. Land and agriculture have been paid more attention in the recent document titled 'Unlocking the Potentials' of government's PRSP.



Mr David Wood, Head of DFID-B is talking to the landless people of Boro Beel under Faridpur upazila in Pabna district.

are that due to very many hindrances the said committees are unable to become active as is required. In many cases, following the governmental rules, listing of the prospective landless, sorting and final listing for distributing khas land are not taking place. Most people are aware that political influence is the sole and key reason for such state of affairs. Lack of political commitment and reluctances are causing barrier to progress. Either lack of initiatives from the political administration or creating obstacles by the same or otherwise interest groups probably kept the said three tiers inactive.

However, the problems shouldn't be left unresolved. The development activities of the country should be imbued with dynamism. The quality of life of the people should be improved. Success in fighting poverty should be attained. The

initiating responsibilities go to them straight who hold the significant and important positions either in the government or administration. But so far it seemed hopeless. The meeting of the three-tier administrative committees has been irregular in the first place. Besides, if and when held it was wrapped up without taking any decisions.

However, it wouldn't be wise to confine such important activities within the administrative endeavours only. Non-governmental initiatives are also necessary in this regard. Along with the government the civil society and NGOs could play a vital role in managing the steps of actions. Since the NGOs' activities are stretched up to the grassroots level, they are supposed to be familiar not only with the unions or villages but respective families as well. Therefore, NGOs' involvement

seems obvious. So, it is quite rational to incorporate NGOs as auxiliary to the government bodies.

Such huge amount of land resources (40-50 lac acres) existing in Bangladesh can surely change the fate of destitute poor people of the country, if appropriately utilised in national interest. In fact, the resources are seized by a few people. They do not serve the national interest. The administration should free the resources from their selfish clutch and distribute among those who need these most for appropriate utilisation to the benefit of the nation. The incorporation of NGOs and civil society in the khas land distribution programme with government should open further possibilities. The hidden potentiality of the so called poor people of this country shall be explored.

DFID of the British government is one of the leading donor agencies assisting Bangladesh. In a recent announcement, DFID said it was going to triplicate its development assistance towards Bangladesh in coming years. Therefore DFID perhaps is becoming the largest donor agency for the country. Mr David Wood, country head of DFID in Bangladesh has said, "DFID's top priority is to help women and landless people and promote education." As we know an enormous amount of khas land is lying under the control of the government. Therefore, we believe that its proper and justified distribution among the ultra poor landless males and females is the appropriate way for their poverty alleviation and empowerment.

Land and agriculture have been paid more attention in the recent document titled 'Unlocking the Potentials' of government's PRSP. The implementation of the programme strategy could be helpful to meet the needs of the poor. The mingled endeavours of government and non-government organisations could be most helpful to eradicate poverty and thus approaching the MDGs, announced by the United Nations.

MD Abdul Kader is Executive Director and Ayub Hossain, Deputy Director, of Samata.

Agonies of stranded Pakistanis

ABU IMRAN

BHARIS or the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh have been living a miserable life in various camps for the last 34 years. Their number is estimated to be around 3 lakh. Among them the old and the children suffer the most. But it is unfortunate that their cause has been ignored. It is true that the onus lies with Pakistan since the prime reason for their suffering is that they supported the cause of Pakistan during the liberation war in 1971. And as such it is the responsibility of Pakistan to take them. Perhaps in the above consideration over one lakh people were officially repatriated during 1973-74 with the understanding that more people would be taken as could be understood from observation of ZA Bhutto. The observation said "If some of them come, say two, three and four hundred thousand, then that would be better" (Hindustan Standard early 1972 or 1973. I am sorry, I forgot the exact date).

The spirit and commitment of the above observation was that Bhutto could take around 4 lakh people. But the persons repatriated were far short of the above figure. It was just over a lakh only. But Bhutto ignored his own commitment and stopped the repatriation process abruptly in 1974. The subsequent leaders like Ziaul Haque, Benazir Bhutto, Nawaz Sharif, all ignored the problem of the stranded Pakistanis although they deserved the consideration most. It was possible the leadership mentioned above ignored the problem because of their Punjabi and Sind origin and hence failed to appreciate the problem relating to the Biharis.

Now perhaps is the appropriate time because the leadership belongs to the Mohajirs or the immigrants. President Pervez Musharraf is of Indian

origin, so is the Prime Minister. Besides them there are scores of parliamentarians belonging to MQM representing the Mohajirs or the persons of Indian origin like the Stranded Pakistanis. On top of the above, the Sind Home Minister, Mr Rouf Siddiqui and the MQM leader stationed in London are Mohajirs. It is expected that the cause of the stranded Pakistanis now could be well served. This is because being Mohajirs, they would better understand the pangs and sufferings of the unfortunate stranded Pakistanis better. It is now the duty of the Mohajir leadership to be active and press upon the Govt. of Pakistan to arrange for their earliest repatriation.

It is likely that both the governments of Bangladesh and Pakistan have forgotten the issue but not the international community and the human rights groups. The international community also has the responsibility to put moral pressure on Govt of Pakistan like what Mr Kuldeep Nayar, the eminent Indian columnist did. In his recent article captioned "Dhaka is looking up," (The Daily Star dt. 16.07.06), he observed, "In the meanwhile, Islamabad would do well to repatriate some three lakh Biharis, the stranded Pakistanis, who have been living in Bangladesh for the last 34 years in deplorable physical and psychological conditions."

In line with above, pressure from international community perhaps may help to cut the ice and the distressed stranded Pakistanis' problem could be solved.

Abu Imran is a retired govt. official.