



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.



Our police

"Never get tangled with police!" When growing up in rural Bangladesh, we often listened to this wise advice. We eyed the khaki-clad, from a distance, with awe. This unfortunate relationship is a continuation of the colonial mindset, developed during the centuries of Union Jack, where police was akin to an extension of the white flagellum (GURA CHABUK). For long, the white is erased, but the flagellum remains, still bent to tame the people. A remnant of colonial mindset, this adversarial relationship needs to be mended, if one desires to make the police effective and accepted.

Apart from this unfortunate mindset of adversarial relationship, there are other issues. Police is generally portrayed to be corrupt and ruthless. Our police having fallen in such a precarious pit of disgrace, a humongous rescue mission is in order.

Whither Saarc?

Saarc is two decades old. But its evolution shows neither statesmanship nor political craftsmanship. Rather, the hollowness of its goal, commitment and sincerity evokes childish bewilderment. The real culprits are bureaucracy and political legacy that are prevailing among three of its member countries-- India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Other members are reluctant witness to fun-play of these three members. The contrast between reality and nice-sounding 30-point charter adopted in New Delhi can well be understood from the following three events. Situation oneA 70-year old Indian journalist applied for a tourist visa in Bangladesh Deputy High commission in Kolkata. In the application form for profession column he wrote 'retired journalist'. This was sufficient for his plan to visit Bangladesh to be rejected. Situation two--A Bangladeshi traveler to Pakistan was picked up by police simply to be questioned why he had visited India so many times? Situation three20 Pakistani doctors were invited by an Indian professional organisation to participate in a scientific seminar. One day before the seminar started all the Pakistani doctors were denied visa by the Indian govt.

So, lofty speeches alone won't work!

Dr. Q.M. Ohidul Alam

Chittagong

Library

I want a library. I want people to read books. I want my next generation to understand the differences between right and wrong. I want to watch a little kid laughing and wondering reading a magical story. I want to know how to live a life without being pissed off all the time. I want to learn how to feel and see the beauty of this world. I want to know the means to fight my loneliness. I want to steal ideas from every line that was ever written in this world. I want to read books to know how to fight against my desirations and sorrows and learn how to enjoy them. I want to know why I'm afraid of reality and why I hate it so much.

I have always imagined that paradise will be a kind of a library. Properly, we should read for power. The book should be a ball of light in one's hand. What counts in the long run isn't what you read; it is what you sift through your own mind; it is the ideas and impressions that are aroused in you by your reading. A library is an arsenal of liberty. Libraries keep the records on behalf of humanity. Books set the spirits free. A new library is like finding a \$100 bill on the sidewalk.

So donate some books or good movies. If you've decided to give a book, then sign your name and address on it. Any help will be appreciated.

Hasan Musifus Salam

Dhanmondi, Dhaka

Tide of truth

Being a proud Bangladeshi who is

This heavy lifting needs a political will and commitment of resources on the part of the government. And this has to be a multi-pronged approach addressing three primary issues:

a) Building a bridge of good will between the police and the populace:

This can only be achieved through education and re-orientation of the police, as to the noble mission of policing.

b) Uplifting the police morale by a fair pay structure:

Nothing is more important than a fair pay scale that can provide a decent living for all members of the police force. They should be able to afford modest housing, education for their children and an optimal status commensurate with their education, experience and expertise. With the current pay structure, blaming police for being greedy

is rather immoral on the part of high-talking politicians.

c) Non-interference from politics at large: This issue needs no explanation. This has a lot to do with police inertia in apprehending the bad guys. What is the point of apprehending a criminal only to see him getting back to the street through the backdoor? Without the benefit of an effective and honest judiciary, effective policing is doomed to degenerate into a fool's utopia.

The overall milieu is perfect to launch the process. To begin with, I urge the IGP of police to undertake the same approach (of reaching out to general people) already championed by the ACC Chairman.

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