

Political economy of crime and lawlessness



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

In spite of the fact that lawlessness has a significant impact on economic development, a rigorous analysis of the linkages between the two remains conspicuous by its absence in general economic literature. The only redeeming feature of the literature concerned with the identification of sources of economic growth is that during the last half of the previous century, empirical research has come to focus on the relationship between political instability (one obvious manifestation of law and order situation) and economic growth.

Paradoxically, however, the issue of linkage between law and order and economic development has generally remained neglected, both in theoretical and empirical literature concerned with the identification of sources of development.

Bangladesh could not reap benefits from global economic linkage possibly because of its internal political turmoil. No in-depth and systematic study of the impact of lawlessness on Bangladesh's economy has been undertaken so far. Stray articles have appeared in newspapers and magazines highlighting adverse impact of disturbances on local trades and industries, but the problem has not been examined in any coherent way from the standpoint of national economy as a whole.

Crime is a major problem of national and, in some cases, international dimensions. Certain forms of crime can hamper the political, economic, social and cultural development of peoples and threaten human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, stability and security. In certain cases it demands a con-

certed response from the community of nations in reducing opportunities for committing crime, and addressing the relevant socio-economic factors, such as poverty, inequality and unemployment.

Crime prevention and criminal justice should be considered in the context of economic development, political systems, social and cultural values and social change, as well as in the context of new international economic order. The criminal justice system should be fully responsive to the diversity of political, economic and social systems and to the constantly

boundaries have, in many cases, ceased to provide any impediment to unlawful activities. The growth of multinational corporations, including financial institutions, has provided even greater means of shifting money and obscuring the evidentiary trail.

Developing countries that, for their own protection and development, impose currency and exchange controls, are likely to find their financial systems targeted by organised fiscal crime. As a result of organisational structure and concomitant pooling of talent, organised crime and terrorism have become more innovative. If one

particular society determine the conditions of law and order.

There is now a new emphasis on "non-material" needs that cannot be dispensed, but, in addition to being valued in their own right, may be the conditions for meeting "material" needs, like self-determination, self-reliance, political freedom and security, participation in making the decisions that affect workers and citizens, national and cultural identity, and a sense of purpose in life and work. This has been accompanied by attempts to evolve human and social indicators of development that would reflect the extent to which some of these needs are met.

When a society suffers from a law and order situation, the basic propensities to develop fundamental science, to apply science to economic ends or to accept innovations, are completely blunted, and the society is deprived of the important stimuli and catalysts of growth, which have greater effectiveness and impact in the long-term perspective.

The government being an indivisible entity, its developmental and administrative roles cannot be separated. Although opinions differ about the nature and extent of governmental intervention in economic affairs, it is now being widely recognised that without maintaining rule of law and creating conditions of peace, no developmental activity can take place in either the public or the private sector.

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One would find reference to main impediments in the way of achieving goals of effective international cooperation in the prevention of crime. Such impediments arise because of variations in legal systems, differences in the stages of economic development, changes in social environment, and newly emerging forms of crimes. There are many reasons behind the need for adoption of concerted effort to curb crime, basic factor being the threat posed by organised crime and terrorism.

The organisational structure of terrorist or crime bodies is indeed their strength, and multidisciplinary approach necessary to combat them is not a part of the traditional law enforcement culture. Actually, a combination of traditional law enforcement personnel, companies and securities regulators, and financial and scientific experts is necessary to identify individual members of organised crime structures.

Advances in communications and technology are such that national

area of activity is curbed, new and equally profitable areas of unlawful activity are quickly found.

Apart from its national dimensions, the problem of crime now has serious international dimensions. Crime prevention, being a global phenomenon, should not be confined to common criminality but should also deal with nationally harmful crimes, including economic crimes, environmental offences, illegal drug trafficking, terrorism, and other unlawful activities that affect development.

Illicit drug money strengthens the economic power of criminals and gives them the power to corrupt political systems. Organised crime syndicates, including Italian and Russian mafias, Japanese yakuza, Chinese triads and Colombian drug cartels, all laundered money through deposits in unregulated banks or by buying up real estate and companies. Because the money is coming from crime it gives to criminal organisation's businesses a competitive advantage against legitimate busi-

nesses. So the legitimate economy is definitely threatened by organised crime. No one really knows how much money is being laundered.

Economic crimes and their social consequences dwarf those of interpersonal violence and crimes against property in as much as they entail losses of millions to the government and also because they often lead to murder, destruction of property or other grave allied offences. Included under this category are smuggling and bank fraud.

Terrorism is a form of low intensity war, therefore, terrorism is also a political act. The objective of the terrorist is always not to overthrow the government of a country, but rather to change the political calculus of that country.

Foreign policy under Ziaur Rahman

MOHAMMAD AMJAD HOSSAIN

YESTERDAY May 30 was President Ziaur Rahman's 27th anniversary of death. On the occasion one feels it worth to recall his foreign policy among other achievements. When Ziaur Rahman took over on April 21, 1977, he not only consolidated his power base but also made foreign policy dynamic.

Initially, he had made efforts in strengthening relations with other Muslim countries, and to foster good relations with countries of the west. Secondly, he planned to foster fraternal and cordial relations with neighbouring countries.

Until August 1975, Bangladesh did not have recognition from Saudi Arabia and China.

President Ziaur Rahman promoted rapid relations with Saudi Arabia and China. Saudi Arabia did not support the liberation movement because of Pakistan's propaganda against the movement.

The government of Bangladesh had dispatched two stalwart diplomats: Iqbal Athar, Pakistan's Ambassador to Italy who defected to Bangladesh, and Ataur Rahman, who had been Pakistan's Ambassador to Sudan, to remove the misgivings that existed in the minds of some Arab countries about Bangladesh.

Many Arab countries came forward to recognise Bangladesh, excepting the oil rich countries - Iran, Libya and Saudi Arabia. These countries did not go along with the dismemberment of the Muslim country, Pakistan, and the birth of the new nation with the backing of a non-Muslim country, India.

Ziaur Rahman initiated efforts to develop ties with China in January 1977 when he paid a visit to that country as chief martial law administrator. Just as the Zia administration was bent upon developing close relations with China, the Soviet Union thought it appropriate to establish contact with the new regime in Bangladesh and to persuade it not to become too close to China at the cost of an old trusted friend who had accorded all-out support to the cause of Bangladesh during the war of liberation.

On the other hand, the exchange of high level visits contributed to the promotion of understanding, cooperation and friendship between Bangladesh and China. The visit of the Chinese Vice-Premier Li Shien Nien accompanied by the Foreign Minister Huang Hua to Bangladesh in March, 1978 was interpreted as a significant development in the bilateral relations between the two countries. Although Sino-Bangladesh bilateral relations developed reasonably well within the span of three years, the Chinese did not apparently accept the friendly attitude shown by Bangladesh towards Vietnam when its vice-premier was received in Dhaka in December, 1978.

The Vietnamese vice-premier was received at a time when relations between China and Vietnam had

become tense following a Chinese retaliatory attack against Vietnam and the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea.

A host of historical, geographical, politico-cultural and socio-economic factors and individual whims have played a significant role in shaping the relations between Bangladesh and India. Ziaur Rahman began his journey to India with a note of apathy in his attitude in view of the growing anti-India sentiments in Bangladesh, but he was cautiously moving on a tightrope to avoid confrontation, keeping in mind the geo-political compulsion. The relations with India improved when Janata Dal, headed by Morarji Desai, was voted to power in India in March, 1977. The Ziaur Rahman government received full cooperation from the Desai government to contain insurgency against Bangladesh.

On the Farakka Barrage issue, Morarji Desai understood Bangladesh's problem. Following a series of meetings at expert and ministerial levels a five year agreement, containing a guarantee clause on the sharing of the Ganges waters at Farakka, was signed in December, 1977. During the state visit of Morarji Desai to Bangladesh from April 16-18, 1979, it was agreed to set up a joint river commission on allocation of irrigation water from the Ganges for Bangladesh.

Viewed in the context of the vast potential that exists in the South Asia region, which is, by and large, a mosaic of multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious patterns, President Ziaur Rahman discussed the idea of regional cooperation in the course of visits to various capitals of the region during the period 1977 to 1979. Encouraged by the initial response Ziaur Rahman proposed that avenues should be explored to establish some institutional framework for regional cooperation. The first meeting of the foreign secretaries, which was held in Colombo from April 21-23, was considered as an important milestone in establishing SAARC in 1985. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary SAMS Kibria described the occasion as one of historic significance.

Bangladesh's commitment to the principles and objectives of the Organisation of Islamic Conference laid a basis for development of further relations with Muslim countries. Credit, however, goes to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman who took the initiative to normalise relations with Muslim countries by attending the second Islamic summit in Islamabad in 1974. Without recognition by Pakistan, Bangladesh could not attend the conference, and to bring about the reconciliation a hectic diplomatic manoeuvre preceded the conference. A seven-member delegation headed by the secretary general of OIC visited Dhaka, and Bangabandhu accepted the invitation.

Although Pakistan's recognition came because of pressure from



Mohammad Amjad Hossain, a former diplomat, writes from Virginia.

Muslim countries, relations did not improve during Bangabandhu's government. During Zia's, time relations had improved, but major issues such as apportionment of assets and liabilities and repatriation of stranded Pakistanis (non-Bengalis) have not been resolved till today. Apart from strengthening relations with Muslim countries, Ziaur Rahman's role in stopping the fratricidal war between Iraq and Iran and bringing about reconciliation between these two countries was deeply appreciated by OIC.

The policy pursued by the Zia government was to foster good relations with western countries. The western countries also showed increasing interest in developing relations with Bangladesh primarily because of Zia's policy to distance Bangladesh from the pro-Soviet bloc and to introduce multi-party democracy. Bangladesh has had excellent relations with the United States and Great Britain. Zia had established personal rapport with Jimmy Carter, President of the United States. The visit of British Prime Minister James Callaghan in 1978 added another feather to the diplomatic success.

In the international forum, Bangladesh earned prestige and honour. The election of Bangladesh to the Security Council as a non-permanent member in 1978, defeating Japan, was quite a significant achievement in the conduct of foreign relations. Bangladesh Foreign Secretary SAMS Kibria's appointment as Executive Secretary at ESCAP (Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific) in Bangkok and Arshad Uz-Zaman as Assistant Secretary General in OIC were success stories, too.

I would like to conclude this article by quoting Professor Muhammad Shamsul Haq, foreign minister in Ziaur Rahman's cabinet: "Bangladesh is a small country and wants to have good relations with all - big or small. We do not believe in any bloc. We do not like it. Bangladesh believes in equal sovereign rights of all nations and non-interference in other's internal affairs."

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Primary schooling in disarray



MD. ASADULLAH KHAN

THE recent move, a long awaited one, by the ministry of Primary and Mass Education to set up BCS Primary education cadre is a very welcome gesture signaling a change in the declining quality of primary education. A draft proposal in this connection, it is learnt through reports carried by some Bangla dailies on May 25 last, has been sent to the Chief Adviser's office for final approval. It is worth mentioning that out of 11 lakh officers and employees in the government sector 8 lakh officers and employees are covered by 29 cadres but there exists no such cadres in the country to bring about effective management, in still efficiency, enhance quality of education and improve working condition for more than 3 lakh teachers and officers working in 83 thousand government and non-government schools.

With about 10 second grade gazetted officers working under one education officer at the upazila level, there are about 500 to 1200 such teachers and employees, at the highest cost, engaged in catering education at the most vital stage of schooling. Sadly true, even when this number exceeds 50 per cent of the total government employees at the upazila level, hardly any thought was given to create a class I education officer's post therein. Undoubtedly true, in absence of any such move during the last 37 years, primary education has lost its importance and dynamism in the country.

It is true that education at the primary level is swamped in a crisis. Its problems are two fold: inadequate investment and

declining quality. The reason for poor quality of schooling in the country, as one might have diagnosed, is the physical infrastructure that is woefully inadequate. While there is much truth in the saying that buildings don't make institutions, the infrastructure of an educational institution cannot be ignored. It is a common sight that in most schools children are huddled together in a single, dark room. Any conscious citizen visiting these dilapidated schools would feel convinced that the state of the premises - leaking roof, often even no shed to protect the students from the sun and rain - was the main reason why children

thirst during hot summer days. Another report carried by the same Bangla daily on May 13 last with photograph indicated that Ideal Girls' High School at Chatmohar in Pabna, worst hit by flood last year, has now been reconstructed with tube wells dug and benches provided through the financial assistance of the Prothom Alo. The report also stated the dire strait of the Bangla Hill Pilot High School at Hakimpur Upazila in Dinajpur district. This school where about 1000 students are now studying has to be declared closed every year as the places adjoining the school get under knee-deep

water just with the onset of rainy season. Incensed by a report about the suffering of the students of Kadhat High school at Thakurgaon on Feb 26 last that indicated, "there are no benches, students keep standing in the class," the management of the Prothom Alo in a nice gesture donated 46 pairs of benches to the Headmaster of the school last week.

Thirty seven years into the liberation of the country, Bangladesh's children have little to celebrate: about 2 crore of them are out of school. This despite the constitutional directive urging the state to provide free and compulsory education for all children but precious little has been done. Sadly true, if present trends continue, Bangladesh is still 100 years away from reaching that goal.

Meanwhile, the number of illiterate people in the population is steadily rising. About 80 per cent of the adolescent girls

are unable to read and write. The low priority given to education by the nation is apparent from the mean years of schooling, the average period spent in school by a citizen. Bangladeshis spend a little over two years in the classroom, the Chinese spend five, the Sri Lankans over seven and the South Koreans nine. Reports carried by different dailies in the recent past indicated that 606306 students dropped out from the final SSC examination this year. That so many children are out of school or dropped out is a profound tragedy. Undeniably true, education is a basic tool for self-defence in modern society. The feeling of powerlessness

inspection of the class teaching by reputed academicians in the area and high ranking officers in the government, and introducing a pay scale commensurate with other ranks in government services could a meaningful change be brought about in the primary level of schooling.

Most shocking leaving aside the primary level, English is hardly taught even at the secondary stage and there is dearth of competent English teachers at the school level, a disastrous consequence of bad selection of English textbooks and syllabus beginning from the primary to the secondary level since the days of liberation of the country. It is because our education ministry was more interested in replacing chapters on dead leaders in school textbooks. The worrying aspect is that primary education or mass literacy is among the few areas where only the government can make a difference.

Despite so much hue and cry about the development effort undertaken by the past government in the education sector, Bangladesh has still more than 46 percent illiterate population and literacy means just to be able to read 'Adarsha Lipi' or write one's name. So while our leaders in the past days talked about lifting the masses from doom and gloom, they had always neglected the essential ingredients such as education and health - a serious failing. It is true that governments in the past made higher allocation in the education budget but there was hardly any trickle down effect. Some new schools with political consideration were built and quite a substantial amount of fund distributed with little benefit to the impoverished population in the countryside. The process only helped to turn some 'record keeper' or clerks in the Education Directorate office into millionaires because of unbridled corruption creeping in the system in absence of proper checks and balances, surveillance and monitoring of the projects by the elected representatives the past days.

Dr. Kamruzzaman said: "A social marketing programme for condoms targeted to young people will be introduced in 64 districts. Advocacy and sensitisation programmes will target religious and community leaders, parents, and policy makers. The proposal will also cover the much-needed research to generate the strategic information that is required to respond to the epidemic."

As there is no cure for AIDS, it is hoped that the government will take all necessary steps to create awareness among the people at all levels so that all the people become familiar with the killer disease.

Bangladesh, with its limited resources, cannot provide all the facilities required for AIDS that can delay the progression of the disease for many years are available, and they can improve the quality of life of those who have developed symptoms. The government should do its best to make such facilities available to those who need them.

Md. Asadullah Khan is a former teacher of physics and Controller of Examinations, BUET.

AIDS: Concern for Bangladesh

NURUL HUDA

BANGLADESH, with a population of over 140 million, is surrounded by India, and Myanmar, where the number of HIV positive cases has been growing at a high rate. Bangladesh is considered fortunate to be low-prevalent, but South-East Asia has the second highest incidence of HIV in the world after Sub-Saharan Africa.

The HIV burden in the region is concentrated in India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand, which, indeed, is a matter of concern for us. In this context, it needs to be recalled here that no HIV case was detected in the country up to June, 1988, according to London-based Panos Institute's "AIDS and the Third World." Afghanistan, Myanmar, Cambodia and Maldives are other Asian countries with no HIV cases up to June, 1988. Sounding a note of caution, the Panos said that the greatest risk to Bangladesh was from "visiting sailors and soldiers." Along with these, some of the country's 40 million expatriate workers are seen as another risk factor today.

The other day (27 May) there was a case report in a section of the press (BSS/The Independent) that a

Bangladeshi worker was affected by HIV through unsafe blood transfusion in Malaysia and in non-leading a secluded life in the country almost without any family and social cooperation.

Dirty syringes are also described as a problem, since they also transmit other diseases like Hepatitis B. Sex is seen as the least important factor in Bangladesh because of our moral, spiritual and other attitudes. But with the passage of time there have, however, been some changes in attitudes and values in our country also.

The number of reported HIV cases in Bangladesh till December last year was 1,207, while the number of AIDS cases was 365, according to official estimates. The number of deaths from AIDS in the country is 123 so far, while there are an estimated 1,500 HIV cases, according to official sources. Unofficial estimates would, however, put such figures much higher.

What has been haunting those working in the field is that in a conservative Muslim majority country nearly 1,500 HIV positive cases have been reported, while there were none two decades ago. WHO has been providing technical and logistical support to Bangladesh to scale-up prevention, care, treatment and support to the people living with HIV/AIDS.

About 2.5 million people have been afflicted with HIV in India, 339,000 in Myanmar, 193,000 in Indonesia, 70,000 in Nepal, and 541,000 in Thailand.

Worldwide, over 5,700 persons die from the killer disease every day, mostly because of inadequate access to HIV prevention and treatment services. About 60 million people have been infected, and AIDS has already claimed more than 25 million lives. Of the estimated 33.2 million people with HIV in the world in 2007, about 7.2 million live in the South-East Asia region, which indeed is alarming.

The awareness of HIV/AIDS in Bangladesh still remains quite low. "Only 19 percent of married women and 33 percent of married men had heard of AIDS," revealed a survey conducted about five years ago. WHO considers creating awareness on HIV/AIDS as a priority intervention at school level.

Dr. Hanif Uddin, Deputy Programme Manager, National AIDS/STD Programme was of the opinion that today's scenario regarding awareness in the country's married men and women would be between 50-60 percent. A survey is being conducted on the prevailing situation.

WHO: "Family life education in Bangladesh is still in its infancy. As a first step, the WHO is supporting the National STD/AIDS Programme to orientate teachers on HIV/AIDS."

Dr. Kamruzzaman said: "The majority of parents in Bangladesh are not at ease talking about sexuality and HIV/AIDS with their children. At the same time, teachers still do not feel comfortable about talking on these issues."

But, in reality, students have a lot of questions in their minds related to the physiological and emotional changes during adolescence. They can get wrong information from their friends if parents and teachers fail. As education about HIV/AIDS has not gained the desired momentum through the formal education system, WHO is supporting awareness programmes for students.

Blood safety is one of the priority issues for prevention of HIV/AIDS, especially in Bangladesh, as professional donors still remain the major source of blood supply. Meanwhile, Bangladesh, with WHO, has taken up a project to prevent HIV infection in young people aged 15-24. The activities covered in the proposal include providing HIV prevention information to young people through mass media, life skills education

through youth organisations and clubs, integration of HIV prevention into secondary schools and higher secondary curriculum, and making health services more youth friendly.

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Money laundering, war criminals and other issues

TMA SAMAD

At the very outset I would like to thank the honourable Chief Adviser (CA) for his straight forward speech and making the cloud clear in respect of holding election by December 2008. Secondly, by attending the farmers' rally at Dinajpur and encouraging them to boost production he expressed his honest and sincere desire to support the farmers and allocate maximum budget provision in agriculture sector.

In fact the foremost national objective of Bangladesh in the context of sustainable human development (SHD) is poverty alleviation. But it must be remembered that there is no magic adoption of specialist or capitalist method that can convert a state of poverty suddenly into affluence. The only way is through hard work by increasing the productivity of the nation and organizing an equitable distribution of its products.

It is a lengthy and difficult process but it is the only way which can reduce conflict and confrontation. But it is a pity that a number of corrupt politicians and dishonest civil servants are making it more difficult to eliminate poverty. Since Bangladesh is primarily agricultural, the importance of rural sector should be recognized with policies and strategies encouraged accordingly since the time for holding parliamentary elections as per road map is only for seven months but the tasks ahead are too many so the government should prioritize the issues so as to make sure that the burning ones are not left unaddressed.

There are five points that I want to make here. Couple of weeks back a news came up that there would be bi-lateral agreement between at least 10 countries on the issue of money laundering. Like many other conscious citizens I also felt happy that some positive results would come out. Governor of Bangladesh Bank also expressed his optimistic view with some caution that the matter in respect of getting the money back would be very difficult. Nevertheless I would like to express my views emphatically with reasonable confidence that if the matter is taken in an aggressive manner with firm determination then obviously some results can be achieved. In fact the essence of truth commission was the same in spirit. It is a kind of rewarding through repentance.

There are two aspects first through voluntarily disclosure an individual

may get relief from conscience biting and at the same time quite a good amount of money be deposited to a state account. It is good to know that the advisory council has finally approved the Truth Commission with some modification. Hopefully, this will fulfil the aspirations of people at large. If we cannot bring back the money now, it will be well nigh impossible to do the job later on. The reasons perhaps need no explanation.

Secondly, the prosecution of crime is not time barred. The war crime issue got momentum after making boastful comments that there existed no war criminals in this country, that it was not a freedom fight but a civil war and also derogatory comments on the freedom fighters by one of Jamaat's so-called leaders. If the leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami were wise and prudent enough they could have apologized for their misdeeds during the liberation period instead they have shown extreme audacity which is highly offensive and unpardonable. Here it will not be out of place to mention that even some lawyers and elite citizens of Pakistan have expressed their profound sorrow and apologized to the people of Bangladesh. So people at large of this country urge upon the present government to form at least a commission without any delay so as to start processing of the trial soon.

Around the world there are many leaders who changed the history of their nations with their charisma, patriotism and magnificence like Abraham Lincoln of USA, Mahatma Mohandas of India, Nelson Mandela of South Africa. Unfortunately this country is facing serious crisis of political leadership. The hunger for power of our leaders has made our life miserable. The worst sufferers are victims are the teeming millions who want to live in peace and want to see the rule of law and a just society free from exploitation. So before election we must have to find out some mechanism that such persons as only power hungry and greedy are barred from being elected.

While it was a great shock for us all to see the brutalities and depression of the police force and party cadres on the unarmed people it was utterly disturbing to see garment factories being burnt and vandalized by workers while the law enforcing agents and officials reportedly remained silent spectators. Also shocking and disturbing are the news that some dis-

honest ministers and politicians siphoned off money to foreign banks, a gas employee accumulated billion, a senior most forest officer kept millions in his pillows and rice containers. But none of them were brought to book for their corruption during the 4-party alliance democratic regime. The nation could not have known the extent of such enormous corruption had there not been this caretaker government backed by the army. The entire nation is thankful to them.

Wastage is no way desirable. And when it is of a finite resource like, natural gas, it must be stopped. Most of us are expressing concern on unnecessary burning of gas at households, but we have not introduced domestic meters. In this connection it may be mentioned that we are also allowing wastage of gas in the name of 'eternal flame'. Is it necessary? It also doesn't seem permissible from our religion point of view. Whatever we should not allow wastage of such and other resources too, either at domestic or national level.

I would like to emphasize now the issue of political appointments of high court judges. Chief Justice Mr. Ruhul Amin expressed with great concern that a doom's day in the higher judiciary has taken place with such irrational appointment. However, mere utterance does not necessarily mean the solution; the entire nation is looking forward to observe a reasonable solution to this problem. The honourable president possibly could form a supreme judicial council and take appropriate action. However, second option is, to form a council of elders where a group of retired chief justices would operate gratis to oversee the functioning of the constitutional post and invoke the supreme judicial council.

In this context it seems necessary to make provision for ombudsman in the judiciary to receive complaints for excesses, if any, particularly in corruption related cases and take appropriate remedial measures.

Finally, it will be good for the country if all the big parties including others participate in the election. It is encouraging that the government has opened dialogue with the political parties and we look forward to see a consensus on issues that are essential in greater interest of the country.

TMA Samad is a former Director BARC.