

government agencies to business, have now come to be recognised as almost a 'done' practice that is not to be questioned. This culture of impunity has given birth to a kind of apathy and cynicism amongst the vast multitude of common people who have also started thinking that the dictum 'money can buy anything' is not to be questioned. Let me point out some instances of utter disrespect to law first. Readers, please to do not get me wrong. I shall start with as trifling a matter as our traffic system. On our highways we are subjected to grid locks every now and then. On enquiry you would find that the reason perhaps is a bus parked in the middle of the road depositing and collecting passengers. I have also seen traffic policemen leisurely chatting with each other while the traffic is piling. During this time the 'pheriwallas' are having a brisk business. A friend once told me that the longer the grid lock lingers the better it is for 'pheriwallas'. A part of the booty also goes to the policemen on duty. This is just an innocuous example of misdemeanour, the kind of which could be countless. The idea is that everything goes.

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From very minor misdeeds to very serious ones. We have managed to kill two Presidents. One with his entire family, some brilliant politicians who gave leadership during our war of liberation, some valiant officers of the armed forces who were also some of our bravest freedom fighters. There are countless others. We have, in keeping with our culture of impunity, never raised a finger in protest. We thought that since it has not touched 'me' directly I should not bother to speak about it. But just look around and you'd see that these crimes are closing in on us irrespective of creed, colour or political affiliation. A tragedy happens with or without a reason. A similar tragedy is repeated because we did not ask why the past tragedy happened. Therefore it is absolutely necessary that the civil society start a dialogue on how the culture of impunity could be put to an end. People should prepare themselves for societal resistance against such misdeeds. And an organised movement towards this direction should be started without further loss of time---before this nation is reduced to rubble. ■