

STRATEGICALLY SPEAKING

Fresh police recruitment

Imparting training is crucial

THE report that bureaucratic tangles have stalled recruitment of around 16,000 new police personnel is unfortunate.

It cannot be gainsaid that the present manpower strength of the police is very low compared to the size of the population.

While an improved ratio of police to people is important, it is the quality of the force that has a greater import. The quality of the force can only be improved through training along modern lines.

At present the public's confidence in the police is poor. That is because it is looked upon more as an oppressor than the protector of the citizens. Rather than coming in aid of the people, they have been turned into an instrument at the hands of the political authority at the expense of professionalism.

Recent incidents of custodial tortures and deaths, extra-judicial killings by special crime busting unit of the police, the recent report of inhuman police torture on two minor boys and a girl held on suspicion of theft in custody provide glaring examples of human rights violation by the law-enforcing agencies. Add to this the poor mob control records of the police as they resort to high-handed methods at the first opportunity.

Allegations of pervasive corruption, their involvement in crime and complaints of the existence of a police-criminal nexus are also widespread. It would be worthwhile to take note of the Transparency International (TI)'s rating of Bangladesh police as one of the most corrupt organs of the government.

Taking all these negative factors into consideration, a mere increase in number of the police force can only do more harm than good unless they are trained up as motivated, committed and efficient law-enforcers.

So, alongside cutting the knot of red-tapism to go for fresh recruitment of police, the government should also attend to the issue of bolstering their capacity. Besides, their salaries and service conditions will have to be upgraded. Finally, they must have the tools to work efficiently.

EU embargo on Syria

Positive approach should be thought of

AS the international community waffles on the ground situation in Syria, the situation in the country is turning from bad to worse.

The European Union's recent embargo on importing Syrian petroleum is a definite statement of the rising global frustrations against the repressive government of President Bashar al-Assad.

The EU hopes no doubt that this embargo will seriously and effectively impact the current regime. This is so because the EU imports 95% of Syrian petroleum.

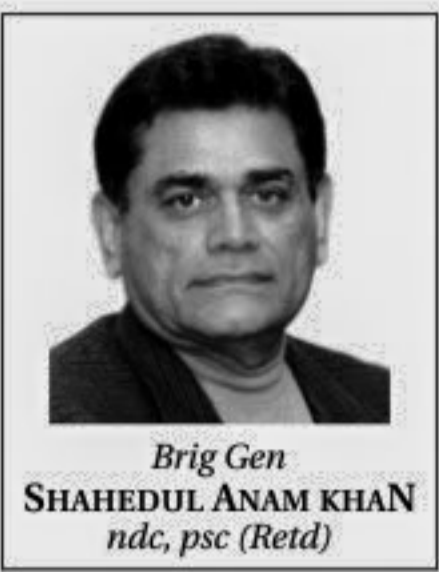
Considering that al-Assad's government has engaged in violence and repression against its people since March, 2011, there is a question as to why, unlike the other countries of the Arab Spring, Syria still hangs in limbo in this process. One hypothesis could be that Syria shares a common border with Israel and thus, for reasons of the pretext of defense, al-Assad continues to maintain a tight grip on the military, which has seen little defection to date.

The essential question now is: will the Syrian embargo be efficient in achieving its goals? That is debatable. Primarily, the embargo, when fully operational in ten weeks, is likely to penalize the population more than the regime and the political elite by weakening the economy. We must not forget that Syria had already been the target of economic sanctions placed by the US since 2003.

From the sheer human rights point of view, it shows the weakness of a multilateral policy to defend the Syrian people.

It is worth noting that perhaps more positive measures regarding Syria could be implemented. These include diplomatic initiatives and political and economical support for the opposition in reversing the current political status quo. Or perhaps a speedy resolution by the UN to end this humanitarian crisis. Could a stern but people-friendly approach to Syria be the answer to helping its

How good is the half-full glass?



Brig Gen SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN ndc, psc (Retd)

IN spite of the fact that Mamata Banerjee's about face had diluted the significance of Manmohan Singh's visit,

dissection of the 30-hour Dhaka trip is likely continue for a long time. It is only but natural. And that is primarily because the expectations created by the interlocutors on our side which were put out through the media were not matched by the outcome. And the disappointment has been made even more acute by an advisor to the Bangladesh PM accusing our media of blaming them for the failure. People in the top rung of the administration seem to forget that success has many claimants of paternity, nobody owns failure.

And what was implied in the statements of the advisors, post Manmohan visit, quite clearly was that Bangladesh was left high and dry by India and they could do precious little about it. Well, the nature of their jobs is such that they must take the bad with the good. Would they have credited India only if everything had gone as we had expected and got everything that was promised? We do not want to look at the glass as half full, as one of the advisors has accused the media of doing, but what good is a half-full glass if that contains undrinkable water?

Even the Indian Prime Minister has acknowledged, not in so many words though, that the Mamata spanner was not only unexpected, the lack of outcome regarding Teesta admits of no excuse on the part of India. I think we, as a nation, are used to disappointments, but when that occurs due to other countries taking us for granted, and failing to reciprocate our actions and goodwill, it is hard to swallow. However, disappointments aside, it is time to take a



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dispassionate look and see if really the glass is half-full in spite of us getting nothing of the Teesta! And, as for today, we shall look at a few aspects only of the bilateral issues.

Teesta is a good point to start. I for one take Mamata's U-turn on Teesta with a pinch of salt. Serious observers of Bangladesh-India relations couldn't have but noticed the absence of the water resource ministers in any preliminaries, though the foreign ministers and the home ministers had met in Dhaka before the visit of the Indian premier, enough indication of things to come. However, since we have no details of the aborted Teesta agreement we do not know how much we lost; thus it is futile to spend effort on it. All we

can do is to ask the government to tell us what exactly we missed and what will be our lot should the Teesta treaty be signed, may be in three months as our finance minister has suggested. We are getting different figures and different calculations. And one gets confused when one hears both the terms, "equal" and "equitable" applied by the advisors and foreign minister in this case. Are they fungible?

On sharing of the common river waters, it is for Bangladesh to worry, even more now that the chief minister of the Indian state of Bihar says that the Ganges Treaty has been a "gross injustice" to his state and has called for its review.

Let us look at the land issues.

Sheikh Hasina had expressed her deep appreciation of the government of Bangladesh for facilitating 24-hour unfettered access to Bangladesh nationals through the Tin Bigha Corridor. While this is certainly an improvement from the status of restricted access to the two enclaves, and would have a "significantly positive impact on the lives of the people of Angarpota-Dahagram," one wonders whether thanks are a bit premature. Is not the corridor to be leased in perpetuity to Bangladesh? Has the long pending promise been really fulfilled as stated by our PM in the Joint Statement?

The two prime ministers may have expressed deep satisfaction at the conclusion of the Protocol to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement, but how much that will pave the way for settlement of the long pending land boundary issues given that the demarcation, which was first agreed to be completed by no later than March 31, 2012, has now been tagged with the exchange of enclaves, which has been left open-ended.

As for transit, the most topical issue, it would be remiss to tag it to the Teesta water sharing. These are two different issues and linking them would be a strategic folly on our part, and one would hope that that was not the intention of the government when it dropped the matter entirely after being shortchanged on Teesta. For Bangladesh there was no other alternative. But there is an arrangement of corridor of sorts, with the ODC going to Palatana power project in Tripura. However, Article 41 of the joint statement of the prime ministers which directed that necessary formalities for the use of Chittagong and Mongla seaports for movement of goods to and from India through water, rail and road be completed urgently, is seen by many as the next step towards granting corridor to India.

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| The New York Times EXCLUSIVE

What to do with Gaddafi

DAVID KAYE

LIBYA'S rebel leaders say they want to try Col. Moammar Gaddafi, if and when he is captured, in Libyan courts. In principle, Libyans deserve the satisfaction that only domestic justice can bring. National trials would advance the rule of law and allow Libyans to fully own their political transition.

One problem: The International Criminal Court (ICC), based 1,400 miles away in The Hague, has already issued arrest warrants for Gaddafi, his son and second-in-command Seif al-Islam, and his intelligence chief, Abdullah Senussi. The United Nations Security Council, recognising that Gadhafi's alleged crimes were not just against Libyans but against humanity, asked the ICC in February to investigate the situation in Libya. Now the ICC legitimately wants to try the three for atrocities committed since the uprising in Libya began last winter.

Some argue that the new Libyan government would be legally bound to transfer Gaddafi and his associates to The Hague. Others argue that the ICC must defer to Libyan authorities if they are willing and able to try Gaddafi fairly in their own courts. A better option should satisfy both ICC partisans and the new leaders of Libya: allow the ICC to try those indicted, but to do it in Libya.

As important as national trials are, post-Gaddafi Libya would, at least in the short term, lack the infrastructure necessary for such complex prosecutions. As in Iraq soon after Saddam Hussein was ousted, the willingness to adhere to basic due process could be severely tested.

The ICC, however, has the experi-

ence, expertise and legal infrastructure to try mass crimes. It has put significant investigative muscle into documenting crimes committed since mid-February. A fair trial process could start fairly soon.

Where the trials should be held is another question.

Trial in The Hague would face limitations. ICC proceedings normally take place far from the scene of the crime, in a foreign language, often according to rules and procedures that may be impenetrable to victim communities. And the court has had difficulty educating local communities elsewhere in Africa about its work, a problem that didn't occur for the Special Court for Sierra Leone in Freetown and the Khmer Rouge Tribunal in Phnom Penh, which are hybrid courts that have elements of international and national law and personnel.

An ICC trial in Tripoli would have practical and symbolic benefits. Most important, it would be closer to the communities that most need to see justice done. It could involve more

Libyans in the proceedings, a step that would afford the ICC greater access to victims and give young Libyan lawyers and other professionals experience with a modern system of justice. It would give the ICC's staff members an opportunity to engage directly with the society for which they are doing their work, while serving as a platform for the international community to help Libya rebuild the rule of law.

Trial in Tripoli, with significant Libyan participation, could also signal a new direction for Libya, one that favours the rule of law and integration with the institutions of international life. It could foster criminal prosecutions of lower-level perpetrators and truth-and-reconciliation processes at the national level, as well as investigations of any serious crimes committed by rebel forces, a signal that the new government believes in fairness within a unified society.

It could give new Libyan leaders some breathing room as they build their new system, while not precluding them from later trying Gaddafi themselves for the crimes of the past

four decades.

An ICC trial in Tripoli would undoubtedly require substantial resources to build or renovate court facilities. Nato or other forces blessed by the Security Council could help arrange security for defendants in custody. The ICC itself would require strong security, lest it become a target for remnants of the old regime. The Security Council, which was happy to refer Libya for investigation, should help now by authorising this kind of support and identifying sources of funds and expertise for the trial.

At the same time, not all proceedings need to take place in Libya; pre-trial proceedings could begin in The Hague while preparations for the actual trial move forward in Tripoli. None of this should seem extraordinary. The Nuremberg trials after World War II drew much of their power from the fact that they took place in the country responsible for the worst crimes of the 20th century. And the ICC's charter, the Rome Statute, leaves open the possibility of trials outside The Hague.

After decades of oppression and months of war, Libyans deserve the opportunity to bring their oppressors to justice. The international community should support that kind of effort, and reinforce it by assuring the basic norms of international law. For Libyans, trial by the ICC in Tripoli should be a bridge toward taking ownership of their future.

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THIS DAY IN HISTORY

September 15

994 Major Fatimid victory over the Byzantine Empire at the Battle of the Orontes.

1944 Franklin D. Roosevelt and Winston Churchill meet in Quebec as part of the Octagon Conference to discuss strategy.

1959 Nikita Khrushchev becomes the first Soviet leader to visit the United States.

1962 The Soviet ship Poltava heads toward Cuba, one of the events that sets into motion the Cuban Missile Crisis.

1983 Israeli premier Menachem Begin resigns.

2008 Lehman Brothers files for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, the largest bankruptcy filing in U.S. history.