

## STRAIGHT LINE

## We felicitate the new JU VC

### His job is cut out

THE resignation of the former Vice Chancellor Professor Shariff Enamul Kabir and his replacement by Professor Anwar Hossain as the new incumbent are welcome developments.

Given his bright track record as a successful teacher at the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology of the Dhaka University (DU) and his administrative credentials as a leader of the DU teachers' association, his has been a prudent choice. It is a step in the right direction.

We hope he will remain above politics and steer the university out of the crisis it has been reeling from.

The new VC faces an enormous challenge from the mess left by the former administration such as moth-long students' and teachers' unrests weakening the very fabric of the institution.

It would be worthwhile to note that despite the specific nature of some of its concerns, JU is not the only public university beset with problems. Dhaka University (DU), Rajshahi University (RU) and Chittagong University (CU) are also not strangers to some or the other forms of unrests and campus violence.

In all the cases, the problems can be traced to the lack of democratic practice of electing a panel of candidates by the senate from which the chancellor appoints the VC under the University Act, 1973. The practice has severely curtailed the autonomy of the universities. It is hardly surprising that the DU and all other public universities have lost their past traditions and glories. This fundamental issue has to be addressed.

We believe Professor Anwar will prove equal to the job and succeed in restoring the past glory and reputation of the university as one of the premier seats of learning in the country.

His initial remarks upon appointment instil a hope that he will be able to heal the wounds and bring to bear a new sense of purpose and mission on his job.

## Fighting terrorism

### Build up on the successes

IT was said by a senior UN official Muhammad Rafiuddin Shah during a counter-terrorism workshop that Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in fighting terrorism through well-thought-out policies. He added that the UN will always extend its support to Bangladesh in its counter-terrorism fight. Foreign Minister Dipu Moni reverberated his views and emphasized her government's success in formulating laws and implementing them to combat terrorist activities altogether. While assurance of UN assistance is undoubtedly a positive inspiration, we are still far from a situation where complacency seems warranted.

We welcome the fact that law enforcers have sporadically made successful busts of terrorist hideouts, exposing their clandestine activities and links with organized local or suspected foreign groups. We also note the present government's success in dismantling religious extremist outfits. Still, we stress the need for more intensive training for the relevant agencies. Overall, regional networking within the SAARC should be an important element of counter-terrorism strategy.

However, we feel the threats from ideological extremist outfits still lurk. The causes that spawn and help spread extremist ideology are still there and these must be rooted out by exposing wrong interpretation of religion.

Those who mentor and pursue extremism try to cash in on poverty and other vulnerabilities of the people. This brings into a sharp focus the agenda for poverty alleviation which will have to be implemented on a vigorous scale.

Another point to address is to incorporate materials in children's textbooks that would infuse in them the spirit of secularism and democracy, thus creating a bastion

# Code of ethics for law enforcers



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

THE police officer has, under the law, great power over individuals. Even in a modern democracy

with an accessible and accountable police service, the first reaction of most people to an approach from the police is to wonder what they have done wrong. Police officers have authority and, irrespective of whether the individual or the uniform engenders respect, there is awareness that challenging police authority has its dangers. It is this representation of authority and potential for exercise of lawful power that is of concern.

"The police, by their very function, are an anomaly in a free society [...]. The specific form of their authority—to arrest, to search, to detain and to use force—is awesome in the degree to which it can be disruptive of freedom, invasive of privacy and sudden and direct in its impact on the individual. And this awesome authority, of necessity, is delegated to individuals at the lowest level of bureaucracy to be exercised, in most cases without prior review and control.

The basis for concern about police ethics is that the impact of instances of police malpractice is greater for both individuals and society as a whole than malpractice among other professions. Police officers are invested with a greater degree of directly applicable power over their fellow citizens than any other group in society.

Furthermore, the degree of autonomy given to individual officers in their exercise of that power allows the most junior officer patrolling the streets a level of decision-making normally reserved for senior persons

in any other government and non-government organisation.

Every decision to stop question or search an individual is an infringement of liberty, and every arrest is both an infringement of liberty and an exercise of force against the individual. Police officers are the only persons routinely armed to carry out their duties, and the use of handcuffs, for example, is unexceptional in carrying out an arrest in many jurisdictions, if not an actual procedural directive.

A further cause for concern is that police powers are most likely to be exercised by those officers who have

without destroying the police service, although the police service is indeed undergoing major changes. Police behaviour would be changed significantly by integrating the code of ethics into police culture, and perhaps this is necessary part of achieving a police service to fit the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

There are many factors which go towards determining any individual's behaviour, ethical standards and beliefs about what is right and wrong. Factors such as family, religion, psychological and intellectual development, peer groups all influence the way we behave. Apart from the pure

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most to do with the public, i.e. officers on general patrol duties, who are, typically, junior in rank and young in both age and police experience.

Whereas for many years the medical profession has had both a code of ethics and a formal disciplinary board, the police service had a discipline procedure from the outset but has only recently attempted to introduce codes of ethics. Intimately connected with this late move are the reasons seen for the necessity for an ethical code, and the success or failure of implementation of codes of ethics within policing involves a discussion of the term "cop culture."

The controlling forces on police behaviour are the law itself, the discipline code, the code of ethics and police culture. Police culture is not always a malign influence, and is probably the most powerful force on police behaviour. To destroy police culture may as well be impossible

psychopath, all individuals have some sense of right and wrong, however bizarre some aspects of this might be.

It is not unduly optimistic to claim that most members of society share the same broad moral principles, and act in accordance with them most of the time: it is not immediately clear how a society could exist in which there were no general agreements on, for example, property rights and the importance of human life.

Police services which have been trying, over the past 10 or 20 years, to implement a code of ethics where previously none was explicit are in a different situation. At least in part, the drive to do so has come from a perception that something is amiss with the behaviour of at least some of the individuals involved, so that the code of ethics implies criticism of current practice, not a move towards best practice. There is a sense of public

unease at the behaviour of some officers towards some or all members of the community.

A code of ethics must be concise, clear, and a public document, and, especially if it is a new code of ethics, the organisation or profession involved must devote a reasonable amount of time to teaching the code and its implications. This drafting can be carried out either by discussion and agreement among the autonomous individuals whose behaviour it will regulate, or by imposition by the organisation, with or without consultation.

It follows that the more involvement there is by individual members of the organisation in drafting and adoption of the code of ethics, the more ownership members of the organisation will have of it, and therefore the more likely it is that it will be known and understood and the organisation will operate according to its precepts.

Police were themselves made to behave in accordance with the requirements of the organisation by the application of hierarchic supervision, and strict application of the discipline code.

It needs to be said that only over the past 40 years or so have the society's requirements included a widespread recognition of equal rights for all sections of the community, and even more recently has policing changed from a force which required of its officers little more than order maintenance and reactive strategies for dealing with offenders, to a service which requires officers to work with the community to keep the peace and prevent crime.

It may well be that the traditional police discipline code is now of less use to a modern police service than a properly introduced code of ethics and sound training in its principles.

The writer is a columnist of *The Daily Star*.

## | The New York Times EXCLUSIVE

# In Sudan, give war a chance

GERARD PRUMIER

LESS than a year after South Sudan declared its independence, it appears headed for war once again with its northern neighbor, Sudan. At the same time, marginalised northerners are rebelling against the government of Sudan's president, Omar Hassan al-Bashir. The international community has called for a cease-fire and peace talks, but the return of violence is not necessarily a bad thing. Soldiers killing one another in war would be far less devastating than thousands of women and children starving to death while waiting for a negotiated peace that will never come.

Bashir's government cannot be trusted. It has for years systematically betrayed its agreements -- signing dozens of treaties and then violating them. Paradoxically, an all-out civil war in Sudan may be the best way to permanently oust Bashir and minimise casualties. If a low-intensity conflict rages on, it will lead to a humanitarian disaster.

South Sudan seceded from the rest of the country last year in what once seemed a radical solution. But the conflict has continued. This is because Sudan's wars have for too long been mistakenly seen as a result of tension between a Muslim north and a Christian south. According to this logic, separating them would bring peace.

But this logic was flawed. Sudan's recurring wars don't stem from religious conflict but from the Arab government's exploitation of various non-Arab groups on the country's periphery -- including the southern

Christians and predominantly Muslim groups like the Darfuris in the west, the Bejas in the east, the Nubians in the north and the Nuba in Kordofan. These peripheral regions have been exploited by Khartoum since the 19th century. But until recently, the South was the only region aware of this exploitation because it was neither Arab nor Islamic.

The rest of the country lived for more than 150 years under the illusion that it shared fundamental values with the Arab center. It was only when black Muslim soldiers were sent south to kill their black Christian compatriots in the name of Islamic purity that they began to realise that Islam did not give them any advantage in terms of education, health and economic status over the "heathens" they were ordered to kill.

The American-sponsored comprehensive peace agreement of 2005 was supposed to cure Sudan's endemic conflict, but it used the wrong medicine. The agreement was signed by only two sides: the Muslim north and the Christian south. That left fully one-third of the Sudanese people -- the African Muslims -- without a political leg to stand on. And it is that forgotten third that is now fighting the Sudanese government

because, after years of serving as its house servants and foot soldiers, they have come to realise that they will never be anything but second-class citizens, despite their Islamic faith.

Although the Arab world has been shaken by a series of upheavals, Sudan has remained the odd man out. Islamists continue to rule Sudan after 23 years of failure. They promised to end the civil war but instead militarised the country, killed more than two million people, ruined the non-oil economy, gutted civil liberties

and gagged the press and academia. After losing the war (and the north's oil resources), they realised they had no plan B. Their only recourse was to vilify African Muslim rebels as traitors, denounce southern Christians as instigators of the Muslim revolt and promise more repression.

Whenever foreign leaders demand greater respect for human rights or peace talks, Sudan always agrees, because agreeing makes the international community happy. But we forget too quickly. A year ago northern Sudanese forces invaded the disputed town of Abyei on the eve of South

Sudan's independence; they later agreed to withdraw, but they never left.

The status quo is not working, regardless of what American and United Nations officials might believe. Bashir recently referred to the black leaders of South Sudan as "insects" and insisted that Sudan must "eliminate this insect completely." For those who remember Rwanda and the racist insults hurled by Bashir's janjaweed militias during their brutal attacks in Darfur, his vile words should be a wake-up call. Indeed, without some moral common ground, "negotiations" are merely a polite way of acquiescing to evil, especially when one's interlocutors are pathologically incapable of respecting their own word. And in the case of a murderer like Mr. Bashir, there is no moral common ground.

Sudan has now reached its point of no return. Many Arabs across northern Sudan have become fed up with the jingoistic frenzy now being deployed by their exhausted tyranny and are quietly waiting for a chance to join the revolt begun by non-Arab Muslims.

The rebels battling Bashir's government are waging a real battle for freedom, and their de facto alliance with southern Christians could finally bring Sudan's endless conflict to a close. War is a tragic affair, but the brave Sudanese men who have chosen it as a last resort deserves to be allowed to find their own way toward a Sudanese Spring, even if it is a violent one.

The writer, the former director of the French Center for Ethiopian Studies, in Addis Ababa, is the author of *Darfur: A 21st Century Genocide*.

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## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

May 19

1649

An Act of Parliament declaring England a Commonwealth is passed by the Long Parliament. England would be a republic for the next eleven years.

1780

New England's Dark Day: A combination of thick smoke and heavy cloud cover causes complete darkness to fall on Eastern Canada and the New England area of the United States at 10:30 am.

1897

Oscar Wilde is released from Reading Gaol Prison.

1961

Venera program "Venera 1" becomes the first man-made object to fly-by another planet by passing Venus (the probe had lost contact with Earth a month earlier and did not send back any data).

1971

Mars probe program "Mars 2" is launched by the Soviet Union.

2008

The World Health Organization has recognised and supported World Hepatitis Day to increase the awareness and understanding of viral hepatitis and the diseases that it causes.

2010

The Royal Thai Armed Forces concludes its crackdown on protests by forcing the surrender of United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship leaders.