

The Daily Star

FOUNDER EDITOR
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Fatal attack on police Enough talk, take action

THE attack on the police in Ashulia yesterday, which killed one and injured four others, has just ratcheted up the problem in an already jittery law-and-order situation. That police on duty can be attacked from very close quarters in broad daylight was hitherto unheard of. The manner of the attack shows that this was a careful operation and the attackers had worked out the plan that ensured a safe getaway. This is the second fatal attack on the police in a fortnight. If the intention was to strike terror into the hearts and minds of the masses that no one, not even the police, is safe from attack, then it is succeeding.

Attacking law enforcers is equivalent to an attack on the State. The statement given by the minister of home affairs in the aftermath of the latest incident is not enough. The State should respond effectively and decisively. Failure to bring to book those responsible for the recent spate of deadly attacks on writers and now the police will merely strengthen the hands of whoever is responsible for masterminding these operations.

It's worth noting that the home minister has not brushed the attack aside as an isolated incident. But he must act decisively now. Delay in nabbing the perpetrators will erode confidence of the people in the State as the ultimate guardian of peace and safety for its citizens.

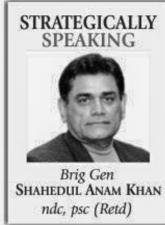
We repeat, the law enforcing agencies should be allowed to function free of political interference and their proficiency including their ability to protect themselves against surprise attacks should be enhanced through more rigorous training and appropriate equipment.

Bangladesh on track for reducing stunting More needs to be done for other nutrition indicators

IT is assuring to note that Bangladesh is on course to meet the global targets for reducing the rate of stunting, low height for age among children under five. The existing rate of this major indicator of malnutrition is dropping faster than in the past and now stands at 36 percent.

While the Global Nutrition Report 2015, an independent annual assessment of the state of nutrition in the world, lauds Bangladesh for this achievement, it also asks the government to do more so that growth retardation among children declines at a faster rate as the prevalence of stunting is still high in the country. The report also indicates the country's relatively poor performance in six other major nutrition indicators -- wasting, anemia in women, exclusive breast feeding, adult overweight, obesity and diabetes -- of which the threat of adult overweight and obesity is growing fast.

So, the government needs to approach the malnutrition issue holistically and put emphasis on improving the poor status of the six above mentioned malnutrition indicators. It also needs to invest more on nutrition. Nutrition component should be incorporated in different social safety net programmes. General people should also be made aware about nutrition issues through nutrition behaviour change communication programmes.



Brig Gen SHAHEDUL ANAM KHAN ndc, psc (Retd)

WE are in accord with the attitude of the Russian Ambassador on the killing of the two foreigners, articulated in the most poetic manner. However, while that aphorism is true, it is also true that droplets in a crag if allowed to accrete will result in the ultimate denudation of the rock, and if one were to compare the society to a rock, it will fracture eventually and the fissiparous forces that are on the prowl and are busy pulverising our mind through selective killings will eventually come to pervade our lives.

The gaze of the nation has been made to shift from the foreigners' killings to the bloggers'. Whether that is deliberate or not is a matter of conjecture but that these killings are somewhat linked is a fair assumption. Even if Ansar-ul-Islam, the so-called appendage of Al Qaeda in South Asia, had not admitted to the attacks on the publishers that resulted in the death of Dipan and grievous injury to three others, it would not be difficult to surmise who the killers were, if not

pinpoint the group exactly. And although Ansar-ul-Islam has admitted to the killing, I think that most of the extremist groups proscribed by the Bangladesh government would like to feel a vicarious association with the attacks. It is the second time that this group has claimed responsibility for the killing of bloggers. The August killing of Niloy was owned up to by this group also.

We have noticed a complete new dimension in the choice of targets of the religious extremists. In addition to the bloggers that they have been going after so far now, as the matter stands, the extremists will not only deter, to the extent of killing those that they do not agree with, but also shut the mouth of those that help to spread their views. But again one cannot overlook the attacks on policemen, the latest being on a police check post in Savar yesterday that killed one policeman and injured 4 others. We are happy to note that the home minister did not dismiss the attacks on the police as 'isolated' incidents.

These events call for the redefining of the government's response and its entire method of combating the extremists, keeping in mind the developing situation through an objective investigation and identification of the killers.

We need not be told that these were well-planned attacks. No killer group gets up one fine morning and says, "Let's go and kill some bloggers?" Of course these were well-planned attacks. Not only that, the attacks were well coordinated too, given that those were carried out near simultaneously, and the method of operation similar. While it is difficult to anticipate a well determined attack for the police -- remember the extremist need to be successful only one day of the year to fulfill their mission -- the law enforcers have to be successful every single day of the year to prevent the extremists' success. It is through an invigorated human intelligence network that the extremists can be more effectively tackled.

And when it comes to investigation and resolution of these cases we are disappointed at the progress of investigation and trial. And this brings us to the question of the state's counter-terrorism capabilities, something that we have been harping on for so long. And when the police admit to the lack of resources, not expertise, in effectively combating extremism and terrorism, our position is vindicated. The police rue the lack of a special force to fight these groups. That is bound to be so since the government is yet to come up with a strategy to combat the menace.

And unless one has established the nature of threat and how that might evolve in the future, and formulates appropriate response, one cannot realistically set up a force appropriate for, and relevant to, the need. Apparently there is little, if any, coalescence of efforts between the counter-terrorism units that some of our intelligence agencies possess. In this regard the government must also consider seriously the need for an apex body that would lead the anti-terrorism efforts and one that would also devolve the authority to task the intelligence agencies.

But that is only one aspect of dealing with extremism and terrorism fed by radical thoughts. The society has a big role to play in this respect and that includes the politicians who have, regrettably, played politics with the issue. It is worthwhile restating the comments of Dipan's father, which was profound in both substance and connotation. He said that he did not want the trial of his son's killers, but would hope that sense would prevail among us. All those who are playing with religion are destroying the country, he had said. These words need no explanation and which everyone, except little people with little minds, would be able to comprehend.

The writer is Associate Editor, The Daily Star.

INVESTING IN PEACEKEEPING For Today and Beyond

HERVÉ LADSOUS

IN late September, more than 50 world leaders met at a remarkable Summit on the sidelines of the 70th session of the General Assembly to pledge support and new contributions to UN Peacekeeping. The Summit exceeded all expectations, with governments pledging some 40,000 troops as well as much-needed critical enablers including more than 40 helicopters and aircrafts, 29 engineering units, 32 policing units and 12 field hospitals.

This historic show of support did not materialise overnight. It was the culmination of a continuous and consistent global effort over the last few years, in which member states across Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas lent their political weight to generate capabilities to fill critical gaps identified by the UN. These pledges, if realised, would make a stronger and more resilient UN Peacekeeping for the people and communities we serve.

Why this surge of support now? UN Peacekeeping has grown steadily in both scope and scale since the end of the Cold War. We are currently operating 16 peacekeeping missions across four continents serving a total population of over 125 million people. But peacekeepers have been increasingly targeted by armed groups including terrorist elements. In Mali alone, 42 peacekeepers have been killed and 126 injured since July 2013. Today the blue helmets operate in remote and austere environments, confronting asymmetric and complex threats each day in areas of political instability with little peace to keep and large vulnerable populations to protect. While violence and conflict are the primary threats, peacekeepers are often deployed in complex and dangerous contexts that require specialised skills, modern equipment, advanced technology and well-trained forces.

In these increasingly challenging missions, we are also being asked to do more. The mandates entrusted to us by the Security Council have become broader and more complicated. Over 95 percent of our peacekeepers now work in missions with a protection of civilians' mandate. In South Sudan, we protect in our bases



An all-female police unit from Bangladesh, serving with the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH).

some 185,000 internally displaced persons fleeing conflict and violence. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, our peacekeepers are actively engaged in fighting a number of vicious armed groups which have pillaged villages and murdered hundreds of civilians in the east of the country. A great deal is at stake.

Why do we need the support? Put simply, real challenges require real capacities. Highly trained military, police and civilian personnel enabled by technology and aviation support will allow UN Peacekeeping to conduct more effective and efficient operations. A key element to this approach is the use of new technologies that can help us monitor ceasefires more efficiently, enhance the safety and security of our personnel, provide early warning and ultimately better protect civilians. But we also need dedicated personnel trained to the highest standards of professionalism. Being a peacekeeper is no easy task.

Where are we going from here?

As US President Barack Obama noted at the Summit, our partnership with Member States "has often depended on the willingness of courageous UN peacekeepers to put their lives on the line in war-torn corners of the world". The Secretary-General has warned of a divide between troop contributing countries, the Security Council and major donors. Similarly, we have long urged Member States to be at a higher level of readiness so that we don't have to "build the ship while sailing it". The pledges made now need to be translated into tangible contributions that match needs and requirements on the ground.

Our engagement will not stop at the Summit. This month in New York, I held a meeting with the Member States that committed their support to review the Summit's implications and how to move forward with the contributions and pledges. Most of the pledges generated at

the Summit cannot currently be deployed to our ongoing missions; however, having a reserve of available contributions will help us provide UN Peacekeeping with greater predictability and the capacity to respond to crises rapidly and effectively. We will continue to work with world leaders and countries from around the globe to meet future needs and enhance our capabilities for the future.

Peacekeeping requires strength in unity and a commitment to improving rapid deployment, responsiveness, performance and accountability. This is the backbone in our efforts to contribute to sustainable peace and stability. Peacekeeping is a unique global partnership, and we will only succeed with the firm political support and commitment of resources from our troop and police contributing countries.

The writer is Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

COMMENTS

"20% pass DU 'Ka' unit test"
(November 04, 2015)

Priyanka Tanni

This is the result after distributing the question papers before the exams!

Israt Jahan

Is this the result of creative questions?

"Truth be damned"
(November 04, 2015)

Elius Raihan

But I blame myself! Why was I born in this time of nasty politics?!

Faysal Kabir Shuvo

The BNP chief's and the PM's positions are incomparable.

"Fakhrul sent to jail again"
(November 04, 2015)

Rezaul Karim

Three million people sacrificed their lives in 1971 but we are yet to get our long cherished democracy. Our hard earned freedom has become valueless. But I strongly believe it's not long before we'll get our freedom and democracy back.

Md Mohid

Everyone knows Fakhrul is innocent.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Repair Sylhet-Tamabil highway

Sylhet-Tamabil highway always remains busy because thousands of tourists visit Jaflong every day. Moreover, coal, stone and other items are imported through Tamabil land port. It is one of the most important roads in Sylhet. But about 20 km of the road from Jaintiapur to Jaflong is in a very dilapidated condition. If this road is not repaired immediately, tourists will stop coming here this winter. So both our business and tourism sector will be badly affected. I would like to draw the attention of the authorities concerned to repair this road on an urgent basis.

Ataur Rahman
Dept. of Business Administration, SUST

Establish a joint river commission

The recent establishment of a mega reservoir and hydro-electric project on the Tsangpo-Brahmaputra river by China in the upper catchment areas of Tibet is a warning sign for both India and Bangladesh sharing the middle and lower catchment areas respectively. This will have serious impacts on the water flow of transboundary river passing through Tibet, India and Bangladesh in the

coming years and is going to severely reduce the local agricultural and hydro-electric productivity in North East India and Bangladesh. With such aggressive policies implemented in the upper catchment areas, it is important for both India and Bangladesh to seriously discuss with China a mechanism for establishing joint management of the river water.

Unless this is dealt urgently

by both nations, the economy of India and Bangladesh will suffer immensely in the not so distant future. It is necessary to establish a joint river commission among China, India and Bangladesh like the Mekong River Commission that is jointly managed by China, Burma, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

Saikat Kumar Basu
Canada