

STRONG INSTITUTIONS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

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Good governance and its link with police reform

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colonial administrative, police and judicial structures without recasting them to meet the changed situation. The "colonial-repressive" character emerged when the governing elite of a decolonised society decided to retain the inherited police organisation, ignoring justified demands for change.

The concept of police work in a welfare state not only includes social justice but also the idea of service to the people. Under this concept, the police perform a number of duties which are, strictly speaking, not a part of their statutory work. The expanding role of the police has brought out the increasing need for public cooperation. The concept of social legislation and social defence calls not merely for enforcement but for effective propaganda and persuasion. This presupposes the existence of cordial relations between the police and the public.

In independent Bangladesh, police are required to act as agent of the law and are viewed as "citizens in uniform". However, this idea has to be spelt out in a new Police Act. The term used in the Police Act of 1861 is police force and not the civil police. Hence, the civilian character of the police should also be given statutory recognition. Such statutory recognition of police as an agency of social change would strengthen the capacity of the police to cope with emerging problems of rapid change reflected in enactment of social legislation. In other words, in an open, free and welfare society, the police have to be a service organisation. The repressive role of the police has to yield to a system of community service, completely changing the concept of penology with more emphasis on eliminat-



PHOTO: AFP

ing social evils and rehabilitating those forces that pose a danger to peaceful existence of the society.

Since we are not a society of virtuous anarchists, there is a need for government. The relationship between the government and governed rests

ultimately upon a contract between the governor and the governed. If police has to function to the benefit of the society then the tradition of the government has to evolve into an overriding belief in the value of a liberal democracy based on the rule of

law. If the rule of law is to be maintained, then the laws must be enforced comprehensively, impartially and effectively. The official and legitimate law enforcement agency is the police organisation. The primary role of police is therefore to enforce the law,

at the implicit wish of the society, so as to make legitimate government effective. Policing in Bangladesh should be to provide a service as well as to enforce the law.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP.



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