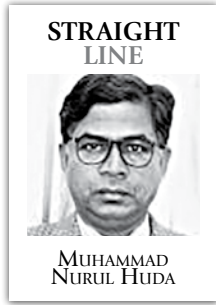


# Cleaning up our police force is critical



STRAIGHT LINE

MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

**T**HE malfeasance and misfeasance of some errant police officials in the recent past—which brought into sharp focus their worrisome delinquency—

has perhaps prompted the Inspector General of Police to initiate a process of cleaning that apparently aims to rid the police of bad apples. The admirable pragmatism behind such an initiative cannot escape the discerning eye, because the misdeeds of the police impinge quite adversely on people's liberty, in addition to the lamentable erosion of public confidence in a vital regulatory organ of the state funded by taxpayer's money.

It's worth reiterating that the delinquent actions or inactions of deviant police personnel are not a mere figment of the imagination. Instead, these are hard realities which would have been less ominous had they been rare instances of misconduct on the part of a coercive organisation. Corrective measures to contain police deviance assumes added significance because the protectors of citizens cannot be allowed to indulge in any kind of activities that are dubious or deplorable. Police has to come clean in the mirror of public opinion.

A democratic society which values individual liberty will look very closely at any infringement of that liberty by the government, and at the particular arm whose actions are seen to be restrictive. The power wielded by police

is all the more worrying for members of society if they feel they have no means of controlling the police and their powers. We have to bear in mind that no other individual or body has anything like the general powers police have. Often, the momentous question of the suspension of individual rights is decided by the most junior and inexperienced members of the police force.

A police officer has lawful power to

individuals have no place in the police force and there must be some means of removing them. The most obvious criterion for a system of investigating complaints about police behaviour is that it be stringent, effective, and capable of discovering facts. This requires trained, experienced, skilled investigators and the largest number of such individuals has to be found within the police organisation itself. It is also necessary that the public

more needed is a properly introduced code of ethics and sound training in its principles.

It is time to come out of the colonial policing model of order maintenance and reactive strategies and move towards a service culture which requires officers to work with the community to keep the peace and prevent crimes. This change in policing ethos is expected to bring a new view of police officers who are required to be culturally

and consensus.

It is important to note that behavioural norms of our police organisation need to change. For this to become a reality, police norms have to comply with the requirements of the organisation. In plain words, the police culture must broadly conform to the new code of ethics. The question is, how can this be done? Admittedly, training has a large part to play in modifying police culture to the mores required in modern progressive policing. This will, however, be a long-term strategy. At the same time, the traditional "carrot and stick" (reward and sanction) process has to continue. There has to be rewards like promotion, pay increments or preferment for those whose actions merit it—and sanctions to rid the organisation of those whose behaviour is seriously unacceptable to merit dismissal.

The propositions placed above cannot be effected in isolation without looking at the broader canvas of the trappings of our subcontinental colonial policing. We have to remember that the "colonial-repressive" character of out policing emerged when the governing elite of a decolonised society had decided to retain the inherited police organisation, bypassing justified demands for change. In other words, we have retained the colonial administrative, police and judicial structures without recasting them to meet the changed situation, although we have adopted a written, liberal democratic constitution.

There is a cynical view that politicians in the subcontinent do not want to professionalise the police service because control over it is central to political conflict in a polarised society. Putting all the blame on the political class, ignoring the less-than-proactive role of police leadership, would be grossly unfair. The imperative, quite clearly, is mental decolonisation to ensure a fair and merit-based police service.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP of Bangladesh.



FILE PHOTO: AFP

*It is time to come out of the colonial policing model of order maintenance and reactive strategies and move towards a service culture that requires officers to work with the community.*

take away individual liberty by arrest, questioning about movements, and demanding name, address and proof of identity. Police powers frequently authorise officials to use force if necessary.

In view of the stipulations above, the cleaning endeavour has to ensure that undesirable and unacceptable

have confidence in the rigour of the investigative process. The public needs to be given faith in the fact that allegations of unacceptable behaviour by police officers will be investigated and dealt with. However, it would be pertinent to note that the traditional police discipline code is now of less use to a modern police service. What's

sensitive, and agents of assistance rather than control. There has to be a realisation that police officials are accountable not just for what they do but how they do it; they can no longer be unthinking, unquestioning functionaries accountable only to senior officers. The change has to come through management by leadership

## PROJECT SYNDICATE

# Covid-19 and Human Freedom



JOSEPH E. STIGLITZ

**T**HE upsurge of Covid-19 cases, hospitalisations, and deaths in the United States serves as a bitter reminder that the pandemic is not over. The global economy will not return

to normal until the disease is under control everywhere.

But the US case is a true tragedy, because what's currently happening here is so unnecessary. While those in emerging markets and developing countries are longing to get the vaccine (with many dying because they cannot get it), the US supply is ample enough to provide a double dose—and now a booster shot—to everyone in the country. And if almost everyone got vaccinated, Covid-19 would almost surely just "fade away," as former President Donald Trump memorably put it.

And yet not nearly enough people in the US have been vaccinated to prevent the highly contagious Delta variant from driving case numbers in many areas to new highs. How do so many in a country with seemingly well-educated people act so irrationally, against their own interest, against science, and against the lessons of history?

Part of the answer is that the country, for all of its wealth, is not as well-educated as one might expect—which is reflected in the country's comparative international performance

on standardised assessments. In many parts of the country—including some with the highest rates of resistance to vaccination—science education is particularly poor, owing to politicisation of fundamental issues like evolution and climate change, which in many cases have been excluded from school curricula.

In this environment, misinformation can gain traction with many people. And social-media platforms, insulated

who refuse to wear masks or socially distance often argue that requirements to do so infringe on their freedom. But one person's freedom is another person's "unfreedom." If their refusal to wear a mask or get vaccinated results in others getting Covid-19, their behaviour is denying others the more fundamental right to life itself.

The essence of the matter is that there are large externalities: In a pandemic, one person's actions affect

against killing, stealing, and so on restrict an individual's freedom, we all understand that society could not function without them. In our post-Covid world, we might interpret the Ten Commandments to include: "Thou shall not kill, including by spreading infectious diseases when thou can avoid doing so."

Similarly, "Thou shall get vaccinated." Any infringement of an individual's liberty by requiring safe and highly effective Covid-19 vaccination pales in comparison to the social benefits—and consequent economic benefits—of public health. It is a no-brainer to require all individuals, with only limited medical exemptions, to be vaccinated. While many governments appear to be too timid to impose this requirement, employers, schools, and social organisations—any organised activity that brings individuals into contact with others—should do so.

As we have been learning for the last 18 months, global health is a global public good. As long as the disease rages in some parts of the world, the risk of a deadlier, more contagious, more vaccine-resistant mutation grows.

In most of the world, however, the problem is not resistance to vaccination but a severe shortage of vaccines. Evidently, the private sector is unable to scale up production to ensure an adequate supply. Is that because vaccine producers lack capital? Is there a shortage of glass vials or syringes? Or is it because they hope that fewer doses will lead to higher prices and even bigger profits? Among the key barriers to greater supply is access to the

*As we have been learning for the last 18 months, global health is a global public good. As long as the disease rages in some parts of the world, the risk of a deadlier, more contagious, more vaccine-resistant mutation grows.*

requisite intellectual property, which is why the IP waiver being discussed at the World Trade Organization is so important.

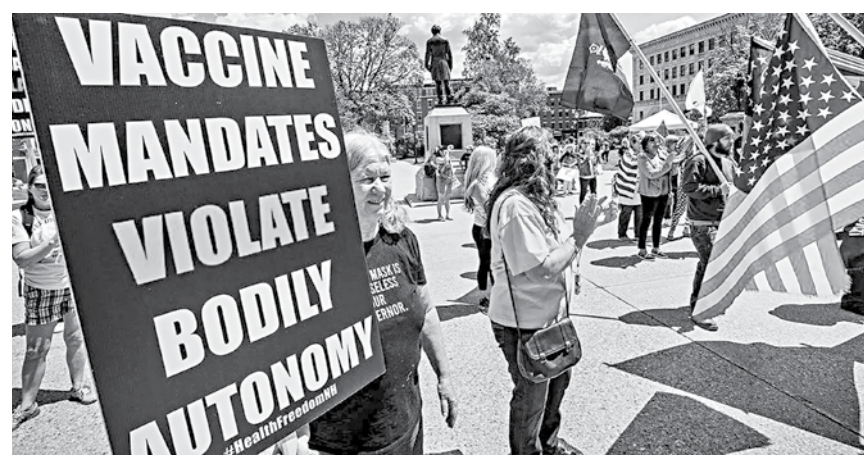
Given the urgency and scale of the challenge, more is needed: Among the steps US President Joe Biden's administration could take is to invoke the Defence Production Act and leverage the federal government's ownership of the patents. The US has been allowing the pharmaceutical companies to use this public IP freely, while they reap billions of dollars in profits. The US must use every instrument at its disposal to increase production at home and abroad.

This, too, is a no brainer. Even if the costs of global vaccination totalled tens of billions of dollars, the amount would pale in comparison to the costs of persistent Covid-19 outbreaks to lives, livelihoods, and the world economy.

Joseph E. Stiglitz, a Nobel laureate in economics, is University Professor at Columbia University and a member of the Independent Commission for the Reform of International Corporate Taxation.

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(Exclusive to The Daily Star)



**'Those who refuse to wear masks or socially distance often argue that requirements to do so infringe on their freedom. But one person's freedom can be another person's "unfreedom."**

PHOTO: AFP/JOSEPH PREZIOSO

from liability for what they transmit, have made a business model of maximising "user engagement" by spreading misinformation, including about Covid-19 and the vaccines.

But a key part of the answer is a deep misinterpretation, especially among the right, of individual liberty. Those

the well-being of others. And whenever there are such externalities, the well-being of society requires collective action: regulations to restrict socially harmful behaviour and to promote socially beneficial behaviour.

Any ordered society entails restrictions. But while prohibitions

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

### ACROSS

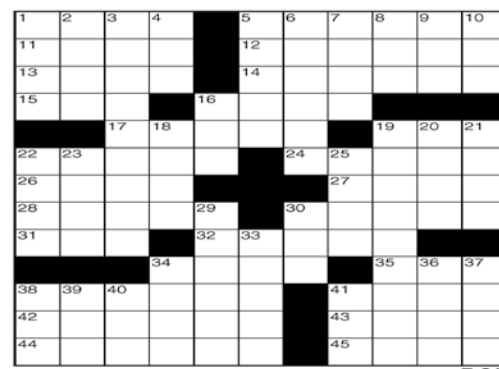
- 1 Staff symbol
- 5 Crotchety folks
- 11 Turner of Hollywood
- 12 Lighten
- 13 Kitchen fixture
- 14 ATM bill
- 15 Hole number
- 16 Vaccine deliveries
- 17 Film legend Garbo
- 19 Soaking site
- 22 So far
- 24 Went fast
- 26 San Juan Hill setting
- 27 — Major
- 28 Center
- 30 Stable worker

### DOWN

- 1 Hoof sound
- 2 Hot flow
- 3 Gym snack
- 4 Team supporter
- 5 Suggest
- 6 Seafood restaurant fixture
- 7 Calls on

### 8 Fellows

- 9 Deposit
- 10 007, for one
- 16 Airport sight
- 18 Caboose setting
- 19 Browser part
- 20 Mexican coin
- 21 Genesis name
- 22 Dull pain
- 23 Litigious one
- 25 Surrounding glow
- 29 Cufflinks' kin
- 30 Hair goo
- 33 Bargains
- 34 Singer Seeger
- 36 In addition
- 37 Sugar source
- 38 Spots on TV
- 39 Convened
- 40 Count start
- 41 Drama division



## SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

W I S H   S L I D E  
I D E A S   T E N O R  
M I S D E M E A N O R  
P O T N I P E M O  
S M E L T S P E E R  
S T A R S   A D D S  
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S L O T   O N T O P  
W A D E   K E Y P A D  
A V E   S E A   T R E  
M I S F U N C T I O N  
I S S U E   T O O L S  
S H A R D   K N E E

## BEETLE BAILEY



## BY MORT WALKER



## BABY BLUES



## BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT



## QUOTABLE Quote



**Milton Friedman**  
(1912 – 2006)  
American economist

*History suggests that capitalism is a necessary condition for political freedom. Clearly it is not a sufficient condition.*

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