

Police recruitment must be fair and transparent

Letting undesirable individuals enter the force goes against the principles the institution is based on

STRAIGHT LINE



MUHAMMAD NURUL HUDA

RECENTLY, there have been news reports highlighting serious irregularities in the recruitment of constables in the district of Narayanganj. The Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has also alleged that there is reasonable suspicion of massive fraud and bribery in such recruitment processes, and termed the dereliction of statutory duties on the part of recruiters as unpardonable. The anti-graft body has rightly commented that lapses and negligence in the recruitment process cannot be solely attributed to the subordinate officials who did not properly fulfil their due responsibilities in carrying out the verification work—thereby facilitating the entry of improper personnel in the police department—and that the senior supervisory officials, including the district superintendent, as appointing authority cannot skirt their responsibility by placing all the blame on the subordinates. The Bangladesh Police Headquarters, thankfully, has taken appropriate action by cancelling the irregular appointments after conducting an enquiry.

From the media reports, it appears that the irregularities in the Narayanganj recruitment pertain to incorrect residency status. However, there are reports of other wrongdoings in such recruitment of constables. The main cause for concern here is the alleged corruption in the recruitment

process resulting from the complicity of some officials as well as some external influence. The end result is the appointment of undesirable personnel that sooner or later adversely impacts law enforcement. As such, there is a cogent concern about public interest in such recruitment in a publicly funded organisation.

Speaking of such concerns, it needs to be highlighted that the police operate on those margins of society where civil liberties may be at risk, and where freedoms and rights may often have to be curtailed in the interest of maintaining peace and order. The constables in our system are legally empowered to curtail the liberty of any individual on the basis of reasonable suspicion. Therefore, there is a distinct possibility of citizens' liberty being at great risk if there is an intake of individuals in the police force through dishonest or dubious means. Simple common sense should tell us that a police constable appointed by means of bribery will hardly ever acquire a general consciousness of how important the concepts of democracy, justice, fundamental freedoms and human rights are. The most likely scenario would be one in which, because of their entry into the force, the general public will have reduced protection from arbitrary and improper interference with their liberties.

It is only proper that police officials in a democratic country understand the natural human aspirations for freedom from arbitrary power, for the exercise of civil liberties, and for the acquisition of human rights. Police, both individually and collectively, have a fundamental role in securing the goals of human rights legislation and practice. In



Those responsible for recruitment in Bangladesh Police must ensure that undesirable elements don't find their way into the force.

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

a democratic dispensation, police stand at the point of balance: securing human rights on the one hand, and on the other hand, exercising their lawful powers to protect the people and their institutions.

But emerging from a tainted recruitment system, police personnel are likely to corrupt themselves and indulge in arbitrary conduct, including torture and inhuman or degrading treatment. We know very well that the police authority can be abused even in the so-called strong democracies. The question is whether police will become more the master or less

the servant. The police can snuff out more freedom than it protects. Therefore, the main problem lies in the notion of control. There is a considerable amount of moral burden on conscientious police officials, whose actions to check pernicious practices of recruitment are of paramount importance to the preservation of human rights.

In creating the vital instrument of law enforcement, our society needs to be very careful. It has to ensure that the system created to protect them does not become the instrument of their bondage, and that the

manner of its control and the nature of its work ensure that, in containing crime and disorder, it does not take away those basic freedoms enshrined in domestic as well as international laws and declarations. Police have to carry out their duties within the bounds of the law of the country, to which they themselves are subject as well.

The government has to ensure that those who are chosen to exercise the power and authority of police are carefully selected, based on their human qualities, properly trained to perform their duties in an ethically correct manner and, most importantly, are led and directed by leaders with high qualities of human excellence. Anything less than that will disrupt the balancing of human rights with adequate control of excessive human misbehaviour. Measures have to be available to maintain correct standards through regular imposition of disciplinary regulations.

Improperly chosen individuals mostly become a liability for the police department and for the general public as well. The undesirable elements find entry to positions that do not need them. Such recruits become reckless, desperate to recoup their "investments" at the earliest time possible without any qualms of conscience. Once in uniform, these recruits let the lure of lucre take its hold and don't hesitate to deviate from the norms. The priority, therefore, is to initiate a concentrated drive that would make it difficult for dishonest people to enter the force or remain in focal positions.

Muhammad Nurul Huda is a former IGP of Bangladesh Police.

Whither opposition unity in India?



PALLAB BHATTACHARYA

ABOUT a fortnight ago, when senior Congress leader Salman Khurshid asserted that his party was still in the "best position" to clinch 120-130 seats in the next Lok Sabha elections in 2024, and assume the leadership of a prospective anti-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) opposition coalition, he set the cat among the pigeons. Since then, the gloves in the opposition camp seem to be slowly coming off and the chinks in the claims about their unity are showing more frequently, as the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Nationalist Congress Party headed by Sharad Pawar are having a dig at the Congress' perceived decline as a party with national footprints, and questioning its leadership credentials.

In an interview to the PTI, Khurshid, considered a staunch loyalist of the Congress first family (Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, and Priyanka), said: "If somebody is not a leader, why project them (as one)? If somebody is a leader, they will get

on and, unlike many other parties, would "not sell its spine or hide in homes." Abhishek named the Congress in this context.

Picking up from where Abhishek had left off, the TMC's Bangla mouthpiece, the daily *Jago Bangla*, went much further on September 17, when it published a lead article bringing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in the line of fire by alleging that he had failed to emerge as a credible alternative to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and only Mamata fitted in that role.

The daily quoted senior TMC leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay as telling a closed-door party meeting in Kolkata on September 15 that Rahul Gandhi had not succeeded in positioning himself as a challenger to Modi, despite several chances. According to *Jago Bangla*, the TMC will launch a campaign projecting Mamata as Modi's alternative. Adding grist to the "Mamata as PM" drive, Abhishek, during a campaign on September 18 for the Bhabanipur by-poll at the end of the month—in which Mamata is a candidate—said if there was anyone who could defeat the BJP in 2024, it's Mamata Banerjee.

As expected, the ticklish issue of opposition leadership is bedeviling it, despite Mamata's public proclamation after a meeting of 19 opposition

go down well with the Congress. But while its top leadership was conspicuously silent regarding Abhishek's remarks, the party's West Bengal unit chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury did not hold back as he suggested the TMC could be playing into the hands of the BJP by targeting the Congress. "The TMC mouthpiece cannot decide whether Rahul Gandhi is eligible or not (to lead the opposition)," Adhir said. His senior Congress colleague in West Bengal Abdul Mannan said both Modi and the TMC were targeting Rahul Gandhi

130 (out of a total of 535) Lok Sabha seats, there is no single regional party that can hope to come anywhere near that figure. It remains to be seen if the cumulative tally of Lok Sabha seats secured by the regional parties matches that of the grand old party. The first hurdle is the electoral arithmetic, and only then comes the issue of acceptability or non-acceptability of a leader as the face of a united opposition.

Apart from this, there is as yet

no sign of the opposition parties hitting the streets against the Modi government on any issue, which ranges from fuel price hike to Pegasus spyware row to the farm laws, despite a decision taken on August 19 for state-level joint agitation. The decision came at a virtual meeting of the opposition parties led by Sonia Gandhi, that the protests should be held between September 20 and 30. Instead of going for the joint protests, what is visible is that the anti-BJP

parties are each vying for a share of the political turf in the states. For instance, in Bhabanipur, Kolkata, the CPI(M) is challenging Mamata, and the Congress and the regional outfit Janata Dal (Secular) led by former prime minister HD Deve Gowda, are showing no signs of joining hands for the protests, which could be in danger of fizzling out.

Pallab Bhattacharya is a special correspondent for *The Daily Star*. He writes from New Delhi, India.

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and wanted to know how sincere the TMC is about opposition unity. Senior Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Sujana Chakraborty, too, echoed Adhir and Mannan by saying it was time to introspect who stands to benefit the most by thrusting the extremely controversial opposition leadership issue upfront at this juncture.

Political circles have noted the fact that the remarks made by Abhishek and the *Jago Bangla* article came at a time when efforts are on to try and forge opposition unity for the next parliamentary election. They also point to the TMC poaching a number of Congress leaders in Tripura and Assam into its own fold in a bid to push Mamata's national ambitions.

A greater section of the opposition parties is asking if the attacks on the Congress and Rahul Gandhi by Abhishek, *Jago Bangla* and Pawar, poaching into the Congress rank and file, and the projection of Mamata as the alternative to Modi, would in any way facilitate opposition unity. As it is, at least two regional parties—Aam Aadmi Party led by Arvind Kejriwal, and Bahujan Samaj Party of Mayawati—are so far out of the opposition unity attempts, and are often seen as soft towards the BJP. Mamata may have pitched for including the Congress in the joint opposition front and expanding it by bringing in more regional parties like Biju Janata Dal, YSR Congress Party, and Telangana Rashtra Samiti. But the problem is that the Congress is the principal rival for most of the regional parties in their respective states, whether it comes to state assembly or parliamentary polls.

On the other hand, what regional parties must realise is that parliamentary majority is a numbers game, pure and simple. Assuming that the Congress, as argued by Khurshid, were to manage 120 to



Is the opposition coalition in India, formed before the 2019 general election as a counter to the BJP, losing its momentum? FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

projected on their own. Congress, among all opposition parties, is still in the best position to bring 120-130 seats." He also made it a point to drive home the fact that the Congress is in "direct contest" with the BJP in 240-250 Lok Sabha seats across India, and that prompted him to make the claim about the Congress spearheading the proposed opposition alliance. What is more interesting is that Khurshid said: "Any party with 100-120 seats will be the leader; any party with two seats won't be the leader. The answer to the leadership issue is 120 seats."

Khurshid's remarks are being viewed as an aggressive response to the TMC's "Mamata as PM" campaign, whose tempo is being raised in a calibrated manner in the build-up to the 2024 polls. It is not coincidence that almost a week after Khurshid's comments came a stinging counter from TMC National General Secretary Abhishek Banerjee, Mamata's nephew, who said that his party would take on the BJP head

parties with Sonia Gandhi that she was not interested in leading the opposition, and her suggestion that it was not the right time to discuss the issue, lest it revealed the divides in the opposition camp. It may be recalled that the TMC had scaled down the level of its representation at two separate meetings of opposition parties convened by Rahul Gandhi during the last monsoon session of parliament.

The TMC is not the only party to have questioned the Congress' claim to be the numero uno in the opposition camp. Sharad Pawar, whose party shares power with the Congress in Maharashtra, recently termed the Sonia-led party as "zamindars who cannot control their *havelis*." Abhishek, the TMC mouthpiece, and Pawar left little doubt about the two parties' continued discomfort with Rahul Gandhi and strong reservations about accepting his leadership.

Obviously, Abhishek's remarks or the *Jago Bangla* article did not

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh				
Bangladesh Police				
Police Telecommunication Organization				
Police Telecom Bhabon, Rajarbag, Dhaka.				
telecom.police.gov.bd				
Invitation for International Tender				
Memo No- 44.01.0000.057.11.007.21/323/Betar			Date: 23/09/2021.	
Sealed tenders are hereby invited from the Manufacturers/Suppliers in their official pad for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis for Bangladesh Police in FY 2021-2022.				
1.	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Home Affairs		
2.	Agency	Bangladesh Police		
3.	Procuring Entity Name	SP (Logistics), Police Telecom Organization		
4.	Invitation for	Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis for Bangladesh Police.		
5.	Invitation Ref. No.	44.01.0000.057.11.007.21/323/Betar		
6.	Date	23/09/2021		
Key Information				
7.	Procurement Method	One Stage Two Envelope Tendering Method (OSTETM) - (International)		
Funding Information				
8.	Budget and source of funds	Revenue Budget (GOB)		
Particular Information				
9.	Tender Publication date	25 September 2021.		
10.	Tender last selling date	07 November 2021.		
11.	Tender closing date and time	08 November 2021 at 14:30 hrs.		
12.	Tender opening date and time (Technical offer only)	08 November 2021 at 15:00 hrs.		
Name & address of the office				
13.	Name & address of the office	Bangladesh Police, Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.		
	Selling tender document	SP (Logistics), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.		
	Receiving tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.		
	Opening tender document	Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.		
14.	Place/date/time of pre-tender meeting (optional)	07 October 2021, at 12:30 hrs. at Police Telecom Conference Room (1 st Floor), Police Telecommunication Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka.		
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER				
15.	Eligibility of Tenderer	1) Up to date Export license 2) Written confirmation authorizing the signatory of the tender in accordance with the Memorandum of Association and Articles of Association of the Principal 3) Affidavit confirming the legal capacity and financial capability 4) Original full Brochure of products of the Principal 5) Other requirements described in the standard tender document (PG 5A).		
Brief description of goods.				
Sl. No.	Description of Good	Price of tender document (Non-refundable)	Tender security	Completion time
1.	Lot-1: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of DMR Trunking (Tier-3) System on Turnkey Basis.	15,000/-	TK-1,10,00,000/- or US\$-1,29,000.00	120 days from the Date of Opening L/C.
Procuring Entity Details				
17.	Name of official inviting tender	M. Anwar Zahid		
18.	Designation of the official inviting tender	SP (Logistics), Bangladesh Police, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.		
19.	Address of official inviting tender	Police Telecom Organization, Rajarbag, Dhaka-1217.		
20.	Contact details of official inviting tender	Phone: +880 2-8301253 FAX: +880 2-8301404, Mobile: + 88 01320-020041 e-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd		
21.	The tenderers shall submit their Technical and Financial offer in separate sealed envelope. Furthermore both envelopes shall be covered by an outer envelope which is sealed.			
Special instructions				
22.	a) No tender will be received after the deadline of submission time & date. b) The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all tenders or annul the tender process without assigning any reason. c) The Procuring entity also reserves the right to omit, increase and/or decrease the quantity of any item(s) of the tender. d) If not possible to receive/open the tender on the scheduled date for any unavoidable circumstance, the same will be received/opened on the next working date at the same time & same venue. e) Evaluation will be done by Lot basis. f) Date of financial offer opening will be duly informed to the Technically Responsive Tenderers and their local agents. g) The Tenderer must comply with all requirements as per the tender data sheet provided with the tender schedule. h) The Tender Security shall be in the form of an irrevocable bank guarantee issued by an internationally reputable bank and shall require to be endorsed by its any correspondent bank located in Bangladesh. i) The Procurement will be performed according to the Public Procurement Act-2006 and Public Procurement Regulation 2008.			
 26.09.21 (M. Anwar Zahid) SP (Logistics) Police Telecom, Rajarbag, Dhaka. Ph: 8301253 Fax: 8301404 E-mail: splog.telecom@police.gov.bd				