OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE : DELHI.

No. /PRO/PHQ. dated Delhi, the /2013.

To

The Editor,
Indian Express,
Bahadurshah Zafar Marg,
New Delhi.

Subject:- Rejoinder of news item i.e. **"Minding the police."**

Sir,

Apropos "Minding the Police" published in your esteemed daily of 17th January, 2013 it is submitted that the article makes sweeping statements about police functioning in Delhi without any basis. The author, who is a civil servant posted in Delhi, comments that as Delhi Police is directly accountable to the Union Home Ministry through the Lt. Governor without involvement of local Government, there is no mechanism of accountability to the political executive. He forgets that Delhi Police reports directly to the Hon'ble Lt. Governor and the Union Home Minister, who are both appointed by the elected government and it is the elected political executive which exercises control over its functioning, budget and service delivery. Therefore, to say that police is not accountable to the political executive is totally erroneous.

He should be reminded that in various states where local elected representatives interfere in the day-to-day policing activities of Station House Officers and even arrests, does not make police any more professional or accountable.

His assertion that the British introduced the Commissionerate system in Presidency towns alone but not in Delhi perhaps attempts to suggest that it was with a purpose in mind, and should have been perpetuated. This is a case of regressive thinking. Since independence, around 40 big cities and towns in India have adopted the Commissionerate system and surely there must be some merit on account of which this system is gaining currency.

Delhi Police is one of the most scrutinized police forces in the country. It is under scrutiny by 12 national and state level commissions including the State Security Commission, Trial Courts, Hon'ble High Court, Hon'ble Supreme Court, 24X7 electronic media and an ever active print media. Thus his contention of non-accountability is unfounded. He should be reminded that Delhi Police has awarded major punishments to 545 personnel and minor punishments to 1344 personnel in 2012 alone. No other government department has comparable figures to show by way of internal vigilance and accountability towards rules and laws.

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Government of Delhi has passed the 'Delivery of Public Services Act' under which 23 services are covered. The Licensing Branch has never defaulted on delivery of any of the services such as 'renewal of licenses', 'permission of public amusement', and 'permission for opening a new restaurant'. However, various other departments have failed to follow the mandatory timelines.

The power of licensing with the Delhi Police and other Commissionerates in the country provides uniformity and helps in coordination with various metropolitan agencies. The licensing functions enable police force to regulate various establishments with a view to enhance internal security of the city. It is on account of these powers that the police has been able to ensure that cinema houses, guest houses etc. have CCTV. The availability of CCTV footage in one such premises proved to be crucial in cracking the case whose aftermath has prompted the author to write this article.

(RAJAN BHAGAT)
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