



## ‘Privatisation is the way forward’

Army veteran, former police officer and a highly-successful entrepreneur, **MAJORMANJIT RAJAIN** – Group Chairman, **Tenon Group** – an Integrated Security & Facilities Management Corporation that has a global presence in six countries and across India – is also a riveting storyteller. As he weaves his way through anecdotes right from growing up in a vastly-different Gurgaon to explaining solar-powered drones over city skies and defending India at international conferences, he also shares his views on public safety, security industry trends and smart cities in a conversation with **BWSC**.

### As Indians are we really alive to security?

There is a difference between security and safety. Not logging out from a public computer is about security, hanging off the side of a bus is about safety. I don't think that anyone is really alive to security around the globe and India is no different from the developed world in being reactive rather than proactive. You have a 9/11, for example, and security goes up, becomes intrusive – and almost obtuse



– and then it all simmers down again. When it comes to safety, however, Indians are a different breed. Perhaps it is the weight of our population or a general lack of respect for human life in this country that we travel on the roofs of trains or hang off buses.

When it comes to safety more needs to be done to prevent endangerment in the first place, like making sure that our railway crossings are ‘uncrossable’ when closed off. People break rules all over the world. Enforcement needs to be stricter, which is how most of the developed world ensures compliance.

#### Do you think there is a change at all in our levels of awareness?

I think there is a fair amount of change in our levels of awareness. Education makes all the difference. For example, unattended bags at public places would be stolen a few years ago, now they are reported. Security is a constant and requires consistent education and emphasis, like an Army drill. This would ensure we dial the authorities to report something unusual rather than take a selfie with it first!

#### Your thoughts on securing Smart Cities?

Planning is very difficult to retrofit onto a city and when it comes down to safety, I am most worried about pollution, which is a serious health risk and is inextricably linked with traffic and transport management and overall city planning. Security on the road itself has interlinked components – the cause of an accident, for example, and the response to it. Can an ambulance even reach you on time? If it does, do you have the medical facilities available to back it up? In India, it is

common for road accident victims to be turned away from hospitals. Also, what of easy access to blood banks? Carrying blood from a hospital in Delhi to one in Gurgaon can take anything between one hour to three. Burning of waste, leaving breeding grounds for malaria and dengue mosquitoes unattended – these are all part of safety in a smart city. Then there is our inability to handle disasters – natural or manmade, like a fire. We still do not have fire tenders that can reach beyond a few floors even as we continue to build high rises.

#### What can be done to address some of these problems?

I think the answer lies in privatisation. Take the example of post-plague Surat where the city privatised the

Also, we need to think small before we plan big. Let’s not talk about cleaning up entire cities or villages but of making a difference, first, to our own buildings or neighbourhoods.

#### What are some of the trends in the security industry that you see in the years ahead?

One is that we will move away from plain physical security and into an arena where there is greater amalgamation of man and machine. It will take some time but it will happen. The second is the use of manpower will come down with the help of better training and education. Alarms have already replaced grills, for example, which are no deterrent to someone wanting to break in anyway.

#### Where do you see the role of big data and

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cleaning of roads. I visited it recently and did not find any littering on any of its streets. Profit-sharing is a great incentive for ensuring compliance, once you privatise a number of civic functions or government services. In the UK, you can renew or replace your passport through the post office. Back home, the Rapid Metro is the first privately-guarded metro in the country. It’s done by us. Private security guards also work out to be more cost effective than what the government would spend on the annual upkeep of a CISF *jawan*, for example.

#### analytics, especially in the field of security?

Let me share the example of Soteria – our remote monitoring command centre, monitoring anything from air-conditioning to alarm systems, pollution or traffic. Basically, whatever can be detected can be done so remotely by evaluating and analysing data feeds in real-time and weaving in human intelligence to respond accordingly. Being both preventive and predictive, this can be the backbone of smart cities. The possibilities are endless. ■

– As told to Preeti Singh