

Reform Agenda

Our Finance Ministry and the World Bank are more or less identical in their views on what should be the time-frame like for carrying forward the unfinished reform agenda.

The reforms need to be sequenced properly in a time-bound plan and a reasonable uniformity of opinions forged between the WB and the GOB on the methods of implementation.

For its part, Bangladesh could make use of an analysis of the effects of the reform policy pursued to date by way of perfecting approaches to the crucial follow-up phase now being embarked upon.

As for sequencing the reforms we suggest the following order of priorities: administrative reform hand-in-hand with the Pay Commission award, fully elective local self-government system, financial sector reform with emphasis on legal framework for loan recovery and investment or business arrangements, infrastructural efficiency and privatisation of loss-making units in the public sector with safety-net provision.

The domestic industries face an unprecedented challenge in global competition. They have to find cheaper sources of raw materials, improve technology and increase productivity or perish.

To give boost to agriculture nothing will be more effective than timely delivery of reasonably priced inputs at the doorsteps of farmers.

The new government seems keen on using the annual budgetary instrument to contain deficit financing and inflation. The government borrowing can be lessened by reducing public sector losses and raising the levels of tax collection.

Action Urged

A guerilla-type attack on a shopping arcade, a dacoity in a tailoring shop and mugging of two businessmen — all happening on Friday — in the port city of Chittagong are enough to strike terror in the minds of general public.

So here is a most ominous development, so far as the law and order goes. The new government is pledge-bound to eliminate terrorism. Whether the anti-social elements have decided to strike before the new government is well settled is a point to ponder.

What the people therefore expect is immediate action. The home ministry's instructions to the police to avoid brutality and cruelty in dealing with criminals seem to have been misinterpreted.

In the particular incident of the gunmen's raid on a Chittagong shopping complex, the presence of a group of patrol police was of no consequence as they reportedly neither made an attempt to challenge the robbers nor tried to contact any nearby thana or police headquarters for a reinforcement.

It is good to know that the on-duty policemen have been suspended. One would like to know if they had connived with the gunmen. The home ministry must act fast and decisively before the goons get another day.

Vigil Wanting

After an election-time lull, muggers are back on prowl, and to business as usual. If one were to go over newspaper reports of the plethora snatching incidents one would be over-awed by these having occurred at the same spots, along the same road stretches and in the same areas of the city.

A close look at the places of their dare-devilry will convince one of their uncanny sense of stratagem blended with a pre-science of where the prey might abound and at what time of the day. Sometimes they would lie in wait in an autorickshaw or on a motorbike to pounce on a lady passing on a pedal rickshaw or may have followed her down to a corner with exit routes before brandishing a weapon to a frightening effectiveness.

Their rate of success reflects badly on the metropolitan police force who have apparently failed to capitalise on the predictability of the occurrences. If the DMP have other duties to keep them from patrolling the roads and lanes adequately then Ansars may be used for the purpose.

PM's Post-election Speech and Economic Emancipation

by Md Asadullah Khan

The present government, most enthusiastically as it is to bring about radical economic reforms and improve the financial climate of the country, must announce some symbolic gestures to attract funding for more vital areas.

WITH the call of the Prime Minister to the opposition parties, namely BNP, to join the government of consensus, the country seems poised to combat its long-standing woes in different sectors.

Prime minister appealed to the political parties and people for a moratorium on the many contentious issues that divided them partisan conflicts, communal hatred and terrorism and fundamentalist activities that have stirred violence from one-part of the country to the other.

Behind all the ambitious programmes that the prime minister sounds in generating economic growth, guaranteeing social harmony, political stability and transition to peaceful democratic rule, the most sought pre-requisite is the establishment of 'rule of law' and that calls for recovery of illegal arms and arresting of the terrorists regardless of their position and status in the society and party affiliations.

Behind all the ambitious programmes that the prime minister sounds in generating economic growth, guaranteeing social harmony, political stability and transition to peaceful democratic rule, the most sought pre-requisite is the establishment of 'rule of law' and that calls for recovery of illegal arms and arresting of the terrorists regardless of their position and status in the society and party affiliations.

the task the new prime minister and her cabinet colleagues face are truly daunting. The recent incidence of fierce gun battle on the Chittagong Medical College Campus between rival groups of students and the raid on Jahangirnagar University Hall students by a group of armed students, and some more cases of this sort here and there in the country, strike a chord of dissonance in the hopes and aspirations of the people.

With the announcement of the Commerce and Industries Minister Tofail Ahmed that the government would be acting as the facilitator to the entrepreneurs and businessmen by cutting down on red-tapism and increasing efficiency in emerging industries sector, the country's hope for a new era of economic rejuvenation seemed somewhat assured.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses. Those newly developed countries in the world have been able to reform and revive their economies with the recognition of the fact that the best prescription for progress is a market economy where government lets men and money loose.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses. Those newly developed countries in the world have been able to reform and revive their economies with the recognition of the fact that the best prescription for progress is a market economy where government lets men and money loose.

has to create a climate and environment in the country so that private investors from affluent economies feel tempted to set up industries in this country and that is only possible when the government has been able to rid the country of corruption in public life and straighten the bureaucratic tangles and red tapism at different stages.

Corruption in different tiers of administration is endemic and eating into the vitals of the nation. Power sector, gas, telephone, shipping and export business — all these macro-indicators of the economic health of the country are hostages to system loss, pilferage, deliberate negligence and wastages of sort.

Morever, in the country, 54 million people live below poverty line. 60 million had

never access to primary health care facilities, and the number of illiterates exceeds 60 million. Given all these gloomy prospects, the economic emancipation of the country that the prime minister proposes to achieve will remain an elusive goal unless matched by total commitment from the government machinery.

The present government that proposes to be totally welfare-oriented must also learn from the past mistakes. World Bank report about the performance of the economy during the last regime is quite gloomy. The growth rate in the country hovers over 4 per cent only. Despite the fact that the country has abundant prospect of harnessing internal resources, the previous government's action in reducing the interest on savings dampened the spirit of resource mobilisation.

Morever, in the country, 54 million people live below poverty line. 60 million had never access to primary health care facilities, and the number of illiterates exceeds 60 million. Given all these gloomy prospects, the economic emancipation of the country that the prime minister proposes to achieve will remain an elusive goal unless matched by total commitment from the government machinery.

On top of all, a reassessment of the performances of the officials of the Bangladesh missions abroad is required if the present debilitating export performance and funding of foreign investment in the country are to be improved. People in the country have often resented the role of such officials as driven only by personal ambitions to stay abroad in comfort and luxury.

The heavy rhetoric and high hubris of the country's leaders reflect the reservoir of good will and patriotism these people had since the time the country was liberated in 1971. The dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, of turning this country into a Sonar Bangla, free from hunger, poverty and disease, has been disintegrated in the meantime being clouded by widespread despair and disillusionment. Shockingly true, the country has now become a sad and bitter region marked ruthlessly by hatred and bloodshed, some at the hand of people inflamed by partisan or ideological passions, some at the hands of venal government servants in their bid to stay in power.

On top of all, a reassessment of the performances of the officials of the Bangladesh missions abroad is required if the present debilitating export performance and funding of foreign investment in the country are to be improved.

The heavy rhetoric and high hubris of the country's leaders reflect the reservoir of good will and patriotism these people had since the time the country was liberated in 1971. The dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, of turning this country into a Sonar Bangla, free from hunger, poverty and disease, has been disintegrated in the meantime being clouded by widespread despair and disillusionment.

The heavy rhetoric and high hubris of the country's leaders reflect the reservoir of good will and patriotism these people had since the time the country was liberated in 1971. The dream of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, of turning this country into a Sonar Bangla, free from hunger, poverty and disease, has been disintegrated in the meantime being clouded by widespread despair and disillusionment.

OPINION

Population Control and Family Planning Administrative Anomalies Deter Progress

Abdul Latif Molla

We all agree that population explosion is our number one national problem. Family Planning Department of the Government is working to control the population growth. Thousands of officers and employees are engaged in this work and crores of Taka are being spent.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Pragmatists will agree with what the new commerce and industries minister said in a recent meeting with the business group. The purpose of government is to set policy, not to manage hotels, banks and other businesses.

Legal authenticity of that booklet is also not above obscurity. Administrative Complications From the above administrative design the following complications are prominent besides many others:

1) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

2) All the officers and employees of the Health Department at Thana level are placed absolutely under the sole administrative control of the Thana Health Officer. He controls their attendance, leave, annual confidential reports, salary and carries out all other administrative and drawing and disbursing activities.

3) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

4) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

5) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

6) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

7) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

8) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

9) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

10) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

Administrative Complications From the above administrative design the following complications are prominent besides many others:

1) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

2) All the officers and employees of the Health Department at Thana level are placed absolutely under the sole administrative control of the Thana Health Officer. He controls their attendance, leave, annual confidential reports, salary and carries out all other administrative and drawing and disbursing activities.

3) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

4) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

5) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

6) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

7) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

8) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

9) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

10) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

Administrative Complications From the above administrative design the following complications are prominent besides many others:

1) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

2) All the officers and employees of the Health Department at Thana level are placed absolutely under the sole administrative control of the Thana Health Officer. He controls their attendance, leave, annual confidential reports, salary and carries out all other administrative and drawing and disbursing activities.

3) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

4) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

5) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

6) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

7) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

8) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

9) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

10) The Family Planning Department is not under Health Department anyway. But efforts apparently unfair, have been made to project the Family Planning Department under the control of the Thana Health Officer at the Thana Level. The Family Planning Department itself has been humiliated by this undesirable effort.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

My offspring not my relative!

Sir, Believe it or not, it is true, at least the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) thinks that your own sons and daughters cannot be classified as your relatives.

Through a Government Gazette Notification of April 28, 1996, the SEC promulgated the Merchant Banker and Portfolio Manager Regulations 1996 after much hullabaloo for the last two years. At Section 15, the regulation states that no merchant banker or any of its director, partner, manager or chief executive shall either on their respective accounts or through their associates or relatives enter into any transaction in securities or acquisition of shares of a company on the basis of unpublished price-sensitive information obtained by them during the course of any professional assignment either from the customers, or otherwise.

The section also provides an explanation of the term 'relative' as to include father, mother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, spouse, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law or daughter-in-law. This explanation amazingly excludes sons and daughters in the categorisation of relatives!

The undersigned vividly recalls working on a response from the DCC on a draft of the referred regulation, circulated for comments and suggestions, wherein among others, this lapse was pointed out for rectification. A copy of the suggested changes/inclusions was also personally forwarded by the undersigned to the chairman of the SEC at that time.

While taking pleasure in finding acceptance and incorporation of some of the suggestions, we wonder how on earth could SEC refuse to recognise my own-offspring as my relative! Something is really rotten somewhere in the Commission.

Yaver Sayeed House No. 25, Road-4 (New), Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205

'Bureaucracy of the Republic'

Sir, I like to draw the attention of the Prime Minister regarding her recent declaration that she considers the Civil Servants as servants of the Republic and that they are directly accountable to the people and not to any party government. I would respectfully beg to differ and would like to

request her to reconsider her statement, while implementing her pledge to reality.

The government servants are, in fact, servants of the Republic, no doubt and they are answerable to the people as it is the people who make the provision of their salary through their tax payment. However, what is the practical way to achieve this accountability without any argument, or an intricate medium, or a high-tech? The accountability which is achieved is the government formed by the people and for the people. It is the people's government, through which the people are represented at the seat of the government, which again, belongs to the people.

Bureaucracy forms the machinery which shall be utilised by the government to implement the content of the commitments they made in their election manifestoes. In the multi-party democracy one or more party shall form a government. A party government therefore in all essence is the people's representative body. Being accountable to the people's government would therefore mean being accountable to the people. All civil and military services must therefore remain subservient to the government of the people, without which the functioning of the government would simply cease.

We believe by declaring the government servants not answerable to the party government, the Prime Minister has relieved the bureaucracy from being accountable to any one at all. For long, our bureaucracy had been maintaining a position of considering itself being superior to all and in practice tend to defy the government to any one. Under such a situation, contrary to her declaration, it is necessary that her government exerts more efforts to make them accountable so that people's wishes are implemented in the way they wanted and at the cost at which it is justified.

We therefore believe the PM's declaration will bring a negative effect towards responsible management of the statecraft and we are afraid the PM and her government will soon be facing casualties themselves, from the bureaucracy which she has started to appease.

Her government has to go a long way and the powerful horse she is about to ride to traverse this distance is not a tame one. Nurul Bashir Saudi Arabia

The writer is former Chief Store Officer of the Essential Drugs Project, Bangladesh, under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.