The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali Dhaka Monday, August 11, 1997

Patch-work on Campus

Dhaka University authorities have decided to flush out ineligible residents of most of the male dormitories by tomorrow in order to ensure their occupation by bonafide students of the institution. The way outsiders and the armed cadres had been infesting the halls of residences recently as a result of preparation for a confrontation by the two major student organisations, JCD and BCL - particularly after the incident of capturing a dorm by one group from the grasp of other — the above decision taken at the meeting of the Paribesh Parishad yesterday was possibly the only logically expected one under the circumstances.

While the decision to leave three female dormitories out of this purge plan is understandable, the one to keep Surya Sen Hall — the apple of discord between JCD and BCL in their highly improper and unethical tussle to establish supremacy on the campus through a vicious grip on the halls of residence — is a questionable one. If getting the dorms rid of the outsiders is the objective of this plan of evacuation and readmission, then it should have been a wholesale and simultaneous one. Despite a similar cleansing drive only last month, Surya San Hall seems to be back in the grip of terrorists again.

The latest trouble-shooting bid of the DU authorities deserves to be wished success so long it is deemed as a beginning of a long and arduous process to uproot the causes of trouble. It cannot be allowed to be forgotten as an end in itself. Because we do not have a particularly inspiring history when it comes to winnowing the chaff from the grain through evacuation. Failure of this ploy in the past has necessitated the present one. The message is clear. Patchwork won't do. Unless political parties withdraw their stakes from educational institutions there is no doubt the stories of dorm evacuation will grow in volume. Secondly, this is a perfectly abominable trend that students or their leaders should have any role in the implementation of a decision of the university authorities. Is not the Dhaka University administration able enough to execute its own decision? More importantly, the one and the only way students can justify their presence in the university or educational institutions is by being involved in matters related to learning and enlightenment. They are devoid of any moral authority to be the overseeing agent in any administrative act, be it evacuation or anything else.

Better Avoided

Professor Golam Ali Fakir is again in the news. His term as Vice-Chancellor of Khulna University expired and he saw no reason to wait for his reliever to come. He left Khulna handing over charge to the Honorary Treasurer of the University. Perhaps this is not very irregular. But the fact of the Honorary Treasurer Sardar Abdur Razzak being a front-ranking leader of the Awami League made it into something he could have avoided. He didn't wait for Professor Nazrul Islam, his successor, to arrive and take over from him. He didn't or couldn't wait? We don't know. On the face of it, he should have waited but did not choose to. Did he do something wrong? Was there a faux pas as involved?

Times are such that a matter-of-course incident which should have passed without notice seems to have stirred up academic commotion strong enough to send waves to Dhaka. A Daily Star story reports indignation among teachers over making over to a known political figure rather than to a senior teacher. The angered teachers perhaps did not care to know Vice-Chancellors are not competent to make over charge to anyone of their choice and that treasurers are quite the right person to fill in an unforeseen temporary gap in that top position.

Setting logic aside, it is a fact that Dr Fakir's has not been the wisest of actions. So much so this has been taken up by the leader of the Opposition to open a new barrage against politicisation of the university by the AL government. Now the question that remains is: was Dr Fakir asked by his superiors in Dhaka — theoretically, he should have none except the Chancellor or the President of the country - expressly to hand over charge to the Honorary Treasurer, an AL leader? Or he did it deliberately to embarrass AL? Whatever the answer, the effect remains the same. Another awkward situation for the government, another handle to detractors. These should not be dismissed as pinpricks. Combined they can be unsettling.

Elevating Achievements

Marlene Ottey, the legendary sprinter from Jamaica about whom we had written in these columns out of unbounded appreciation for her athletic quality and Robert Bruce-like perseverance, was beaten at the Athens World Athletic Championship on Friday by, incredibly, Susanthika Jayasinghe, a 25-year-old athlete from Sri Lanka. It feels great to see someone from the subcontinent making a mark in world-level track events. Milkha Singh we remember as a phenomenal achiever but even he was no medalist. Abdul Khalique was the best sprinter in Asia in his time doing better than 10.5 on occasions. He couldn't land a medal. It remained for Susanthika to earn the first track medal, a silver, for not only Sri Lanka but for South Asia as a whole. Her time for the 200 metre dash, one-hundredth of a second better than Ottey's at 22.39 is something out of question for most male athletes competing in top meets in the subcontinent. We send our grateful congratulations to Susanthika.

A similar kind of a sense of elevation was felt by readers of the morning Press on Sunday. Thirty Bangladesh police officials were awarded the United Nations Medal for meritorious service with the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The news further reported an earlier award of ten UN Medals to ten other officials. A full complement of 1155 Bangladesh army and police personnel are at present engaged in the UN peacekeep-

ing operations around the globe. The medals have been well-earned. Nation is the name of an idea, in most cases this is an abstraction. Our performance in Bosnia-Herzegovina and its international recognition are among things that concretise a nation. We join in felicitating the awardees of the UN Medal.

America's Post-Gulf War Gulf Policy

HE world's backwater till about early '60s the Gulf region of the Middle East shot into prom-inence almost overnight and gradually occupied a position of importance second only to that of the central theatre of original Cold War — Europe. When Iran was propped up as an US ally and Iraq signed a Treaty of Friendship with the Soviet Union during the '70s the East-West rivalry clearly spilled into the Gulf, even if indirectly. This newly-acquired geostrategic importance of the region comprised of Iran. Iraq. Saudi Arabia. Kuwait, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, was primarily because of its enormous oil wealth and its profound impact on the economies of the developed world. But it is not merely the economies but also the defence of Europe that desperately required Gulf oil in order to function. As a result NATO is a primary beneficiary of, and indeed had always been dependent on the supply of oil

from the Gulf. The western interests in the region first by the British date back to early nineteenth century although the US involvement in the Gulf is a recent phenomenon. During the heyday of Pax Britannica, the entire region remained under British tutelage. However with the British decision of its military withdrawal at the close of the 60s for the first time there was a power vacuum in the Gulf But contrary to the expectations, the Americans with bitter experience of Vietnam did not want to replace British in the Gulf as they did elsewhere by taking up the mantle of declining European powers soon after the Second World War. Instead, in keeping with the spirit of Nixon's Guam doctrine of 1969 envisaging reduced military commitment transferred the prime responsibility of protecting the US interest in the

The end of the Cold War already eliminated a major strategic concern for the US which no longer had to fear Soviet efforts to gain a foothold in the Gulf

area to her allies in the region. For the purpose she helped developing regional influentials who would eventually turn into the US surrogate to serve her interests. Within the framework of this policy the US, following the decline of the western security alliances (e.g. Baghdad pact and later CENTO) and a wave of strident Arab nationalism developed special relationship with Iran and Saudi Arabia aimed at creating what was then considered "the twin pillar of security."

In less than a decade the

twin pillar of security collapsed with the Iranian revolution in 1978-79 as was the fate of Baghdad Pact when in 1958 monarchy was overthrown in Iraq. then the closest of the US allies in the Arab world. Notwithstanding this setback the US, with her interest remaining unchanged in the Gulf, could however ensure the uninterrupted flow of oil to the world market at prices that did not damage economies either of the US or her allies in the advanced industrialised world. And the strategy employed, for it was now to prop up Iraq, hitherto an adversary and other regional allies particularly of the Gulf cooperation council to balance the power of now hostile Iran The strategy, although bereft of a morale dimension, worked all right even through the difficult days of Iran-Iraq war threatening the closure of Gulf's strategic waterways without compromising the US' basic policy premise: refraining from direct military involvement and continuing to shift the responsibilities to regional allies. Yet in the wake of Iran-Iraq war in early '80s, a trend towards an increasingly direct American

strategic role in the Gulf could

not be overlooked. But even as the American military role in the Gulf became more direct, the Reagan and Bush administrations considered Iran and Iraq as the key strategic players. Taking Iran to be more inimical to US interest in the region, Washington moved to bolster Saddam's regime as a counterweight to Iran when the tide of battle turned against Baghdad.

Iraq's defeat in Desert Storm made a major turnaround in US policy in the Gulf. This is not without a reason although its wisdom is questioned even in the US itself. The end of the

the US aims at isolating both the countries regionally, cutting them off from the world economic and trading system, and encouraging a regime change in Iraq. It has strongly supported the continuation of UN sanctions against Iraq and made efforts to persuade Europe, Russia and Japan to deny Iran's access to international capital and arms markets. More importantly, implicit in it is an US resolve to involve herself more directly in Gulf affairs.

On May 18, 1993 the special assistant to President Clinton



PERSPECTIVES

by Brig (Rtd) M Abdul Hafiz

Cold War already eliminated a major strategic concern for the US which no longer had to fear Soviet efforts to gain a foothold in the Gulf. Second, as a result of almost a decade-long conflict the regional power balance between Iran and Iraq was established at a much lower level of military capability. Third, the GCC states' eagerness to enter into security arrangements with Washington gave the American forces an advantage to physically deploy in the Gulf against any threat either from Iran or Iraq. Finally, an allied victory in the Gulf war gave Americans an extra confidence. Emboldened by these positive factors the US has now developed a policy known as "dual containment", to deal with Iran and Iraq, both identified together as significant threats to America's interests in the Gulf region. According to the policy,

for Near East Affairs at the National Security Council outlined the dual containment. He said that the US would no longer play the game of balancing Iran against Iraq. The strength of the US and its friends in the region— Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the GCC states— would allow Washington to "counter both the Iraqi and Iranian regimes The US will not need to depend on one to counter the other. While reiterating the US commitment to the territorial integrity of Iraq, he left little doubt that a regime change in Baghdad was the ultimate goal of American policy. The containment of Iran, not buttressed by UN resolutions is tricky. The US, however, recognises that such containment must be multilateral. Towards that end Washington will work energetically to persuade other countries not to engage in military transactions or normal commercial relations with Tehran.

While the idea of containing

both Iran and Iraq has a facile geopolitical appeal it is fraught with difficulties. Two of the America's closest allies in the region. Egypt and Turkey are already calling for easing of sanctions on Iraq. The regime change in Iraq, it is feared, would entail the disintegration of Iraq, given the country's demographic dispensation, interest groups and known preference of the Americans. The containment of Iraq — the goal of which is regime change without a destabilising civil war - is hard to imagine without some kind of cooperation from Iran. For the GCC states in the lower Gulf, fearful of greater Iranian or Saudi power in the region, there is a geopolitical imperative to prevent Iraq's disintegration. Meanwhile, Europe and Japan have been unwilling to isolate Iran economically thereby foregoing a market worth billions of dollars. Even the commercial interests in the US including the Boeing want to do business with Iran. The GCC states, whose security is a major goal of the dual containment policy regard isolating Iran as a mistaken approach. For them, Iran acted responsibly during the Gulf war.

Dual containment places a substantial political burden on the Gulf monarchies. As Iran and Iraq rebuild their militaries the detterent aspect of the policies requires a continued and expanding American presence in the Gulf. Saudi Arabia and her GCC partners would have to host such a presence raising the level of hostility between them and both Tehran and Baghdad. The higher the

American military profile in these countries the greater the risk that it would become a lightning rod for domestic discontent. Moreover, there are some risks inherent in the coupling of the US approaches to Iran and Iraq. To the extent they are pressured they may be driven together in their efforts to resist the West. Indeed, Baghdad and Tehran seem to have engaged in limited cooperation over the past years despite their differences. Dual containment pushes Saddam and Tehran closer together despite their history of hostilities. Tentative political contacts between the two states have recently been renewed. Also, a Vietnam syndrome

already seems to have been in the offing. The Carter doctrine of 1980 formally committed the US to preventing any 'hostile power' from dominating the Although the context has

by now thoroughly changed the nearly contemporaneous events of that time i.e. the Iranian revolution, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and doubling of world oil prices between 1979-81 led the US to be significantly and inextricably drawn in Gulf affairs. The US is already thick in the mess it wanted to avoid in the beginning. American military involvement in the region accelerated from the failed hostage rescue mission in 1980 to the large naval deployment in 1987-88 to protect Kuwaiti and Saudi shipping, culminating in the Desert Storm. The double containment policy, in essence, draws her thicker and deeper in the imbroglio she may be permanently stuck in. During the days of her "twin pillar of security" the US had at least two clear allies and no distinct enemy. Now with her double containment policy she has at least two clearly-defined enemies and no sure ally in the re-

Protesting Zionist Sacrilege in Bangladeshi Style!

by Kazi Alauddin Ahmed

Scanning the whole 'hartal' scenario one can easily conclude that it was just a pretext to choose the sacrilege of our Prophet (peace be on him) and of the holy Quran, for an issue.

HE citizens of Dhaka metropolis in particular A and the people at large all over the country were thrown into a world of confusion by the callers of hartal on last 15th July, 1997 because of two different time schedules. The socalled Islami Oikya Jote announced a dawn-to-dusk framework while Jamaat sliced it to a half-day. And instantly turning with the hypocrites, BNP Chairperson — the heir to a noted freedom fighter Ziaur Rahman, Bir Uttam — offered her party's uncanny support to Jamaat's half-day "hartal of Prophet Muhammad" (peace be on him). Though ostensibly, for BNP It was an Islamic issue. was evidently an intriguing camouflage, a sordid political leg-pulling of the present government.

Against such a highly controversial and provocative hartal called by two identical platforms, loud cries of vehement protest were heard and observed from hundreds of thousands 'musullis' - supposed to be the diehard followers of the Holy Quran and Sunnah. They were joined in the streets by a massive gathering of valiant freedom fighters and thousands of freedom-loving pro-liberation people from all walks of life. There was a clear, distinctive demarcation between the callers of the hartal and the protesters. Never before in the history of Bangladesh such a positive reaction against the traders of religion was seen.

BNP used to be very vocal against hartal when in power. Its Chairperson in particular, fiddled with her vocabulary to castigate the proponents of hartal. Her main consideration was the national economy, visa-vis, the sufferings of the poor people of the country. She then detested hartal bitterly but immediately after being out of power she started to change her taste and now seems to find it rather relishing.

The 'innovative' hartal of the extremists had its impact on public property. Prior to it police intercepted 10-12 hoodlums around Segun Bagicha who were identified as members of the so-called Juba Command of the Freedom Party. They took to the streets and were on rampage of shops and business houses. For them too, the call of hartal by the fundamentalists was just a cover. In a way it had a semblance of BNP's open support to hartal for reaping polit-It may be recalled that a lunatic woman in the occupied West Bank belonging to the Jewish community had affixed a poster on the wall portraying our Prophet (peace be upon him) and defiling the holy Quran.

This sacrilege ignited fire across the Islamic world and was condemned universally. Joining such condemnation and expressing absolute unity with the Islamic Ummah all the members of our parliament, irrespective of their political affiliation, passed a unanimous resolution in the Jatiya Sangsad condemning Israel in unequivocal terms. It was indeed a unique consensus, rare in our political history. In spite of the resolution the

Jamaat declared a half-day hartal and that too surnamed "hartal of Muhammad" (peace be upon him). The Ulama-e-Keram reacted sharply against such a blasphemous nomenclature using the sacred name of our beloved Prophet (pace be upon him). Many viewed it a bigger, outrageous sacrilege than the original incident at the hands of a Jewish woman. BNP's support to such a hartal was all the more seditious be-

cause they have a good number

of freedom fighters within who were compelled by Begum Zia to swallow many a bitter pills. Some dailies have alluded to the expressed reactions of a few unnamed old guards who were reported to have registered their protest with the high command against party's support to Jamaat's hartal. But they were outnumbered by the infiltrators and opportunists within the party ranks. Notwithstanding such wordy duel the joining of a number of Jamaat workers and the enthusiastic welcome accorded to them by BNP Secretary General a couple of days before the hartal cannot go unnoticed. To everyone's knowledge and information entry into Jamaat-e-Islami is as hard as leaving it. So, it can be anybody's genuine apprehension that such 'Jamaati deserters' have been surreptitiously assigned by the party to sabotage the image of the freedom fighters in BNP; their desertion is just a sinister hoax.

Hartal of the kind that we in Bangladesh had, was not observed anywhere in the Islamic world, not even in Pakistan, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, the entire Arab world and Middle East. Leaders attending the recently concluded Islamic Conference in Cairo to celebrate Eid-e-Miladunnabi expressed their utter dismay and surprise that Bangladesh observed hartal on the issue of the blatant sacrilege of our Prophet (peace be upon him) and the Holy Quran at Hebron, Israel. They considered it funny and preposterous. The Egyptian Foreign Minister Amor Moussa, the Chief Editor of the daily Al-Ahram and a senior journalist of Cairo-based Al-Akhbar, the Grand Mufti of

Bosnia and many others thought such hartal was a colossal wastage of time and energy, a deterrent to pursuing normal life affecting the poor people in particular and the national economy at large. Islam does not support it, they said. One of them watching the violent physical clashes between students in Dhaka on television remarked sarcastically if our universities gave such abhorring lessons!

At home, the Acting Ambassador of Palestine in Dhaka made scathing remarks against the hartal of the fundamentalists, which in the opinion of the diplomat, was fraught with the danger of sowing the vicious seed of hostility and division among the people. Expressing his firm conviction in the preachings of Islam and the great teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) the Ambassador exhorted the friendly people of Bangladesh to keep constant vigil on the malignant forces who, he said, were out to create a serious law and order

situation. Scanning the whole 'hartal' scenario one can easily conclude that it was just a pretext to choose the sacrilege of our Prophet (peace be on him) and of the holy Quran, for an issue. In the back of the callers' mind was 'Sikha Anirban' and 'Sikha Chirantan' — the symbols of the victory of the Bangalees in the War of Liberation in 1971. Those forces have actually been up against these two national symbols feigning them as 'fireworshipping'. They had the audacity to declare in public meetings that they would have a long march on July 18, 1997 (Friday) after Jumma prayers, from Baitul Mukarram

National Mosque, proceed in procession in hundreds of thousands, to Suhrawardy Udyan, demolish the pulpit of Sikha Chirantan and lay foundation of a mosque there. The Muktijoddhas and the myriads of freedom loving citizens, men and women got the provocative message and formed a human chain in challenge. Curiously enough, none of the fanatics was sighted anywhere around. Even if they were not there to do their job.

fighters engaged at resistance, must reinforce themselves. It seems that the extremists have been able to build their ominous bases in Baitul Mukarram National Mosque and some other mosques in the city. We have had a specimen of their seditious and criminal activities on July 17, 1997 at the Eid-e-Miladunnabi functions of the Islamic Foundation at Baitul Mukarram premises. President Justice Shahabuddin

there is no reason to be compla-

cent over this moral victory.

Instead, the freedom loving

people and the brave freedom

Chief Guest but left the place without giving his address due to the pandemonium created by a group of hoodlums in the guise of musullis. They booed at the State Minister Moulana Nurul Islam as soon as he rose to address the assembly which was followed by pelting stones, shoes etc towards the rostrum. Consequently, the function had to be abandoned. It is unthinkable that the

whole administrative machinery specifically assigned to ensure full security to the Head of State failed so miserably in taking any preemptive action against the probable troublemongers. It is awful and ridiculous that despite whispers around that there could be some mishap of this kind, the Intelligence was totally inactive. There must be a thorough probe into such a pitiable lapse on their part and parallel to it the role played by Khatib of the National Mosque must also be dispassionately investigated into. It may be pertinent here to recall that in the past as well, a statement attributed to him eventually dragged him into a controversy as to his allegiance to the sovereignty of the coun-

Anyway, this is a reality in Bangladesh politics and we have to live with it!

It's a Shah, not a

Larsons

Sir, In July 25th's edition of the DS, there was a front-page news titled, "India storms into final." It was continued on the last page. It had a picture with it which had a caption: "Bangladesh batsman Athar Ali Khan runs the ball down to third man during yesterday's Asia Cup tournament match against India in Colombo." But the truth is, it wasn't Athar Ali's photo. It was Aminul Islam

There is something more that proves it. The man in the picture is using a 'Shah' bat. We all know that Bulbul plays with a 'Shah' bat while Athar Ali uses a 'Larsons'. So, the man in that picture is definitely not Athar Ali. He is none but Aminul Islam Bulbul. Anupam Kallol

Bulbul's photo.

Dhaka College, Dhaka Civil servants for the future

Sir, Civil servants are the most important incumbents of any government. They can be compared with the blood running in the government's physique. As the polluted and germful blood destroys a living being, so do inefficient and corrupted civil servants to the government, in turn a nation. So for the prosperous nation and effective government, efficient

civil servants are a must. Besides, preparation for the 21st century is an important agenda of the present government. Government in the meantime has announced it within and outside of the

country. But it seems contradictory to me when I see the 55 per cent of the civil servants is manned by substandard people. I call them sub-standard because they have not entered in the service through open competition. They have been provided with jobs under the quota reserved for them by the government. This policy may be friendly to enhance the standard of life of some so-called underprivileged people but unfriendly in general for a nation, because Bangladesh is a signatory of the

According to this agreement, all the privileges that Bangladesh enjoys now will be withdrawn after the year 2004. "Survival of the fittest," will be the main philosophy of that world. So how Bangladesh shall exist in that competitive world, with her incompetitive civil ser-

The government should rethink it now and be logical giving up all the emotions. Most efficient and brilliant ones should be selected through open competition for higher civil service in order to materialise the government agenda. -"preparation for 21st century." Md Firoj Alam Dhaka University, Dhaka

Caring for commoners

Sir, It is estimated that over 80 per cent our revenue and development budget is spent on pay and allowances of our government servants, employees of the public sector corporations, ministers, members of the parliament, members of the armed

forces and police, running our white elephants - Bangladesh Secretariat, Prime Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, maintaining our Jatiya Sangsad and also on account of government transports, POL. repair and maintenance of the vehicles, payment of telephone bills, rent of accommodation for government servants, tours of ministers and bureaucrats abroad, expenses on holding state functions, feasts and fes-

Only a petty sum of money is spent economically for the welfare of the people and alleviation of poverty. It appears that the government servants and the rest others concerned are all in all in the country and the common people don't have the land under their feet.

Following the government decision to observe 2-day weekly holiday, it has emerged that there are two classes of people in our country i.e., the 'ruling' - privileged class and the 'ruled' - unprivileged class. The privileged class of people are those handful of persons who are mentioned above and the rest are the vastmajority of the country. The majority always remain secluded and aloof from the privileged class. Some privileged people contact the unprivileged at long intervals only during general elections. O H Kabir

The shattered conscience of the society

6, Hare Street, Dhaka-1203

Sir, We have read in details the extracts of the judgement of

Seema murder case. What most people, including the press seem to forget to emphasise is that Seema was just not raped but also subsequently murdered, and that too, while in official custody! The way the case was prepared and presented for trial is all a hoax as the learned judge himself has mentioned to the belief of all.

Now the people are demanding and the authorities have decided to reopen the case, appeal to the higher court etc. But what about all those who connived at rape and murder and at suppression of facts, falsify ing of evidence, mis-informing the court and utterly tarnishing the image of the government itself, not to speak of the law enforcing agencies and the public prosecution system?

The government has to publicly and believably proceed against these culprits to restore its own image, ensure exemplary punishment for such heinous crimes so that none can dare repeat such act. Just appealing to the High Court with all the trash and false pretenses and letting free the real criminals and their connivers will not convince anyone. The whole nation's anger and wrath are enough of a proof that the crimes of rape, murder and subsequent suppression of facts have been committed. All that has to be seen is how the government proceeds against the criminals and their connivers

who are even greater criminals. Were the authorities not aware of the drama being staged in the name of justice? F Ahmed 5 Bank Bhaban Minto Road Dhaka

Ahmed attended the function as

OPINION Too Much Paper Work

The US-based Centre for International Private Enterprises (CIPE) has come to the conclusion that the Bangladesh government intervention in the economy is still high, (as reported in the local press). This direct or indirect control through a mass of paperwork is a legacy from the "Central" days of colonial administration (remember "The Writers' Building" in Calcutta - the very

name defines the function!). The present regime in Dhaka, and the previous regimes, have been "sincerely" engaged in the passive pastime of carrying out major administrative reforms for several decades now, but the solidity and stability of the entrenched bureaucracy is as firm as ever. It is difficult to shake this 'steel frame', as the civil service is af-

fectionately nick-named. In the emerging nations, many paradoxes are practised. In a country where 70 per cent are illiterate, the remaining 30 per cent consume writing paper many times more than the number of users actually need. Not only that, Bangladesh has daily newspapers to the tune of about 200, and the periodicals number about 600. How these papers make a profit to run this 'huge' printed paper business is a mystery to the outsiders. The government is also aware of the situation, but what can it do in

a much-publicised 'free market' Looking at the government administrative machinery, it is known to all that there is too much paper work in the government offices; because there is too much control. Now the free market concept is working globally, and all governments in the Third World countries are committed, on paper, and practically, to play the game, or lag behind in development efforts in this shrunken global

But we are struck up with the inertia of the flywheel, or the "flywheel effect". The bigger and heavier the (bureaucratic) wheel, the more difficult it is to change its current speed. The weight of the flywheel has to be

reduced, and the speed or revolution increased. This sounds contradictory, but it is easier to grasp if the power to the hub is increased. Translated into nontechnical terms, it means increase the efficiency by cutting

down on the office personnel.

There are other ways. Process lesser papers. That means less input, and less day-to-day 'control'. The picture might look better if the target is to cut down paper work by, say, 50 per cent. The will, and, the consensus, have to be in place first.

At present, one issue/paper/input is passed through too many officers or sections; and there are to many papers (input) sent to the ministries for approval, sanction or clearance. In the government attached or subordinate departments (dealing with the public or visitors), the procedures are cumbersome and time-consuming; and many of these requirements are unnecessary these days, or could be updated and simplified. The remedy is to cut down on the procedures, reduce the paper work and the method of processing, and the total time period for handling each single case. One name of this 'magic' is decentralisation or decontrol.

The Local Government draft set-up is said to have been finalised for presentation at the Jatiya Sangsad, to be followed by elections to the local tiers. This exercise has also been going on for many decades. Many versions bloomed and withered away mysteriously. The image has to be changed: top-heavy Dhaka, and administrativelystarved LG outside the metropo-

The bureaucracy may be allowed to indulge in the latest fashion of aerobics, and look lean, slim and smart. Inflation is found in two sectors, economics and bureaucracy. One is under control (below five per cent); the other is bloated.

Devaluation of the other sector won't help. The remedy is known. Who will bell the super