

# ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM

## Bangladesh Bureaucracy: Historical and Structural Background

by ABMS Zahur

Measures such as decentralisation and limiting the scope of any single person's decisions may be considered for combating corruption. Basis of decision should be well articulated and decision should be open to public scrutiny

**E**FFECTIVE public administration is essential for modern state building which requires decisions of ruling authorities readily translated into effective policies and programmes. The ultimate goal of state building is to provide substantial benefits for the citizens at large. A level of administrative development must be attained to transform modern knowledge into action programmes.

With a limited extractive power Bangladesh has to depend heavily on the foreign aid and assistance for her development efforts. The foreign aid agencies in general, and agencies like Asian Development Bank, World Bank, Islamic Development Bank in particular, complain about the poor level of efficiency of her bureaucracy. We have to admit that our bureaucracy has serious limitations. Great majority of bureaucracy is routine-minded, stagnant and generally lacking in enthusiasm and ability for innovation.

If Bangladesh aims at rapid economic growth, her bureaucracy must attain reasonable level of efficiency. Without maintenance of public order economic development is not possible. An adequate police force and the maintenance of minimum standards of speed, efficiency and justice in the courts are basic to sound administration and thus to economic development. Competence and honesty in public administration exert an important stabilising effect upon the economy, while uncertainty and risk have an inhibiting effect on economic initiative. Governmental functions must effectively serve the country and the public. Such functions have to be carried out in the face of limited manpower and material resources, with sensible economy and a minimum of duplication, with due regard for the rule of law and the processes of consent.

It is difficult to lay down any specific qualifications for a development administrator because they vary according to the administrative culture, social values, economic developments, political conditions and development needs of each country. Bangladesh bureaucracy must improve its efficiency so that it may effectively tackle the urgent problems such as implementation of economic plans, attaining social objectives like reducing illiteracy, poverty, birth rate, economic objectives such as reducing dependency on foreign aid, controlling inflation and political objectives like building democratic institutions and increasing people's participation in the formulation and execution of plans.

The process of administrative development in developing countries is facing dilemma of creating authority on the one hand and on the other developing more efficiency in utilising knowledge in action programmes. It arises because, in contrast to the needs for authority building of continuity, predictability and stability, the character of modern knowledge is highly dynamic calling for constant change, innovation and a style of management in which ultimate authority must constantly shift according to the dictates of specialisation.

The requirements for development demand that all advances in knowledge be utilised for the public service. Yet the character of modern technical knowledge is one of specialisation. Therefore to translate such knowledge into action requires diffusion and decentralisation of controls and the recognition that technical specialists must be recognised as sources of authority. Thus the authority of the technicians tends to clash with the ultimate political authority. Thus any Bangladesh administrative reformer will have to be aware of the authority of the technicians and go for open and flexible organisational structures capable of dealing with different problems.

### Public Administration in Bangladesh

The backbone of the British administration in India was its civil service. Though the first Indian was selected in the ICS in 1864 it remained mainly a service of Britishers. It was not until the Lee Commission (1924) which planned a phased programme of Indianisation that the number of Indian ICS increased. After 1943 there was

no recruitment to the Indian Civil Service. Thus the attitude and structure of the entire bureaucracy in India had been moulded by relatively small elite cadre consisting of 1157 officers in 1947. Of those 101 were Muslims. Ninety five of these opted for Pakistan. They were joined by one Christian officer, fifty British officers and eleven Muslim army officers.

The study of bureaucracy in Pakistan is almost contentious because her political process was not as advanced as the bureaucratic process, due to initial political instability upto 1958 and forty-four months stoppage of parliamentary activity during the Ayub government. During this period the civil service of Pakistan not only survived, it gained 'enormous' in both power and prestige'. (Shahid Javed Burki, *Twenty Years of the Civil Service of Pakistan: A Reevaluation*, Asian Survey, April, 1969).

At liberation of Bangladesh the number of CSP officers was 180. In addition, there were about 150 central services personnel, 45 foreign services personnel and about 1000 provincial services personnel. It is hard to comprehend as to why such a large number of trained and experienced personnel failed to tackle the problems of rehabilitation and reconstruction efficiently. The failure may be partly due to inefficiency of the personnel and partly due to lack of experience of political authority to handle the intricacies of a national government beset with enormous task of rehabilitation and reconstruction in financial stringency.

Like most of the developing nations Bangladesh public administration is inadequate and inappropriate for the developmental needs of the country. It is inadequate because it has not the requisite number of trained personnel to help formulation and execution of development plans. In addition it has not

enough good quality economists, statisticians and professionals. The problem has been accentuated by the attraction of petro-dollars in the Middle East and better living conditions in advanced western countries. It was inappropriate because it was not primarily meant for development purposes. In fact the law and order bureaucracy is often at odds with development administration; partly because of their entrenched power positions, partly because of their self-image as guardians, partly because of their suspicion for the masses, partly because they are often despised by both politicians and technical advisers. Such administrators do not take easily or kindly to new administrative missions or to demands for popular participation (Joseph L Palombra, *Alternative Strategies for Developing Administrative Capabilities in Emerging Nations* in Fred W Riggs (ed) *Frontiers of Development Administration* (Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina, 1970).

Under rapid social and political change, says Lee, a higher civil servant 'would exhibit one of the three potential roles: (1) controlled agent, (2) usurper, and (3) innovator. The innovational potential is related to a developmental orientation of the bureaucrat. (Hahn-Bee Lee, *The Role of the Higher Civil Service under Rapid Social and Political Change* in Edward E. Weidner (ed) *Development Administration in Asia*, (Duke University Press, Durham, North Carolina). Lee has advised that the higher developmentalist bureaucrats must be identified, fostered and properly utilised by the politi-

cal leadership. To secure benefits from such bureaucrats, a parallel presence of enlightened political leadership with an adequate measure of 'developmentalist' orientation is required. In the Bangladesh situation a lot will depend on how the 'developmentalist' bureaucrats are treated by the political leadership.

Bangladesh administrations, like administration in other developing countries, is burdened with problems such as international monetary disturbances, inflation, food and energy crises etc. It tries to meet the challenges posed by such issues through improvisations within the existing systems whereby the available organisations and personnel are diverted to immediate tasks. Such issues tend to relegate planned administrative improvements to the background and militate against sustained efforts in that direction.

### Structural Change in Bangladesh Civil Service

The existing system of ad-

ministration in Bangladesh retains a fundamental continuity with the past. Its hierarchical structure was inherited from the British. However, some attempts at refinements have been made during the last fifty years (1947-97) to suit the needs of changed circumstances. Forty-four years back Paul H Appleby in his report of a survey of Indian administration argued that there was 'too much and too constant consciousness of rank, class and service membership, too little consciousness turning on particular job responsibilities'. Almost a similar attitude may be seen among the officials of Bangladesh, where the situation is different.

The following may be regarded as special features which impeded civil service reform:

(i) people are apathetic to political development;  
(ii) the majority of the people still consider government service the only secured and prestigious employment;  
(iii) due to inheritance of weak and inexperienced repre-

sentative institutions the tradition of executive government remains strong;

(iv) activities normally performed by private enterprises in western countries are undertaken by government;

(v) the political parties cannot play their due part in the policy formulation due to their organisational weakness.

The structural organisation of the civil service of Bangladesh is very complicated. It remained essentially unchanged since the British days (as developed in Aitchison and Lington reports). The division of services into almost completely autonomous cadres subject to no overall, unifying central control is its most important characteristic. For popular understanding of Bangladesh bureaucracy one must start with the following reports: (i) Report of the Public Service Commission 1886-87; (ii) Report of the Royal Commission Upon Decentralisation in India (1909); (iii) Report of the Royal Commission on Public Services (1917); (iv) Report of the Royal Commission on the Superior Civil Services in India (1924); (v) Report of the Indian Constitutional Reforms (1918); (vi) Report of the Indian Statutory Commission (1930).

Friedrich says that 'the only effective political antidote to

the crises and catastrophes is unbureaucratic inspirational leadership on a broad democratic base. To keep such leadership effective it needs bureaucratic support. When faced with anarchistic breakdowns rational bureaucracy needs strongly inspirational democratic leadership. The leadership must be responsible and efficient, and the bureaucracy which serves such leaders will in turn strive for responsibility as well as efficiency. If responsible and efficient leadership can be given there is no reason as to why Bangladesh bureaucracy would not be responsible and efficient.

Like many other developing countries corruption is a major problem of Bangladesh public administration for development. It is reflection of what happens in society generally. Measures such as decentralisation and limiting the scope of any single person's decisions may be considered for combating corruption. Basis of decision should be well articulated and decision should be open to public scrutiny. Within the limited means provision for adequate compensation may be considered. Whatever may be attempted for administrative reform its success will depend on changed attitude and heightened ability of the public officials.

## Turkey: Current Political Developments

by ASM Nurunnabi

In recent developments, Turkey and Israel forged stronger ties. They shrugged off Arab condemnation of their mutual relations and took a significant step in building up a strategic alliance as defence ministers of the two countries met in Ankara to discuss military cooperation.

**I**F we look back at the recent history of Turkey, it may be noted that, after remaining neutral in World War II, it aligned itself with the West and received substantial US military and economic aid. It joined NATO in 1952, was signatory to the Balkan Entente in 1953, and joined the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation and the Council of Europe. In 1959, Turkey apparently resolved the three-year dispute with Greece over Cyprus. The Second Turkish Republic was created and a new constitution was adopted in 1991.

Disputes between ethnic Greeks and Turks in Cyprus resulted in a civil war there in 1963. Greece and Turkey were on the brink of war, but pressure from the United Nations helped control the conflict. In 1974 a coup occurred on Cyprus with support from the Greek military government. Turkish forces invaded and occupied northern Cyprus in response.

In the face of increasing domestic instability and political turmoil in Turkey the armed forces took over the government in a bloodless coup and instituted martial law in 1980. Two years later a new constitution was approved by a majority of voters. Parliamentary elections followed in 1983, and martial law was gradually lifted. Turkey thereafter experienced relative political stability and economic growth.

The ideal of secularism upheld during the period of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk suffered a setback in the subsequent period of the rise of Islamists under Prime Minister Naemuddin Erbakan who was ousted by President Suleyman Demirel. The President used his constitutional powers to handover power to pro-Western Mesud Yilmaz who as prime minister pledged to forge 'Islamic-free' front from among the country's fractious political parties. That development put pressure on previous Prime Minister Erbakan who was forced by the army to resign as modern Turkey's first Islamist leader.

On assuming power, Turkey's new government under Yilmaz launched an aggressive campaign to roll back the influence of the Islamists-led coalition headed by Erbakan. The

senior figures in the Turkish establishment, who were zealous guardians of the official secular order, played a vital role behind the scenes in shutting out Erbakan and his Pro-Islamic Welfare Party. Thus a significant move was made to reinforce secularism in Turkey. In its latest move, Turkey, through its constitution party, banned the Welfare Party which has held a major segment in the legislature and prohibited its leader Erbakan from taking part in political activities for five years. The ban was said to be due to reported anti-secular role of the Welfare Party.

Turkey's secularism is not only a form of government but also a way of life, and a guarantee for democracy and social peace. Turkey has been long campaigning to become a member of the European Union and a drift to any other state ideology is strongly disfavoured as it may tarnish Turkey's longstanding image. When during the earlier regime there was a project for construction of a large mosque in Istanbul and also in the capital city Ankara, Turkey's National Security Council demanded a crackdown on the anti-secular groups of religious fanatics who were trying to tighten their grip on a section of the Turkish media and educational institutions. Further, during the short tenure of office for eleven months only Prime Minister Erbakan sought to strengthen his ties with a few Islamic states, mainly Iran and the Muslim states of Central Asia. The Turkish military, which was behind the move to oust Erbakan, considered it to be their responsibility to defend Turkey's secular traditions, which had been founded by the father of the nation, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, 75 years ago.

A number of major problems beset the emergent secularism in Turkey. They are, among others, the denial of a berth to Turkey in the European Union for which, as already noted, Turkey had been campaigning for a long time, the continuing dispute over Cyprus and the ticklish Kurdish issue.

The questions of Cyprus and Turkey's bid for entry into the European Union appeared to be interrelated. During the Turkey-Greek Summit held in October last, the question that was up-

permost in everybody's mind was: 'Will the Tarcu Greek Summit of Crete pave the way for Turkey's entry into the European Union?' The Greek Prime Minister was reported to have said: 'We are aware that cooperation between EU and Turkey is attainable and we do not wish to bar Ankara from EU. The fact is that Turkey has an aggressive foreign policy. Any country that wishes to cooperate with the EU must accept the European order and the relevant principles.'

Regarding solution of the Cyprus problem, it has appeared that the chasm between the Greek position and the Turkish position had widened. Whereas the EU seemed ready to start talks on membership of Cyprus minus Turkish Northern Cyprus, Turkey had threatened further integration of the one-third of Turkish Cyprus held by her. The EU appeared to have come to the end of its arguments against including Turkey in the list of countries that have made the grade including Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Estonia. Some observers felt EU seemed to have been petrified by the thought of 65 million Turks' presence in the different countries in Europe. Accepting Turkey for eventual membership would mean that EU would cease to be a Christian Club, which opens the question, 'are the big wigs of the EU ready for it?'

Turkish Cypriots have already suspended UN-sponsored unification talks with Greek Cypriots to protest the inclusion of the Greek side in European Union membership talks. The EU's ally to Turkey's membership is reportedly due to human rights abuses in Turkey, the presence of 30,000 Turkish troops in Cyprus and sour relations with Greece. According to observers, it may be absurd if a row over a small island at the eastern end of the Mediterranean were to prevent the enlargement of the European Union. So bitter is the mistrust between Greeks and Turks, both those who live in their respective motherlands and those who resentfully share the divided island of Cyprus, that the grand plans to bring new eastern members into Western Europe's club will be at risk if nothing is done to ease

the situation. For Greeks and Turks, the awful possibility of war can never be ruled out due to the Cyprus time-bomb.

US President Bill Clinton lately appeared determined to cement the alliance between the US and Turkey. Washington's warning towards Ankara followed the decision by the EU to defer action on Turkey's 34-year old application for membership. Turkey warned of 'catastrophic consequences' if the EU persisted in rejecting its membership. While Clinton deplored the EU decision, his administration had been quick to take advantage when, in a high-profile event, Yilmaz signed a \$2.2 billion deal with Boeing to buy as many as 49 commercial aircraft.

Turkey is closely involved in Kurdish affairs. The armed group of Kurds in Turkey is known as the Kurdistan Workers Party with Marxist orientation. This party, known as PKK, made its appearance in the middle of eighties. The leader of the Turkish Kurds is said to be one Abdullah Akar. They want autonomy under Ankara. It is estimated that in the total Turkish population of more than six crore, the Kurds form about one and a half crore. Other Kurdish populations are spread over three other Muslim countries, namely, Iraq, Iran, and Syria. In October, 1995, at the intervention of the US, a conference was held at Ankara to stop the internal conflicts among the Kurds of different groups based in other Muslim countries. Since then, such conflicts have tended to ease. In this respect, the US played a notable role.

In recent developments, Turkey and Israel forged stronger ties. They shrugged off Arab condemnation of their mutual relations and took a significant step in building up a strategic alliance as defence ministers of the two countries met in Ankara to discuss military cooperation. Turkey was the object of a thinly veiled attack lately by the Organisation of Islamic Conference for military links with Israel. Turkey dismissed the rebuff and showed signs that it has abandoned its policy of balancing its relations with Israel and the Arab world.

## Metropolitan



Southeast Bank Limited has donated Tk 5 lakh to Prime Minister's Relief Fund. Chairman of the Bank MA Kashem handed over a cheque for the amount to the Prime Minister at her Secretariat office recently. Managing Director of the Bank Syed Anisul Haq, Vice Chairman Ragib Ali and directors M Mashur Rahman, Jalaur Rahman, Mostori Miah and Azim Uddin Ahmed were also present.



### Elected to fellowship at ACP

Dr Taimor Nawaz has been elected a Fellow of the American College of Physicians (FACP). He was also elected a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh (FRCP) in March 1997, says a press release.

Dr Nawaz graduated from Dhaka Medical College in November 1982 and trained at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and in the UK prior to obtaining MRCP (UK) in 1988. He subsequently did his Residency in Internal Medicine at the Georgetown University and his Postdoctoral Fellowship in Infectious Diseases at the University of Rochester, USA, 1989-95.

He is Board Certified in Internal Medicine and Board Certified in the Subspecialty of Infectious Diseases by the American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM), USA. He has a number of publications in peer reviewed international medical journals. In addition to general medicine, his special practice areas are Infectious Diseases including Hepatitis and HIV.

Dr Nawaz is currently an Associate Professor of Medicine and Director Medical Education Centre at the Bangladesh Medical College. He is the youngest son of late Aminur Rahman, the first pilot from East Bengal and flute maestro.

### More donations to PM's fund for cold victims

Eastern Bank Limited yesterday donated Taka five lakh to Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the cold affected people of the country, reports BSS.

M K Alam, managing director of the bank, handed over a cheque for the amount to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office.

Besides, Sonali Bank donated 38 cartons of readymade garments for the cold-hit people. M Asafudowla, chairman of the bank, and Mahubur Rahman Khan, managing director, handed over the donation to the Prime Minister.

### Dhanmondi Lake development work progressing

The development work of Dhanmondi Lake at an estimated cost of Taka 9.69 crore is progressing speedily, a Local Government Ministry press release said yesterday, reports BSS.

Twenty per cent of the work has already been done and the rest is expected to be completed by June next year, the release said.

The development project was taken up to preserve the natural environment of Dhaka metropolis, expansion of facilities for the residents, building of entertainment infrastructure and beautifying the front side of the Bangladesh Memorial Museum, Dhaka City Corporation under the supervision of the Local Government Ministry has been implementing the project.

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Zillur Rahman accompanied by Mayor of Dhaka City Mohammad Hanif, State Minister for LGRD and Cooperatives Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury and concerned officials visited the project area yesterday to see the progress of work.

### BCL, JCD hold rallies on DU campus

By DU Correspondent

The student fronts of the ruling and opposition parties brought out two separate processions and organised rallies on the Dhaka University campus yesterday.

Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), the student wing of BNP, brought out the procession protesting what it said the police attack on a JCD procession on DU campus on Saturday.

The JCD rally, held in front of the JUCSU building, was addressed, among others, by JCD president Shahiduddin Chowdhury Anney, general secretary Habib-Un-Nabi Shohel, vice president Nasiruddin Pintu, DU unit joint-convenor Selimuzzaman Selim, JCD DU unit convenor Nasir Uddin Asim presided over the meeting.

The JCD leaders threatened to launch an all-out movement against the government of Sheikh Hasina. They condemned the inauguration of the Ekuushey Bô Mela at the Bangla Academy premises on February 7 by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and the 'police attack' on the JCD procession on the DU campus.

Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student front of the ruling Awami League organised its rally at the *Aparajeo Bangla*. Earlier, BCL brought out a rally on the campus welcoming the arms surrender by the members of Shantibahini today.

The BCL rally was addressed, among others, by education secretary Sujit Roy Nandi, assistant organising secretary Golam Sarwar Tuku, DU unit general secretary Abdul Wadud Khokon, BCL general secretary Ishaque Ali Khan Panna presided over the meeting.

### Obituary

Wahidur Rahman, Manager, Bangladesh Shilpa Bank, died in the city Sunday following a heart attack. He was 57, reports BSS.

The deceased, who was the general secretary of Shilpa Bank Officers' Association and the chairman of the managing committee of South Chandpur High School, Marikganj, was associated with a number of educational and social organisations.

He left behind his wife and two daughters.

The quikhwant of Wahidur Rahman will be held tomorrow after *Asr* prayers at his 582/1, Uttar Shahjahanpur residence.

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Eminent educationist and one of the pioneers of women education Rahima Khatoon died in Chittagong Sunday. She was 80, reports BSS.

She left behind her only son Rezwaul Haq, chairman of Chittagong Port Authority and a host of relatives.

Rahima Khatoon was the founder headmistress of Sultana Hamid Ali Girls School at Khulna.



### Abdul Quddus Makhan's death anniversary today

The fourth death anniversary of Abdul Quddus Makhan, a noted freedom fighter and former general secretary of Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) will be observed today, reports BSS.

Different socio-cultural organisations including Abdul Quddus Makhan Smriti Parishad, have arranged elaborate programmes to observe the day in a befitting manner.

Qurankhwani and fateha will be offered at his grave at Mirpur at 11 am today. A milad mahfil will be held at his Dhanmondi residence after *Magreb* prayers.

The Brahmanbaria Samity in Dhaka will hold a discussion meeting and milad mahfil at its 42/1 Segun Bagicha office at 4:30 pm tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the parishad has organised a memorial meeting on Feb 14 at Brahmanbaria town.

The parishad will also organise a discussion on Feb 18 at Khulna Press Club.

### Trishal Barta Award 1997 announced

By Staff Correspondent

The authorities of the Weekly Trishal Barta of Mymensingh have announced the names of the recipients of 'Trishal Barta Award 1997' recently.

The recipients of the award in seven fields have been nominated on the basis of opinion poll of readers of the weekly, said a press release yesterday.

The recipients are editor of The Daily Star, best journalist; Principal Hamida Ali of Vikarunnessa Noon School and College, best educationist; Ali Akbar Bhuiyan from Islampur, Dhaka— best social worker; Abdul Matin Sarkar, vice president of Mymensingh District Awami League— best political leader and organiser; Dr Ashra-uddin, thana health officer of Trishal— best physician; TNO of Trishal Mohammad Sarwar Khan and Abdul Mannan manager of Pubali bank, Darirampur branch— best administrative officers and Idris Ali of Iva filling station in Trishal— best businessman.

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