Every society has its social, cultural, economic, political and environmental aspects. A political system is the product of all these aspects of a social system and its external environment. The political process of a country also impacts upon the civil society or in building the civil society of a nation. It is obvious that the civil society and political processes are closely interrelated. The nature and quality of each are reflected in the nature and quality of the other. Political and social philosophers from the ancient to the modern periods attempted to conceptualize the correlations between the political process and the civil society in various ways. Greek philosopher Plato, for example, prescribes for an ideal state to build up an ideal civil society. He puts emphasis on education, justice, philosophy and philosopher king to establish a just and civil society. "Plato's thought, from first to last, was chiefly bent on the question how society could be reshaped so that man might realize the best that is in him." Of the modern scholars Hegel, Weber, Marx, Gramsci, and Tocqueville among others dwell on the subject and have given their views about the relations between the civil society and the state or political process.
This paper is an attempt to examine the relations between our civil society and the political institutions such as political parties and the process of reciprocity between the two. Plato in his *The Republic* has outlined a scheme of social engineering to build an ideal civil society through the mechanism of a structured political process. Andrew Hacker writes:

One of the most important goals for the politics of Western World over the last two thousand years has been the quest for civility. This pursuit is founded on the idea that men ought to live together in a civilized way. This means more than the avoidance of violence or lawlessness. Civility is a positive virtue; it suggests a style of life. That civility usually embraces manners and a cultivation of the social graces is undoubtedly the case. But to stress those features would be to emphasize what are only superficial trappings. Citizens in a civil society do more than behave well; they regard life as an experience which must be rationally planned and carefully disciplined.”

It is worth mentioning here that Plato believes that the *Ideal State* can be possible only if a civil society is there to support it.

The burden of building a civil society is much more on the society itself than the political system or process. But political process can play a very positive role in the construction and deconstruction of a civil society. However, the role of civil society in the establishment and growth of a nation’s political institutions and their process is more important than the other. And this is more desireable also for the development of a democratic political system.” (The
Bengali meaning of civil society should be *nagaric samaj* not to be *susil samaj.* Talcott Parsons has given the outline of an exchange system between the social and political process where one would receive from the other for each others development and growth. Some other social scientists prescribe some input output mechanism for the social and political exchange model which Mitchell has summed up in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Inputs</th>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>Demands</th>
<th>Control of</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Interest Demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Legitimation of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Authority of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Powers of Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Outputs</td>
<td>Decisions &amp;</td>
<td>Extractions</td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Opportunity for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actions</td>
<td>Regulation</td>
<td>Controls</td>
<td>Effectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Allocations</td>
<td>Allocation of Fluid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Symbols</td>
<td></td>
<td>Resources,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Leadership,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibilities,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1

**Input Output Categories : Some Comparisons.**

What may be added to this scheme of social input and political output is that there are political inputs to social outputs also. That means the process is reciprocal. We suggest that there are give and take or exchange of inputs and outputs from both the social and political sectors of a society. As Lucian Pye writes:
A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the individuals who currently make up the system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experiences.\textsuperscript{7}

A civil society is, therefore, the product of a civic culture. This culture is vitally important for the growth and existence of civil society where a political process can grow and continue to function. If there is a democratic civic culture in a society, a democratic political process may function in that society. The civic culture, Almond and Verba write:

\ldots is an allegiant participant culture. Individuals are not only oriented to political input, they are oriented positively to the input structures and the input process. In other words, \ldots, the civic culture is a participant political culture in which the political culture and political structures are congruent.\textsuperscript{8}

Now let us see in the following section how our civil society and our political institutions, especially the political parties, are interacting with each other in Bangladesh. It is to be cautioned here that the civil society that we have is not as developed as the western democracies where political institutions like political parties have grown with certain norms. Our economic, cultural, and educational conditions are not as they are in the established democratic societies, where well established party systems have been functioning with continuity. Under this situation the political parties can play more significant roles in the growth of civic culture or a civil culture or a civil society in Bangladesh.
Political Parties in Bangladesh and the State of Civility:

In building a civil society the role of every one in the society is crucial including the individuals, the trade unions, the business community, the state apparatus, and the political organizations. Without having a sense of civility at the societal level, civil society cannot flourish. As it has been defined by Hecker that "it is more than the avoidance of violence or lawlessness. Civility is a positive virtue; it suggests a style of life." He further argues that "Citizens in a civil society do more than behaving well; they also behave purposefully. They regard life as an experience which must be rationally planned and carefully disciplined." In this section let us examine the role of our political parties in establishing such a civil society in Bangladesh or their roles in the growth and nourishment of virtues of a civil society in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, like many other developing nations, has inherited from its colonial rulers some political and legal institutions. Such institutions include, for example, a constitution, political parties, legislatures, judicial and executive bodies. But it is noticeable that these institutions have not grown in our country in the same process as they did in the western countries. Lucian Pye in writing about the political parties in the developing countries observes that:

Historically the introduction of political parties has seemingly created as many problems as it has solved; and although by now Asians have had considerable experience in proclaiming, inaugurating, and living off political parties, Asia had pathetically little experience with working party systems."
Many things such as culture, soci-economic conditions and traditions may be attributed to this situation in Bangladesh. Lapalombana and Weiner argue that to be an organization a political party requires: (1) organizational continuity, (2) should have local units having proper integration with the national unit, (3) efficient leaders, and (4) recruiting supporters and followers (1966: 6). And Huntington maintains that:

The level of institutionalization of any political system can be defined by the adaptability, complexity, autonomy, and coherence of its organizations and procedures (1968: 12).

To what extent do the political parties of Bangladesh fulfill these conditions as political organizations and how much are they democratic? Huntington observes that:

The vacuum of power and authority which exists in so many modernizing countries may be filled temporarily by charismatic leadership or by military force. But it can be filled permanently only by political organization. Either the established elites compete among themselves to organize the masses through the existing political system, or dissident elites organize them to overthrow that system. In the modernizing world he controls the future who organizes its politics (Huntington 1968: 461).

Although there are some studies available on political parties and politics in Bangladesh, none of these have precisely focused on the issues of building institution and their role in the process of building a civil society supportive of a democratic political system. We have political parties operating in our political system for a long time. But how are
they playing their roles in building and maintaining a
democratic political process in Bangladesh? What is the
impact of our party politics on our civil society and at the
same time what is the impact of our civil society on the party
system that we have in Bangladesh? We will attempt to
address these questions in this paper.

It is to be noted here that Bangladesh has many political
parties, some of which are organizationally strong such as the
Awami League (AL), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and
Jamaat-e-Islami (JI). These parties have been existing with
continuity and integrity (although there were some splits and
defections at different points of time) for considerable period
of time as political institutions. Yet there are certain
difficulties in building and maintaining a mechanism to
peacefully get to power and transfer that power. In this
section we shall focus on issues such as: leadership problems
i.e., the role of the leaders in a party, factional politics and
defection, lack of democratization within the parties, and the
extra-party factors, for example, the military intervention in
politics.

Authoritarian Tendency in Parties and Their Leaders:

The leaders in the Bangladesh political parties tend to be
authoritarian in their style and nature. The authoritarian
nature of leadership often harms the growth of parties as
democratic and durable political institutions. This
phenomenon has twofold impact on political parties. On the
one hand, authoritarian leaders keep their parties person-
centered, and they don’t allow or animate democratic process
within a party. On the other hand, when such a leader gets
chance to exercise state power, they tend to repress
opposition parties. In the following section we will see
examples of such leadership behavior in Bangladesh political parties.

The problem of building political institutions in Bangladesh began just after its liberation in 1971. The Bangladesh movement was led by a political party (the Awami League-AL). The AL ruled Bangladesh from 1971 to 1975 until the formation of a one party system known as Bangladesh Krishak Sramic Awami League (BAKSAL) by the leader of the AL, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Mujib). During this period the League did not share power with any other parties. The party and its leadership gradually moved towards authoritarianism. The AL leadership tended to identify the party with the government and the state (Jahan 1980: 134). The role of AL in building political institutions such as the constitution, the legislature, and a competitive party system during its tenure of power is not quite positive. In 1975 it radically changed the constitution which was founded by its legislators. The Fourth Amendment to the constitution had changed the parliamentary form of government to an authoritarian presidential system, and the multi-party system to a one party state.

The leadership style of Mujib was also authoritarian in nature (Jahan 1980: 134-135). His attitude towards the opposition was not democratic as after the 1973 parliamentary elections he said, "now there is no opposition in Bangladesh." The political party leaders including the one who emerged through party politics, e.g., Mujib, and those who emerged through military rule and turned politician e.g., Zia and Ershad have demonstrated a tendency to be authoritarian and tend to monopolize power by their respective parties. Lucian Pye has attempted to explain such tendencies:
... as long as the penalties for defeat are so out of line with the rewards for victory, the instincts of Asian politicians have understandably been to keep the game as monopolistic as possible.\textsuperscript{15}

The party leaders who either after elected to power, in the case of Mujib, or who after seizing power formed political parties in the cases of Zia and Ershad wanted to monopolize power in authoritarian manners (Ahmed 1995).

After the killing of Mujib by the military personnel in the coup of August 1975, Bangladesh experienced a series of successful and abortive military coups. However, when General Ziaur Rahman ultimately evolved as the powerful man he desired to acquire political legitimacy by creating a political platform. He formed a political forum with the defector politicians from various political parties including Mashiur Rahman from the National Awami Party (Bhashani), Shah Azizur Rahman from the Muslim League, and K. M. Obaidur Rahman from the Awami League. Zia initially founded Jatiyatabadi Ganatantrik Dal (Nationalist Democratic Party) with these defector politicians. Later, in a bid to broaden his political base, Zia founded the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). But, the fact of the matter is that he remained the center of power despite the formation of this political party. Moudud Ahmed who served as a senior member of Zia's cabinet writes:

It was not surprising that, ... the party remained completely under the authority of Zia. All these led to the growth of a party centering round a single man.\textsuperscript{16}

General Ershad did the same thing when he also formed a political party to legitimate his rule. Following the footstep of his predecessor Zia, Ershad formed a political party (Jana Dal
later to be renamed as Jatiya Party), but he remained the center of gravity as long as he was in power. Even after his ouster from power while still in Jail, the Jatiya Party leaders could not do anything without his consent or blessings.

Authoritarian tendencies are still there in Bangladesh political parties. The two main political parties, the BNP and AL, are led by the widow of Zia and the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman respectively. These two leaders have inherited their positions rather than achieving it by their own capacities. Khaleda Zia, the widow of President Ziaur Rahman was simply a housewife when Zia was assassinated in 1981, and Hasina was also a housewife staying abroad with her husband when her father was killed along with other members of his family in 1975.

The political parties in Bangladesh do not take their major decisions in their council meetings or in a democratic process. Because of the absence of elections and accountability within a party, there is the chance of growing authoritarianism among the leaders. There may develop a vacuum of leadership because of the absence of democracy within a party. The growth of leadership through democratic process and their upward mobility cannot be ensured without democratic exercises within a party. So when a vacuum of leadership is created due to killings, coups or natural death, the parties cannot replace them easily. This is what happened to AL after the killing of Sheikh Mujib, and its four other leaders in the jail in 1975, and to BNP after the killing of Zia in 1981. There is a common lack of internal democracy in all the parties. All the decisions are made at the national level and imposed upon the local committees. The candidates for all the elections are nominated by the central committees and the party leadership. Such a situation within a party
organization is not favorable for the growth and circulation of new generations of leaders, and for the evolution of parties as dynamic and democratic institutions.

The authoritarian trends are the reflection of values we have in our civil society at the family and community levels and in our cultural ethos. In our families, the head of the family dominates in almost all the decision making processes, in our socio-cultural organizations the leaders dominate in the decision making process, and in our religious organizations or institutions the authoritarian values persist. Even in our business organizations, the nature of the owners or the Chief Executives are authoritarian. But extreme concentration of authority without having efficient instruments or mechanism to exercise that authority may make the system weak and inefficient. This is what we have in our civil society and in our political process. Although our religious leaders always preach high moral and ethical principles such as honesty, kindness, equality, they are hardly practiced by their followers in the civil society. Same is the case with the leaders of our political parties.

The Coups, the Generals and the Parties:

After the 1975 coup General Ziaur Rahman emerged as the dominant figure and had issued a regulation in 1976 for the revival of political parties. The government received fifty-six applications for permission and nineteen of them were given clearance by the government. It is generally believed that Ziaur Rahman very shrewdly maneuvered to divide and weaken the political parties by offering the leaders of the splinter groups lucrative proposals. General Ziaur Rahman in his efforts to establish a political forum had lured away persons from other parties. He could successfully divide most
of the parties into various factions and small groups. The defection of important leaders from various parties enabled Zia to establish a political party devoted to serving his political purposes. Later, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad replicated the same process after he staged a coup and seized political power in 1982. The fragmentation of parties into smaller groups and the defection of their leaders made the opposition parties infirm institutions. For a long time the opposition parties could not develop strong political base against the autocratic, authoritarian, and military dictators.

Most of the parties in Bangladesh have grown from the factions of various older parties. There are several parties with similar ideological identities and programs only because of leadership conflicts. In the absence of democratic processes in the parties, leadership conflicts could not be resolved or minimized within their organizational frameworks through constitutional means. In many cases, authoritarian behavior of the party leaders forced others either to leave a party or to form a new faction. One recent instance of such a behavior is the exclusion of Dr. Kamal Hossain from the presidium of the Awami League (AL) by Sheikh Hasina. It may be noted here that Dr. Kamal Hossain, a veteran AL leader, played leadership role as a constitutional advisor to the founding leader of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, as the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister in independent Bangladesh and in that capacity, he drafted the first Constitution of Bangladesh, and then as the Foreign Minister of Mujib government. Dr. Hossain finally left the League and has formed another organization in the name of Gano Forum (GF). Another AL presidium member from Rajshahi also joined the BNP just before the June 12 parliamentary elections. Some others, for example, Humayun Rashid Chowdhury, a JP leader and Foreign Minister in Ershad's government, and
Shamsul Huda Chowdhury of the same party who was the Speaker of the Parliament during the Ershad period also joined the AL just before the election of the seventh parliament.

In many other instances, ambitious leaders motivated by their self-interests defected from the older parties. It is also said and widely believed that the ruling military Generals could make the political opposition weaker by encouraging the smaller factions of larger parties to defect from their original parties. The Generals managed to do that by offering the factional leaders positions in the government or by bribing them individually. When such a political leader joins a military government, it inflicts enormous harm to political parties. The political opposition (to a military regime) loses esteem and momentum due to this kind of actions of some of the political party leaders. In the long list of these politicians, few names such as Kurban Ali, Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury, Khondkar Mushtaq Ahmed, Moudud Ahmed, Quazi Zafar Ahmed, Yousuf Ali, Obaidur Rahman, may be mentioned, each of whom changed party affiliations at least once in their lives to join governments under the leadership of military generals. The relations between these leaders and their parties and the civil society are one of disregard and mistrust.

**Elections, Parties and the Civil Society:**

The civil society behaved rationally in all the elections which took place in Bangladesh in a democratic environment. The electorate provided support in a balanced way to the major political parties, as the tables below demonstrate this fact.
It may fairly be concluded here that a regular and impartial election could ensure the growth of a well functioning two party system in Bangladesh. It could also lead to the growth of political parties as viable political institutions as the data demonstrated in the above tables. But on many occasions it is seen that the parties in power could not utilize that support of the civil society to build up a democratically oriented civil society. They rather maintain a habit of getting involved in mindless fighting with each other making the civil society a captive in their hands. It may be noted here that political parties in our country still indulge in violence, indiscipline and corrupt methods even in the democratically organized elections. The lack of consensus among the political parties to sever their connections with the front organizations on the college and university campuses is another example of such behavior of our political parties and their leaders. The relations among the trade unions and the political parties are also examples of ignoring the interest of the civil society by the political parties. The immediate past President of the country on several occasions had appealed to the political parties to delink their connections with the trade unions and the student organizations in order to contain terrorism, lawlessness, violence and from various public organizations. But our political parties and their leaders gave no serious attention to the President’s call.
### Table-1

**Parliamentary Elections 1973**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>No of Candidates</th>
<th>No of Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Awami League</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (M)</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (B)</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD)</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPB (Communist Party of Bangladesh)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPB (Leninist)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banglar Communist Party</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya League</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krishak Sramic Samajbadi Dal</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sramic Federation</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantric Dal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangla Chatra Union</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Congress</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Parties</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1077</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table-2

**Second Parliamentary Elections 1979**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>No of Candidates</th>
<th>No of Seats Won</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BNP</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awami League (Malek)</td>
<td>295</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awami League (Mizan)</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Front (Rahim)</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSD</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAP (Muzaffar)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gano Front</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sammyabadi Dal</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya League</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganotantric Andolon</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Oikya Party</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 18 Groups</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total :</td>
<td>1982</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table -3

Third Parliamentary Elections, 1986

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Candidate</th>
<th>Elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party (National Party)</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awami League (Hasina)</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaat-i-Islami</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim League</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic United Front</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Bangladesh</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (M)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (B)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKSAL</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worker’s Party</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samya Badi Dal (Marxist-Leninist)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD-Rab)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSD (Siraj)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other 15 Small Parties</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total : 28 Parties</td>
<td>1269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BNP did not take part in this election

Table -4

Parliamentary Election 1988

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party*</th>
<th>Candidates</th>
<th>Elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combined Opposition Parties</td>
<td>269</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSD (Siraj)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Party</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 Parties Alliance (Solaiman)</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khelaphat Andolan</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janadal</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GBP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals : 8</td>
<td>978</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two major parties: Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party boycotted this election. After two years and ten months due to mass movements the Ershad government had collapsed and this parliament was dissolved on 6th December, 1990.
Table 5

Parliamentary Election of February 27, 1991

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awami League</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya (Dal) Party</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communist Party of Bangladesh</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Krishak Sramic Awami League(BKSAL)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Awami Party (NAP-Muzaffar)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ganatantri Party (GP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workers Party (WP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD-Siraj)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Democratic Party (NDP)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total :</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission

Table 6

Parliamentary Election of 15 February 1996*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom Party</td>
<td>001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total :</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All the major opposition parties including the AL, JP, JI boycotted this election on the issue of caretaker government.

Table –7

Parliamentary Election\(^1\) of June 12, 1996

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awami League</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh Nationalist Party</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Party</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaat-i-Islami Party</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jatiya Samaj Tantric Dal (Rab)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Oikya Jote (IOJ)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>300*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- See foot note 52 for the changing position of total seats of the AL, BNP and JP in the Seventh Parliament after the by-election of September 5, 1996.


The Issue of Caretaker Government and Party Politics 1994-1996:

In 1990 the autocratic government of General Ershad was replaced by an interim caretaker government headed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. The public demand for the resignation of General Ershad’s government was accentuated by the incessant mass movement organized by the major political parties and supported by the intellectuals, professionals and people from almost all the spheres of society. Chief Justice Shahabuddin was first appointed as the Vice President and then after the resignation of Ershad from the presidency Justice Shahabuddin became the President according to the provision of the Constitution. Justice Shahabuddin immediately had formed a caretaker
government as demanded and agreed upon by the opposition parties.\textsuperscript{24}

Under the caretaker government of Justice Shahabuddin, parliamentary elections were held in February 1991. It was commonly accepted as a reasonably fair election ever held in the history of Bangladesh.\textsuperscript{25} In this election, although no single party received the vote of the absolute majority, the BNP emerged as the largest party. The BNP with the support of the Jamaat-i-Islami had formed the government. The poll results clearly indicate the trend of emerging a two-party system in the electoral politics of Bangladesh, as shown above. During the rule of BNP government between 1991-1996 there was another movement in Bangladesh by the opposition parties for the provision of a caretaker government to conduct national elections. In the following section we will try to explain the nature and impact of that movement in building a civil society in Bangladesh.

During the period 1994-1996 the opposition parties under the leadership of the AL raised the demand for a caretaker government to conduct the national elections. The opposition parties claimed that elections could not be fair if they were to be held under the partisan governments. The AL leader, the then Chief Whip of the opposition in the Parliament and the Organizing Secretary of the party said:

Now the demand for holding election under a neutral, non-partisan, caretaker government has been raised, because we have reasons to believe that the BNP government is conspiring to snatch away people's right to vote which was achieved through long-drawn struggle.\textsuperscript{26}

In support of their demand they cited the examples of Magura and Mirpur byelections which they alleged were
rigged by the ruling party. The AL was joined by the Jatiya Party of the deposed dictator General Ershad, the Jamaat-i-Islami, and some other left and right wing small parties in the Parliament. To press their demand home for a caretaker government the opposition Members of Parliament boycotted the sessions from March 1994 till their resignation on 28 December 1994.27

The opposition Members of Parliament initially began their boycott as a walkout in protest of a comment in the house by the then Information Minister Nazmul Huda.28 Minister Huda while taking part in a debate over the issue of condemning the killing in a Hebron mosque in the occupied territory of West Bank said referring to the opposition members that "They (the opposition Members) had suddenly become Muslims."29 The opposition had demanded an unconditional apology for the comment from the Minister. Mr. Huda later expressed his regrets for the comment. The opposition members, however, did not withdraw their boycott, but added the demand for a caretaker government to the cause of their boycott.

The opposition Members did not attend the 1994 budget session of the Parliament. The Parliament to which the members were elected by the electorate was supposed to be the best place to discuss any issue of national interest in a democratic system, and not to boycott it for days, weeks, or even for sessions to keep pressure on the ruling party.30 The political leaders were creating a situation where the importance of the Parliament was losing as a democratic political institution. 31

Dr. Kamal Hossain accused the leaders of the ruling BNP and the opposition parties including the AL of "making the
Parliament ineffective." He said "Country's hard earned democracy has now been threatened due to irresponsible role of the opposition and undemocratic attitude of the ruling party."\textsuperscript{32} It became clear that both the ruling and the opposition party leaders were responsible for such as a political situation. The Leader of the Opposition said in public that the opposition would launch \quotes{violent movement} to oust the democratically elected government if it would not bring legislation in the Parliament for caretaker government.\textsuperscript{33} In fact, they meant it by taking the issue to the streets. The Leader of the Opposition in the democratically elected Parliament asked the people in a public meeting while boycotting the Parliament to \quotes{prepare for a movement to unseat what she said the \quotes{corrupt}, inept and neo-autocratic BNP government and resist communal forces to secure democratic rights through election under a caretaker government.}\textsuperscript{34}

The AL declared that it would launch mass movement for the realization of the opposition's demand for caretaker government.\textsuperscript{35} Sheikh Hasina, the Leader of the Opposition and the Chief of AL, announced on July 27, 1994 a nationwide program of agitation, hartal (strike) to unseat the BNP government. The Leader of the Opposition said, \quotes{The BNP government was the source of all evils now crippling the society and it no longer had any right to stay in power.}\textsuperscript{36} Sheikh Hasina declared, \quotes{I hereby announce a one point campaign to unseat the government.}\textsuperscript{37} The \textit{Daily Star} reported, \quotes{To realize her demand, she announced a package of agitation programmes, including a \quotes{Dhaka siege} on September 10.}\textsuperscript{38} On September 10, the Dhaka siege program of the AL, supported by the Jatiya Party of the deposed General Ershad and Jamaat-e-Islami party, was resisted by the government. The government employed thousands of
police force and had allegedly arranged a strike by the transport owners association in Dhaka. The AL thus called for a three day strike following the Dhaka siege program.\textsuperscript{39}

It is obvious that the politics of mass agitation, strike, violence and boycott are still the political strategies adopted by the major political parties in our parliamentary democratic system. A common citizen might ask whether this was the only option available to the opposition parties or were there any other ways to resolve the political issues in a parliamentary democracy? If an elected Member of Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition in the House, asks the common people to unseat the elected government by agitation, one may wonder how democratic values could develop in the civil society? This is a very critical issue to ponder because the duly elected government of Khaleda Zia was still commanding a majority in the Parliament and had yet enough time to complete the term of office while Hasina, the then Leader of the Opposition, vowed to oust her through agitation. Ironically, the leader of the present opposition party in the Parliament Khaleda Zia has been proclaiming the same thing repeatedly. Let us examine the behavior of the then ruling party in this context.

\textbf{The BNP and Its Leaders on the Caretaker Issue :}

The then leader of the Parliament and the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia said that the proposal for a caretaker government was not consistent with the democratic political system. The then Finance Minister Saifur Rahman said in the Parliament during the budget session that the framework of caretaker government was a conspiracy to snatch away power from the majority.\textsuperscript{40} The PM invited the opposition MPs to join the session and discuss the issues in the Parliament.\textsuperscript{41} In her
address to the nation on September 19, 1994, the Prime Minister repeated her appeal to the opposition members to come back to the Parliament to discuss any issue.42

The ruling party placed a bill before the Parliament with the proposal of reforming or empowering the election commission (EC) and reforming the electoral system. The bill proposed for the introduction of voters identity cards. It said that the responsible officers would not be transferred immediately before or after elections, that the EC would appoint the Returning Officers. And it had provision for ‘electoral Inquiry Committee’ to investigate the complaints.43

The opposition leaders rejected the government’s proposal and the Opposition Chief Whip of the Parliament said, “we also want a stronger EC, but the government bid to do it without meeting the demand for a caretaker government is a political farce.”44 The Opposition Whip also said, “There is no scope for the opposition parties to return to the House until the ruling party accepts our demand for constitutional provision for a non-partisan caretaker administration for holding general elections.”45

But the fact is that the elected Parliament which bears the responsibility of delivering legislation and debate the issues of national importance was not working properly. The opposition Members were not there in the House since their walkout long ago. And unfortunately this culture of boycotting the Parliament is being practiced by the present opposition party in the Parliament more frequently. But for the greater interest of the civil society both the ruling and the opposition parties should demonstrate a sense of accountability by being politically adaptive and pragmatic in their behavior. Their leaders should show statesmanship and political acumen by being accommodative and agile on procedural and substantive
issues. The governing elites’ outstanding quality of coalition building on any issue of national interest makes democracy functional. As Huntington writes:

It does seem most likely, however, that whether democracy in fact falters or is sustained will depend primarily on the extent to which political leaders wish to maintain it and are willing to pay the cost of doing so instead of giving priority to other goals.46

The opposition parties began to launch programs of strikes, seize, and demonstrations one after another. The crisis was deepening day by day and the government was not moving from its position while opposition was hardening its pressure to the extreme. Meanwhile many other proposals and counter proposals of form and nature of a caretaker government came from various quarters including the intellectuals and the major parties, but none of them were accepted.

The Sixth Parliamentary Elections of February 15 and Persisting Political Crisis:

Despite all the appeals from various sections of the society at large to resolve the political crisis that gathered over the issue of a caretaker government to conduct the national polls, the stalemate remained at its gravest when the government decided to hold Sixth parliamentary elections without the participation of the major opposition parties. On February 15, 1996 the national parliamentary polls took place amidst grave tension and violence.47 A total of 1987 candidates filed their nomination papers, while after proper scrutiny 1498 were found to be valid. But finally for the 252 of 300 total seats 1450 candidates contested. Forty-eight
candidates of the ruling party, BNP, were elected unopposed. Forty-one political parties including the ruling party took part in the elections. The major opposition parties which were boycotting the election imposed "a people's curfew" throughout the nation on the election day. The voting rate was very poor. Neutral observers estimated the voter turnout as about 5 to 10%. The low turnout was, among other reasons, believed to be due to violent threats from the non-participating opposition parties, and because the major opposition parties were not participating in the elections, and there was a three day long nation-wide blockades imposed by the opposition parties. But the ruling party (BNP) leaders after the elections claimed that a very high percentage of voters did turnout and cast votes in favor of their party. It also became clear that the ruling party had indiscriminately rigged the elections in several centers throughout the nation.

After the polls, while the ruling party was going ahead with its plan of forming new cabinet and summoning the session of the new parliament, the opposition parties were planning to launch their mass movement with renewed vigor. After the 15 February polls, the opposition parties began to agitate not only to realize their demand of a caretaker government to conduct national polls but also to nullify the "farcical" election and the "illegitimate" Parliament and for the resignation of the so called illegal government. To intensify their movement the opposition parties called a nation-wide non-cooperation program from March 9 which ended on 31 March with the resignation of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and taking oath of a Head of the caretaker government. The non-cooperation program which was actually a total strike was a total shut down of the whole nation. The entire national communication network, industries, business, banks, national sea port of Chittagong was totally closed during those
days. A total chaotic situation prevailed over the country. Violence, riots, killings and disorder became the order of those days. During the non-cooperation the economy, administration and the government as a whole virtually collapsed.

The Sixth Parliament hurriedly passed the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution with provision for a caretaker government to conduct all future national polls. After a lengthy discussion which continued till 6 a. m. on March 27, 1996, the House passed the 13th Amendment Bill with 268 votes and none against it. While passing the bill the House also agreed to insert a new article to the relevant section of the Constitution to avoid referendum on the amendment.

Immediately after passing the 13th Amendment Bill, the PM Khaleda Zia met the President on 29th March and requested him to assent to the caretaker bill at his earliest convenience and to dissolve the Parliament. The President assented to the caretaker bill on 30th March and dissolved the Sixth Parliament on 31 March. This was followed by the PM's resignation and the President appointed the retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court Justice Habibur Rahman as the Chief Adviser of the Caretaker Government on the same day. The President then on advise of the Chief Adviser appointed ten Advisers of the Caretaker Government on April 3, 1996.

The three party alliance (AL, JP, and JI) which was demanding and agitating for the caretaker government accepted the new Caretaker Government and the constitutional arrangements made in this regard by the controversial Sixth Parliament. These parties however demanded the cancellation of the “farcical elections” of the Sixth Parliament which was boycotted by them. Because in their views the elections and the Sixth Parliament were
"illegal". They later claimed that any action whatsoever of this Parliament would be "illegal". On March 16 the mainstream opposition parties announced that they would resist the session of the Sixth Parliament which was summoned by the President on March 19, 1996. After a meeting of the main opposition parties the organizing secretary of the AL said "The opposition parties would never recognize the Sixth Parliament, let alone any law passed by it." However, while welcoming the caretaker government the mainstream opposition parties including the AL did not say anything about the validity of the 13th Amendment Bill on caretaker government. Sheikh Hasina, the AL chief who earlier declared that the Sixth Parliament and its elections were illegal not only did welcome the caretaker government but also promised "all cooperation to this caretaker government."

All these changes were taking place while the nation remained closed for several days since 9th March 1996 with the launching of an indefinite non-cooperation program by the opposition parties. The national shut down in the name of non-cooperation movement called by the opposition parties took a crucial and new dimension with the launching of a sit-in program in front of the national press club under the leadership of the mayor of Dhaka City Corporation Mohammad Hanif. He established a "Janatar Mancha", people's podium on March 24 from where he and other leaders of his party and later many professionals addressed the people who gathered there to participate in the indefinite sit-in program.

Before the beginning of the "sit-in" program the Dhaka City Mayor Hanif and the AL Chief Hasina addressed a huge rally. Hasina while addressing the rally asked the
"government employees to disobey directives of the government of vote thieves." And the Mayor who is also the president of the Dhaka City Unit of the AL "called upon the members of the law enforcing agencies and the armed forces to join the sit-in program." The Mayor also "asked the officials and employees of WASA, DESA, RAJUK and the Telephone and Telegraph departments not to cooperate with the government." He said "I order you not to join offices." The national dailies reported that while the AL Chief was addressing the rally, gun shots were heard from the nearby Dhaka University campus. Later the law enforcing agencies tried to disperse the participants of the 'sit-in' program. This action of the government could not stop the sit-in program, rather many other 'manchas' were erected in Chittagong and many other places from were leaders of the opposition political parties and various professional groups addressed the gatherings.

The 'sit-in' programs and the erection of 'Janatar Mancha' were significant addition to the opposition movement against the government. This program was non-violent in nature and it provided a venue to those who were concerned to ventilate their opinions and feelings regarding the political crisis. Another crucial development of the events at this stage was the joining of a section of civil servants including some secretaries in the opposition-led programs. The Daily Star reports on March 28 that on March 27, 35 Secretaries of various government ministries met the President and they informed him that "the government officials and employees would not be able to attend offices from today if the country's overall situation did not improve." The Secretaries also suggested the President to form a caretaker government immediately. Earlier on March 24 a group of government officials identifying themselves as the "Officials Coordinating Council of the Republic" "expressed their solidarity with the
opposition demand for cancellation of the February 15 polls and a fresh election under a non-party caretaker government." The group led by a Secretary Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir “joined the citizens rally organized by Dhaka City Mayor Mohammad Hanif in front of the Jatiya (national) Press Club.”

The employees of the Bangladesh Secretariat were also agitating to protest the maltreatment of a liftman by two visitors of the newly appointed state minister for education Mr. Amanullah Aman. The two visitors allegedly were members of the student wing of the BNP. Following the incidence the employees declared Mr. Aman, a leader of the student wing of the BNP at the Dhaka University and an MP, persona – non – grata and called for the immediate withdrawal of the Minister from the Secretariat. This incidence had triggered the movement of the government employees that led to wider unrest among them and their active participation in the opposition led non-cooperation program.

These developments had two significance: first, it added momentum to the anti-government movement and speeded up the resignation of Khaleda Zia’s government. Second, it has established a record of joining the anti-government movement by the ranking government officials. The latter point is important to ponder, as once the public officials become politicized, it may become difficult to make them subservient to the political executives elected by the people. We have seen this tendency in Bangladesh civil service on various occasions under this government. Few examples may be worth mentioning here in this regard: in the last week of July 1998 in a meeting of the Parliamentary Committee on health, the Secretary, Ministry of Health, called the Health Minister a liar (the Honorable Minister is a public representative elected by
The people, a university student was picked up by the police without any legal authority and killed by the police in Dhaka.

The Impact of Party Politics on the Civil Society and the Issue of Reciprocity between the Two:

The rights of the members of our civil society have been violated by both the civilians and the government officials or by the state very often, but the political parties and their leaders are ineffective observers of such incidents. The political parties also have the practice of violating the civil rights of the members of our society. The political problems between the political parties should have been resolved through dialogue, negotiations and peaceful process. But our political parties and their leaders very often resorted to the course of strike, demonstration and even violence by ignoring the rights of the civil society where civility, not violence, should be the norm. It is now clear that our political parties are not either capable of or interested in adopting any coherent policy to contain corruption, violence, and anarchy in almost every aspect of our civil society including the educational institutions.

The civil society, on the other hand, does not have the capacity or power to force the political parties and the state apparatus to maintain civility in the civil society. To establish order and peace is not only the function of the state, but also it is the responsibility of the civil society. But civic values are decaying in our society in a progressive manner. The newspaper reports of rape, violence, distortions, and terrorism are alarmingly increasing in the society. Even the police is committing these crimes openly and without any hesitation. It may be fair to say that even political leaders and their parties
are helpless to protect the civil society from the cruel hands of the police, from the corrupt hands of the government officials, and from the brutal behavior of the evil elements of our civil society. In fact, they encouraged such behavior in the civil society in the name of political agitation on various occasions as we have seen before and now. The participants of a workshop on “Towards a Deterorised Campus” organized by the British Council and the Center for Alternatives observed that our “political parties must stop patronising armed cadres.”

The exchange of words and mode of interactions among our political party leaders would convince any one that their behavioral patterns do not conform to the values needed to maintain a sense of civility among the members of civil society. On April 15, 1998 the BNP law makers rushed towards the Speaker in the Parliament and damaged the TV camera. They alleged that the Speaker had failed to maintain his neutral role in the Parliament. But the way they behaved can not be justified as civilized action. Is it not fair to ask what kind of civility should the civil society members learn from our political party leaders? But it is also equally true that the quality of our politicians reflect the quality of our civil society; its values and its nature.
Notes:


2. For a discussion on the views of these scholars on relations between civil society and the state and political process see, Gerhard Clarke, 1998.


4. See for a discussion on the role of civil society in the growth of democratic process, Putnam 1993.


6. This table is taken from William C. Mitchell, op. cit., p. 83.


12. M. Badiul Alam, *Democracy and Authoritarianism in New States: The Case of Bangladesh*, Ph. D. thesis (Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, 1985); Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics* :


23. The lone independent member joined the AL making the total number of seats for the party to 147. Later, on September 6 by-elections were held
in the 15 constituencies vacated by the resignations of the AL (4 seats), BNP (6 seats) and JP (5 seats) leaders including Sheikh Hasina, Khaleda Zia, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, and few other leaders of these parties who were elected from more than one seats in the June 12 elections. Of these 15 seats, AL got 8, BNP 3, JP 3 and one independent candidate got a seat. After the September by-elections, total number of AL seats raised to 150 because one of the AL MPs died and by-election to that seat yet to be held and in one of the constituencies by-election could not take place yet because of legal actions. After the by-elections, the total seat of the BNP has been reduced to 113. Of the 30 women MPs elected by the Parliament Members, the AL got 27 and 3 were given to the JP.

24. This formula to replace Ershad from the Presidency was formulated by the joint opposition and embodied in the November 1990 Joint Declaration of Three Alliances.


27. Only except a few minor party MPs including Shajahan Siraj of the Gano Forum and Major General (Retd.) Mahmudul Hasan of Jatiya Party who joined the BNP.

28. Minister Huda however was later sacked from the Cabinet because of his proposal for a caretaker government.

29. See for the details of this issue "Pandemonium in Parliament: Opposition Stages Walkout Over Huda's Comment," *The Daily Star*, March 2, 1994, pp. 1 & 4. Mr. Huda was sacked from the Cabinet later for offering a formula of a caretaker government without the approval of his party, BNP.

30. Such a view of the ruling party has been supported by Dr. Kamal Hossain, see *The Daily Star*, June 28, 1994, p. 1.

31. Dr. Kamal Hossain who drafted the 1972 Constitution of Bangladesh as the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister in Sheikh Mujib's Cabinet and recently left the Awami league to form Gono Forum, a new political organization, has criticized the Awami League the main opposition party
in the Parliament for boycotting the sessions continuously. See The Daily Star, June 25, pp. 1 & 12. Talukder Maniruzzaman, a leading political scientist of the country, also expressed similar opinion in a recent interview with a national daily, Bhurer Kagoj, (A Bengali Newspaper), August 26, 1994, p. 9.


37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. The Daily Star, September 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, issues 1994.


43. See Inqilab, June 30, 1994, pp. 1 & 11, col. 4.


45. Ibid.


53. A national daily summed up the content of the 13th amendment bill as follows:

According to the provisions of the Bill, a non-party caretaker government would be formed within 15 days of the dissolution of the Parliament. The caretaker government will assist the Election Commission (EC) in holding a free, fair and impartial general election to be held within 90 days of the dissolution of the Jatiya Sangsad. The outgoing Prime Minister, Ministers, and the State Ministers will continue to hold their offices till the caretaker government is formed.

A retired Chief Justice or a retired judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, or a competent citizen would head the caretaker government. Incase, the persons concerned are not available or unwilling to head the interim government, the President would take over as the head of the caretaker administration.

The caretaker government will remain in power till a new elected Prime Minister enters the office.

During the interim period, the chief advisor will exercise the executive power of the state in consultation with the advisors.
The status and privilege of the chief advisor will be that of the Prime Minister. Other members of the advisory council will enjoy the status of ministers.

While cooperating with the EC, in holding an impartial poll to elect Members of Parliament, the caretaker government would run the day-to-day affairs of the state. But it would not make any policy decision.

... the President will approach the Chief Justice who retired last to head the caretaker government. If the last Chief Justice declines to head the interim government, the President will invite the 2nd last Chief Justice. If the 2nd last Chief Justice is not available, the last retired judge of the Appellate Division on the Supreme Court will be approached. If the last retired judge of the Appellate Division is not available 2nd last retired judge of the Appellate Division will be appointed as the chief of the advisory council.

In case the said judges are not available, the President will appoint, on the basis of discussions with the major political parties, a citizen of the country as the Chief Advisor.

If none of the persons concerned is available or willing to head the caretaker government, the President will, in addition to his constitutionally defined duties of the head of state, discharge the responsibilities of the head of the interim government. In that case, the President would require oaths of affirmation and secrecy from the sitting Chief Justice.

The Chief Adviser and the Advisers will neither be members of any political party, nor they will have any affiliation with any party. They will have to be qualified for being a Member of Parliament but will not contest the general elections. The age of the advisers must be within 72.


56. The ten advisers were: Syed Ishtiaq Ahmed, a Lawyer and a member of the Supreme Court Bar, in charge of the Ministries of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs and Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives; Muhammed Yunus, a former Economics Professor of
Chittagong University and the founder Managing Director of the Grameen Bank, in charge of the Ministries of Science and Technology, Primary and Mass Education Division and Environment and Forest; Syed Manzur Elahi, an Industrialist, in charge of the Ministries of Communications, Shipping, Civil Aviation and Tourism, Post and Telecommunications, and Housing and Works; Najma Chowdhury, a Professor of Political Science, Dhaka University, in charge of the Ministries of Labor and Manpower, Social Welfare, Women and Children's Affair; Wahiduddin Mahmud, a Professor of Economics at Dhaka University, in charge of the Ministries of Finance and Planning; Jamilur Reza, a Professor of Technology, in charge of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources and Water Resources; Shegupta Bakht Chaudhury, a member of the Pakistan Civil Service and a former Governor of Bangladesh Bank, in charge of the Ministries of Industries, Jute, Textiles and Commerce; AZM Nasiruddin, a member of the Pakistan Civil Service and a retired Secretary of the Government of Bangladesh, in charge of the Ministries of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and Livestock and Disaster Management and Relief and Land; Md. Shamsul Huq, a retired University Professor of Physics, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University, and Chirman of Bangladesh University Grants Commission, in charge of Education, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Cultural Affairs; Dr. Abdur Rahman Khan, Major General of the Bangladesh Army's Medical Corps, in charge of Health and Family Planning and Religious Affairs.


Civil Society and Party Political Process in Bangladesh


64. Earlier in a meeting of the cadre officials held at the Engineer's Institute expressed their solidarity with the secretariat employees and the opposition movement. They also asked the government to resolve the crisis by March 27. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Mohiuddin Alamgir, a Secretary, and addressed by Agriculturists, Engineers, Judges, Physicians, Educationists and representatives of many other government service sectors. See for the details on the subject *The Daily Star*, March 25, 1996, p. 1-8.


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