

**English translation:**

Our country, Bangladesh, is divided into six administrative divisions. Each one is called a division. These divisions are then split up into districts. We have six divisions, and... six divisions and sixty-four districts. These districts are then divided into sub-districts, or *thana*.<sup>1</sup> Sub-districts are then divided into unions. The political entity at the grassroots level, politically and administratively speaking, is the union *parishad*, the union council. The union council has a chairman, and a union is divided into wards... each union is divided into wards. The three wards have members, of which one-third are women who have been elected. Each ward has in all probability – things have changed recently – nine members. This is the basic... foundation of our democracy. The next step being taken is... will be to set up the sub-district council. These used to exist and then were closed down; they are talking about having them again. There will be a chairman of the sub-district. The union-council chairman is the direct representative of the government [among us]. S/he has a lot of work. One of them is to note births and deaths. All the development work in a region has to be done through him/her. S/he hands out small judgments. The union council acts as the bridge between the government and the people. The next level, which is above the union council, the *thana*, or sub-district council, looks after the development work in [the *thana*]. The next step up is the district council. The district council is also engaged in development work. It sees to [the question of] where there would be roads and bridges. It does not have much of an administrative function. The sub-district chairman has some, but the district council does not. Then there is the parliament.

What do I say?

Our parliamentary elections are held every five years. I mean, according to the constitution. So, this has occurred sometimes in the past. Parliamentarians... are basically legislators, but the MPs [Members of Parliament] in our country have greater powers than that. They look after the development activities, and even administrative activities in their constituencies. Although the administrative activities are not within their power, they look into them somewhat – one can say that they intervene in them, as it is not their function.

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<sup>1</sup> Police-station.

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