

Mere AL-BNP understanding won't end political crisis

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mere understanding between ruling BNP and main opposition Awami League cannot save the country from political crisis, speakers said at a roundtable in the city yesterday.

They also said such understanding does not guarantee free and fair election unless total electoral system is not reformed.

They were speaking at a roundtable titled 'Necessary Reform for Free and Fair Election and for Institutionalisation of Democracy' organised by Bangladesh Labour Party (BLP) at the National Press Club.

Krishak Sramik Janata League leader Bangabir Kader Siddiqui MP said major political parties are busy with making arrangement to ensure

their victory in the upcoming general election, but they are not aware whether people of the country are with them.

He invited all minor political parties except Jamaat-e-Islam to join their newly formed 'United Front' to bring in positive change in the lives of common people.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) leader ASM Abdur Rab said without introducing total electoral reform and without changing the political culture, mere 'understanding' between two leaders would not produce any fruit.

Chairman of BLP Sekandar Ali Moni presided over the roundtable while Dr Zafarullah Chowdhury of Gonoshasthya Kendra, former vice chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof Jasim Uddin, JSD General Secretary Abdul Malek Ratan, President of Sramik Jote Abul Khair Sajjad, Advocate Jamil Hossain and Shahidullah Farazi also spoke on the occasion.

DHAMRAI BNP FACTIONS CLASH 50 injured, 40 motorcycles damaged

UNB, Dharmrai

At least 50 people were injured and 40 motorcycles damaged during a fierce clash between two rival factions of ruling BNP here yesterday.

Witnesses said supporters of Barrister Ziaur Rahman MP and former home secretary and party nomination seeker Omar Faruq clashed at Dhuli Vita bus stand of Dhamrai upazila in Dhaka district.

Police and locals said supporters of Barrister Ziaur Rahman attacked a motorcade procession of upazila BNP and its front organisations, believed to be supporters of Omar Faruq. They attacked the procession when it reached Dhuli Vita bus

stand at about 1:00pm.

The procession was brought out as part of a scheduled programme in the morning.

They chased each others turning the bus stand area into a virtual battle field.

Cadres of both the groups ransacked 10 to 15 shops at the mosque market and damaged 20 to 25 motorcycles.

Activists of Omar Faruq set on fire to two motorcycles of Barrister Zia group disrupting traffic movement on the Dhaka-Aricha Highway. They also attacked and damaged Dhamrai filling station.

Police opened fire to control the situation. Both the groups blamed each other for the violence.



PHOTO: STAR
Former lawmaker Mayedul Islam, former secretary Azharul Islam, former secretary general of Prakashali Krishibid Chikitsak Chowdhury Khalequzzaman and president of Feni Samity Mostafizur Rahman Dulal join Awami League by presenting a bouquet to AL President Sheikh Hasina at the Dhanmondi party office in the city yesterday.



PHOTO: STAR
Different child organisations take out a procession from Shishu Academy in the city yesterday to mark the National Girl Child Day.

Rival factions clash at Ctg AL confce: 20 injured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

At least 20 Awami League activists were injured in a clash between two rival factions of Chittagong south district unit at its triennial conference at the Engineers Institute auditorium here yesterday.

The AL groups --- one loyal to president Akhtaruzzaman Chowdhury Babu and another loyal to Jafar Ahmad Chowdhury --- used chairs, bamboo and lathi during the half-an-hour clash in presence of central leaders Sajeda Chowdhury, Matia Chowdhury and Bir Bahadur MP.

Witnesses said the incident occurred at around 11:30am, just an hour before the conference begin,

when activists of Jafar group led by Lohagara upazila unit President Advocate Humayun Kabir Rasel stormed into the auditorium and started ransacking the chairs and tables prompting Babu group to respond with sticks and bamboo. At one stage Jafar group was driven out of the auditorium.

The two groups again locked in clashes outside the auditorium. Police and senior party leaders intervened and brought the situation under control.

Later, the conference began at around 12:30pm with Babu in the chair while activists of Jafar group were seen agitating outside the conference venue.

The injured were admitted to different city clinics.

Party sources said Babu and Jafar have a long-drawn rivalry for domination on the party folds in the district.

President, PM greet Chinese counterparts

BSS, Dhaka

President Iajuddin Ahmed and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated their Chinese counterparts on the occasion of the 57th National Day of China today.

Iajuddin in his message to Chinese President Hu Jintao said, "I am confident that the close ties of friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding existing between our two countries will grow in depth and dimension in the years ahead to the mutual benefit of our two countries."

Khaleda in her message to Chinese PM Wen Jiabao said, "I have immense pleasure in extending to you, on behalf of the government and the people of Bangladesh and on my own behalf, heartiest felicitations and greetings on the auspicious occasion of the 57th National Day of the People's Republic of China."

"Bangladesh and China share close and cooperative relations that have matured and flourished over the centuries through historical interactions between the two friendly peoples. I am confident that the existing close ties of friendship and bilateral cooperation between our two countries will acquire greater depth and dimension in the years to come," Khaleda said.