

Nation to plunge into deep darkness if dialogue fails

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Welcoming the dialogue between Awami League (AL) General Secretary Abdul Jalil and BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, legal experts, academics and civil society members yesterday said the dialogue must be held under constitutional framework and win-win situation.

The nation will plunge into deep darkness if the dialogue fails in holding the next election in a free and fair manner, they said at a discussion titled 'National dialogue: Evaluation and expectation of the civil society' organised by the Council for National Agenda (CNA) at the National Press Club in the city.

"There should not be anything in the dialogue that is extra-constitutional and can supercede the constitution as it will bring ill to the nation," said CAN President Justice Abdur Rouf.

He said judiciary, parliament and Election Commission (EC) are constitutional institutions which must be upheld for the sustenance of democracy.

The constitution ensures the separation of judiciary for its independence, while there is not a single option in the electoral rules that enables the election commissioners to influence the election, said Justice Rouf.

"The discussion in parliament is good, but there is a tendency among

the politicians to discuss things outside parliament," he said urging the two leaders Bhuiyan and Jalil to hold discussion keeping the constitution above everything.

Former vice-chancellor of Dhaka University Prof Emazuddin Ahmed said both the parties should move from their positions and be cooperative for making the dialogue a success.

"If it (dialogue) ends in a situation that one was defeated and the other won, it will not bring significant success," said the teacher of political science, adding that they can reach a consensus on the amendment of the constitution.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) Executive Director Debapriya

Bhattacharyya termed the dialogue a "primary success of people" saying "This will be a milestone for the culture of dialogue in future."

Some quarters may be happy in the failure of the dialogue, but in that case the nation will have to pay a high cost in the long run, the renowned economist said, adding that inflow of foreign investment and aid, manpower export and export industries will be badly affected.

"We hope the political parties will realise this and reach a consensus," he added.

The Hunger Project Country Director Badiul Alam Majumder said a situation could be created for holding the next elections through dialogue, but many fundamental reforms including those of the political parties are needed for institutionalising democracy.

Caretaker government is a hole in the constitution which will create more complications in future, opined Amar Desh Editor Amanullah Kabir.

"Ninety-five percent problems can be solved if the EC is made totally independent," he added.

The dialogue amid political impasse is surely welcoming, said journalist Sadek Khan and suggested that other national issues, not only the elections, should be discussed in the dialogue.

Brigadier General (Retd) Shakhawat Hossain, AL leader Abul Hasan Chowdhury, former secretaries SM Al Hossain and Shah Abdul Hannan, former ambassador M Anwar Hashem and professors of Dhaka University Abu Ahmed, Ataur Rahman, Razia Akter Banu and Mahbubullah also spoke.



Justice Abdur Rouf speaks at a dialogue titled 'National dialogue: Evaluation and expectation of the civil society' organised by the Council for National Agenda (CNA) at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Conservatives face test to prove change

REUTERS, Bournemouth

The Conservatives have changed their leader and their logo but need to convince voters they have undergone more than an image makeover to oust Labour.

Ten months after David Cameron, 39, took the Conservative helm following a third successive election defeat, he has repackaged the party as a modern, centre-right force with a social and environmental conscience.

Cameron must now convince those sceptical Britons who equate the Conservatives with economic incompetence and uncompromising, right-wing policies on crime, immigration and Europe that the transformation is more than skin-deep, analysts said.

He must also persuade angry Conservative traditionalists the party needs this new direction to win power in an expected 2009 election.

"They have rebranded themselves into a moderate, friendly, approachable, accessible, concerned and compassionate party. But in the late 90s and early 2000, Conservatives were offering some pretty harsh policies and they haven't yet reconciled that," said Mark Wickham-Jones, an analyst at Bristol University.

"There is still a sense they are an ideological right-wing party... They've changed the packaging but they haven't changed the policies," he added.

Cameron has avoided policy details at his party's annual conference in Bournemouth this week, saying he has set a clear course towards the centre and will give specifics later.

As Labour changed in the 1980s and 1990s, it stole much of the middle ground — where most British voters are found — once held by the ruling Conservatives and stormed to victory in 1997.

Cameron wants it back, hence the pro-environment and family-friendly mood music and his avoidance of divisive issues associated with the Conservatives like Europe and immigration.

Many analysts say Britons are as anxious for change now as they were after 18 years of Conservative rule dominated by Margaret

Thatcher. **POLLS COULD BE BETTER** Under Cameron, the Conservatives have posted their best poll ratings for more than a decade, giving them a new sense of hope.

They have a serious chance of at least depriving Labour of its parliamentary majority in the next election, analysts said. Cameron's opponent is expected to be Chancellor Gordon Brown, tipped to succeed Blair when he resigns within a year.

Many commentators are forecasting a hung parliament, with no single party in overall control.

But given Labour's troubles — from squabbles over the leadership to sleaze to public anger over the Iraq war — the Conservatives should be much further ahead, analysts

added. Cameron must develop policies showing that he can manage the economy and is in tune with voters on issues like immigration, public spending and crime, analysts said. He also has to extend the party's appeal to Scotland and northern English cities.

"He has to put substance into himself and into the party's image. Right now, both the party and Cameron are benefiting from an anti-Blair feeling," said Robert Worcester of pollster MORI. Continued...

Cameron's move to the centre means there will be little to differentiate the two main parties in 2009, analysts said.

WEATHER TODAY

Thundershowers likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, Met Office said.

Highest temperature 35.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Mongla and lowest 23.2 degree Celsius at Srimangol and Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:40pm today and rises at 5:53am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.1	25.3	75	79
Chittagong	32.8	25.0	85	86
Rajshahi	33.0	26.0	83	88
Khulna	34.5	26.5	77	80
Barisal	33.6	24.6	92	86
Sylhet	32.8	24.5	92	69
Cox's Bazar	32.2	25.7	78	80

Brass scraps seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Bangladesh Rifles yesterday seized huge brass scraps from a truck at Bhadra crossing.

Tipped off, a BDR team searched the truck and found that it was loaded with sacks carrying brass scraps.

BDR sources said the recovered brass metal would be worth Tk 20 lakh.

However, none was arrested in this connection.

Asian politicians plead for UN action on Myanmar

REUTERS, United Nations

Asian politicians pushing for democracy and human rights in Myanmar appealed on Wednesday for the UN Security Council to take concrete action against the Asian nation's military government.

The Security Council held its first official session on Myanmar last week, at which the United States and its allies advocated a resolution to pressure the former Burma to

stop jailing political opponents, persecuting minorities and flooding the region with refugees.

"We can no longer tolerate the situation. Please do something more concrete rather than just paying lip-service diplomatically, which is no real solution in the situation," Indonesian parliamentarian Djoko Susilo told a news conference.

Susilo, Filipino Member of Parliament Loretta Ann Rosales and

Thai Senator John Ungphakorn are members of the Asian Inter-Parliamentarian Myanmar Caucus who traveled to New York seeking support for UN Security Council Action on Myanmar.

The military has run the south-east Asian nation under various guises since 1962 and the current group of generals have been in power since 1988. They officially changed the English version of the country's name from Burma in 1989.



Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain appears for the plaintiffs at the 'Janatar Adalat' (people's court) in Chittagong while Advocate Abul Hashem and Advocate Sheikh Iftekhar Saimul Chowdhury assisted him.

TWO MORE CASES FILED WITH 'JANATAR ADALAT' IN CTG 'Bangladesh ranked as most corrupt country due to corruption in 9 sectors'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

The 'Janatar Adalat' (people's court), set up by the Chittagong unit of Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine, heard two more cases against 15 people, including the prime minister, on its second day yesterday.

Advocate Ratan Kumar Roy and Engineer Md Delwar Hossain Majumder filed the cases. They held the 15 people responsible for widespread corruption and acute water crisis in the port city.

Eminent jurist Dr Kamal Hossain appeared for the plaintiffs while Advocate Abul Hashem and Advocate Sheikh Iftekhar Saimul Chowdhury assisted him.

Pleading the case, the prosecution lawyers and witness urged a public investigation into the widespread corruption of the ruling alliance.

Advocate Ratan filed the corruption case against Prime Minister Khaleda

Zia, Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman, LGRD Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Law Minister Moudud Ahmed, Commerce Minister Hafizuddin Ahmed, Education Minister Dr Osman Faruq, Health Minister Dr Khandaker Mosharrar Hossain, State Minister for Land and Power Ukil Abdus Sattar, Home Minister Lutfulzaman Babar, former sate minister for power Iqbal Hasan Mahmud, Senior Joint Secretary General of BNP Tarique Rahman and Chief Election Commissioner MAAziz.

In his case, Advocate Ratan, general secretary of Chittagong Bar Association, alleged that Bangladesh has been ranked as the most corrupt country in the world due to the ruling party's corruption in nine sectors.

He also alleged that around 75 percent of foreign loans has been embezzled in the last five years.

Former pro-vice chancellor of Chittagong University Prof Dr Abu Yusuf Alam gave his deposition as the witness of the case.

In the other case, Engineer Delwar Hossain held the LGRD minister, LGRD secretary and Chittagong Wassa chairman responsible for the acute water crisis in the port city.

He said the Chittagong Wassa supplies 16.2 crore litres of water a day while the demand stands at 52.5 crore litres.

It has also failed to develop any sewerage system in the city in the last 43 years since its establishment in 1963, he alleged.

After the hearing, the court took both cases into cognisance and adjourned the court until 3:00pm today.

Journalist Kamal Lohani, Chittagong Bar Association President Advocate Khairul Islam, former president Advocate Shafiqul Islam and former general secretary Advocate Anwar Kabir Chowdhury were on the panel of judges.

Convicted prisoner dies in Kishoreganj sadar hospital

UNB, Kishoreganj

A convicted prisoner of the district jail died in Sadar Hospital yesterday.

Officials said prisoner, Murad, 44, was taken to the hospital after he fell sick at about 9:00am and doctors declared him dead after admission.

But some employees of the hospital said Murad was already dead when he was brought to the hospital by two wardens of the jail, an allegation denied by Jailer Mustafizur Rahman.

He said Murad, son of Ibrahim, resident of Laxmipur village in Bhairab upazila of the district, died of sickness.

An uneasy calm was prevailing in the district jail following the death of Murad.

Murad was sentenced to three years' imprisonment under the Narcotics Control Act by a local court.

Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital staffs resume duties

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Doctors and nurses of Moulvibazar Sadar Hospital resumed their work yesterday morning after 48-hour strike.

Service in all wards of the hospital has become normal following their joining, sources said.

The strike was called in protest against the insult of doctor Omar Faruk.

Ahmed Faysal, convener of the 'Committee to resist insult of the physician' said as law enforcers are taking action against the culprits they decided to resume their duty considering the sufferings of patients.

Five killed in road accidents

STAR REPORT

At least five people, including a minor girl, were killed and 39 injured in separate road accidents in Cox's Bazar, Brahmanbaria, Khagrachhari and Chittagong yesterday.

Our correspondent from Cox's Bazar adds: Three people were killed and 31 others injured in a road accident in the district yesterday.

Of them, two were identified as Hossain Ahamed, 45, son of Kabir Ahmed, and Mohammed Nasser, 21, son of Abdul Hamid.

All are Rohingya refugees. The injured were rushed to Teknaf Sadar Hospital and Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital in critical condition.

The accident occurred when a jeep bound for Cox's Bazar from Teknaf fell in a ditch near Teknaf Othoni as the driver lost control over the steering.

Our correspondent from Brahmanbaria reports: One minor girl was run over by a truck at Phulbaria village under Brahmanbaria Pourasabha yesterday.

The accident occurred when a speeding truck hit the girl identified as Jarina Akter, 8, while she was crossing the road at 10:30am, leaving her dead

on the spot. Angry mob blocked the roads — Brahmanbaria-Dhaka, Brahmanbaria-Sylhet and Brahmanbaria-Comilla — from 10:30am to 1:00pm and damaged glasses of several vehicles.

On information, police rushed to the spot and control the situation. Police arrested the driver and the helper of the truck, source said.

Our correspondent from Khagrachhari adds: One man was killed and another critically injured in a road accident at 8:30am at Satmail under Dighinala upazila in the district yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Mohammad Saiful Islam, 29, of Netrakona district.

The injured Mohammad Abul Hossen, 28, hails from Satkania in Chittagong district.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a Dhaka bound bus from Marissha hit a motorcycle at Satmail.

After the accident, the two critical injured were rushed to the Khagrachhari Adhunik Sadar Hospital while Saiful died on the way. Khagrachhari Hospital Resident

Medical Officer (RMO) Tozzamel Hossen Zoarder said a post-mortem has been conducted.

Our staff Correspondent from Chittagong adds: A head-on collision between jeep and coaster left seven people injured, three critically, on Chittagong-Banshkhal road at Anowara upazila in the district here yesterday.

Police and witnesses said the accident occurred when a public jeep locally known as "Chander Gan" and a coaster collided head-on at Fakimrhat area at around 1:30am.

At least seven persons were injured in the accident.

Of them, five were rushed to Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) and the rest two received treatment from the local health complex.

At CMCH three of the injured identified as Md Asgar Ali, 17, son of Abu Ahman, his sister Motahara Akter, 15, and Nezam Uddin, son of Fazal Ahmad were under going treatment in critical condition, sources said.

Noman slams Ctg mayor

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al Noman yesterday strongly criticised the 'Janatar Adalat' initiated by Chittagong city Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury.

The 'silly' activities the mayor has been carrying out in the name of 'Janatar Adalat' (people's court) by hanging 'Lal Shalu' (red curtain) on the roadside are tantamount to undermining the judiciary, said the minister.

"None has the legal right to set up a court on the street," Noman said, adding that the opposition should play a more responsible role in the parliamentary democratic system.

The minister was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the newly established media centre at Chittagong Press Club in the afternoon.

He also said the media people are playing a vital role in making the bridge between the politicians and the common people.

At present, the accountability of the ministers and MPs has increased substantially due to the strong role of the press, he observed.

He also assured the journalists of his support and assistance for further expansion of the Media Centre where he contributed two computers, printers and scanners.

Chittagong Press Club President Abu Sufian presided over the ceremony.

Rezaur Rahman passes away

BSS, Dhaka

Rezaur Rahman, eldest brother of late President Ziaur Rahman, passed away at the Combined Military Hospital (CMH) in the city on Thursday night at the age of 73.

He was suffering from old-age complications, including nerve problem, for a long time, family sources said.

BNP Secretary General and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday expressed his deep shock at the death of Rezaur Rahman.

He also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and conveyed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

Bhuiyan yesterday visited the deceased's residence and paid his last respect to him. He also consoled the widow of Rezaur Rahman.

Whip of the Jatiya Sangsad Shahidul Haque Jamal and BNP central leader Sayed Emran Saleh Price accompanied the minister.

Fatema Khatun Rekha

Fatema Khatun Rekha, wife of Md Ali Hossain, retired deputy director of Bangladesh Water Development Board, passed away on October 5 at the age of 62, says a press release.

She is survived by her husband and a son.

She was buried at Shajahanpur graveyard in Dhaka.

Death anniversary

Today is the 19th death anniversary of veteran freedom fighter and former minister Captain Abdul Halim Chowdhury, says a press release.

On the occasion, a milad mahfil and a memorial meeting will be held at his house at Manikganj. Foods will also be distributed among the destitute.

Relatives, colleagues, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the milad and pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Monwar Hossain

Today is the second death anniversary of Monwar Hossain, a young sport journalist of Dainik Manabjani, says a press release.

Monwar died on this day in 2004 due to a cardiac arrest.

To mark the day, milad mahfil will be held at DU Central Mosque, Dhaka Reporters' Unity in the city and at his village home at Majhir Hat under Mirpur upazila in Kushtia.

Friends, colleagues, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the programmes.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of Hosne Ara Begum, associate professor and head of the department of Islamic history and culture, Kabi Nazrul Govt. College, will be held at her residence at 13 Gopibagh, 3rd lane, Dhaka, after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Hosne Ara, wife of Farid Ahmed Chowdhury, a senior officer of Uttara Bank, passed away on Thursday. She left behind one son and one daughter.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the qulkhwani.



Jubo Jote forms a human chain at Muktangan in the city yesterday protesting police attack on shooters, including SA Games gold medalist shooter Asif Hossain Khan.