

'Chaos to prevail if CG takes over without electoral reforms'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Peshajibi Samanoy Parishad (PSP) yesterday demanded a free and fair election by implementing the reform proposals.

They said proposals for reforming the caretaker government (CG) and Election Commission (EC) can be implemented without amending the constitution.

Addressing a press conference at the National Press Club, the parishad leaders comprising teachers, lawyers, engineers and doctors placed a 7-point proposal to hold the next general election in a free and fair manner.



PHOTO: STAR
Supreme Court Bar Association President Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam speaks at a press conference yesterday.

These included appointment of a nonpartisan and neutral person as chief of the next caretaker government instead of controversial former Chief Justice KM Hasan.

The PSP leaders also demanded that the chief of the caretaker government should control the armed forces during its tenure instead of the President.

"Chaos and conflict will prevail in the country if the caretaker government takes power without the implementation of reform proposals," they cautioned.

PSP Co-convenor and President of the Supreme Court

Bar Association Barrister M Amir-Ul Islam said if the two major parties agree, constitution can be amended by calling a special session of parliament.

He said the Supreme Court is losing its credibility and reputation as judges are being appointed on partisan basis.

PSP Co-convenor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Rashid-e-Mahbub, Abdur Razzaque Miah, Dr Akhtaruzzaman and Member-secretary Kamrul Hossain Khan were present at the press conference.



Auto-rickshaw drivers call strike in city Oct 15-16

UNB, Dhaka

CNG-run auto-rickshaw drivers will go on a two-day strike in the capital on October 15-16 to realise their 10-point demand, including implementation of their daily deposit of Tk 300 to their owners as fixed by the government.

It was announced at a meeting of Bangladesh Auto-rickshaw Sramik League at its office in the city yesterday with its president M Shah Alam Chowdhury in the chair, said a press release.

Association General Secretary Insur Ali, MAzhar Ali, SM Sobhan, M Mosharraf Hossain, Hanif Khokon, M Mujibur Rahman and Zakir Hossain addressed the meeting.

They said the auto-rickshaw owners would have to shoulder the responsibility if any untoward incident occurs during the Oct 15-16 strike.

Sharat Mela from Oct 8

BSS, Dhaka

A five-day Sharat Mela (Autumn Fair) of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation (BSCIC) will begin on October 8 on its premises here.

The stalls will be allocated among the participants on a first come first serve basis, a BSCIC press release said yesterday.

The fair will remain open from 10.00am to 5.00pm every day till October 12.

Interested persons have been requested to contact over the following telephone numbers: 9556191-2, 9553293, 9553202, Extension-393, 396 and 301.



PHOTO: STAR
A run-down manhole on Motijheel-Kamalapur link road near the second gate of Bangladesh Bank poses danger to pedestrians as well as passengers.

Reforms talks to bring about desired solution

Hopes Hasina

UNB, Dhaka

Awami League Sheikh Hasina yesterday hoped that the ongoing dialogue on electoral reforms would bring about a desired solution, but cautioned that the people would not tolerate any procrastination.

"I hope, the government will accept our reform proposals. Otherwise, people will not sit idle," she said, adding: "I want solution to the dispute over caretaker government and the election commission. Any delaying tactics or any game over it will not be tolerated by the people."

Hasina made the remarks while exchanging views with the central leaders of Awami Jubo League, the youth front of Awami League, at her Dhanmondi office.

She made the remarks on the second day of the Jalil-Bhuiyan dialogue being held at the Sangsad Bhaban. The third round of the talks will be held on Sunday at 7.30pm.

Hasina, also Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, said the BNP-Jamaat alliance government "wants to rig the next election as it will not be able to retain power without vote rigging."

She asked the Jubo League

leaders to remain alert about protecting the people's mandate at any cost.

Referring to former Chief Justice KM Hasan, the probable chief of the next caretaker administration, Hasina said the government in a planned way extended the retirement age of the Supreme Court judges in order to make Justice Hasan the chief advisor.

She said no fair and neutral election is possible with Justice Hasan as chief of the caretaker government as "he is totally partisan."

"The alliance government is conspiring to steal the people's vote," she said, "but we're fighting for protecting the people's mandate."

Hasina termed irrelevant the government's comment regarding the tea party that was proposed by US Ambassador Patricia A Butenis at her residence.

"Did it deem disgraceful for them?" she asked. "Many ruling party leaders went to her (Butenis) residence on that day for taking Iftar... what was the problem in attending the tea party?" she said.

She said Khaleda-led coalition government is not sincere about

resolving the power crisis.

"It (government) also failed to ensure public security and reduce the prices of essentials in the holy month of Ramadan. There is no need of such a government," she said. "Our movement will continue against this failed government."

Criticising the government for the recent police attack on the shooters including Asif, she said: "None is safe under this killer

government, that kills journalists, opposition leaders and workers and even MPs."

Hasina urged the people to be ready to move against the government whenever it fails to supply electricity and assured of resolving power crisis within one year if her party is voted to power.

Referring to the Thursday's remarks by the prime minister that Awami League wants to make Bangladesh "a vassal state, create market of aliens and destroy public property", the opposition leader wanted to know from her political rival who had signed the gas sale deal.

Jubo League General Secretary Mirza Azam MP also spoke at the meeting with its Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak in the chair.

Recording of Bangladesh Sanglap today

BSS, Dhaka

Recording of the 6th edition of the BBC Bengali Service's Bangladesh Sanglap will take place at the media centre of Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre at 11.45am today.

A four-member panel will discuss the major current affairs issues with an invited audience of around 150 members of the public, said a BBC press release here yesterday.

Mayor of Dhaka and BNP leader Sadeque Hossain Khoka MP, Awami League presidium member and former Water Resources Minister Abdur Razzaq MP, Chairman of the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) and former Information Minister Dr. Mizanur Rahman Shelley and Director of Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (BELA) Syeda Rizwana Hasan will feature in the panel.

The on-going Bangladesh Sanglap series follows the series of last year's eight debates, which were jointly produced with the BBC World Service Trust, and also called Bangladesh Sanglap.

The Sanglap programmes will be broadcast by BBC Bengali Radio on Sundays, and telecast by Channel I Television on Mondays. Channel I will repeat the programmes on following Sundays.

PHOTO: STAR
Garments Sramik Oikya Forum stages a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding a minimum wage of Tk 3000.

Launch united movement against distortion of history

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable yesterday called for a united movement against the distortion of history of the liberation war.

The pro-liberation forces, professional organisations and political parties must come forward to launch a movement against such evil attempts for the sake of the country's existence, they said.

They also said that they would appeal to the caretaker government to remove distorted history from the textbooks and reprint real history for the sake of the future generations.

Sammita Nagorik Andolon organised the roundtable on 'Dis-

ortion of liberation war history: Our duties' at the National Press Club in the city, with Justice KM Sobhan in the chair.

Prof Muntasir Mamoon said all the successive governments have tried to control history, but the BNP-Jamaat alliance government has rewritten history after they came to power in 2001.

The four-party alliance distorted history in the textbooks, which has done immense harm to the nation, he said, adding that the history of liberation war is portrayed as an isolated incident.

He said the liberation war affairs ministry has also brought changes to the 15-volume liberation war documents, but no-one

has protested the move.

Condemning the distortion of history of independence in a documentary entitled 'Bangladesh Amar Bangladesh', Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said those who killed Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are now engaged in such evil attempts, but they will be thrown into the dustbin of history.

"Now the main duty of us is to project the real history to the new generation," he said.

Justice Sobhan said the distortion of history began after the killing of Bangabandhu and during the regime of late president Ziaur Rahman.

The ruling alliance wants to undermine the contribution of Bangabandhu to independence, he said, but Bangabandhu will be remembered forever in the hearts of the people.

Cultural personality Ramendu Majumder said, "The evil forces have been trying to jeopardise independence, but we could not launch a strong movement to resist them."

Golam Kuddus, general secretary of Sammalita Sangskritik Jote, said the BNP-Jamaat government wants to misled people by broadcasting the documentary with distorted history in order to gain benefit from the next election.

Artist Hashem Ali Khan, women's rights activist Shirin Akter, The Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury and Dr Kazi Faruk Ahmed also spoke.



PHOTO: STAR
Prof Muntasir Mamoon speaks at a roundtable at the National Press Club yesterday. On his left are Principal Abdul Ahad Chowdhury and Justice KM Sobhan.