

# Serving humanity should be our guiding principle

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earning through dishonest means the right one? I am placing my questions to today's forum. Today's initiative is being held in a political environment where threats are being given over mobile telephones every now and then, and shrouds for burial are being sent to individuals with due forewarning. We have to make our own arrangements for our security. Dishonest people have made their way into our politics and are using it for evil purposes; the only way to rid us from this is for the people with conscience to hold their heads high in protest.

**Muhammad Afzal**  
In long 35 years we have not been able to establish a society that is non-communal and free from any form of discrimination. Although Bangladesh made some progress at the beginning it nose-dived soon after. Today's Bangladesh cannot be called democratic. The government that is in power today has considerable fascist tendencies. One of its coalition partners is a fascist party, and opposed our War of Liberation. It is a religious fascist party. I would like to particularly speak about a particular party. There is yet another party whose entire philosophy is based on religion. Jamaat-e-Islami is yet to accept the existence of Bangladesh. Even to this day it is against the independence of Bangladesh. It is this party which is at the seat of power. It is they who have created JMB with its mentor overseas. The American imperialists gave birth to Bin Laden and the Al-Qayeda. Bangladesh's Hirkatul Jihad, or Mujahid, or whatever you call them are all part and parcel of that outfit. Yet whoever has the support of America they will continue to flourish. It is no exception here in Bangladesh. To me it is a danger signal for Bangladesh and the Bengali nation as a whole. It is the responsibility of the entire 14 crore people to be fully prepared to resist this evil force in order to ensure that none of these people dare to come out with any weapon or bombs. If the people remain awake and alert they will not dare to come out with weapons. Just as these four organizations are working towards holding of a just and fair election the various political parties, social organizations, groups of professionals including many student youth organizations, are also carrying out their own movement alongside them. Although CPD, Channel I, Prothom Alo, the Daily Star, including the Nagorik Committee, have not come forward directly with the reform

media that terrorists are dying in cross fire while shooting at the RAB. There is a law that prohibits loan defaulters from contesting elections but they are able to vote. There should also be a law prohibiting terrorists and their sponsors from contesting, although they may vote. I believe that this will free our politics from terrorism. I believe that a person, who is a judge himself but ignores court orders, cannot hold a credible election.

**Muhammad Sirajul Islam Siraj**  
We often call for hartals as a strategic tool of our politics and a part of our democratic right, whether it is BNP or Awami league or any other party. On the other hand I shall take my child to the school and will keep my business house open which is also my constitutional right. But there I am attacked with bombs. I shall drive my car procured by my own money, on the streets; this is also my constitutional right. No one has the right to break it. Whichever political party may be involved in snatching such constitutional rights of the people the civil society resist such acts. Let us unite and stand up against all such acts irrespective of our party affiliations. Whatever party I may belong to I shall always stand by you.

**Abdul Quddus**  
People who are involved in theft, corruption and plundering of wealth are the so-called educated ones and not the poor people. Karl Marx once said that capitalism, in its early days, had given mankind a lot and helped the society to move forward. Today, it is on the path of decline. In 1991 we held the election through the Caretaker Government a makeshift arrangement, ignoring the left progressive forces. At that time we thought that this was the option open to us. Whatever reforms we may undertake the capitalist system shall not be able to sustain them.

**Nazrul Islam Hakkani**  
Politics is becoming difficult for the politicians. It has been vandalized. It is now in the hands of businessmen and holders of black money. People have lost confidence in politics. People think that politics cannot be of any good to them, but we have not brought about this kind of politics. It is clearly written here about a non-communal democratic Bangladesh. It is not possible that we, the politicians, will be the only ones to dream but others of the society will not. Various groups of people may have their own dreams. It is the politicians that will



nominating candidates for the national assembly comes up we find that we are stuck with traditional thinking as to who should be nominated. There is often talk of competent candidates, but whenever the election draws near we see that there is a kind of contest amongst the political parties, big or small, and those who are running the Administration. The contest is for giving nominations to those who have most money and muscle power. I believe that the civil society has to come forward. The political parties also have to play their due role. I confess that those of us who have been engaged in politics have committed many mistakes over the last 35 years. We are paying for all those mistakes, big and small. Today, those of us who belong to the various professional groups, social organizations and the civil society must come forward in protest and initiate appropriate actions. We have to make all out efforts to transform Bangladesh into a working democracy.

extend the present civil society by including them, too. Through this forum I wish to reiterate that if we are to hold a credible and proper election in 2007, and establish an accountable government, the two election commissioners should resign.

**Syed Nur Ahmed Tulu**  
I am an optimist and I see no reason for loosing hope, looking at the present state of the country. Today, CPD have embarked on this venture with whatever resources they have. They have described their initiative as the journey to the path of democracy, through which people will travel. A few Muslims, bureaucrats and some worthless politicians may block the passage of this path. Election is the right path, and there is no alternative to it. Elections have to take place everywhere, from electing the chairman of an institute right up to the top. Both the Upazilla and the District administration have to be brought under a chairman. The parliament has to be made accountable.

others. Is it really so? A politician works right through till two and three in the morning each day working for the people. Is it right to put the blame on all politicians because of a few? As a matter of fact there is no difference between the politicians and the civil society. They also want the good of the country just like the politicians. Why only the civil society, even if any other social organization worked for the good of the country, all honest politicians will stand by them. Today I have come to this discussion meeting by CPD in that frame of mind. Since the politicians provide the leadership to the people they expect more from them and that is not natural. Today we have a set system where elections are held every five years in the country. Many countries of the world are yet to have such a system. Even after this you will notice that during the eighties there used to be hijacking of ballot boxes and mastans would come from different areas and snatch votes. Does such an environment exist today? We have come a long way out of that situation for the better. We are also making progress in the area of our economy and, hence, I see no reason for feeling disheartened. Not much can be achieved in preventing the use of black money and nominating of honest and competent candidates, through enactment of relevant laws only. I believe that there is no alternative but to create public awareness. I would hope that the way CPD is conducting a meeting here today within closed doors it will also go out to the people who are voters and hold similar discussions with them. Not all responsibilities should be put on the shoulders of the politicians. Everybody should take that responsibility, come forward and talk to the people.

**Advocate I. E. M. Sarwar-ul-Alam**  
I have not leased out my conscience to any political party. I say whatever I think to be just. I am not obligated to any political party. But I am obligated to one force that is the defenders and the caretaker of the War of Liberation. When our Constitution was framed the preamble declared that freedom was achieved through a noble War of Liberation. But the very words "great war of liberation" are no longer there in the Constitution. We see our national flags are flying on the cars of those who do not believe in our very independence. I consider this to be a shame for the entire nation.

I shall hint at two issues, one, the concept of the Caretaker Government. An elected government is qualified to govern the country for a period of five years unless a no-confidence motion is passed, or it is removed through a constitutional process. Strange as it may seem, whenever the election approaches the government can longer be trusted. The entity with whom we have lived for five years we longer trust. I believe we have become a laughing stock in the eyes of the world. I propose that this concept be scrapped. There is yet another provision in the constitution with regard to appointing technocrats as ministers. Despite the fact that you had been working so long for preventing the technocrats becoming ministers, one out of ten is still able to qualify to become a technocrat minister, as if we would not be able to run our gas establishments and oil operations. I propose that the constitutional provision of appointing technocrats

as ministers be scrapped. It is against the very principle of democracy that an elected person is not allowed to speak freely. I am therefore proposing that Article 70 (a) of the Constitution should also have the provision for free speech by an elected representative. I believe all these three clauses of the constitution should be scrapped.

**Prof. Reza Shah Taufiqur Rahman**  
The wise people of the country are not sitting idle at this critical juncture of the country. They are all the time thinking about the country and have expressed their views. Their objective is to pave the way for a good government. There can be no such crisis in a country whose wise men of its civil society are so active. Those who are engaged in leftist politics love to

talk about class distinctions. I also say the same. In other words this means that the rich will be richer and the poor poorer. But the program of our economic development should be as such that, we are known as a country of mid level economy, for this we need to have a government, a government consisting of people from the civil society. There is no alternative to democracy throughout the world today. Under the democratic process it is the politicians who should be engaged in politics but we hope that they are civil, too. We shall merely be complimentary to their efforts. Those of us who claim ourselves as civil wish to stay beside them as helping hands.

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## List of participants

1. Prof. Reza Shah Taufiqur Rahman, distinguished educationist.
2. Mahfuz Anam, Editor, The Daily Star
3. A. K. M. Abdur Rouf, Chairman, Rangpur Municipality.
4. Mostafa Azad Chowdhury, President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Rangpur.
5. Marhamatunnessa, President, Mahila Parishad, Rangpur.
6. Sadrul Alam Dulu, President, Rangpur Press Club.
7. Mafizul Islam Mantu, Vice President, Rangpur Shahittya Shankskriti Parishad.
8. Imrul Kayes, Director RDRS.
9. Advocate M. A. Bashar Tipu.
10. Mukul Mostafiz, President SHUJON and Editor the Daily Atol.
11. Hasna Hena Rosy, member shaheed family.
12. Dr. Mala, Gynecologist, Rangpur Medical College.
13. Advocate Shamima Akhter, Bangladesh Jatiyo Mahila Ainjibi Samity.
14. Muhammad Yakub Ali, Advisor BADHAN
15. Advocate Hosne Ara Dalia, President Rangpur Theater
16. Maksudur Rahman Mukul, Cultural activist.
17. Naseema Akhter, Department of Bengali, Mahiganj College, Rangpur.
18. Muhammad Rezaul Karim Raju, Student.
19. Hira Huq, former Chairman, Rangpur Municipality.
20. Feroz Faruk, President, Prothom Alo Bandhushabha, Rangpur.
21. Advocate Chowdhury Nargis Akhter Banu, Gaibandha Bar Association.
22. Arup Sarkar, President Chitra Maitri, Rangpur City Branch.
23. Lubna, Project coordinator, RDRS.
24. Laila Rahman Kabir, former President, MCCI and Executive Director, Kedarpur Tea Company Ltd and Deputy-Convenor, Nagorik Committee.
25. Prof. Mazharul Mannan, Vice Principal Ahmaduddin Shah College.
26. Moinul Islam, Convenor, Shacheton Nagorik (TIB), Lalmonirhat.
27. Advocate Ruksana Alam Liza, President, Prothom Alo Bandhushabha, Nilphaman.
28. Muhammad Afzal, Central committee presidium member and former Chairman Democratic Party.
29. Muazzem Hossain Lablu, President, Shaechashebak League, Rangpur Zilla Shakhha.
30. Muhammad Sirajul Islam Siraj, General secretary, JSD.
31. Abdul Quddus, Convenor, Bashad, Rangpur
32. Nazrul Islam Hakkani, Member Central Committee, Workers Party.
33. Dr. Ekramul Hossain Shapan, President, District JSD, Rangpur.
34. Rozy Rahman, General Secretary, Mahila Awami League.
35. Syed Nur Ahmed Tulu, President, Zilla Jatiyo Party, Rangpur.
36. Ashraf Hossain Barada, Vice President, Zilla BNP, Rangpur.
37. M. Hafizuddin Khan, Former Advisor of Caretaker Government and former Comptroller and Auditor General, Member Nagorik Committee.
38. Advocate Moezul Islam Moyez, President Zilla Ainjibi Samity, Lalmonirhat.
39. Pradip Kumar Goswami, President, Mithapukur Press Club.
40. Rashid Babu, General Secretary, Rangpur Press Club.
41. Manik Sarkar Manik, Staff reporter, Jankantha.
42. Muhammad Salequzzaman Salek, District representative, Daily Dinkal.
43. Wadud Ali, Reporter, Dainik Ittefaq and Rangpur Representative, Channel 1.
44. Salma Begum, Poet and writer, Abhijatrik Shaitiya Shangshad.
45. Pintu Shaha, Cultural activist, Rangpur.
46. Muhammad Entazur Rahman, Principal, Sheikh Shafiquddin College.
47. Amirul Hayat Ahmed, Lalmonirhat.
48. Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, Executive Director, Shamadhan, Rangpur.
49. Rozina Saifreen, Vice Principal, Arcadia International School and college
50. Muhammad Abul Kalam Chowdhury, Rangpur District Shopowners Society.
51. Muhammad Farhad Hossain Ripon, Member Rangpur Union Parishad.
52. Tapan Chatterjee, Student, Carmichael college
53. Zohurul Quayyum, President, Udichi, Gaibandha.
54. Lovely Yasmeen Ratna, Information Assistant, Nari O Shishu Pachar Protiroth Shahayak Kendra.
55. Muhammad Nazrul Islam, President, Insaaf, Rangpur.
56. Muhammad Sohel Rana, Student.
57. Muhammad Shariful Alam, Instructor, Government Technical School and College, Rangpur.
58. Advocate Rafiqul Islam Mukul, Secretary Bar Bhaban, Rangpur Bar Association.
59. Sohel Elahi, Agricultural worker.
60. Banamali Pal, President, Hindu-Boudha-Khrisatan Oikka Parishad.
61. Muhammad Ashrafur Alam-al Amin, General Secretary, Udichi and Assistant General Secretary, Shamillito Shanskritik Jote.
62. Dr. Muhammad Hedayetul Islam, President, BPMPA.
63. Mozahar Hossain, Vice Principal, Rangpur Government College.
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65. Md. Abdul Abdul Wahed Mia, General Secretary, Bangladesh College University Shikha Samity, Rangpur.
66. Captain Azizul Huq, Birpratik.
67. Muhammad Nur Islam, Service holder
68. Advocate Abdur Rashid Chowdhury, Lawyer.
69. Habibun Nabi Khan Sohel, General secretary, Zilla BNP, Rangpur
70. Anwar Hossain Bablu, Convenor, Bashad, Rangpur.
71. Muhammad Arshad Haroon, President, Gantantari Party, Rangpur.
72. Anwar Hossain, Vice President, Gonoforum.
73. Muhammad Tareq Bappi, Organizing Secretary, Jatiyo Chitra Oikko, Rangpur
74. Advocate Md. Abul Kalam Azad, Member, Central Committee, Gonotantari Party.
75. Hasna Chowdhury, Secretary, Mahila Parishad, Rangpur.
76. Dr. Zaki, Rangpur.
77. Syed Mahbubur Rahman Hirok, Karmajibi Nari, Field Office, Rangpur.
78. Abdun Nur Dulal, former Vice President, Rangpur Government College Students' Union.
79. Md Shahzada, student, Government Carmichael College.
80. Md. Rabiuzzaman Palash, Government teacher, Lions School and College, Rangpur.
81. Advocate Ratish Chandra Bhowmik, President, Padatik, Rangpur
82. Liton Pervez Manna, Member, Sound Touch, Rangpur
83. Moshfeq Razzak, IVAS, Rangpur.
84. Md. Rezaul Huq, Teacher, Begum Rokeya Uchcha Balika Biddalay, Rangpur.
85. Rajesh Adhikari, Coordinator, SHUJON, Rangpur.
86. Manik Chand, Member, Abhijatrik
87. Shafiqul Islam, Lecturer, Department of English, Rangpur Government College.
88. Goutam Roy, Convenor, Shamajik Shangathan Paribaradhan Dhara
89. Akbar Hossain, Secretary, SHUJON, Rangpur.
90. Md. Nurul Islam, Executive Director, Bangladesh Computer Education
91. Sohel Mamun
92. Advocate Munier Chowdhury, Human Rights activist, Rangpur.
93. Sirajul Islam Siraj, Founder Editor, Sharhatik Academy, Rangpur.
94. Muni Akhter, Volunteer, JONIPOP
95. Mostafa Kamal, JONIPOP.
96. Rakibul Hassan, Student, University of Dhaka.
97. Md. Hafizur Rahman Lablu, Member, the Daily Star Readers' Club
98. Md. Al Mahmud Kabir Romel, Prothom Alo Bandhushabha
99. Md Syful Islam, President Zilla Dokan Malik Samity
100. Advocate I. E. M. Sarwar-ul-Aalm, Former President, Zilla Ainjibi Samity

**CORDINATOR**  
Debapriya Bhattacharya: Executive Director, CPD



proposals they are not against it. I believe the programs launched by these four organizations are a program awakening, alongside the movement launched by the 14 Party Alliance and other political parties. There is no conflict between the two; this endeavor is complimentary to the program of launched by the 14 Party Alliance.

**Moazzem Hossain Lablu**  
It is the 35<sup>th</sup> year of our independence, yet can we really say that our national, district level and other leaders say the truth without giving false hopes at the time of contesting election? Today we see news in the TV and the print

take forward their dreams. Independence of the Anti-corruption Commission is to be ensured. Alongside meting out exemplary punishment to corrupt people, their ill-gotten wealth and properties acquired through corrupt means should also be confiscated. The terrorists are to be identified, arrested and tried. They must not be allowed to join any political party and given nominations for contesting election. We have to bring about a healthy trend in politics by reducing corruption in politics.

**Dr. Ekramul Hossain Shapan**  
Whenever the question of

**Rosy Rahman**  
Can these recommendations be made into a law and can we achieve our objectives through the process of that law? We wish to nominate those who are engaged in politics on a fulltime basis and are dedicated politicians, those who would talk about the poor and the people at large and about the development of the country. Above all they have to be honest, and people of character. Those who are in this compound today are not the only representatives of the civil society. There are many more belonging to the civil society living in the rural areas. We wish to

**Ashraf Hossain Barada**  
If we are able to discharge our individual responsibilities only then we will be on the right path, the path that the Nagorik Committee is trying to show us. But the Nagorik Committee has to come out above the mistrust that is eating into the vitals of the entire nation bit by bit. Nagorik Committee has the means to come out of this. You are to reflect our hopes and aspirations through your Media. Surely you will be the think tank for guiding the country if you are able to successfully fulfill the task you have undertaken. The two leaders have to sit together under pressure from