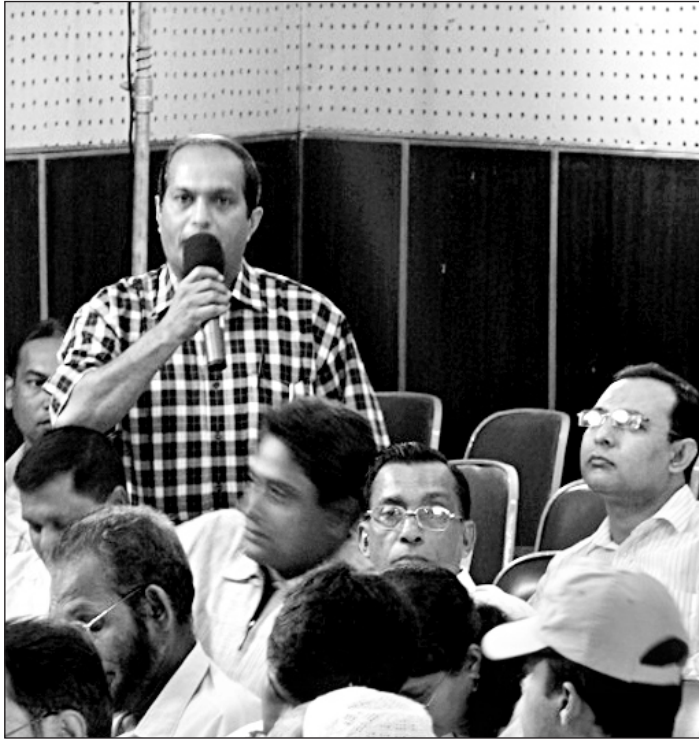


# Serving humanity should be our guiding principle

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Educated, honest and genuine politicians should go to parliament. We in the civil society are talking about this but the political parties will have to implement this. Pressure has to be exerted on them in this regard and all of us here will have to take the responsibility to make the people aware about it. If people do not become aware, no political party will do any reforms on their own.

As an MP of a political party I also want my party to fulfill the promises. I shall start a campaign in my party. We tend to criticise political parties at random. We have joined a political party on behalf of the people. Therefore, we shall have to come to you the way you will want us to. If you cannot make the coming elections free and fair then you will never get honest and competent candidates. If people cast their votes with prudence then those who will get elected will remain obligated to them. The first job is to do reform of the election commission and the caretaker government to make the elections free and fair. The election commission has been given



independent power by the constitution. But these have been attached with prime minister's office. Election commission should prepare budgets separately. Election commission has to be made strong.

If parliamentary democracy is to be made functional in this country then there cannot be any differentiation on the basis of religion in the constitution. The constitution of 1972 was the correct one. Unless and until secularism is established as per that constitution, secularist politics will not be established in this country. Anticorruption commission has to be made strong. This has to be made neutral as per the constitution. There should be budget allocation for this body. The judiciary has to be separated from the executive to establish rule of law. Tax-free cars are given to the MPs and ministers. I am also an MP but if I am given a transport from the government then I would like to say to the civil society that do not want a tax-free car.

#### M Nurul Islam

No matter how honest a man is or how less controversial he is, he will have little importance if he does not belong to a political circle. At present people are being influenced by Awami League, BNP and some other parties. They hold sway over a very large portion of the masses. If you do not get nomination from either Awami League or BNP, then even if you are an honest person, you may lose your deposit in the election. In national elections people only know either boat or sheaf of paddy. You may be a very good person and even if you get elected, alone you will not be able to do anything for the country. People will look at you as either BNP or Awami League.

The best outcome of this dialogue is that we have not attacked any particular political party. No adverse comment has been made regarding any national leader. It is because this organisation will not play a role to create political division. This organisation will work to unite people. This organisation is trying to build people's confidence through exposing the anti-people works of the political parties and governments and help find competent candidates for the next elections. This is a pro-people work. The election will be subject to questions if certain administrative aspects in the constitution need to be amended. There is only three-month time in hand to do any basic change. The next three months will be the tenure of the

caretaker government. The party in power thinks that we should prepare for the next elections through handing over power to the caretaker government. Since people have the right to vote, they will vote for the persons they like and make him/her MP. The party that will be voted to power by the people will form the next government. There have been three elections under the caretaker government. No government could come to power by manipulating votes. Therefore, let us go forward and pass the remaining three months and then the three-month tenure of the caretaker government. After that let us participate in elections to avoid the crisis. Let us sit for discussion and hold dialogue throughout the country. If anything has to be added we shall do it for national interest.

#### Debapriya Bhattacharya

We have requested the prime minister and BNP chairperson and leader of the opposition for their time. We want to place before them the summary of what has come out of the last eight discussions and your recommendations.

#### Prof. Mohammad Jafor Imam

The purpose of this discussion is to cleanse politics of all blemishes. We are not entering politics or planning to form a political forum. Our biggest strength is that we are going to do politics. We do not want to be political candidates. But those who will become candidates we shall vote them to power and in this regard we shall exercise the power of honesty. People are the source of all power. We have been able to perceive this fact. Our thoughts and spirit are secular. We are definitely secular. When we fought our Liberation War we have been motivated by the spirit of secularism. At later stage some non-secular words have been added to the constitution through amendment. This house is rejecting these. Some of you have given suggestion to make the tax department more powerful. The task of the tax department is to identify those who avoid giving taxes and force them to pay taxes. Some of you have talked about birth registration. This is a good proposal and I support this.

The government has started this work. If everyone accepts this then we shall have no problem in updating the voter list. We believe that if honest and competent people become candidates then many of our political problems will be solved. Black money and muscle power have taken hold of our politics. Corruption has polluted our politics. That is why if we can vote honest and competent people to power, we can free ourselves from many of the problems. We cannot watch this country go towards a pit and that's why citizens have become aware today. We want the government to govern this country in an honest and transparent manner. We do not want to see any division as majority or minority. One system can help us overcome some of our political problems. That is registration of the parties. With registration, political parties will be forced to accept certain basic principles. For example, there will be practice of democracy within the parties. There will be a list of the assets of the members. Registration will also reveal whether anyone is tax defaulter or whether there is any court case pending against a member. Therefore, if we can have the political parties registered then they will be inclined to practice democracy within the party and also at the national level.

We want an independent judiciary and anticorruption commission. We want an independent election commission. If these organs can function independently then political parties will have no influence over them. If we feel that caretaker government is unnecessary, then we must not forget that it was created to meet some historic need. You must not forget that a situation was created when we had lost confidence in the political leaders. People had no faith that the party in power would hold a free and fair election. This was the reason why caretaker government concept was accepted by all. And people had support behind this concept. Now it needs to be reformed. We have been able to discern the feeling here from the discussion the caretaker government system will be abolished gradually. But as long as it is here, it has to be free of any blemish, so that it cannot be influenced by any political party.

## List of participants

### List of participants

1. Prof. Mohammad Jafor Imam, (chairperson) Economist
2. Matiur Rahman, editor, Prothom Alo
3. Sheikh Ashraf uz Zaman, general secretary, Khulna Unnayan Sangram Samannaya Committee
4. Anwarul Kadir, economist
5. Mohammad Hafizur Rahman, chairperson, Sacheton Nagorik Committee, TIB
6. Wahidur Rahman, former principal, Govt. Sundarban College.
7. Humayun Kabir, former joint-secretary, Bangladesh Frozen Foods Exporters Association.
8. MM Mujibur Rahman, chairperson, Khulna District Lawyers Association
9. Rezaul Haque, convener, Sacheton Khulnabashi
10. Syed Monwar Ali, former manager, Jute Mills Corporation
11. Hafizur Rahman Bhuiya, president, Workers Party, Khulna District
12. Rashida Karim, executive director, Mayer Anchol Sangstha, Khulna
13. Rasu Akhter, general secretary, Mohila Parishad
14. Dr. Shamim Mahbubul Haque, associate professor, city and rural planning discipline, Khulna University
15. Rabiul Islam Polash, head master, Naihati high school, Rupsha Upazila, Khulna
16. Shamima Sultana Shilu, director, family planning samity
17. Kazi Wahiduzzaman, executive director, Noboloke, Khulna
18. Shahruzzaman Mortaza, chairperson, shilpa banik samity, Khulna
19. Sheikh Abdul Qayum, chairperson, Khulna nagorik forum
20. ASM Shahjahan, former adviser of the caretaker government and former inspector of police and member nagorik committee
21. Sardar Motahar Uddin, Trade Union leader
22. Sylvie Harun, developmental worker, Pradipon Sangstha
23. Shahin Jamal, sports and cultural organiser
24. Mohammad Tarikul Islam Tuhin, RTV representative, Khulna
25. Mohammad Monirul Islam, head master, Phulbari ideal high school
26. Poresh Kumar Saha, executive director, Thed-human resource development organisation
27. Mia Ataul Goni Badshah, Police super (Retd) and freedom fighter
28. Adv. Feroze Ahmed, city president, CPB
29. Kazi Sekandar Ali, former member of parliament
30. Rafiqul Haque Khokon, chairperson, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Khulna city
31. Prof. Krishnapada Das, general secretary, Bangladesh Puja Ujjapan Parishad, Khulna district
32. Rehana Akhter, chairperson, Bangladesh Kindergarten Association

33. Animesh Chandra Hari, student, BL University College
34. Eng. Enamul Kabir, probashi
35. Mohammad Lokman Hakim, co-chairman, Khulna Unnayan Sangram Committee
36. Mohammad Salekuzzaman, professor, environmental science, Khulna University
37. Sheikh Abdul Jalil, former upazila chairman, Rampal, Bagerhat
38. Nazrul Islam Manju, former general secretary, BNP, Khulna district
39. Adv. Enayet Ali, former poura chairman, Khulna
40. Majeda Ali, vice-principal Govt. Sundarban College
41. Gazi Shahidullah, former poura chairman, Khulna
42. Mollah Saifur Rahman, chairman, No. 3 Naihati union council
43. Adv. Kudrat-e-Khuda, member secretary, Khulna nagorik committee
44. Mohammad Monirul Islam, joint secretary, Dumuria upazila nagorik committee, Khulna
45. Adv. Mohammad Aminur Rahman, general secretary, tax lawyers samity
46. SM Mantu, general secretary, Daulatpur dokan malik samity
47. Sajjadur Rahim Pantho, Noboloke, Khulna
48. SM Shohrab Hossain, Khulna district coordinator, Bangladesh poultry industries association
49. Sheikh Golam Mostafa, juba sangathak
50. SM Manjur-ul-Alam, lawyer
51. Humayun Kabir Bobby, coordinator, education and cultural centre, Khulna
52. Syed Mainul Islam Kichlu, chairman, Jib Kallyan foundation
53. Mohammad Mokam Ali Sardar, representative, united Muslim organisation
54. SM Hussain Billah, lyricist, playwright, Bangladesh Betar
55. Mohammad Badiar Rahman, secretary education affairs, greater Khulna unnayan sangram samannaya committee
56. Mohammad Abdul Berek Bacchu, insurance official
57. Mohammad Golam Mostafa Sindaini, Khulna divisional coordinator, Jatiya nirbachan parjabekhan parishad,
58. Dr. Purnendu Gain, Khulna University
59. Dr. SM Zakaria Zakir, chairperson, three star astrological research centre
60. MA Qaiyum, director, Qaiyum digital library Ltd.
61. Reazul Haque, director, modern seafood industries Ltd.
62. Eng. Azad-ul-Haque, former chief engineer, biddut unnayan board,
63. Mohammad Ashik-ur-Rahman, lecturer, city and urban planning discipline, Khulna University
64. Rafiqul Islam Khokon, director, Rupantar
65. Mohammad Shaiful Islam, general secretary, Jatiya Party, Khulna district
66. Sheikh Ainul Haque, chairperson, motorcycle garage mechanic samity
67. Mujtaba Shamim, democracy watch
68. Abdullah Hossain, lawyer
69. Gazi Abdullalhel Baqi, director, modern language centre, Khulna University
70. Ahmad Ali Khan, executive director, executive editor, Dainik Purbanchal
71. Kamruzzaman Tuku, freedom fighter
72. Shahnewaz Nazimuddin Ahmed, associate professor, economics discipline, Khulna University
73. Dr. Sheikh Gaush Mia, former professor
74. SM Abu Bakar Siddiq, chairperson, Mongla bondor sramik karmachari union
75. Praddut Rudra Chaity, lecturer, MM College, Khulna
76. Rosy Rahman, cultural worker
77. Ponchanan Biswas, member of parliament, Khulna-1
78. M Nurul Islam, member of parliament, Khulna-4

Coordinator: Debapriya Bhattacharya, executive director, CPD.