

# Politics should be treated as a business

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 been able to transform ourselves into a proper state. The flag we got in 1971 is the symbol of our aspirations, and the state has to rally round it. The gap between the rich and the poor has widened. On one hand there are those

who have crores, and on the other side there are those who are going hungry. There has to be justice in the country. Judiciary has to be independent. The Prime Minister of Bangladesh is the most powerful individual of the country. She heads the Army, the office of the Chief Executive and the Judiciary. There are some problems with our constitution. Some one has mentioned yet another problem. Politics is no longer confined to politicians alone, but it has also gone into the hands of all kinds of people. Under clause 70 you no longer can decide for yourself, it has to be the decision of the party. We had removed Shoirachar Ershad with the hope that we shall lead our lives in the clean environment of democracy. We have removed the Shoirachar but democracy today is heading towards kingship. We have nothing to fear, the entire country is behind us. We have a clear conscience. We are talking in favor of the people.

**Zobaer Hassan Liton**  
 Is there a need to define in clearer terms the criteria for an honest and suitable candidate? Can we call a person honest who has seized power illegally, although being honest both in his public and private lives? My proposal is that those who are involved in war crimes, and grabbing power illegally directly or indirectly, should be declared as unsuitable for contesting any election.

**Ferdous Zaman Mukul**  
 The ears of the present government are plugged, and its back is covered by steel. I do not believe that it is ready to listen to any good advice. The largest party has placed its reform proposals. The game of reforms is yet to take momentum. There has to be a leader capable of listening and understanding as to what is being said or proposed. I have my doubts as to how much importance will be given to our deliberations at a time when one had to appear in a court of law for having spoken against one of the Ministers. We have to take due measures to free ourselves from terrorism and black marketing.

**Hafiz Ahmed**  
 We are still struggling. Our dreams are yet to be fulfilled even after 35 years of our independence. What is the reason behind this? We have failed to reach our goals due to partisanship and failures of our political parties, also due to existing social order. People belonging to different walks of life and profession are treating politics as business. The real politicians are falling behind. While the 14 Party Alliance placed a 23- point charter of demands, CPB has placed 53 points. Election will take place on party-basis. This way we shall be able to drive away the holders of black money.

**Kamrunnahar Putul**  
 What can we expect in a country where grenades are thrown to kill the daughter of Bangabandhu. Economist Kibria, even Journalists, are not spared by the terrorists. The real culprit gets away unpunished, while the innocent is victimized. Shiploads of arms are brought into the country, godfathers are not hunted out, people like Bangla Bhai and Abdur Rahman are housed in air conditioned rooms. I believe a solution will come out of the dialogue initiated by CPD. I see no problems if the reform proposals are accepted.

**Majibur Rahman Majnu**  
 Democracy must be upheld. People have realized that votes cannot be cast in favor of those who do not have links with the masses. We should institutionalize democracy so that the future generation is able to live in a stable country. There will be fewer incidences of fake votes if voter cards are issued.

**Advocate Fazlul Bari**  
 I came here to listen to the deliberations and to find out if CPD had turned into a political party. Now I have the feeling that they are playing the supporting role for the good of the country. The country is facing extreme crisis. Those who think of the country are no longer sitting idle.

We are carrying out a Nagorik dialogue focused towards 2021. I believe we shall succeed. There is a government in office. Never before have I seen such a crisis since independence.

**Rezaul Karim Tansen**  
 To able to hold a free and fair election the 23-point reform proposals submitted by the 14 Party Alliance should be implemented. In order to save the country and the nation from conflicts and strife steps have to be taken. We have to resist those who are planning to occupy the seat of power through a blue print. If the government of Khaleda is sincere only then it can come out of controversy. I propose that religion based politics be banned. A

particular party is misguiding the people, hiding behind the veil of religion.

**Mumtazuddin**  
 We shall be able to move forward if we are able to cleanse the place where we stand now. I would like to ask those who are questioning as to who is the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman or Ziaur Rahman, and those keeping silent on the issue? Let them ask their conscience as to whose name echoes in their hearts. We have heard the name of Ziaur Rahman only after he came to power through staging a number of coups. Those who have given rise to this controversy opposed our independence. These people cannot be allowed to be in politics.

I was a freedom fighter. I can never support the return of the ghost of the Muslim League.

No matter how many political forums we float, unless we cleanse the environment that exists around us, there can be no solution to our problems. Not the politicians alone, the bureaucrats are also to blame. Who reside in Gulshan, Baridhara and Banani? It is always the politicians who are branded as guilty, who are more guilty the politicians or the bureaucrats? One who was once branded, as a Shoirachar is now being given nomination. Why the court's verdict in Bangabandhu murder case is not being carried out? Some other entity would have taken this initiative that CPD has undertaken taken today.

**Muhammad Abdul Jalil**  
 Many people call us Shoirachar who have administered this country for over nine years. Be that as it may I am also a freedom fighter. Many people today are talking for, and against, our independence. 34 years have passed by since we gained our independence. What stage are we at, in the development of the country? There is rot from head to foot. We must bring about a change, and find out the root cause for it just the way the Nagorik Committee is doing. The reason for this rot is that, we have merely indulged ourselves in hollow speeches No one has taken any practical steps. Awami league says that BNP has said this and BNP says; Jatiyo Party is saying this, whereas we are saying that all that they are saying are not true. There should be a change in the scenario, or else we shall hit the bottom due to hatred and jealousy.

**Fazlul Karim Bahar**  
 My students often ask me this question: what is a civil society? I tell them that those who keep the street clean in front of you, keep us free from undue hassle, it is they he who are the civil society. Those who are working towards achieving the objectives of the state, it is they who belong to the civil society. Today Lebanon is under siege. Here, too, the civil society is at work. Noam Chomsky is working. We have to work too; we are a part and parcel of the civil society. A strange darkness has surrounded us. We have to arrive at the destined goal.

**Muhammad Aminul Farid**  
 As a local representative I have seen how resources are plundered and looted. Government gives the work orders, tender terrorism takes place and then the PPR is amended. Those who will occupy the seat of power must be promise bound to the people: the PPR has to be fixed well in advance, genuine businessmen must not be ignored or suffer losses, and the bureaucrats must not be allowed to make crores by awarding contracts. We have seen how many who were once paupers have become owners of crores of takas. The Nagorik Committee also has to be explicit about its stance on the Qaumi Madrassahs

**Mushihur Rahman**  
 Very often it is said that the real owners of the country are the people. But its real ramification is clear to the people only during the election.

Whenever they visit officials of a government office or a political party, the way they behave it looks as though they are the real owners and we are mere subjects or even lower than that. In order to understand this ownership, there is a need for such Nagorik dialogues. I believe CPD has set that trend.

As of today we have not been able to make the present administration accountable. Why have we failed? The main reason for this, is clause 197 of Cr.Pc. One of the speakers has said that in order to draw court proceedings against any official, clearance has to be obtained from his superiors. I have talked about the issue a number of times. We should now put a writ petition in the High Court. In this way we may be able to scrap the clause from the constitution. The constitution says that all are equal in the eyes of the law. I believe that in order to bring accountability in Administration those of us who

consider ourselves as belonging to the civil society should unite and establish a civil society commission, a commission that will provide due assistance to the Anti Corruption Commission.

You have said about electing honest and capable candidates. Let us assume that your proposals are accepted by the political parties: We have an election Commission just the way we wanted, likewise the administration, including a voter list and all our demands are met. But when a voter goes to vote for a candidate he would see if the candidate has the capacity to offer him at least a cigarette, not knowing that the ultimate cost of a cigarette will be worth a crore of takas for the candidate, since three and half lakhs people will come to the booth for casting their votes.

We shall not be able to establish honest politics, no matter how hard we try, until there is an awakening amongst general members of the public. Does the voter really know the consequences of his demand for a cigarette? Someone has to tell him. It is the responsibility of us all, and not CPD alone. CPD has made the beginning and has showed us the way. This is what we should all do, and in this way we shall be able to bring about changes in the country.

### List of participants

50. Ferdous Zaman Mukul, Former, MP.
51. Hafiz Ahmed, Jatiyo Parishad Member, CPB.
52. Kamrunnahar Putul, Former, MP.
53. Mujibur Rahman Majnu, Former Chairman, Sherpur Pourashabha.
54. Advocate Fazlul Bari, President GONOFORUM, Bogra.
55. Rezaul Karim Tansen, President, Bogra Zilla JSD.
56. Mumtazuddin, President Bogra Zilla Awami League.
57. Md. Abdul Jalil, Freedom Fighter and Vice President, Zilla Jatiyo Party, Bogra.
58. Hassan Ali Sheikh, CPB, Bogra.
59. Bazul Karim Bahar, Writer and Vice Principal, Institute of Information technology, Bogra.
60. Shakil Ahmed, Chairman, Holy family Foundation, Bogra.
61. Md. Abul Kalam Azad, Principal, Taslimuddin Tarafdar Degree College, Bogra.
62. Md. Aminul Haque, Retired Teacher.
63. Mujibur Rahman Majnu, Former Chairman, Bogra Pourashabha.
64. Md. Abdul Hannan, JONIPOP, Bogra.
65. Abul Kausar, Library Activist, Natore.
66. M.A. Momin Dulal, President, Petrol Pumps Owners Association, Rajshahi Division.
67. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Executive Director, NIDO.
68. A. B. M. Ziaul Haque Babla, General Secretary, Shammilito Shangskritik Jote, Bogra.
69. Daren Pervaz, Cultural Activist.
70. Ismail Hossain, Vice President, Bogra Zilla Central Shop Owners Society.
71. Advocate Sakhawat Hossain, Executive Director, PGUS, Bogra.
72. Md. Mahfuz Siddique Liton, Senior Vice President, Bogra Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
73. Sameer Roy, Senior Pharmaceuticals Officer, Health Care Pharmaceuticals, Bogra.
74. Enamul Haque, Sponsor and Initiator, Antarjatic Sheba Shangathan.
75. Toufik Hassan Moina, President, Shammilito Shangskritik Jote, Bogra.
76. Sadequr Rahman Shujon, General Secretary, Shangshaptak Theater.
77. Bilu Kabir, Coordinator, UDP, Bogra.
78. Abdur Razzak Raju, Director, Paribartan, Sirajganj.
79. K. M. Abdul Bari, Prof. Government Mujibur Rahman Mahila College.
80. Abdul Manik, Manager, Womens Training and Rehabilitation Center for the Mentally-deficient.
81. Md. Liakat Ali, Executive Director, Manab Unnayan Shangstha, Sirajganj.
82. Md. Aminul Islam, Zilla Parishad Chairman, Bogra.
83. Advocate Rezaul Karim Montu, Former Chairman, Bogra Pourashabha.
84. Belaluddin Ahmed, Artist, Advertising Agency, Bindu. Bogra.

COORDINATOR  
 Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director, CPD.