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BNP and AL



In democracy there is no way you can bring a country to a complete standstill. If it were to happen in any developed country all the leaders of the AL and its allies would have been made accountable for their unconstitutional activities. There is not a single good reason to believe that the AL is doing politics in a proper way.

On the other hand, the AL is losing the opportunity to win the upcoming election. There is a chance that the AL can win not because people like them but because of the failures of the BNP. In that case the AL will not win, BNP will lose. The same way, the BNP won the last election not because people supported the party but because of the AL's mis-governance.

Five year is not enough time to forget everything as ideologically there is no difference between these political parties.

Ashrafur Islam MD, PhD
University of Louisville School of Medicine
Louisville, KY

Achievements of Dr. Yunus



have not been limited only to removing poverty. He has urged all the nations to use the micro-credit plan to fight against poverty. This method of giving out loans is now used in different projects in 58 countries, including the US, Canada, France, the Netherlands and Norway. His contribution to the telecommunication sector is remarkable as well. The sector is doing very well now.

This is time to have a fresh look at things, thanks to the Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Yunus & his Grameen Bank.

Since 1976 Dr. Yunus has been working for removing poverty in Bangladesh through his micro-credit plan. Though he won the Nobel Prize still he is saying that the struggle against poverty is not over. His plans

But there are people in the country who are trying to undermine his great achievements. We may recall Mr. Saifur Rahman's comments in this respect. This is really a matter of regret that a veteran politician has failed to assess his achievements correctly. However, it doesn't really matter what Mr. Saifur thinks about the Nobel laureate.

Rajjul Hasan
University of Ballarat, Sydney

Private universities

Private universities, no doubt, occupy a place of great importance in our education system. But many of these universities are not playing their due role in imparting education as their aim is to earn money, rather than ensure a high standard of education.

Rubab Abdullah
Dhaka Cantonment, Dhaka

To CG and EC...

As a general citizen, I have found a few problems insofar as holding of a fair election is concerned.

1. In the current voter list, it is also true about the previous ones, there are hundreds of thousands of fake voters who have made the election process questionable even before it has been held. In 1991, during the tenure of Justice Abdur Rouf, the Election Commission started a pilot project of computer managed voters' database at Muktagacha, Mymensingh which could have provided a voter ID-card to each voter with his/her photo. Nowadays, whereas public examination database stores, retrieves and reports results of each examinee, the voter-database is undoubtedly feasible. This card may have multi-purpose use like social security number etc. Along with this process, a birth registration database should be started in future.

2. The next general election, like the previous general elections, is supposed to be held in 'a single day' and 'throughout the whole country' with 14 million fake voters.

3. Vote counting is not performed centrally though it is known that some voting centres cannot count votes properly due to some unavoidable circumstances.

4. Cell-phone operators are being compelled to stop their operation on the election day allegedly for security reason. But security can be boosted by coordinated usage of these tiny communication tools among the security forces.

5. Posters, wall-writings, banners etc. are being displayed long before the declaration of the election schedule, which is a violation of the electoral laws.

6. Illegal arms and ammunition have to be recovered across the country. Supply of arms must be stopped.

7. Disclosure of Assets and Liabilities of the contestants is not made public before and after the election and the account of Income & Expenditure during election campaigning is not taken.

Considering the entire scenario, people of Bangladesh expect prudent and effective measures from the CG, EC and all others concerned.

Saif Tinku
Dhaka

Advisors should resign

The way CA is running the administration without proper consultation with the council of advisors...I don't think there is any reason for them to stay as advisors.

In such a crucial stage, I don't think the advisors need to stay for doing nothing...they should resign en masse.

Mir Rashid
Vancouver, Canada

Leadership hunt

This letter is addressed to the electronic media with a proposal to make a leadership hunt programme just as we see on 'Tomakei khujche Bangladesh'. It has been a long search for an effective leadership for this country, and now the search has come to a critical point. Why don't we follow the same concept of Closeup 1? The performance will be a 20-minute speech. The speech will reflect the strategies to direct the country onto the right track. The winner of each round will be totally based on public votes (through sms/email). Participants can be from Teknaf to Tetulia.

People will be able to filter through the characteristics that they want to see in a leader for this country. Please do consider it.

Sadia Karim
Delaware, USA

Freedom of electronic media

Citizens' rights and democracy are not flourishing in the country at the expected level due to control on the media, especially on TV channels by the alliance of businessmen and politicians. The way black money is being invested in the media is not at all a positive development. There is much doubt about the freedom of and respect for the media in future. Failure of the past governments in formulating



A fair election for what?

Our newspapers are overflowing with articles from ex-bureaucrats, retired army/police officers, editors, assistant editors, freelance writers, et al., on the forthcoming election. Everyone is sending their suggestions and advise on how to hold a free and fair election. Some blame President Iajuddin Ahmed, while other support him; some blame a number of those advisers to the caretaker government and others blame the Chief Election Commissioner MA Aziz, etc.. But before we all get mad about holding a fair election, we need to sit down and ask ourselves one short question: will it change anything for our people and our country if we do manage to hold a fair election?

As far as the election is concerned, there are two possibilities: either the election will be fair, or it will be rigged. Now ask yourself, what will happen if the election is rigged? As we have seen before, soon after the results are

announced, the defeated party will boycott the results and launch massive agitation programmes, killing people, vandalising public properties and causing damage worth billions of dollars to our country. The winning party will proudly accept the result and claim that the "people" have given them a clear mandate to rule (or misrule) the country for five long and luxurious years. Now ask yourself another question: what will happen if the election is fair (verified by internationally respected organisations and even the UN Secretary General himself)? The reaction to a fair election, unfortunately, will be "exactly" the same as the reaction to a rigged election! So what is the point of holding this election? The whole idea of holding an election is to decide who will run our country for the next five years. But when the participants do not respect the outcome of an election, then why must we have that election?

That is why, in my humble opinion, those advisers to the caretaker government are not the problem; a biased/neutral President Iajuddin Ahmed is not the problem; Chief Election Commissioner is not the problem; correct/incorrect voter list is not the problem either. The real problem are those two main political parties. Instead of wasting hundreds of crores of taka in a futile attempt to hold a fair election, let us spend all our efforts, money and time in taking care of those corrupt parties first. If we can sort them out, most of our other problems will be sorted too. Those parties which have made a habit of insulting the people's decisions and unnecessarily boycotting election results, should not be allowed to take part in "our" elections. It is as simple as that.

Azad Miah
Oldham, UK

ing a policy on mass media was deliberate.

In the absence of a media policy, the immediate past government had allowed the ministers and the lawmakers of the ruling party to have satellite television channels. Beside the state-run television, the government also started controlling the private television channels, which is a threat to press freedom and democratic practices. The said government also decided to limit the terrestrial telecasting facilities to the state-run BTV only.

The government followed no clear policy in issuing television licences, none except their own men got permission for operating private television channels, which are also forced to telecast the news bulletins of BTV. Though these satellite channels telecast the news of the opposition parties, they avoid reports on corruption and anomalies in government offices; these channels hardly do any investigative reporting. Most of these channels serve the interest of businessmen, and some channels

telecast very low standard programmes. There is no mechanism to regulate their actions. Talk shows of these channels are, however, laudable.

There are many allegations against the real estate developers, mobile telephone operators and beverage companies. But neither the electronic media nor the print media dare to raise voice against them, as they are a big source of advertisement revenue. The advertisement policy must be guided by some ethics, though the business-

men and owners seemed not to understand the thing. They are perhaps not aware that those channels would lose their credibility in the long run, if they fail to run them professionally.

There must be the provision for declaration of the sources of income of the satellite television channels. Terrestrial facilities should be open for the private TV channels also in order to ensure people's right to information.

Khan Ferdousur Rahman
On e-mail

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