

Spirit of the Liberation War

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relationship with the donor agencies with their co-operation, seek assistance in stopping foreign interventions in our internal affairs by many countries of the developed world. We could ask for their assistance and support in putting a stop to "looting" of our gas, water oil resources.

Nur Jalal
Those who change parties should be barred from contesting election for 5 years.

Zahiduzzaman Tokon
I am acquainted with Sahaikh Siraj through the TV screen, but to my mind it has not been proper for him to say that he has totally committed himself body and soul to the land and the people of this country.

Binoy Krishna Mallik
This endeavor can only succeed if those connected with the state join hands with the civil society. We should hold these discussions at Upazilla and Union Parishad levels from where we can get even better suggestions.

Engineer G.C. Majumder
I invite you to hold your next meeting at Narail. We are with you and we shall remain with you.

Champa Shaha
Opportunities for higher education in the country should be open to all particularly in Medical, Engineering and other national level Universities.

Fakhre Alam
I feel that this discussion forum is more political in nature than an initiative of the civil society. You have failed to be neutral. You have not discussed anything about regional development. There is neither a medical college nor an agriculture university here. The government earns about 1200 crore annually from the services of land port here but the people of Jessore are yet to see any real development.

Shubhankar Dutta
Complete freedom of expression of their views should be given to the print



and the electronic media including the various cultural organisations.

Aminul Islam Rontu
Having due respect for the aspirations of the civil society I am restraining myself from saying anything.

Abu Naim
I wish to draw the attention of Mr. Mahfuz Anam. We have witnessed the success of the Kansat movement and all had recognised the significance of it, at the same time two days following that incident saw yet another kind of movement which led to breaking and damaging over two hundred public and private vehicles. Many in this country are out to make political gains through so-called movements but often they fail. I would earnestly request Mr. Anam to expose the source of this movement through the columns of his Daily.

Saifur Rahman
My question is, if we call the people who lend money against interests as moneylenders, how should you then address Dr. Younus.

Zahid Babu
Not only political leaders but also civil servants, the police including custom officials are amassing black money. I wish to know as to why they cannot be resisted.

Aftabur Rahman
We have seen such discussion sessions being conducted for the last 5 years. I invite the Committee to coordinate its activities with Proshika.

Advocate Delwar Hossain
Those of the Judicial and Administrative services are also engaged in making black money and corruption including secretaries and ministers. A strong and independent Anti Corruption Commission may be able to put an effective check to all this.

Muhammad Shahidul Islam
I am in full agreement with Mr. Shaikh Siraj. We have to develop and improve the conditions of the farmers first since they constitute the largest segment of our voters, without them no tangible national development is feasible. In the manifestoes of the political parties in the forthcoming national election the rights of the farmers should be clearly defined.

Dipankar Das Ratan
We want Bangladesh to be a success story in the field of sports.

Sukumar Das
Religious fundamentalism should be banned forever from this country. We often observed that unprecedented oppression is carried out in this country just before the election. If this oppression continues let the government take away our rights to vote.

Nabi Newaz Md. Mujibuddowla Sardar
Your 21-point agenda has taken into consideration the spirit of our War of Liberation and a secular Bangladesh. You have indicated that any one elected will automatically be the people's representative. I beg to differ with you since the black money holders and oppressors of women can never be public representatives. CPD should be involved in the process of preparation of the draft voter list.

Farazi Shad al Hussein
If the proposals for reforming the Election Commission are ignored what will be your stand at that time? The nation is divided into two, one consisting of those who believe in the Bengali nationalism based on our independence achieved through the sacrifices of three million shaheeds and the other on Bangladesh nationalism and the killing of Bangabandhu, would you kindly tell us as to which one you subscribe to?

Wahiduzzanman Ork
This Nagorik Committee has a long way to go.

Hafez Tarfar
For accountable development efforts we need to develop a democratic culture amongst the people themselves. What are your plans towards that goal?

Kaniz Fatema
As a member of the civil society I invite the attention of all to be aware of the time.

Jayanta Biswas
We should include, the spirit of liberation, communal politics, reformation of



the electoral process and culture a part of the 12 point agenda.

Kazi Gholam Mostafa
In the forefront of all the centers of power in Bangladesh that have frequently caused harm to the democracy in this country lies the Army; you have not included them in your 21point list of discussions. .

Bappi Roy
If any political party nominates a dishonest candidate, in that case can we boycott the election?

Debapriya Bhattacharya
This question has come up before also. If any voter finds the candidate not up to his expectations then he can caste a " no vote". This practice is in vogue in many countries like England. If that "no Vote" exceeds 50 percent of the total vote; the entire election has to be rescheduled with new nominations.

Prof. Gholam Mustafa
There is a culture of intolerance in our politics. There should be a dialogue on this issue.

Tarapad Das
Elected representatives are basically the controlling agents of the country. They hold the key to the nations development. We need to ask for the past records of all prospective nominees relating to their patriotism and humanitarian activities. Once this is obtained, nomination of candidates will be finalised after due process of scrutiny of the records.

Mostafa Ruhul Quddus
In order make this endeavour succeed what is needed is the good will of the politicians. If the politicians nominate competent candidates, then they will be elected any way whether or we want them or not.

Benzin Khan
I am against the caretaker system of government.

T. I. Tariq
We have to improve the quality of education and make due reforms.

Jahngir Alam
School and college going students often hear of such misleading and false terminologies as crossfire and encounter. I solicit your opinion in this regard. We often here about toll collectors and terrorists but there are hardly any discussion about bribe takers and corrupt civil servants. This aspect should also come into the purview of your discussions.

Advocate Monirul Islam
This vision document can only be materialised though the Election Commission and the Caretaker Government. I believe that the parliament of 2007 can be only be effective if CPD's Executive Director Devapriys Bhattacharya and M. Zillur Rahman, convener of the third force both are inducted into the position of Deputy Speakers. This will in turn nullify Opposition's excuse to refrain from joining the parliament on grounds of the Speaker being partisan.

Mostafizur Rahman Kabul
I want the "vision" to talk about the development of those who are directly involved with development. I believe there is no need for a new vision document. Our main single agenda should be the spirit of our nine-month struggle for freedom of 1971.

Shakila Akhter
The practice of putting up dummy candidates in national election must stop.



Advocate Sabhia Khanam
The 21point agenda has not taken into consideration the issues of woman and child repression.

Enamul Haque Babu
About two days back through an interview in Television I learnt that no one is nominated more than twice in West Bengal. Even after Budhadev's departure Joyti Basu continue to give him all-out support. Such a thing is rare in Bangladesh. Those who are not connected with politics or away from the seat of power they become isolated and kept in abeyance. Two other questions have come up here about the business community and the bureaucrats. It has become a culture in this country that any one having two to ten crore taka, he has the opportunity to serve the people. My question is that having one crore taka he could help in poverty alleviation and spread of education and much

more, without going through the Parliament. I believe after having retired at 56 or 57 years of age all he would be capable of is roaming around in a flagged car, he cannot be of any service to the country. I believe a politician who has been in active politics for ten years should be considered as one having the requisite qualification for being elected.

Alamgir Kabir
In my opinion we should approach the issue of student politics with a clear and firm vision.

H.R. Tuhin
I wish to ask you about nominating those politicians who are holders of black money as against the educated and lawyers, after all, it will be they who make the framework of our legal systems working through the Parliament.

Muhammad Itimuddowla
I learnt from the newspapers that the name of Prof. Muzaafar Ahmed has been omitted from the voter list. While you talk on how to get rid of black money and muscle power, the representative of the 14 parties Opposition Coalition present here has not raised this point. In this regard I would like to draw the attention of Mr Mahfuz Anam.

Kazi Abdus Salam
I propose that CPD in collaboration with its three major collaborators in the media should embark on a serious dialogue with the Parliament Members in an effort to see the implantation of the proposal put forward by the civil society keeping it within the existing legal framework.

Debapriya Bhattachrya
We have carried on our discussions for 2 hours 45 minutes. I see all of you are still sitting under bright lights with the cameras of Channel I still covering the proceedings. I believe you are here not because of the Cameras of Channel I are still on but because you believe in the objectives of our discussion / dialogue. On behalf of CPD, Channel, Prothomo Alo and The Daily Star I wish to express our sincerest thanks to all of you. Nearly a hundred individuals have expressed their opinions freely. We believe in the participatory process. Pertinent aspects of each of the speakers have been



duly recorded from which a transcript will be prepared based on which a supplement will be published by The Daily Star and Prothomo Alo.and subsequently it will be telecast by Channel I. A summary of the proceedings will also be forwarded to the Nagorik Committee. We have not gathered here with conspiratorial intentions or with any ambitious programme or any personal agenda. Bangladesh is in critical juncture of its existence now. Although the country has made considerable progress over the past one and half years however but there has not been an equitable distribution of the benefits amongst the people at large. We have come to you today with the objective of speeding up the process of development during the next 15 years so that the common man is further benefited. The precondition to that is the presence of a political environment that will ensure building up of a workable and an effective Parliament and that is what is our ambition. We have come here have come here imbibe people with that spirit. I believe if we are able to transform make Bangladesh into a country of midlevel economy. All our attention is focused towards that goal. I would now like to close this meeting thanking you all with a request to Mr. Sharif Hossain, who had kindly agreed to preside over this session, to make his concluding remarks.

Prof Sharif Hossain
Our society loves to maintain a status quo and normally slow to change. This hall where we have just concluded our meeting is called BD Hall, a name that was given to it during the time of Ayub Khan, even the organisers called it BD Hall. You have embarked upon an important task and hence as you should

proceed with caution keeping in view the ultimate limitations. We often talk about the farmers who till the land, the weavers and the fishermen, but we do not have any concrete plan to deal with them. We have made considerable success in many fields but the farmers are still reeling under levies. We must strive to bring about a change in this state of affairs. Without referring to any other specific profession all of us here are some kind of agents. For example all of you here are our guests. Debapriya Bhattacharya is an economist and many of you and your compatriots also have worked towards many noble causes. You have talked about the multinational companies but do you know that the most important organisation / institution of Bangladesh? Harry K Thomas in Bangladesh became an unconstitutionally elected member representing all those companies and we had given him that opportunity. I shall not forget that I am a Bangladeshi and a Bengali but we have made serious mistakes by deviating from the principle that gave us the right to

retain and practice our individual religious faith living as one nation. I was in a meeting the other day where at one stage all stood up and began to clap, when suddenly some one stood up and declared that, " clapping" was for bidden in Islam. Our youth are misguided and are on the path of ruin. I would like CPD, which is well connected with various large and important agencies/organisations, work with the main producers. Second this dialogue should be taken to the doors of our youth. We need more dialoguing and opposition. I am now 73. I have seen people who are cultured and sober have achieved but little, whereas many young people who crossed the border to the other side of the world have contributed substantially to the development of the country. As for me, using the state resources I have stayed back with the elites of the country and have arranged a retirement pension for life. It will be up to the CPD to take into confidence these people who I have just talked about or else their efforts may become futile. I would like to end my deliberations with the prayer that may Allah help us to be calm and be steadfast in our faith, refrain from abusive language and pass through this turmoil as a unified committed soul.

LIST OF SPEAKERS

1. Prof. Sahrif Hossain, Former Principal, Micheal Madhusudan College, Jessore. (President of the Dialogue).
2. Mahfuz Anam, Editor, the Daily Star
3. S.M. Kamruzzaman Chunnun, Chairman Jessore Pourashava.
4. R. M. Khairul Umam, President, IDEB, Jessore.
5. Chowdhury Shahidul Islam Nayan, President District BNP, Jessore.
6. Prof. Afsar Ali, Member Central Committee, Workers Party.
7. Angela Gomez, Member, Nagarik Committee 2006.
8. Fakir Shawkat, President, Jessore Press Club.
9. Nargis Begum, Principal, Jessore City College.
10. Advocate Syeda Masuma Begum, Judges Court, Jessore.
11. Asdauzzaman, Student, M. M. College, Jessore.
12. Suraiya Sharif, General Secretary, Mahila Parishad, Jessore.
13. Nurjahan Islam, President, Zilla Mahila Awami League, Jessore.
14. Enamul Huq Babul, Chairman, Noyapara Pourashabha, Jessore.
15. Fazul Haque, Coordinator, Citizens for Good Governance (SUJON), Jessore wing.
16. Nayan Shikder, Publicity Secretary, Prothomo Alo.
17. Alamgir Kabir, student, S. M. College, Jessore.
18. Srabani Shur, Cultural Personality
19. Mostafa Anwar Pasha, Chairman, Jhikargacha Pourashabaha, Jessore.
20. Prof. Muazzam Hossain, President Sadar College Teachers' Association.
21. A. Mannan Mia, District Representative, UNB, Jessore.
22. Shahidul Islam Milon, President Jessore Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
23. M. Sayeeduzzaman, Former Minster for Finance and Chairman, Bank Asia.
24. Manzurul Huq, Eminent Lawyer, Judges court, Jessore.
25. Habiba Sefat, Mohila Parishad, Jessore.
26. Bimal Chandra Roy Chowdhury, Eminent senior citizen.
27. Mujtaba Shamim, Director, SHAPNA, Voluntary Organization, Jessore.
28. Doctor Sanjay Pathak, Manirampur Health Complex, Jessore.
29. Shimul Azad, Director, Shilpa Kendra, Jessore.
30. Abul Hossain, General secretary, CPB District Committee, Jessore.
31. Pannalal Dey, Organizing Secretary, UDICHI, Jessore.
32. Gulnahr Begum, Retired Principal, Government Women's College, Jessore.
33. Harunur Rashid, Executive Director, Al Miraj Foundation, Jessore.
34. Prof. Masudul Huq, Executive Director, Banchthe Shekha, Jessore.
35. Elahi Dad Khan, President, CPB, Jessore.
36. Advocate Abdur Rashid, Gonoforum, Jessore.
37. Advocate Kazi Munirul Huda, General Secretary, BNP District Committee, Jessore.
38. Amirul Alam Khan, Controller of Examinations, Jessore Education Board.
39. Abdus Samad Biswas, Chairman, Keshabpur Municipality, Jessore.
40. Advocate Najmus Saadat, Retired Professor.
41. Sheikh Hassan Imam, Lawyer. Convener TIB Citizens' Awareness Committee, Jessore Branch.
42. Ekramuddowla, Editor Dainik Kallayan, Jessore.
43. Rabiul Alam, President, JSD, Jessore.
44. Advocate Enamul Haque, General secretary, NAP, Central Committee.
45. Doctor Rabiul Haque, Cultural Personality and former President, BMA, Jessore.
46. Shaikh Siraj, Director, Transmission, Channel I.
47. Shah Hadiujaman, former member of Parliament, Jessore-4.
48. Aninda Islam Amit, Executive Director, Dainik Lok Samaj, Jessore.
49. Nur Jalal, President, District NAP, Jessore.
50. Zahiduzzaman Tokon, Secretary, District Red Crescent Society and Press Club, Jessore.
51. Binoy Krishna Mallik, Executive Director, RIGHT, Jessore.
52. Engineer G.C. Majumder, Workshop Super, Polytechnic Institute, Jessore.
53. Champa Shaha, Udichi, Jessore.
54. Fakhre Alam, Poet and Journalist, Jessore.
55. Shubhankar Gupta, Convener, Bhabatosh Pani Nishkashan Sangram Committee, Jessore District wing.
56. Aminul Islam Rontu, Columnist, Jessore.
57. Abu Nayeem, General Secretary, Kingshuk, Jessore.
58. Saifur Rahman Shaikh, General Secretary, Shnagbadik Union, Jessore.
59. H.R. Tuhin, Representative, the Daily Jugantar, Jessore.
60. Zahid Babu, sportsman, cultural activist, student, Jessore.
61. Aftabur Rahman, Zonal Coordinator, Proshika, Jessore.
62. Advocate Delwar Hossain, Zilla Ainjibi Samity, Jessore.
63. Md. Shahidul Islam, Unnayan Dhara, Jhinaidaha.
64. Dipankar Das Ratan, General secretary, TIRJAK, Jessore.
65. Skumar Das, General Secretary, Udichi, Jessore.
66. Nabi Newaz Md. Mujibuddowla Sardar Kanak, President, Zilla Ainjibi Samity, Jessore.
67. Farazi Shahadat Hossain, Vice President, Jessore District Awami League.
68. Wahiduzzaman Ark, Writer and Businessman, Jessore.
69. Hafez Tarafdar, Student M.M. College, Jessore.
70. Kaneez Fatima, Student, Public Administration, University of Dhaka.
71. Advocate Md Itimuddowla, Judges Court, Jessore.
72. Jayanta Biswas, Convener, DOTANA, Cultural organization, Jessore.
73. Kazi Golam Mostafa, Asst. General Secretary, Bangladesh Communist Party, Jessore.
74. Bappi Roy, student and cultural activist, Jessore.
75. Prof. Golam Mustafa, retired Principal.
76. Tarpada Das, retired teacher, Shamlini School, Jessore.
77. Kazi Abdus Salam, Student, M. M. College, Jessore.
78. Mostafa Ruhul Quddus, District Representative, Dainik Sangram, Jessore.
79. Benzin Khan, RTV, Representative for Jessore.
80. T.I. Tariq, Student, Government City College, Jessore.
81. Jahangir Alam, Lecturer, A.F. Women's College, Kaliganj, Jhenaidaha.
82. Advocate Manirul Islam Muneer, President, Abul Islam foundation, Jessore.
83. Mostafizur Rahman Kabul, General Secretary, Sramik Federation, Jessore District.
84. Shakila Akhter, Representative, JANIPOP.
85. Advocate Sabia Khanam, Judges Court, Jessore.

Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, Executive Director, CPD (Dialogue coordinator)