

# Volatile situation during caretaker govt if talks fail

Speakers tell roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The situation during the next three months of the caretaker government would be volatile if the proposed dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition fails to reach an agreement on electoral reforms before the expiry of the tenure of the present government, speakers at a roundtable said yesterday.

They said it would not be possible to bring about reforms during the caretaker government and that militancy would raise its ugly head taking advantage of the conflicts

among the political parties.

Academics, diplomats, high government officials and eminent citizens took part in the roundtable organised by the Institute of Development Strategy (IDS) and the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) at the National Press Club.

CDRB Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley presented the findings of an opinion poll on 'Comprehensive reform for good election and better Bangladesh'. The IDS and CDRB conducted the survey on 2000 people. The questionnaire was also posted on web site.

According to the survey, 80.28 percent of the respondents said no one should be allowed to contest the parliamentary election from more than two constituencies, and 87.5 percent said the candidates must disclose certain personal information such as net wealth, financial and business interest and taxes paid.

About 78 percent of the respondents said the Election Commission should be further empowered and made independent. Every voter should also be provided with an identity card, said 92.23 percent of the respondents.

About 71 percent of the respondents are in favour of a ban on hartal, and 60.68 percent said the number of ministers should be limited to 15 or 18.

On student politics, 83.5 percent of the respondents said there should be constitutional restriction on dragging students into party politics or violence.

Speaking at the roundtable, Brigadier (retd.) Sakhawat Hussain said conflicts among the political parties are responsible for the rise in terrorism in the country and that the evil forces would rear their ugly head if the political stand-off over electoral reforms is not resolved within the next 24 days.

Mentioning a report of the Transparency International, Bangladesh (TIB), Jatiya Party Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam said 29 legislators in the present parliament did not pass the SSC examinations.

He suggested that the Election Commission should introduce a new provision regarding the educational qualification of candidates. The candidates for parliamentary election must be graduates and the legislators should not be involved in any businesses other than making laws, he added.

Dr Ataur Rahman said the Article-17, which does not allow a candidate to speak against his party's decision in parliament, should be amended to make parliament effective.

Prof Nurul Islam, Selina Hossain, Mosleh Uddin Ahmed, columnist Jagul Ahmed Chowdhury and former lawmaker Nurul Islam also spoke at the roundtable moderated by Dr Mustafizur Rahman.



PHOTO: STAR

Dr Mustafizur Rahman speaks at a roundtable organised by the Institute of Development Strategy (IDS) and the Centre for Development Research, Bangladesh (CDRB) at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his right is CDRB Chairman Dr Mizanur Rahman Shelley and on his left is Dr RA Gani.

## Form labour tribunal outside EPZ, reinstate workers

Demands BCWS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Centre for Workers' Solidarity (BCWS) yesterday demanded reinstatement of all suspended and terminated workers as well as convenors and members of all Workers' Representatives and Welfare Committees (WRWC) in Export Processing Zone (EPZ).

The centre also demanded immediate formation of EPZ Labour Tribunal and EPZ Labour Appellate Tribunal.

Kabir Hossain, a temporarily suspended WRWC convenor of LSI Industries Ltd, said they are extremely oppressed as they do not have any place to go for justice.

"The only place to go to seek justice is BEPZA which always

serves the interest of owners instead of us," he alleged.

Kalpona Akter, secretary general of BCWS, said the workers in EPZ never get justice as they do not have the right to form trade union.

Though the EPZ workers get a little much higher salary than the other workers, they are deprived of their rights, she added.

Kalpona demanded reinstatement of all suspended and terminated workers of EPZ including those of A-One BD Ltd.

Workers of different factories also spoke at the conference.

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