

State terrorism, bad political culture responsible for HR violation

Politicians, civil society members tell seminar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

State terrorism and bad political culture are mainly responsible for human rights violation hampering normal public life and depriving people of their basic needs, said the politicians and civil society members at a seminar in the city yesterday.

They said lack of concern for human rights and uncompromising attitude among the political parties lead to political violence which disturbs educational, financial and other activities worsening the condition of poor.

In the wake of such realities, the speakers suggested practice of democracy within the political parties, reforms in the Election Commission and inclusion of human rights issues in school textbooks.

The seminar titled 'Human rights exercise in political culture: We want compromise and normal movements of people' was organised by Sushashoner Jonno Procharavijan (Supro), meaning campaign for good governance, at the National Press Club marking the World Human Rights Day.

"State terrorism means abuse of power, which is the major enemy of human rights. Those who formulate bad laws are responsible for disturbing peace," said top Awami League leader Abul Mal Abdul Muhit.

Most people do not like the politicians, as they abuse power and engage themselves in corruption, he said, citing an example that army deployment in aid of civil administration is nothing wrong, but the attitude of President Iajuddin Ahmed is more autocratic than that of Yahya or Tikka Khan of then West Pakistan.

"I will be the victim if I protest the president's decision of army deployment. This is a state terrorism," he

added.

Protests, rallies, differences of opinions are natural phenomena in democracy, but why should these happen in the form of violence, questioned Supro Secretariat head Aminur Rasul Babul.

In his presentation Babul said, "We must respect the normal life of people in our political culture. Putting citizens at the opposition will never harvest good results for the political parties."

They also should avoid uncompromising attitude, he said, adding that taking the advantage of political impasse, the foreign capitalist forces might take the control of ruling the country, which will be a threat to national sovereignty.

Referring to the theme of this year's Human Rights Day 'Fighting poverty as a matter of obligation, not of charity', Mohammad Zakaria of

Supro said all the achievements would be meaningless if poverty cannot be alleviated from the country.

He said the government should immediately start implementing the pledges that it made by signing the UN instruments. This includes separation of judiciary, establishing rule of law and democracy and strengthening the movement against terrorism and corruption.

AL leader Dr Abdur Razzak said poverty alleviation is not possible unless equal distribution of resources is ensured. "Only 10 percent people enjoy 35 percent resources of the country. The gap between the poor and the rich has also widened significantly," he said.

This advantaged group neither reveals their income sources nor pays taxes duly, he said, adding that development is meaningful only

when all people have opportunities to get its share.

Former BNP lawmaker Moazzem Hossain Alal said it is not only the politicians who are responsible for irregularities and underdevelopment, but their fault is always emphasised, which is not fair.

Both the people and politicians have responsibilities in democracy, he said, adding that people criticise a lawmaker if he drives a car, but they do not criticise a businessman who buys 10 cars even being a defaulter in the bank.

Former BNP lawmaker Tasneem Rana, Advocate Suprio Chakroborti, Shahadat Hossain Chowdhury of Prodig, an NGO, and Imam Uddin of Peoples Health Movement also spoke at the seminar moderated by Supro Secretary Rezaul Karim Chowdhury.

'Strengthen family values to ensure peace in society'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a roundtable underscored the need for unity and solidarity in the family to eliminate domestic violence, injustice and discrimination from the society.

They also called for a united movement for educating women to strengthen family values to ensure peace and harmony in society.

They were speaking at the roundtable on "Human Rights in the Families of Bangladesh" organised by Worldwide Family Love Movement (WWFLM) and Bangladesh Paribar Unnayan O Punarbashan Sangstha at a com-

munity centre in the city yesterday to mark the International Human Rights Day.

Speaking as a chief guest, Dr Mohammad Mahbubur Rahman, secretary to the ministry of Textile and Jute, said urbanisation and modernisation are the root cause behind the fragmentation of family ties in contemporary world, which ultimately leads to violence and corruption.

Terming families as the supreme institution to mould a person's basic character, he further urged for an equal participation of both men and women to build up strong family values.

"Its through instilling proper morals in a child at an early age we can save the world from destruction", said Khurshid Irfan Ahmed, adviser to Ain O Shalish Kendra, who attended as a special guest.

ATM Ataur Rahman, secretary to Bangladesh Parliamentary Secretariat, highlighted the importance of educated mothers in families.

Kazi Ali Reza, officer-in-charge of the United Nations Information Centre (Unic) and Tajkera Khair, chairperson of WWFLM, also spoke on the occasion.

CONTEMPT OF COURT

SC lawyer faces suo moto rule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A High Court (HC) bench yesterday issued a suo moto contempt rule on a Supreme Court (SC) lawyer asking him to explain within a week why he should not be prosecuted for contempt of court and be punished in accordance with law.

The bench also ordered the accused lawyer Sheikh Awsafur Rahman not to appear before it with any of his cases until disposal of the rule.

The HC division bench following a newspaper report placed before the bench by Barrister Ruhul Quddus Kajal, member-secretary of the Caucus of Young Legal Professionals, issued the contempt rule against Awsafur.

The Daily Sangram ran a report yesterday headlined "Awami lawyer's audacity on November 30" alleging that Awsafur misbehaved with Justice AKM Asaduzzaman in his courtroom on that day.

AL-backed UP chairman murdered in Bagmara

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

A union council chairman belonging to Awami League was murdered by unidentified assailants at Jalpaitala in Bagmara upazila last night, said the police and witnesses.

The victim was Jahangir Alam, 38, Goalkandi union chairman and the upazila Awami League executive committee member.

The killer gang numbering about 10 called Jahangir out from a club at Jalpaitala intersection and fired four bullets on his head and chest at around 7:30pm.

Awami League leader and former minister Sardar Amjad Hossain told reporters that hired goons of BNP-Jamaat or cadres of militant outfit Jama'atul Mujahidin, Bangladesh (JMB) might have link in the gruesome murder.

The police refrained from making any comment on the murder, but said, they have already arrested one person fleeing from the scene with help of villagers.

Jagrata Muslim Janata, Bangladesh commander Siddikul Islam Bangla Bhai, who launched anti-outlaw operations in 2004, forced Jahangir on gunpoint to hold some meetings at his house.

Bangla Bhai met several times with journalists at Jahangir's house.



Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain dry over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the country during early morning, Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 29.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Cox's Bazar and Khepupara and lowest 12.2 degree Celsius at Simongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:12pm today and rises at 6:31am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature	Humidity in percentage	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.7	16.4	77	57
Chittagong	29.3	16.0	85	58
Rajshahi	27.4	14.2	92	75
Khulna	28.0	17.2	79	--
Barisal	28.0	15.0	90	90
Sylhet	27.3	15.5	88	63

Ershad to go by party's desire, join 14-party

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Rangpur

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad announced here yesterday that his party is going to join the 14-party combine in the upcoming election as desired by the party supporters, activists and leaders.

He said sufferings of the people during the last five years surpassed all previous records but he could not stand by them as his freedom was snatched away.

Addressing a meeting with the party activists and leaders of the northern districts at Rangpur JP office, Ershad said, "I am free today. I don't bother about any conspiracy. I am ready to embrace all sufferings for the cause of the people. I have been waiting for the last five years to get such opportunity."

He said JP is now considered as the 'stairs to go to power' because neither the BNP-led four-party alliance nor the Awami League-led 14-party combine will be able to form government without its support.

Tajul Islam Choudhury, Abdur Rashid Sarker, Abdur Rouf Manik, Moshir Rahman Ranga, and Mostafizur Rahman also spoke at the meeting chaired by Karim Uddin Bharsa.

All the speakers except Moshir welcomed Ershad's decision to join the 14-party combine.

HC stays order to make 353 officials OSD

UNB, Dhaka

The High Court yesterday stayed for two months the operation of gazette notifications making OSD some 353 officers, who are awaiting next postings during the general election.

Giving the order of stay, a division bench comprising Justice Syed M Dastagir Husain and Justice Mamnoon Rahman issued rule upon the government to explain why the notifications regarding the postings of the officials, ranking from deputy secretary to secretary, "should not be declared unconstitutional".

The court orders came upon a writ petition challenging the validity of the notifications issued on December 4.

The petitioner contended that the notifications were issued "in violation with the Constitution".

Moving the petition, Barrister Omar Sa'dat submitted that the notifications were issued by the interim nonparty caretaker government in violation of the Article 58D (1) of the Constitution.

The Constitution has barred the interim government from making any policy decision like promotion of the civil servants, the counsel told the court, citing Article 58D(1).

It says the non-party government shall discharge its functions as an interim government and shall carry on the routine functions of such government with the aid and assistance of people in the services of the Republic. And, except in the case of necessity for the discharge of such functions, it shall not make any policy decision.

Outlaw killed in 'shootout'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kushtia

A top activist of outlawed New Biplobi Communist Party (NBCP) was killed in a 'shootout' with Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) at Ratulpura village in sadar upazila yesterday.

The dead was identified as Kata alias Rajbabbar, 40, son of Notun Mia, of the same village.

According to a Rab 12 press release, Rab arrested Kata from his house on Saturday night and took him in custody for interrogation where he confessed to having firearms hidden in different areas.

Later, Rab took him along to Ratulpura to retrieve the firearms.

As soon as the law enforcers reached the village at around 9:30am, NBCP outlaws opened fire on them. Rab returned fire that triggered a half-hour long gunfight.

Kata was shot during the shootout while trying to escape and died on the spot, claimed Rab.

Rab retrieved a firearm and 15 bullets from the spot.

According to police, Kata was a close associate of notorious NBCP leader Akdil Hossain and accused in different cases including four for murder.

A total of 127 alleged criminals, highest across the country, have been killed in shootouts in Kushtia since June 2004.

Admission test of NIMC today

Admission test of Northern International Medical College (NIMC) for first year MBBS course under 2006-2007 sessions will be held today on the college campus, says a press release.

Admission seekers have been asked to be present at the venue at 9:30am.

BNP hails move to deploy army

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday welcomed the president's decision to deploy army across the country and said the chief of the caretaker government has taken the decision a bit early due to vandalism and destructive activities of the 14-party.

"He (the president) has saved the nation from a catastrophe by taking this decision," Bhuiyan said at a press briefing at the party's Naya Paltan office in the capital after attending a joint meeting with the party leaders.

The president and chief adviser to the caretaker government took the

right decision, which he was compelled to take. Otherwise, the public sufferings would worsen, The BNP leader observed.

When his attention was drawn on a number of advisers' opposition to the president's decision on army deployment, Bhuiyan said, "I don't know whether the advisers opposed the decision or not".

At the meeting, BNP finalised programmes for observing the Martyred Intellectual Day and National Victory Day on December 14 and 16.

The programmes include discussion, placing floral wreaths at the National Mausoleum at Savar and Martyred Intellectual Mausoleum at

Mirpur, cultural programmes, rallies and colourful processions.

BNP will organise a discussion at National Press Club auditorium at 3:00 pm commemorating the Martyred Intellectual Day on December 14 and another discussion at Mahanagar Natya Mancha at 3:00 pm on the occasion of National Victory Day.

On December 17, BNP will bring out a colourful procession from the party's central office at Naya Paltan on the occasion of National Victory Day. Jatiyatabadi Muktioddha Dal will organise a freedom fighters' rally and discussion on December 18.

Lawyers granted bail as SC resumes work

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They are Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) President barrister Amir-Ul Islam, Bangladesh Bar Council Vice-chairman barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, former SCBA secretary Enayetur Rahim, advocate Subrata Chowdhury, Awsafur Rahman, Khashruzzaman and Subrata Saha.

The bench also issued rule on the government to explain why the petitioners should not be granted regular bail.

Barrister Rafique-ul Haq, Dr M Zahir, Mahmudul Islam, barrister Shafiq Ahmed, barrister Azmalul Hossain and Abdul Baset Majumder appeared for the petitioners.

Barrister Omar Sadat and SC authorities brought the sedition charges separately against around 200 lawyers for the November 30 vandalism on the Supreme Court premises.

Dr Kamal Hossain and barrister

Tania Amir, who are also among the 200 lawyers, will seek bail after returning from abroad, sources said.

The vandalism took place following the stay orders by the chief justice upon public interest writ petitions minutes before giving a rule by a High Court division bench.

Leaders of Awami League-led 14-party combine and some other parties filed the writ petitions challenging the legality of the president's assuming the office of the chief adviser to the caretaker government.

The other HC bench directive against the harassment came following a writ petition challenging recent police raids on the residences and chambers of the lawyer-petitioners and attempt to arrest and harass them without following the due legal process.

The 11 lawyer-petitioners concerned are Biswajit Roy, Mosfaqur Rahman Sobuj, M Masud Alam

Chowdhury, Syed Mamun Mahbub, SM Zafar Sadeque, Nizamul Huq Nizam, M Khairul Alam, ARM Hasanuzzaman Uzsal, SM Fazlul Haque, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and M Abdul Matin.

Police started raiding the homes and chambers of some lawyers on suspicion of their involvement in the November 30 vandalism on the Supreme Court premises.

The bench also issued a rule on the government to explain why it should not be restrained from interfering in the privacy and sanctity of the homes and chambers of the petitioners without any order of the court.

Barrister Rafique-ul Haq, Mahmudul Islam, Mahbubey Alam, Abdul Matin Khasru, Obaidur Rahman Shaheen and Enayetur Rahim appeared for the petitioners.

Meanwhile, security on the SC premises was strengthened yesterday to avert any untoward incident.

Yunus unveils vision to end global poverty

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"Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. Micro-credit is one such means," said Committee Chairman Ole Danbolt Mjos, adding that such initiatives

"advance democracy and human rights."

Yunus also used the Nobel platform yesterday to criticise purely military strategies for combating terrorism, which often springs, he said, from deep-seated poverty.

"I believe that terrorism cannot be won over by military action," he said. "I believe that putting resources into improving lives of poor people is a better strategy than spending it on guns."

Also accepting the award on behalf of Grameen Bank's seven million investor-borrowers were Mosammat Taslima Begum, who used her first 16-euro (20-dollar) loan in 1992 to buy a goat.

Today she has expanded her entrepreneurial activities to include a small mango orchard, a fish pond and a rickshaw for transport -- operated by her husband -- and is one of the bank's nine elected board members.

"If you multiply Taslima by seven

million you get a sense of the impact of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh," Yunus told journalists on Saturday.

All but two or three percent of the borrowers at Grameen, which is 94 percent owned by depositors, are women, one of three focal points for the 2006 award.

"The Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to focus attention on dialogue with the Muslim world, on the women's perspective, and on the fight against poverty," Mjos said.

Yunus said that new mechanisms must be found to redress gaping inequalities in wealth distribution, noting that 60 percent of the planet's population live on only six percent of global income, and that one billion people subsist on less than a dollar a day.

But micro-credit is only part of a broader vision in which Yunus sees the development of a kind of socially-conscious capitalism.

He has already launched several social businesses, which he hopes will motivate established corporations and young entrepreneurs to follow suit.

A partnership with French food giant Danone, for example, produces

and markets nutrient-rich yogurt at near break-even prices in Bangladesh, while another venture -- with US companies Cisco Systems and Quadcomm -- focuses on providing affordable access to mobile telephony and the Internet.

Both are what Yunus calls "non-loss, no-dividend companies."

Indeed, Yunus argues that modern communications technology -- mobile, borderless -- is one of the most powerful tools available for eradicating poverty.

One of Grameen's most successful lending programs has targeted rural women who borrow money to purchase a mobile phone, and then sell telephone services in their village.

There are today over 300,000 of these so-called "telephone ladies" throughout Bangladesh, including four on the 13-member board of directors of the bank.

All of them came to Oslo this weekend to share in the glory of what Yunus describes as their collective achievement.

CA criticised for calling in army

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the president of deploying the army on advice of the BNP-Jamaat alliance, adding that this step had got the nation's military involved in unnecessary controversy.

At a presidium meeting in the party office yesterday, Badruddoza also noted that the president's decision shows that the caretaker government has failed in its responsibility in some regards.

Meanwhile, Executive President of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Oli Ahmed urged the armed forces not to stoop to the role of 'police.'

"You are the pride of the country for your unparalleled contribution to the liberation war. Therefore you will not side with any particular political party or the corrupt," he said while addressing a rally in Tangail yesterday.

The LDP leader also urged the government to arrest all the BNP ministers, lawmakers and leaders who have plundered crores of public assets in the past five years.

Regarding deployment of army, Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman HM Ershad said that the army is the pride of the nation and they must not be used to fulfill any ill motives of any particular party or alliance. He was

addressing a party meeting at Rangpur yesterday.

Ershad also urged the forces to act by putting themselves above all controversies for the greater benefits of the people.

Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) in a press release termed the army deployment as a 'provocative' move that endangers the hard-fought negotiations to resolve the political stalemate. "This move only fans the fire of the political tension instead of dousing it," the statement said quoting CPB President Manzurul Ansan Khan.

"Just when it is necessary to implement the 'package proposals', this move would only deepen an already dangerous political crisis, if the army is deployed with any ill motives," Khan said. Bangladesh Students' Union, the students' wing of the CPB, demanded the withdrawal of the troops from all educational campuses.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Worker's Party described the move as 'abuse of power' by the president. "There is no doubt that the president has abused his powers to deploy the army in order to implement the agenda of the BNP-Jamaat without any logical reason," said a press release. Demanding immediate

removal of the armed forces, the WP press release also stated, "Using the military against the people for the sole interests of a particular group is not an alternative."

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) in a press release yesterday described the deployment of army as "unconstitutional, illegal and conspiratorial" and demanded immediate withdrawal of the forces.

"The provision allows only the council of advisers to deploy the military, not the president alone," the JSD press release said, adding that it is completely unconstitutional and illegal to sideline the council of advisers in this regard.

Bangladesh Samajtantrik Party (BSP) in a press release quoted the convener of its central committee Khalequzzaman as saying, "What is needed is not the deployment of the army, but the resignation of the chief adviser."

The Freedom Fighters' Coordination Committee and the Sylhet Division Development Action Council also sent press releases demanding the immediate withdrawal of the army.

No such situation arose for army deployment

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that no such situation has arisen that the army should be deployed. Taken without discussion with the advisers, it has in fact become a "prestige issue" for them, he added.

Agriculture Adviser CM Shafi Sami said they are very worried about the way the home ministry took the decision. Finance Adviser Akbar Ali Khan said he was enquiring whether it was a routine decision of the home ministry or a greater political decision of the government.

"It does not call for any consultation with the advisory council if it's a routine decision. But it is mandatory to confer with the advisers if it's a major political decision," he added. He maintained that it was not a decision of the council of advisers. The issue of army deployment did not come up for formal discussion at the advisory council meeting, he added.

Akbar Ali said, "I also need to find out for how many days and for what reason the army has been deployed."

The finance adviser said the press release issued by the home ministry on Saturday night did not say what

actions the forces will perform during their stay and when they will return to barracks.

"I don't know exactly why the army has been deployed. I haven't seen any activities of the army yet," he added.

"We have many reasons to feel frustrated. I will stay with the government as far as I can contribute to the holding of a free and fair election. I won't be continuing the job merely for the sake of it," Akbar said at a briefing at the Finance Ministry Auditorium. He said implementation of the package proposals has got stuck in a big and important issue. "However, we will keep trying to resolve the issue," he observed.

Akbar described the decreeing of section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code around the Bangabhaban as a quasi-judicial matter.

He said the advisers are thinking over a new proposal for recasting the Election Commission (EC) with a view to breaking the stalemate.

"We are having talk with each other. I have already spoken to Shafi Sami and Sultana Kamal about the new

proposal," he added.

CM Shafi Sami said he will continue to be with the efforts to resolve the crisis.

"We are still hopeful that a resolution will come through a consensus among all the stakeholders," he added.

Replying to another query, he said he will carry on with the job as long as he is able to work towards holding a free and fair election.

Sami said he does not want to say anything about resignation at this moment. He can decide whether to quit or not only after consulting with the colleagues, he added.

He said alternatives to an amicable resolution of the crisis could mean terrible and disastrous outcomes for the nation.

Information Adviser Mahbubul Alam described the decision to field the armed forces as a routine decision of the home ministry.

He said only a few points of the package proposals remain to be implemented and that he will keep on trying to get over the problem through more discussions.