

Resist 'one-sided' election

Grand alliance leaders urge people

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Awami League-led grand alliance leaders yesterday called on the people from all walks of life to resist the 'one-sided' January 22 elections in order to restore democracy in the country.

There will be no election under Chief Adviser to the caretaker government Iajuddin Ahmed, they asserted at a grand rally held at Paltan Maidan in the city.

"The chief adviser must be removed, all attempts to implement the election engineering be stopped and the rejected nomination papers be accepted before any elections can take place," said Jatiya Party Chairman HM Ershad.

The nation now feels helpless in

the face of a 'conspiracy', he said, adding that Awami League President Sheikh Hasina is spearheading a campaign to restore democracy and a democratic government will return to power.

Ershad said there is a conspiracy to arrest himself. "I have surrendered my fate to the grand alliance, now it is up to them and the people to decide what lies in store for me," he added.

"This might be the last time I come onto this stage, but if the conspiracy can be foiled and I can be freed, I will come back here again for you," the JP chairman said.

"My last word to you is that I can promise that the one-sided elections will be resisted with the last

drop of our blood," he stated.

Badrudozza Chowdhury, president of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), said the nation is facing the greatest crisis since independence as the people are being deprived of their basic right to vote through a conspiracy.

The people who have struggled to earn their freedom in 1971 are again being robbed of their rights by the BNP-Jamaat alliance through an evil design being implemented by the president/ chief adviser, he said.

He also criticised the chief adviser, saying that President Iajuddin Ahmed himself has violated the constitution to become the chief adviser, but now he (Iajuddin) is citing the provisions of the consti-

tution to defend his decision to hold the one-sided election.

"As 70 percent of candidates have withdrawn their nomination papers, how can a credible election take place?" Badruddoza asked.

He accused the chief adviser of being the protagonist of the conspiracy to destroy democracy. Therefore, he has to bear all the consequences, Badruddoza added.

He appealed to the police and the army to stand by the people to help prepare a correct and updated voter list.

Worker's Party President Rashed Khan Menon said that giving the army the power to arrest anyone from any place without a warrant is part of a conspiracy to bring back the BNP-Jamaat coalition to state power.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haque Inu called on the activists to make all-out efforts to resist the 'farical' elections.

Zaker Party Chairman Mostafa Amir Faisal said President Iajuddin Ahmed became the chief adviser by violating the constitution only to hold a 'one-sided' election in order to bring back the BNP-Jamaat coalition to power.

AL General Secretary and 14-party coordinator Abdul Jalil said the people would resist the election at any cost to prevent the communal and undemocratic forces from forming the government.

AL leaders Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofail Ahmed, Motia Chowdhury, Sheikh Fazul Karim Selim and Suranjit Sengupta, JP leaders Kazi Zafar Ahmed and Ruhul Amin Hawlader and LDP leaders Oli Ahmed and Maj (ret'd) Abdul Mannan also spoke at the grand rally.

Removal of Iajuddin demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President of Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) Dr AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury demanded removal of President Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of the chief adviser for sake of a free and fair election.

Badrudozza, also former president, said it at a meeting with British High Commissioner Anwar Choudhury at LDP presidium office at Baridhara in the city yesterday, says a press release.

Head of Chancery Duncan Norman, LDP Secretary General Major (Ret'd) Abdul Mannan, Presidium Member MA Zinnah and Organising Secretary Mahi B Chowdhury were also present at the meeting.

All the parties are demanding re-announcement of election schedule after reformation of Election Commission (EC) and formulating a correct voter list but the president seems does not care about it, Badruddoza said.

He also criticised the brutal attitude of police.

Following the meeting, Anwar Choudhury said the international community, including his country, wants an acceptable, free and fair with participation of all parties in the country.

Farical election would not get acceptability to the international communities, said Anwar.

1,197 more held

UNB, Dhaka

Police arrested some 1,197 people from across the country on various charges in the last 24 hours ending at 6:00am yesterday.

During the drive, the law-enforcers also seized seven firearms, one another weapon and 11 bombs, a press release of police headquarters said.



Prominent lawyers Dr Kamal Hossain, *third from right*, Barrister M Amir-UI Islam, *second from left*, Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud, *fourth from right*, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, *extreme right*, and nine others coming out of the court yesterday after obtaining bail in a criminal case filed in connection with vandalism on the Supreme Court (SC) premises on November 30 last year.

Act rationally for holding acceptable election

DCCI urges CG

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DCCI leaders yesterday urged the caretaker government (CG) and two major political parties to resolve the present crisis through constructive dialogue for a free, fair and participatory election.

"We do not support a poll without all parties' participation. The election should be acceptable to people of the country as well as to international community," said Hossain Khaled, new president of Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), at a press meet, which was organised to introduce the newly elected executive committee and to discuss the current political uncertainty.

He said the business community is seriously worried about the current volatile political situation emerging from declaration by the 14-party grand alliance not to participate in the forthcoming election and taking vow to resist the election through different agitation programmes.

"The CG should act rationally and objectively for a credible and acceptable election rather than making the situation complicated," he added.

he added.

He said the constitutional obligation in holding the election within 90 days will not be a big problem if all political parties agree and come to a consensus.

The DCCI chief said the country's trade and economy have been seriously affected due to political turmoil for the last three months and business losses are mounting.

"It is widely recognised that hartal causes direct loss of more than Tk 500 crore to the economy of the country per day," he said, adding that the loss due to blockade will be much more than this.

The loss due to one day's hartal has been estimated at 0.12 percent of the country's GDP while the government losses revenue worth about Tk 30 million a day only due to the halt of Chittagong Port during the blockade, he said.

"The apparel sector stated that it suffers financial losses worth at least Tk 3.60 billion a day due to hartal," he added.

Khaled said foreign aid flow into the country during the first four months of 2006-07 was US\$ 172 million, as against US\$ 335 million during the corresponding period of

Left parties' countrywide road march today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

All left-leaning parties will stage countrywide road march with red flags and launch mass contact campaign today demanding resignation of Iajuddin Ahmed from the post of chief adviser to the caretaker government (CG) and cancellation of general election slated for January 22.

They also demanded reshuffling of the administration and preparation of correct voter list.

Seven left parties under the banner of Gonomukti Andolon, Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) and Five Left Party have decided to boycott the general election and enforced the countrywide programmes saying that a congenial atmosphere for a free and fair election is yet to be created.

As part of the countrywide programme, Bangladesh Samajtantrik Dal, Workers' Party, left-leaning Eight Party, Samajibi Mukti Andolon, Garib Mukti Andolon, Samyabadi Dal and Bangladesh Gonatantrik Andolon under the banner of Gonomukti Andolon will hold a rally at Muktagong in the city at 3:00pm.

After the rally, leaders and activists of the Gonomukti Andolon will lead a road march towards Bahadurshah Park in old Dhaka with red flags.

Turn population into human resources

President asks teachers

UNB, Dhaka

President/Chief Adviser Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday asked the teachers' community to play a sensible role in turning the population into human resources.

"You can play an effective role in spreading knowledge among students through lively teachings in your classrooms, giving feedback, taking healthy measures and proper evaluation. Your creativity, well thought out methods and sincere efforts could make a difference," he said.

The President said this while inaugurating a programme for distribution of primary and 'ebtedai' level textbooks and marketing of secondary level books for 2007 at the International Conference Centre.

He said education flourishes people's natural instincts and creativity, and makes one as an enlightened person. "So we give emphasis on spreading education and making human resources to survive in today's competitive world," he said.

Referring to the highest allocation for the education sector in the national budget, Iajuddin said this programme helped raise the country's literacy rate and improve the standard of education, brining an epoch-making change in women education.

Expressing his satisfaction at the timely preparation and publication of textbooks, he said primary and 'ebtedai' textbooks have already reached the authorities concerned at the field level.

The President said measures have been taken for the marketing of secondary level textbooks in the beginning of the academic year.

He said printing and distribution of textbooks were privatised in 2005 for reaching the books to the primary and secondary level students in time.

Iajuddin expressed the hope that the organisations concerned with their honesty and sincerity would be able to timely reach the textbooks to all the primary and secondary level students as per demand.

He also asked the authorities

concerned to closely monitor the programme.

The President/CA mentioned that compulsory education of ICT at the secondary level and various programmes for expanding vocational and technical education for making the students familiar with new technologies.

He called upon all, irrespective of party affiliations, to come forward to create skilled manpower and reach the fruits of education to the people's doorsteps.

Iajuddin asked the students to sincerely nurture their tenderness alongside obtaining contemporary knowledge and reading science for building themselves as worthy citizens.

He also asked them to develop the mentality to work for the welfare of the country and its people imbued with patriotism.

The President/CA thanked all the officials and employees concerned of the National Text Book Board for their relentless efforts to reach the books to the students despite various odds.



Agitated workers of Padma Poly Cotton Knit Fabrics Ltd. vandalise a car during a demonstration in Tejgaon Industrial Area in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

Arson attack on Hindu houses condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Hindu Bouddhu Christian Oikya Parishad yesterday strongly condemned the arson attack on 50 houses of Hindu families in Dianjur.

In a statement, the Parishad said a gang of criminals equipped with sharp weapons attacked the houses at Amuir village under Sundarban union in Sadar Upazila at the dead of night on Sunday when the family members were sleeping.

The gang set fire to 50 houses and threatened to kill all 150 people living there. They also looted all the houses.

At least 22 people were injured in the attack. The family members are now living under the open sky.

Parishad leaders Maj Gen (Ret'd) CR Dutt, Adv Siril Shikder, Ushatan Talukdar and Prof Nim Chandra Bhowmik demanded immediate arrest of and exemplary punishment to the culprits.

Police action on blockaders condemned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Mahila Parishad yesterday strongly condemned countrywide police atrocities, including indiscriminate mass arrest, attack on political leaders and activists during three-day blockade enforced by the grand alliance.

In a statement, the leaders said boycotting an election is a democratic right that might not be acceptable to other political parties.

In a separate statement, Samajik Protirodh Committee also condemned police action during the blockade programme.