

Ex-BNP ministers, MPs hit out at 4-party leadership

'Failed politicians must quit politics'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several former ministers and lawmakers of BNP yesterday came down heavily on the BNP-led four-party alliance leadership for resorting to massive corruption and terrorism, saying that failed politicians must quit politics.

They also demanded that the corrupt leaders be brought to justice.

There is no alternative for the present military-backed caretaker government but to achieve success, the BNP leaders said at a roundtable at the National Press Club.

"The Quest for New Leadership" organised the roundtable, with BNP standing committee member Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman as the chief guest.

Former minister and BNP Vice-President Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, former state ministers Alamgir Kabir and Anwarul Kabir Talukdar, former ambassador and adviser to the BNP chairperson Mofazzal Karim, former lawmaker Shamsuzzaman Dudu and Krishok Dal leader Mujibur Rahman took part in the roundtable moderated by Ehasanul Kabir, infor-

mation and research secretary of BNP central committee.

Lt Gen (retd) Mahbubur Rahman said the present government must succeed in bringing about a positive change, as the nation does not want to go back to the previous situation.

The government has already brought changes to several institutions, he said, adding that reforms now should be brought to the political parties for a qualitative change in this arena.

Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf said old leadership as well as the system have to be changed. "Let us have a new system and new leadership, which would run the country properly," he added.

Alamgir Kabir said the 'Hawa Bhaban' group is responsible for corruption and terrorism. The group even ran a 'parallel government' from that controversial Bhaban, he added.

"The Hawa Bhaban group has ruined all the institutions. They have even appointed judges and bureaucrats," he alleged. Those who plundered public property cannot be forgiven, he added.

Strongly criticising the Khaleda

Zia's government, Anwarul Kabir Talukdar said all corrupt people must be brought to justice.

"The 'dual governments' destroyed everything in the last five years and the corrupt leaders have grabbed 28 or 29 government buildings in the city," he said.

Calling for a political revolution, Mofazzal Karim said some politicians are responsible for the present political crises. "It has now been proved that the allegation of siphoning of money is true, although I earlier thought it was propaganda," he said.

Criticising BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia for her recent comment about the party's Secretary General Mannan Bhuiyan, he said it would be difficult to keep the party intact if she continues to make such comments.

Shamsuzzaman Dudu said the corrupt political leaders must be removed from politics.

Mujibur Rahman said that the four-party alliances leadership is responsible for the present situation and that the decision to make the president the chief adviser was completely wrong.



(Left) Furniture and other office materials being removed from the office on the 5th floor of Rangs Bhaban in the city yesterday as Rajuk workers continue to demolish internal structures on the 16 upper floors of the building. (Right) Ratna Roy, an employee of Rangs Group, speaks at a press conference on the Rangs Bhaban at a city hotel yesterday. Officials and employees of the Rangs Group organised the press conference. (Story on Page 16)



PHOTO: STAR

Injured woman falls sick due to starvation

RU CORRESPONDENT

An injured woman fell sick as she had been unfed for last four days at Darshanpara village under Mohonpur upazila in Rajshahi district.

She was identified as Hasna Hena, 70, and admitted to Rajshahi Medical College and Hospital (RMCH) in senseless condition.

Hasna was hurt in a clash between the villagers and the police on July 30 in which at least 30 people including women and children were injured.

Following the clash, five cases were filed with Mohonpur Police Station against hundreds of villagers including Keshorhut Pourasabha Chairman Shahiduzzaman Shahid.

The female members of about 165 families are now passing their days in misery as most of the male members fled homes for fearing of police arrest.

Sources said most family members are leading an inhuman life with their dependents and passing days ill-fed or half-fed in absence of their male earning members.

Police everyday raid the village to arrest the accused persons.

Rabeya, a housewife, said many women are becoming sick day by day due to food crises.

Villagers have urged human rights activists and NGOs to extend their hand and supply foods and medicines to affected people.

When contacted, Officer-in-charge of Mohonpur Police Station Afzal Hossain said only the accused are absconding, general people are staying at their homes.

Call to conduct extensive research on road safety

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at the third national convention of 'Nirapad Sarak Chai', a campaign for road safety, have underscored the need for extensive research on road safety issues and causes of accidents.

Expressing solidarity with the campaign, former adviser to the caretaker government Dr Akbar Ali Khan called for addressing a number of issues, including the existing law and its application, training of all stakeholders and launch of highway patrol.

Without adequate information and documents, it is not possible to take effective measures to ensure road safety, he added.

The convention titled 'Application of existing law and formulation of new law to prevent road accidents' was held at the Shishu Academy auditorium in the city yesterday.

Stressing the need for proper monitoring, Dr Akbar said, "The parliamentary standing committee on communications ministry could arrange 'hearing' twice a year where the government would apprise the people of measures taken to check road accidents."

He also laid emphasis on freeing the transport sector from criminalisation. "A vested quarter has grabbed the transport sector...The road safety movement has to forge resistance against these enemies."

Presiding over the programme, Nirapad Sarak Chai Chairman Ilias Kanchan lamented that they have been lobbying the government for long to take effective measures to ensure road safety, but the response from the bodies concerned is very slow.

"The highway traffic and road security council are the direct outcome of our movement...But it is a matter of great regret that those bodies completely failed to fulfil the objectives," he said.

Mohammad Yasin Ali, managing director of Dutch-Bangla Bank Ltd, called on the affluent people to join the movement and also insisted on raising awareness about the issue.

Army members donate Tk 2.05 cr for flood victims

UNB, Dhaka

Members of the armed forces have donated their one day's salary to the chief adviser's relief fund for the flood victims.

On behalf of the army members, Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed handed over a cheque for Tk 2.05 crore to Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed at his office yesterday.

Thanking the army personnel for their contributions, the chief adviser said this assistance would be helpful for the flood victims.

This is the first donation to the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund for the flood-affected people.

Gen Moeen said that members of the army spontaneously donated the money for the flood victims.

Principal Staff Officer of the Army Lt Gen Masud Uddin Chowdhury and top military officials were also present on the occasion.



PHOTO: PID

Chief of Army Staff General Moeen U Ahmed hands over a cheque for Tk 2.05 crore, one day's salary of the members of the Armed Forces, to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed at CA's office in the city yesterday for the flood victims.

Coal mining: Germany shows the way

FROM PAGE 16

populated area, the 282 square kilometre (sqkm) North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) coal mining zone stands as a bright example of how agriculture, water bodies, forests, communities and coal mines can co-exist for each other's benefit.

Mining coal from open pits is a story of more than a hundred years for Germany. The NRW area is an ideal case study for Bangladesh because it is densely populated with 529 people living in each sqkm area. Till now 196 sqkm area of NRW has already been mined and completely reclaimed.

From the fifties, about 50,000 people have been resettled to facilitate mining. Sometimes resettlements created disputes and political debates but Germany chose to expand mining to cater to its greater economic needs.

The Daily Star correspondent visited the mines and coal power plant installations near Cologne at the invitation of Asia Energy Bangladesh between July 25 and July 28. The Daily Star covered the travel and hotel cost of its correspondent while Asia Energy that has stakes in the Phulbari Coal Mine facilitated the visit in collaboration with Germany's biggest mining and power company RWE. RWE is a consultant company for Asia Energy for handling Phulbari project's most sensitive area -- water table.

Twenty to 30 km off the busy city of Cologne, one would come across the vast open pit mines. There are three open pit mines in operation--Hambach mine pit which is as big as 20 sqkm with mine area spreading 42 sqkm and a gradual depth reaching 390 metres, Inden mine is 38 sqkm having a depth of 350 metres and Garzweiler-2 mine is 48 sqkm.

Records show that the 282 sqkm NRW area now has 12.5 percent of it for buildings and open spaces, 1.05 percent for plant area, 0.6 percent for mines, 6.8 percent for traffic movement, 1.6 percent recovery phase area, 49.6 percent for agriculture, 1.9 percent

for water and 25.2 percent for forest.

These three mines are annually producing 10 million tonnes of lignite coal against a total proven reserve of 3.8 billion tonnes in the NRW area. More than 90 percent of this coal can be extracted in the open pit method of mining, which is in a sharp contrast with the fact that coal extraction can be as low as 6 percent of it in an underground mine like Barapukuria in Bangladesh in its 30-year lifetime.

The RWE, which is a homegrown German company, operates this mine and uses this entire lignite to generate 11,000 megawatt power in the NRW area alone. RWE produces 33,000 MW power from lignite all across Germany. RWE Power Co that employs more than 18,000 people earned 6.57 billion euros in the last fiscal year.

Because of the open pit system of mining, which allows maximum extraction of coal reserves, the cost of RWE's lignite-fired power is less than euro 1 cent, says RWE BOA Power Plant's executive Egbert Reinartz.

But besides economic factors, there are human and environmental factors in judging whether open pit mines are better than underground mines. "There had not been one instance of fatality in the last 30 years in these mines," says RWE's senior hydrogeologist Dr Thomas Von Schwarzenberg. "There had been accidents but not deaths."

In contrast, official figure of death in underground mines of China last year was 5,000 and unofficially death figure is said to be 20,000 a year. Even on August 1, 67 miners died in China. The Barapukuria mine so far witnessed three or four deaths though it is not operating in full scale.

When the RWE is granted licence to mine in a certain area, it has to acquire the land that belongs to private citizens or the government. Accordingly, RWE acquires agricultural areas and villages for certain period of time. The communities are given new areas and homes to live in, preferably within 10 to 20 km of

their original homes. The government and communities are closely involved in this phase.

After it completes mining in that area, it must scientifically fill up most part of the void so that the land becomes arable again. Restoration of agricultural land and forest undergoes a process lasting several years to ensure that the fertility level has reached its original state.

Part of a mined area will always have a void because the miners take away huge quantities of coal. This void is scientifically turned into lakes which the public can access as recreation and sports facilities. Such residual lake can be 25 sqkm big and 150 metres deep.

As an open pit mine is easy to work in, the miners have installed 300 km of conveyor belts in the three mines of NRW, plus there is 600 km of railroad to carry coal to power stations in the area.

RWE's Mining Engineer Ruediger Durchholz pointed out some of the major issues of mining that need constant attention -- noise, dust, groundwater, reclamation of land and resettlement of communities.

The mining company strictly maintains dust and noise prevention measures. A monitoring group, other than the government, keeps an eye on the mining activities.

He said on an average 10 percent people of a community, especially the older generation, oppose resettlement. These resistance can lead to court cases but typically the law upholds the necessity of mining over individual properties.

"When there is a resettlement issue, a villager becomes concerned at the loss of properties, unclear future and familiarisation at new locations. We ask the affected people to be involved in the designing of their new homes in new locations. They are given higher payments for their old homes," Durchholz noted.

The Daily Star correspondent visited villages that have been evacuated for mine development and newly built

BSF guns down Bangladeshi cattle trader

UNB, Jhenidah

Members of Border Security Force of India shot dead a Bangladeshi cattle trader on Joluli frontier in Moheshpur upazila early yesterday.

The dead was identified as Asadul Bhalui, 35, son of Moniruddin Bhalui of Matina village in the upazila.

BDR sources said when Asadul went to his field near the border to bring his cattle back home at about 6:00am, BSF members of Ronoghat camp fired on him, leaving him dead on the spot.

The body was dragged away across the frontier by the Indian border guards.

Skeleton of dead whale taken to Nat'l Science, Tech Museum in Dhaka

CU CORRESPONDENT

Skeleton of the dead whale, which was found at Kattali sea beach of the port city on July 30, was taken away to National Science and Technology Museum in the capital yesterday.

A five-member team led by Museum Curator Abu Taleb Molla took away the skeleton, segmented into different parts, in a truck.

Earlier, four morgue personnel at Chittagong Medical College and Hospital (CMCH) separated flesh from the skeleton after a three-day effort at the beach.

Sources said it will take three months to put the skeleton on display for visitors at the museum.

The skeleton would be kept under soil for two months and later the bones would be boiled with necessary chemicals for preserving.

The giant mammal drew huge city dwellers every day.

After five days of indecision about the fate of the blue whale, it was finally decided to send to the capital following a directive of the adviser of the ministry concerned on Wednesday.

225 DU teachers demand release of Hasina

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Some 225 teachers of Dhaka University (DU) yesterday demanded immediate release of Awami League President Sheikh Hasina and declaration of August 15 as the 'National Mourning Day'.

They also demanded immediate execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman murder case.

"In accordance with the government's assurance of showing proper respect to Bangabandhu, we are demanding declaration of August 15 as the national mourning day, and immediate execution of the verdict in Bangabandhu murder case," they said in a statement.

The signatories to the statement included former DU vice-chancellor AK Azad Chowdhury, Muntasir Mamun, AAMS Arefin Siddique, Kazi Shahidullah, Mesbahuddin Ahmed, Mohammad Mizanur Rahman and Badrul Imam.

YLC cultural programme

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Young Learners' Centre (YLC) of The British Council organised a daylong cultural programme for the children yesterday.

Over 250 children aged from four to 12 years took part in the colourful event held at the British Council auditorium at Fuller Road in the city.

British Council Bangladesh Director Dr June Rollinson inaugurated the function as the chief guest.

The programme is organised to showcase the inherent creative talents of the children through spontaneous participation of children and to enhance their interactive thoughts and interpersonal skills, said the organisers.

The major attractions of the function were Simsimur Puppet show, magic and gameshows.

Obituary



She was buried at Azimpur Graveyard after a namaz-e-janaza at the Bashiruddin Road Mosque after Zohr prayers yesterday.

Syeda Jahanara Haq, a renowned social worker and former general secretary of Kalabagan Mothers' Association, passed away in the early hours of

MASS PSYCHOGENIC ILLNESS

14 more fall sick

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Some 14 students fell sick during outbreaks of mass psychogenic illness (MPI), also known as mass hysteria, at a school at Hathazari in the district yesterday.

Sources said Md Mohiuddin, a student of class VIII of Jafarabad High School, felt headache at around 10:30am.

When he was brought to the room of the headmaster, he felt nausea and fainted soon afterwards, said Md Akhter Hossain, headmaster of the school.

As the news spread, other students at different classes started to fall sick, sources said.

Among the students who fell sick,

nine was of class VII, four of class VIII and one was of class X.

Of them, three students identified as Mohiuddin, Amina Akhter and Basab Das were admitted to Hathazari Health Complex and received first aid.

However, Dr Fazle Rabbi of the health complex said they were out of danger.

The authorities of the school declared it closed for three days.

More donation to cancer hospital

Prime Finance and Investment Limited has recently donated Tk 5 lakh to Ahsania Mission Cancer Hospital, says a press release.

Managing Director of Prime Finance and Investment Limited AKM Nozmul Haque handed over the donation to Dhaka Ahsania Mission Kazi Rafiqul Alam at the Mission Office at Dhanmondi in the city on Thursday.

Prime Finance and Investment Limited Senior Vice Presidents Moin Al Kashem and Ahsan Kabir Khan, Vice president Mizanur Rahman, Assistant Manager Kamrul Islam Ratan and officers of Dhaka Ahsania Mission were present on the occasion.



Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at many places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at a few places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Day temperature may rise slightly over the country, Met Office said in a forecast.

Highest temperature 35.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Dinajpur and lowest 24.9 degree Celsius at Sandwip.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:39pm today and rises at 5:29am tomorrow.

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

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in		percentage	
	Max	Min	in celsius		Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.5	27.4			72	56
Chittagong	34.0	25.4			66	92
Rajshahi	34.4	26.3			82	70
Khulna	33.0	27.5			83	76
Barisal	34.0	26.6			76	67
Sylhet	34.1	26.2			95	69
Cox's Bazar	33.2	25.5			67	73