

DIALOGUE WITH CARETAKER GOVERNMENT

BKP alerts CG about remarks by a quarter about military

Demands all local govt elections before national polls

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Kalyan Party (BKP) yesterday alerted the caretaker government about insidious comments of few political parties or quarters about military forces "to provoke a face-off between the people and the armed forces".

The newly floated political party, which is now 205-day old, made the suggestion during its dialogue with the government at the chief adviser's office as part of the ongoing consultations with the parties on transition from the current interim regime.

Asked to clarify the matter of people-military confrontation at a post-dialogue joint press briefing, BKP Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) Syed M Ibrahim said the chief of a big political party stated in the dock that they will see their end.

The BKP chief interpreted that the word 'their' indicated the caretaker government and those backing this government.

As the caretaker government is not an elected government, the joint forces are rendering their hard labour in support of the interim government, he said.

On this score, Education Adviser Hossain Zillur Rahman, who is working as the caretaker government's spokesman in the dialogues with the political parties, said the national dialogue would have to advance on the basis of objective

statement considering overall statements.

Maj Gen (ret'd) Ibrahim, who led a seven-member delegation to the talks, said they stated in the dialogue that according to his party's evaluation, people's confidence in the caretaker government has been on the decline in the last 18 months.

The party suggested regaining people's confidence mainly in two ways: by introducing rationing system in rural and urban areas for the poor and apportioning common masses, particularly rural people, in detail of the previous corruption and how it adversely impacted national life.

About the downturn in people's confidence, Zillur said history would consider the subject of popularity. "The present government is moving focusing on their responsibility," he said, adding that they will certainly consider public concerns.

Replying to a question, the education adviser said there is no possibility of advancing parliamentary elections in October because of the factor of preparation. He, however, said elections for local bodies would not put any impact on national elections, slated for December.

The BKP proposed electing the president by people's direct vote or vote of electoral colleges comprising elected representatives from

various tiers-like union parishad, municipality, upazila and the parliament.

It also strongly advocated for holding all local government elections, including upazila polls, before the general election, or upazila and parliamentary elections on the same day.

The BKP chief proposed that ethnic groups should be invited to take part in the dialogue.

He asked for inviting the Bangladesh Hindu League, the only political party representing the Hindu community, which has already appealed to the chief adviser in this regard.

He also suggested inviting Christian and Buddhist communities under coverage of the civil society, as they have no political party of their own.

The other proposals in their 9-point proposition put forward in the dialogue include comprehensive administrative reforms, balance of power between lawmakers and ministers, ministers and the prime minister, and the prime minister and the president.

They sought amendment to the Constitution to be done by the next elected parliament, and before that, some work can be done through forming Constitution Review Committee, changing the word 'Sanad' in national charter for consensus or policy framework, bicameral parliament, enough

power to the army and law-enforcing agencies before and during the election to check violence.

Moreover, they called for holding the stalled general election within the timeframe of roadmap "to avoid crisis of confidence", and starting the trial of war criminals.

The BKP thanked the government, the Election Commission and the army for their efforts in preparing voter list with photographs.

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed along with three advisers concerned was present at the dialogue.

This was the 16th round of the ongoing dialogue between caretaker government and political parties and different stakeholder groups.

The education adviser informed that they would hold talks with minor groups of population in Khagrachhari on June 27.

He said the first rural and urban regional dialogue would be held in Chittagong on June 28. Dialogue with Jatiya Party will be held on June 30 while with Awami League on July 3.

Communications Adviser Ghulam Quader, Law Adviser AF Hassan Arif, BKP Secretary General Abul Kalam Azad and other leaders of the party, including Mohammad Ali Sarker, Momtaz Begum and Abdul Hannan Palash, were present on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Group Theatre Federation forms a human chain at Segun Bagicha in the city yesterday demanding an increase in budgetary allocation for the cultural sector.

DELIMITATION OF JS SEATS Hearing in Khulna tomorrow

UNB, Khulna

The hearing on the written objections regarding the redrawn boundaries of parliamentary seats in Khulna will be held tomorrow.

According to local election office, the hearings will take place at the Deputy Commissioner's conference room.

Chief Election Commissioner Dr ATM Shamsul Huda and Election Commissioners Sohul Hossain and Brig (Ret'd) M Sakhawat Hossain will attend the hearing for Khulna 5 and 6, Satkhira 3, and Jessore 4, 5 and 6.

10 JOCVs arrive

A 10-member team of Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) have arrived Bangladesh on Tuesday for a period of two years assignment, says a press release.

The volunteers are Yumi Osawa, Kei Shiga, Miki Kashiwagi, Kenji Tsuji, Mayuko Takahashi, Yuya Ishitobi, Ayako Hirashima, Hisashi Shibata, Ryoji Miyashita and Yuko Miyamoto.

They will work on rural community development, environment education and primary school education in different regions of the country.

At present, 44 Japanese volunteers are working in different organisations across the country.

Dhaka committed to maintaining liberal Muslim country image

CA tells Brunei Darussalam envoy

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday said Bangladesh is deeply committed to maintaining its image as a liberal and tolerant democratic Muslim country.

The head of the caretaker government stated this when outgoing High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam in Dhaka Abdul Rahman-bin-Abdul Hamid made a farewell call on him at the CA's office.

As the high commissioner remarked good performance of Bangladesh workforce in Brunei, Fakhruddin noted with happiness that it is good to know that Bangladesh workforce is working well and Brunei is happy about it.

"It is a win-win situation as Bangladesh workers are contributing to the economy of Brunei and sending remittances to Bangladesh as well," he said.

It was informed in the meeting that, presently, per month 100 Bangladeshi people are going to

Brunei with confirmed jobs and higher salary.

The high commissioner said no middleman is working in the recruitment process of manpower rather it is going on through direct government-to-government contact.

"Bigmanpower recruitment will take place in Brunei and Bangladeshi workforce can avail of the opportunity," the diplomat said.

The chief adviser said the existing brotherly relations between Bangladesh and Brunei are deeply rooted in common faith and shared culture and history.

Fakhruddin recalled his meeting with the Sultan of Brunei on the sidelines of the 13th OIC Summit in Dakar, the capital of Senegal.

CA's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed newsmen about the meeting.

Int'l exhibition on pollution control begins

DU CORRESPONDENT

With a view to creating awareness on pollution control management, a three-day international exhibition on pollution control and environment management technology begins at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre (BCFCC) today.

Adroit Environment Consultants Ltd will organise the exhibition styled "Pollutech Bangladesh 2008" where a total of 11 international and 29 local companies will demonstrate and display their technologies, services and products related to the pollution control and management.

Dr Nasir Uddin Khan, managing director of Adroit Environment Consultants Ltd, informed this at a press conference at the National Press Club yesterday.

Nasir expressed hope that the exhibition will create awareness among business groups, play a matchmaking role between polluters and pollution control solution providers and to create business opportunity for the local business groups related to the environment management.



PHOTO: STAR

Awami League leaders sing the national anthem at the beginning of a discussion marking the party's 59th founding anniversary at the Engineers' Institute auditorium in the city yesterday. (Story on Page 1)

Concern over bus fare hike

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different organisations yesterday expressed grave concern over the hike in bus fare in different routes in the city and urged the government to take immediate steps to this end.

In a joint statement, the leaders of Nagorik Sanghati, Citizens' Rights Movement, Green Voice and Projomner Chetona said that when the people are tired of struggling with the hiked price of essentials, the city transports have been realising extra fares, giving price hike of

CNG gas as an excuse.

Although Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) sometimes fined some buses, it did not work at all. Those buses have again charged extended fares from the passengers and no steps were taken against the owners of these buses.

Blaming the management system and corruption of BRTA for this anarchic situation, the leaders of those organisations also said that BRTA should inform people why the route permit of these companies who charged extended money even after being fined have

yet not been cancelled.

They also urged the Ministry of Communications to take necessary actions.

Signatories to the statement include President of Nagorik Sanghati Dr ASM Atikur Rahman, General Secretary Sharifuzzaman Sharif, President of Citizens' Rights Movement Dr Masud Rahman, Secretary General Tushar Rahman, Coordinator of Green Voice Alamgir Kabir, Joint Coordinator Rashed Rabbi and Convener of Projomner Chetona Golam Nabi Hossain.



Death anniversary of Jahanara Imam today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 14th death anniversary of Shaheed Jahanara Imam, who initiated a movement for the trial of war criminals.

Jahanara Imam, the author of 'Ekatturer Dinguli' ('The Days of '71'), passed away at a hospital in the USA on this day in 1994 due to cancer.

Forum for Secular Bangladesh will hold 'Jahanara Imam Memorial Lecture' at WVA auditorium in the city to mark the day.

Justice Mohammad Golam Rabbani will deliver the lecture while Prof Mahfuza Khanam, Habibullah Siraj, Shaymoli Nasrin Chowdhury, Khandaker Abdul Hannan and Shahriar Kabir will take part in the discussion. Prof Kabir Chowdhury will preside over the session.

Journalist Kamal Lohani and Jatiya Kabita Parishad will be awarded Jahanara Imam Memorial Award at the programme.

In the morning, the Forum will place wreaths at the grave of Jahanara Imam at Mirpur.

Proma Aabritti Sangathan, a recitation organisation, will also hold a discussion, rally and recitation session in Chittagong to mark the day.

Bangladesh fair begins in Nepal on Aug 26

UNB, Dhaka

A four-day 'Bangladesh Single Country Fair' will be held at Decoration Exhibition and Convention Centre (DECC), Kathmandu on August 26-29 to promote local products in the Nepalese market.

Nepal, the most potential market of Bangladeshi products among the Saarc countries, is keen to import Bangladeshi products like saree, readymade garments, all kinds of ladies wear, medicine, ceramic and sanitary wares, food and beverage, industrial products, electric cable and wire, plastic wares, household durables, toiletries and cosmetics, lubricant oil and services.

Bangladesh is also the best choice of Nepalese students for higher study. So, the universities can expose their services in Nepal.

An agreement was signed on June 23 with Surround Nepal, a leading event management company and the authorised agent of DECC, and Dhaka International Exhibition Company (DIEC).

Surround Nepal Director Marketing Rajesh KC and Managing Director of DIEC Enayet Karim signed the agreement on behalf of their respective companies.

'46 lakh drug addicts in country'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Director General of the Directorate of Narcotics Control (DNC) Humayun Kabir yesterday said there are over 46 lakh drug addicts in the country and that heroin is the main drug of misuse.

Next to heroin, cannabis and Phensidyl are the drugs of choice for the drug addicts while Yaba is a 'fashion drug', he said at a press briefing on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit

Trafficking to be observed today. The DG quoted the figures from a report of Family Health International.

The drugs seized in the country amounts to only 10 percent of drugs smuggled into the country, he said, adding that some one lakh people are engaged in illegal drug trade and 30 percent of those arrested on charges of drug peddling are women and children.

Replying to a question, DG Humayun Kabir said a drug addict

spends, on average, Tk 100 on drugs a day, which means over Tk 46 crore is spent on drugs daily.

Additional DG Yusuf Ali, Deputy Director Abu Taleb and other high officials were present at the press briefing.

The DNC officials said Dhaka is the main den for drug peddlers and abusers.

The DNC has arranged a weeklong programme from June 20 to 26 to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse.



PHOTO: STAR

Justice Golam Rabbani speaks at a discussion at Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) auditorium yesterday. On his left is Convener of National Committee to Protect Oil, Gas, Mineral Resources, Electricity and Port Engineer Sheikh Mohammad Shahidullah and on his right are Shafiqur Rahman Mazumder and Sahida Sarkar. (Story on Page 2)

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