

Credible polls only way out

Says SCBA; urges govt to make compromise with political parties to end present political crisis

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court Bar Association yesterday urged the government to immediately reach a meaningful compromise with all political parties to resolve the ongoing crisis.

The only way out of the impasse is to form a legitimate government by holding an inclusive and credible election endorsed by the people, SCBA President Khandker Mahbub Hossain said at a press conference in the organisation's auditorium. The adviser to BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia said the present government which "lacks public support" could not survive by torturing, repressing and suing the opposition activists and by denying

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Labourers, most of whom stated to be following their employers' instructions, stage a demonstration some 50 yards away from BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office in the capital yesterday demanding an end to the ongoing blockade of the BNP-led 20-party alliance which began on January 6.

"Pro-govt labourers" egg Khaleda's office

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Following their employers' instructions, some 60 labourers carrying shovels and baskets hurled some eggs which fell way before reaching their target, BNP

Chairperson Khaleda Zia's Gulshan office in the capital, after failing to besiege it yesterday demanding an end to the BNP-led 20-party alliance's ongoing blockade which began on January 6.

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HC order for political talks sought

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A Supreme Court lawyer yesterday petitioned the High Court to direct major political parties including the Awami League and the BNP to hold a dialogue and bring an end to the ongoing crisis marked by violence and deaths of innocent civilians.

A dialogue is necessary to avert arson attacks and bombings which are killing, injuring people and destroying properties, Eunus Ali Akond said in the petition.

The court may hear it on Monday, he told The Daily Star.

Eunus prayed for an order on the home secretary for taking necessary measures to stop violence and killings in the name of political movement.

The HC was also requested to issue a rule upon the political leaders

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BNP warns lawmen against 'repression'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The members of law enforcement agencies will face dire consequences if they do not stop repressing the opposition activists at the behest of the government, the BNP said yesterday.

In a statement, Rizvi Ahmed, its joint secretary general, wrote, "The law enforcers are not state forces now. The government has turned them into 'Awami law enforcement agencies'. It is drenching the entire country with the blood of opposition men using you people."

He said the law enforcers had become a symbol of horror for their "brutal" attacks on the opposition activists.

Slamming Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her accusation that Khaleda

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Thought for food

IMPORTANCE OF FOOD LABELING AND RELEVANT LEGISLATION

A food labeling is the display of information about a product appearing on its container, packaging, or the product itself and information may include any words, particulars, trademark, brand name, pictorial matter or symbol relating to the food.

The main purpose of labeling is to enable the consumers to avoid, reduce or eliminate dietary excesses and nutritional problems. In addition they help the consumer to avoid food components which may provoke allergic or adverse reactions. But now-a-days food manufacturers & industries are more concerned with promoting their products rather than providing necessary information and/or misdescribing their products on the labels which sometimes can be ambiguous and misleading for the consumers. They have a right to expect that the food bought matches the description given on the label and that they get what they pay for.

Legislation on Food labeling according to Food safety Act 1990, UK, Section 15, subsection 1

"Any person who gives with any food sold by him, or displays with any food offered or exposed by him for sale or in his possession for the purpose of sale, a label, whether or not attached to or printed on the wrapper or container, which:

1. Falsely describes the food; or
2. Is likely to mislead as to the nature or substance or quality of the food, shall be guilty of an offence.

**** Food Safety Law 2013 (Bangla version), Chapter V, and Article 32 can be read through which is published by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh ****

A good food labeling should have the following particulars and it must comply with legislation

The name of the food, the list of ingredients, any ingredient or processing aid or derived from a substance or product causing allergies and still present in the finished product, the quantity of certain ingredients or categories of ingredients, net quantity of food, the date of minimum durability (the 'use by' date or best before date), any special storage conditions and/or conditions of use, food business name and address, the country of origin, instructions for use where it would be difficult to make appropriate use of the food in the absence of such instructions, with respect to beverages the actual alcoholic strength by volume, a nutrition declaration.

There are some instances which can directly or indirectly confuse & mislead consumers -

- The use of pictorial on the labeling can be misleading especially on processed foods or beverage. E.g. In Bangladesh we can see packaging of mango flavored drinks show a whole mango picture but in reality % pulp not marked on the product label.
- Safe Level of additives such as colors, flavors or preservatives not found in the labeling that may cause health hazards.

- Some time beverage such as juice label indicates free of flavors and preservatives & it's all natural but the fruit used to make this juice is almost certain to be a product of industrial farming, and is likely to contain chemical residues.
- Some parts of the world, Food Allergens has not been identified and not mandatory to label on the packaging.
- Nutritional information is also another problem area. Some producer declares their product as "vegetarian" but in reality, some ingredients taken from animal sources such as milk, egg.
- Manufacturer or packer must mark their product as minimum durability according to Food Legislation all over the world including Bangladesh but we can easily find lot of expired products in our retail shops.
- Sometime manufacturer declares health benefits on their labeling but it makes confusion to the consumers as well as health hazards. E.g. Sugar free Diet Coke. Normally Aspartame (synthetic sweetener) is added to the diet coke as sugar alternative but must be added in permitted quantity which is not labeled on their product.

The following steps should be taken into consideration to improve food labeling up to standard-

- Responsible authority should provide guideline to the food industries according to the food legislation
- Strong monitoring should be put in place to ensure industries are following the guideline as given & samples can be taken from the market for laboratory analysis to make comparison with the food labeling.
- Catering service providers should be included as they should label lists of ingredients as well as quantity and any allergens which may cause adverse health effect.
- Enforcement authorities should enforce Food Safety Law (relevant to the respective country) and should make unannounced inspection to the food industries
- Use mass media to develop public awareness regarding Food Labeling.



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