

Essay on Politics of Bangladesh

Forty years of independence gave Bangladesh a lot. We have made significant progress towards democracy. We have ousted military dictators and established democracy in a very short period of time comparing to other countries in the world. Many other countries in the world are still dealing with dictators or military regimes. Along this journey, many of our leadership sacrificed a lot. Our prime minister lost her entire family. Our opposition leader was widowed. And many other great leaders sacrificed their lives for our country, for our democratic rights. Since 1991, we are having parliamentary elections in regular intervals, which is a very good sign. Besides small incidents, Bangladesh is sailing smoothly in the path of modern democratic society.

The politics of Bangladesh takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic, whereby the Prime Minister of Bangladesh is the head of government, and of a multi-party system. Executive power is exercised by the government. Legislative power is vested in both the government and parliament. The Constitution of Bangladesh was written in 1972 and has undergone fourteen amendments.

The President is the head of state, a largely ceremonial post. The real power is held by the Prime Minister, who is the head of government. The president is elected by the legislature every five years and has normally limited powers that are substantially expanded during the tenure of a caretaker government, mainly in controlling the transition to a new government. Bangladesh has instituted a unique system of transfer of power; at the end of the tenure of the government, power is handed over to members of civil society for three months, who run the general elections and transfer the power to elected representatives. This system was first practiced in 1991 and

adopted to the constitution in 1996.

The prime minister is ceremonially appointed by the president and must be a member of parliament, commanding the confidence of the majority of the MPs. The cabinet is composed of ministers selected by the prime minister and appointed by the president.

I thank Shiek Hasina and Khaleda Zia for their personal sacrifice for our country. History will judge their contribution to our country. But we live in the present and we need to solve our current problems. I consider Bangladesh still very fragile democracy. In 2008, the people of Bangladesh gave Bangladesh Awami league a landslide victory and I believe Sheik Hasina's govt doing everything they could do to move the country forward. But they are missing a key ally in their journey which is Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the largest opposition in the parliament. Without a sensible opposition, democracy doesn't sustain. BNP has not been in the parliament for over a year now. Parliament is the heart of democracy. People send their representatives to the parliament through a fair voting process. But BNP is not exercising people's mandate. They are staging street protests, disrupting commerce, affecting people's lives by calling hartal in the name of people. Calling strikes is a democratic right, but not by violating the law and order of the country. We are not Egypt or Tunisia where we have dictators for over 30 years. We have a democratic government in the country. We don't need street protests, burning buses, or shutting down businesses through violence. We need productive dialogs in the parliament. If the opposition leader truly cares for the people of Bangladesh, please go fight for people's rights in the parliament. Not in the street.

If the BNP leader's true motive is just to get in power, then our democracy is in big trouble. BNP is the second-largest political party in the country. We need them in the parliament, not in the

street. Debate the national issues you do not agree with, even if you don't win by a majority in parliament, people will know that BNP is a sensible and credible opposition. So when they are elected to run the country, they will be a sensible government as well. I share the same sentiment for future opposition parties in Bangladesh. Let's take our country forward, not backward. I am urging BNP to come back to the parliament and start participating in the democratic process and stop calling hartals.