

Should the secularists abandon AL?

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In a land where, albeit, there are no dearths of shocking news, the revelations of the so-called deal between the AL and the Khelafat Andolon created a shock of Tsunami magnitude among the secular Bengalis living all across the globe. The agreement, the content of which, although kept secret from the AL presidium, the highest policy making body of the organization, but the signing ceremony was not all that secret, since I was able to watch it sitting in my drawing room in Toronto through the courtesy of ATN. Since its successful and historic leadership in creating an independent Bangladesh in face of many odds, AL lost more than it won, including elections. Nevertheless, AL had always something to boast about, which was the sympathy and support of our intelligentsia; those who adamantly believe in a secular and non-communal Bangladesh, which are in absolute conformity to the values and virtues of our great war of liberation. With the single stroke of a pen of its very imprudent general secretary, AL has promised to carry out some major enactments, which in his own words is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that not only defy the principles that formed the pinnacles of our creation of a secular state, but even contradict the provisions of the constitution in its current disfigured states. More over, it has put the high heads of many to a rock bottom, who have used their pens and preaching to uphold the values that have always helped creating a moral high ground for the AL. In my own analyses, this *faux pas* is probably the most despicable depravity the party has ever been engulfed into since its inception.

The heart breaking repercussions of the secularists, inside and outside, Bengalis and non-Bengalis alike, those who want to see Bangladesh prospers as a secular democratic state, were quick and categorical. It was heartening to see even the personalities with the closest proximity to the highest leadership of AL have come up with strong and concerted protests to nullify the so-called MOU. Aside from keeping the pressure on AL to abrogate the deal, the secularist forces obviously have three options vis-à-vis the ensuing election, if at all it goes through. Firstly, they could abandon their rock-solid supports for the AL and instead ask people to support its adversaries. Secondly, they could abandon their supports for the AL and ask people not to vote for either of them. Thirdly, they could still urge people to vote for the AL with the pledge that they will fight tooth and nail to prevent the implementation of the deal if the AL led alliance wins the election.

The country is under the siege of multi-prone conspiracies crafted by the BNP led alliance over the last five years which is now very skilfully played by their anchorman, the self-assumed Chief Adviser (CA) Iajuddin Ahmed, defying the provisions of the constitution, the rule of laws and any semblance of conscience and ethics expected from the first citizen of any (except for banana) Republic. It is very clear now from his two month's of actions and inactions that Iajuddin Ahmed has a single agenda in his card and that is to bring his utterly disgraced masters back to the helm of power of the state. To meet the evil design, he has deviously made all the organs of the state subservient to him, including the highest judiciary of the Republic, the last hope of its citizens. As the chief of a supposedly neutral caretaker government, he has not only continued with

committing the crime of extrajudicial killing but more blatantly has been using the barbaric act to annihilate the political opponents of his masters. Under this fated scenario, if the secularist forces resort to first option, it would only smoothen Iajuddin's contemptuous journey much easier to sail through. Once back in power, the BNP led alliance will bulldoze the AL's MOU (a part of which they have already implemented) on the nation with no resistance, since the AL, in that likelihood, would lose all the moral right to mount any criticism of it.

In the likelihood of the second option, the end result would be more or less similar to the first, expect for the fact that Iajuddin's conspiratorial plans at least would not enjoy the support of the secularist forces whose mighty pens absolutely net the country's print media. These in turn would aid in crystallizing the opinions of the diplomatic and international community whose support, in the absence of any internal avenues to redress the situations, would be vital to get rid of the impending tyranny.

In the event that the final episode of Iajuddin's conspiracy is overridden by people's power similar to the happenings in Kansat, Shanir Akhra and Fulbari, and if the secular forces resort to third options, they will have considerable power to prevent AL not to implement the MOU. Probably, for the first time, it would not be unwise for the secularist forces to believe in BNP secretary general's words when he said, "AL will never implement this deal". Based on my collected assessments from scores of absolutely neutral individuals from many regions of Bangladesh as regard to the people's (especially of poor and lower middle class) concerns, the whole country has become a Kansat vis-à-vis the atrocious rule of the BNP led government over the last five years and Iajuddin's evident conspiracies one after another to bring the country to the brink. Except for 1971, more than any other time in history, struggling people of the country need the voices of conscience, the secularist forces form the principal bastion of it, on their side to overturn Iajuddin's chain of conspiracies. Should our secularists keep themselves aloof by abandoning AL, in turn the general people who possess no clear perception of AL's recent mountainous lapse, at such a grave (could be a turning) point of history?

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