

Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

# Prof Yunus: Our national pride

Please convey our (Probashi Bangladeshi) message to our first Bangladeshi Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Dr. Muhammad Yunus.

We don't have enough words to wish you right now, we get lost in our highest joy and happiness for your grate success. This is the success of our nation, and success of humanity. We would like to congratulate you from the bottom of our heart. We pray together, "Let our country be poverty free". "Let's work together for peace and harmony". We will help you to make your dream (poverty free Bangladesh) true. We are with you.

On behalf of Probashi Bangladeshi from Canada.  
**Md. Imtiaz Hassan**  
Toronto, Canada

Firstly, congratulations to the Nobel Peace prize winner Dr. Muhammad Yunus and his institution Grameen Bank. This is such a great achievement for Bangladesh that too made me feel very proud among my classmates here in the UK at London Metropolitan University. It was a great counter strike to my white classmates who consider that we, the Indian sub-continental Muslim people are terrorists and bombers. Now I told them that we are not such what you people think of us. We are the makes of peace on the earth and we won the Nobel Peace Prize. Congratulations to Bangladesh for giving birth to a gladiator who fought his whole life for the poor, against poverty.  
**Muhammad Zakir Hossain**  
London Metropolitan University, UK

For last few years this kind of rumblings were going on that Prof. Muhammad Yunus might

get the Nobel Prize. At last getting the adrenalin of the nation high Prof. Yunus and his Grameen Bank were declared to have won the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006. It makes the nation witness one of the biggest attainment albeit it was long overdue.

Prof. Yunus, a living legend and maiden Nobel laureate of Bangladesh has commenced the nation to walk into a new dimension. His innovative micro-credit programme helped poor people to develop their entrepreneurship skills. Over 6.5 million people, 96 percent among them are women, have so far received Grameen Bank's micro-credit and around 58 percent (approx. 3.8 million) of them have been able to ameliorate their conditions by breaking out of the poverty trap. A small comment from the Nobel Committee must be cited here, "Yunus and Grameen Bank have shown that even the poorest of the poor can work to bring about their own development."

Concomitantly, this achievement also heralds the triumph of the spirit of fellow feeling and camaraderie and will help to brush aside some stereotypes about our country.

So, we must not be lost in reverie. It is time to come the whole nation together and croon the valedictory song to the poverty with Prof. Yunus in unison.

**Sifat Mohammad Sayedee**  
SUST, Sylhet

Professor Muhammad Yunus has proved once again that the people of Bangladesh with their millions of small pursuits can add up to create the biggest wonders. In 1971, they earned their freedom, in 1990 they earned democracy, and in 2006,

earned Nobel Prize for peace through economic development of the poor. Professor Yunus is now going after removing poverty from the country forever. It is a pride for the nation no doubt, but I consider it to be the greatest shame on those who promised the same ever since we earned our freedom.

**Saiful Islam, On e-mail**

The 2006 Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to Dr. Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank is a propitious sign for Bangladesh. All eyes, internationally, in various sectors, have turned their direction toward Bangladesh and its talent, recognising one of its fulfilling successes rather than focusing on its unrest and needs.

It is the first time that the Prize has been awarded to a profit-making business. Yunus' effort and the Grameen Bank signify the critical role that the private sector and individuals must play in the realisation of socio-economic rights, specifically through innovative (and at times, riskier) initiatives and opportunities that unleash human potential.

The honour for the nation coinciding with Ramadan is an opportunity for Bangladeshis to reformulate their traditional notion of zakat.

Perhaps, a more beneficial form of zakat lies in more affluent members of society internalising a sincere desire to pursue the welfare of the nation and thus, creating a culture that demands that private enterprises take on the social responsibility of beginning such initiatives. The creation and sustenance of such a culture involves consumers rewarding those private institutions that support such initiatives.

Reconsidering zakat must also include recognising the importance of efforts to support not only human survival or charity, but also human potential, on a personal level. For example, those are in the position to do so must not only monetarily support charities during Ramadan and otherwise, but must consider the socio-economic benefits of volunteerism, like the free tutoring of young and teaching household staff how to read and write so that they are able to pass more along to future generations.

**Samira Khan**  
Master in Public Policy  
from Harvard

"I got to know the news from a foreigner and I felt absolute rapture and got enthralled when everybody here was talking about our country. I can't just make you realise my feelings, particularly a Bangalee like me who lives abroad, when the whole world is talking of us."

The above quote is an immediate reaction from a friend of mine who is abroad now. This reaction was in response to the news of Dr Yunus's winning Nobel Peace Prize.

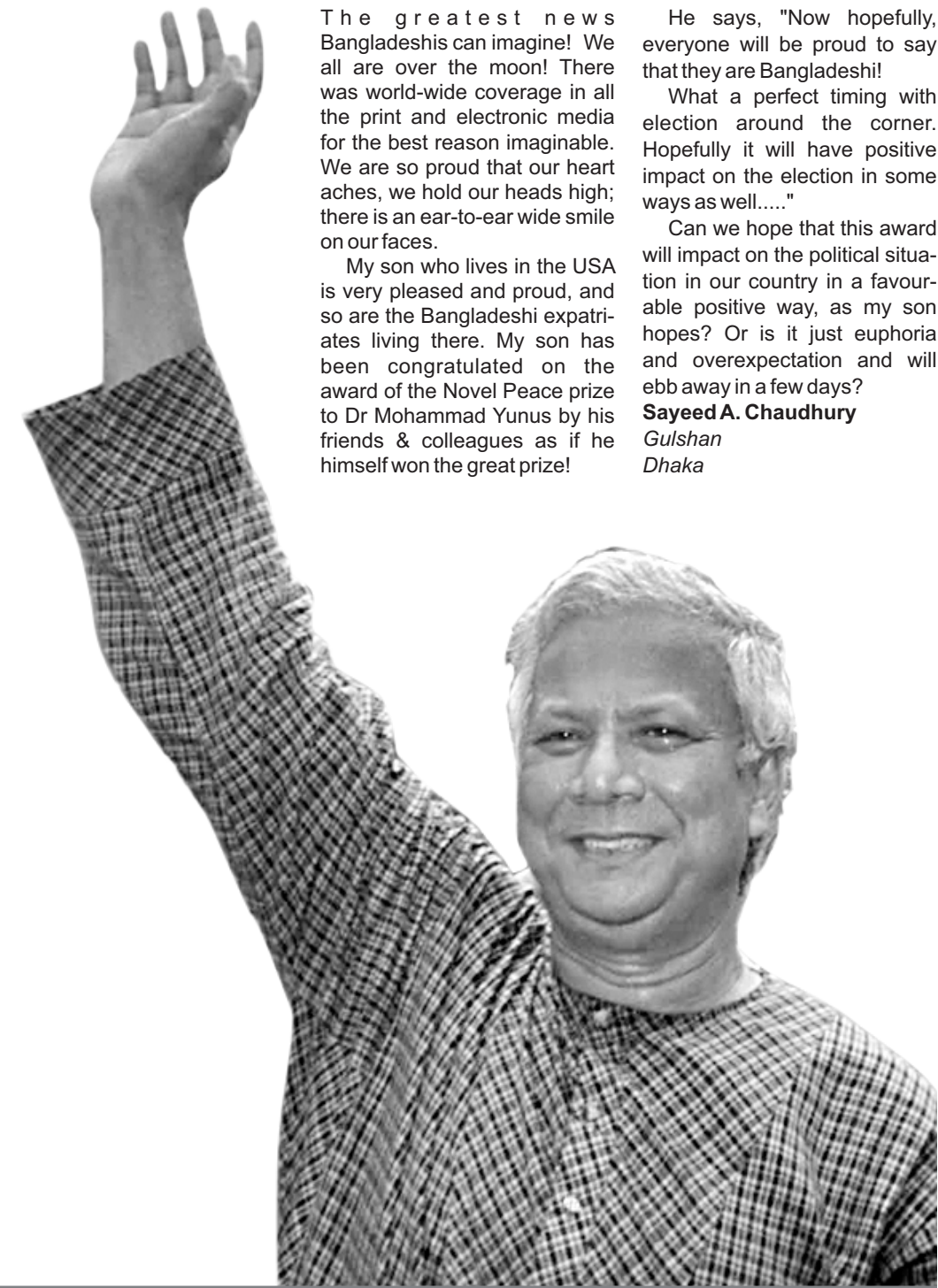
When I first heard the news from my colleague I was speechless. I was speechless not because it was unexpected; it was very much expected as we were expecting to hear this news for last few years. But I was speechless because it was a mere coincidence for me. Last few days I was actually expecting some kind of miracle to happen at this crisis stage of our country to give us positive spirit. The way our leading two political parties were throwing dirt to each other, the way they are eager to project one another's dark side, the way our leaders have now become dependent on foreign power to take deci-

sion about country's fate, this really made us wonder whether there is any light any where for us! In this period of darkness, Dr Yunus's getting Nobel Peace prize is really a ray of hope for people like me who dreams for better Bangladesh even in the wildest darkness. He has now introduced Bangladesh to the world with a new look. It's really a great honour for all Bangladeshis at home and abroad and above all to our motherland.

**Tahera Jabeen**  
A Development Practitioner

I, and perhaps many others across the world, were hopeful that he would receive recognition for his primary and visionary role as the global progenitor and executor of the (essentially-economic) concepts of micro-finance and micro-credit. May it not be argued for that Dr. Yunus's primary contribution was to the stunningly successful framework of alleviating poverty through the innovative, pragmatic, and sustained application of micro-finance and -credit? Therefore, may it not be reasonably argued further that he, and his groundbreaking credit institution were more-than-sufficiently deserving of the coveted Nobel Prize in Economic Science?

**Sadiq S. Ahmed, On e-mail**



The greatest news Bangladeshis can imagine! We all are over the moon! There was world-wide coverage in all the print and electronic media for the best reason imaginable. We are so proud that our heart aches, we hold our heads high; there is an ear-to-ear wide smile on our faces.

My son who lives in the USA is very pleased and proud, and so are the Bangladeshi expatriates living there. My son has been congratulated on the award of the Nobel Peace prize to Dr Mohammad Yunus by his friends & colleagues as if he himself won the great prize!

He says, "Now hopefully, everyone will be proud to say that they are Bangladeshi!"

What a perfect timing with election around the corner. Hopefully it will have positive impact on the election in some ways as well....."

Can we hope that this award will impact on the political situation in our country in a favourable positive way, as my son hopes? Or is it just euphoria and overexpectation and will ebb away in a few days?

**Sayed A. Chaudhury**  
Gulshan  
Dhaka

## Bangladesh cricket team and management

After witnessing Bangladesh lose two of the first matches in the ICC champions trophy to Sri Lanka and the West Indies respectively the team had nothing left to do but play against Zimbabwe to complete formalities of participating in the qualifying round of this tournament. The fact that Bangladesh lost is not the major issue here; the issue for concern is that Bangladesh lost both matches even before the second innings started.

They never targeted to chase 302 against Sri Lanka neither had they any plan of restricting the West Indies to 161.

This is where we cannot but find a major lack in strategy formulation or even any plan for that matter. Mohammed Ashraful who has been successful only in the number 4, 5 and 6 batting position is being sent to open even after repeatedly failing to perform in that position. Where his career average is in the 20's his batting average in the opening slot is around 15. I do not understand the necessity for sending him up there if he does not perform there. If the team management thinks that he is not good enough for the number 4, 5 or 6 position he could be dropped. Sending Ashraful to the opening position looks nothing but some form of harassment to a player who could perform better if allowed to bat at his preferred position.

I do not think Bangladesh has reached that stage where they can play without Javed Omar in the team. He at least has one thing called consistency in his performance and has this selfish need to stay in the wicket, which other batsmen in the team lack so much in.

My second point concerns Sakib Hasan and Reza the new recruits of the team. Why does the management suddenly play two new youngsters in the team? These kinds of sudden decisions not only hamper the team's balance but they also hamper the future careers of these young players. They could have played one of the two at a time instead of handing the responsibility of the middle order to them in a single match.

A recommendation I would like

to make is to drop Habibul Bashar as soon as the world cup in 2007 ends because he has contributed nothing to the ODI team in the 80 or 100 matches he has played (keep him for test cricket as long as he performs). If he cannot better his average of 21 in his age he can never do any better.

Another thing, which shows the short-term mindedness of the team management, is in its succession planning on captaincy. What in the world made them decide to make Shahreer Nafees vice captain who is barely 21 or 22 and who has not even been in the team for more than a year? There is no doubt that this kid would have felt the world's pressure on him if Habibul had not played for the injury.

The board needs to take appropriate and effective measures on improving the first class cricket structure so that the management has more options of choosing players of experience in first class cricket rather than having to select players from the under-19 team who have not grown mentally enough to understand the need for temperament, persistence and pressure management. If players reach the age

of 24 or 25 and then get to play in the national team having around 7-8 years of first class cricket experience they will be more capable to relate to the significance of playing in the national team. They will not take their position in the team for granted and will have at least a basic idea of what temperament and adjusting to the needs of the game actually mean.

**Syed Munazir Hussain**  
On e-mail

Bangladesh cricket team finally signed off from ICC champions' trophy with a brilliant tune. Its only fitting that another thumping victory coincided with the day one of the rare bird of the soil earned the greatest laurel for the nation. Bangladesh did not perform all that bad in other matches. Against far superior Sri Lanka they put up admirable show in stretching them to some extent. Against West Indies they were well on course to a good total. Youth exuberance overrode professional aptitude and led to collapse. We must consolidate our gains and learn from our pains. Some youngsters graduated in the matches. Saquib seems to be

a man of immense potential. Left arm spinners emulating the veteran Rafiq is proving to be our mainstay. Role models make lot of difference. We must explore our potential and regroup. Ashraful must not be risked again to open. He can bat at number five. Nafees should have a genuine opening partner. Mehrob Junior can be tried. Aftab should know to adjust and adapt to circumstances. He will win many matches if he can restrain himself from committing suicide when in full flow. Mashrafe needs a striking partner. Shahadat Rajeb must be tried. We need a genuine quickie to unsettle opponents with pace and bounce. Bangladesh should try to find an attacking leg spinner and an off spinner. Above all we need a thoughtful captain to lead the side.

**Saleque Sulfi**  
On e-mail

### Prof Yunus

Dr. Md. Yunus has made us immensely proud. Henceforth Bangladesh will no longer be 'famous' for land of misery, tornadoes, cyclones, poverty, political violence etc. rather it will be called as an Asian country, which produced a Nobel laureate.

We have many success stories. But 'Grameen Bank' concept has superseded all and hence the recognition. Dr. Yunus emerged as a real hero. A country needs heroes and role models who can be followed and will inspire the nation for ever bigger achievements.

We need to nurture the heroes and root out the villains, so that we can dream of many more 'M. Yunus' in our country.

**SN Mamoon, Dhaka**

There is understandable joy in the country regarding the announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize winner, but I find it more than a little ironic that countless organisations are now spending large amounts of money inserting full-page colour advertisements in all the newspapers in order to congratulate and praise him.

These adverts extend heartiest congratulations. But I am also fairly certain that Professor Yunus would think it a better use of this money to extend further loans to the ultra-poor or deprived groups within Bangladeshi society rather than merely transferring money between already well to do private organisations.

**Keith D Cundale**  
Gulshan 2, Dhaka

Our political parties have merged with the people in expressing their happiness and congratulating Professor Yunus for bringing so much honour for our country. But only congratulation is not enough, to follow his footsteps, to give heed to his words, will be the real felicitation. He is very upset by the present political situation in our country and urged both secretaries of BNP and Awami League, to immediately settle the disputes prevailing among them in a single sitting and emerge everyone from the meeting embracing each other.

We hope and trust our political leaders will not ignore the call of a person who has won the noble prize for his relentless efforts to reduce poverty, to help millions of people stand up on their feet. He did it because he loves the people and wants to see smiles upon their faces.

Do our politicians love the people? The existing circumstances made it clear that their ambition is to go to power at any cost, to remain at loggerheads, not caring for the country and its people.  
**Nurjahan**

### Chittagong

#### Dialogue enters critical stage

The one-on-one dialogue between BNP Secretary General Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan and BAL General Secretary Abdul Jalil is on. Both hoped for arriving at a consensus and for an amicable settlement of the dispute over different proposals related to Electoral Reforms & Caretaker Govt. I think this dialogue reflects the wish of the masses. But sometimes we are too negatively affected by the irresponsible statements of the chiefs of these two parties. Sk. Hasina said, "There is no scope to compromise in the ongoing dialogue." On the other hand, Khaleida Zia said, "No amendment will be done in the constitution and they are not compelled to work according to AL's whims." Besides, they are threatening each other verbally. Furthermore, these two leaders went abroad whereas at home no solution is still in sight. Their absence has delayed the negotiation and may even lead to a deadlock. Yet we think their tolerance, patience and consensus are a must for the next election. Now we are awaiting the dialogue result.

**Abu Sayem**  
Burichang, Comilla

#### Shooters

How should I start? I have lost all the words to express my grudges against the wild activities of our law enforcing agencies on the national shooters. It is a matter of great shame that we harass the people who brought international acclaim. The honourable prime minister still has not regretted this assault on the shooters who are now critically injured. Aren't they our national wealth? But the high authorities don't care about the golden sons of our soil because of their own vested interests.

While all the conscious people and institutions are on the street for protesting this notorious act, our government is not taking any steps to punish the culprits. The criminals got the go-ahead to investigate the real reason behind this unwanted incident whereas what it requires is a judicial probe to ensure a neutral investigation.

As a national organisation, Bangladesh National Shooting Complex has certain rules and regulations of their own which the people while they are in their vicinity have to adhere to. It's not that the law enforcing agencies are above them, rather they ought to maintain themselves very strictly so that people also understand that they too are bound by the same rules.  
**Mrinal Sarkar**  
Lecturer in English  
College of Development Alternative  
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

#### Caretaker government people

The dire necessity of non-partisan people to conduct one of the most important things in the country -- the running of the general election after each five years -- can't be denied. All the governments in the country have appointed chosen people to the different posts violating rules of appointment. Now the situation has come to such a pass we have to find some sort of microscope to find these people out. If we cannot find out people for the top posts, how can we possibly expect to find people in the countryside who will conduct election in the name of the chief election commissioner? It seems the system will ultimately fail if we cannot correct ourselves in a very short period of time.

**M.F. Islam**  
Shamoli, Dhaka

#### Our talents

I have a point of view to share with you in relation to the recent joy of our winning the Nobel Peace Prize. I would like to say that for years it has been a tragedy for us that our talents go (and settle) in the developed countries thinking there are better opportunities abroad. But the reality is Bangladesh needs these talents badly. Can't we appeal to them to come back home on the occasion of this Nobel Peace Prize winning which has proved that great things can be done at home too?

Also, I would like to toss my idea that the next Star Magazine cover story can be in line with this. You can find out the root causes of the prevailing tendency among our talents going to developed countries and working/settling there. This is what is termed as "brain-drain." Don't you think that if our talents contribute to the country's development then one day we will also be a developed country? If we can win the Nobel, surely we can expect better things to come in the future. And for that, we need our talents' help. If they leave us, who will help us?

**K M Tarek**  
Melbourne, Australia

#### An appeal to Justice K.M. Hasan

Our next general election is not very far away. We must take necessary steps to ensure that the Caretaker government does not suffer from unnecessary debate and political debacle.

We must also remember that the Chief Advisor has to enjoy the confidence of the principal Opposition parties in the Parliament as well as be active in our political arena. But the current debate over appointing ex CJ K.M. Hasan has taken the centre stage. Like others, I sincerely appeal to Justice KM

Hasan to voluntarily reject the post of Chief Adviser to the caretaker government in the interests of national stability, constitution and the very institution of interim government. If Justice Hasan rejects the post with a judge-like attitude, he will be remembered as a Chief justice with honour more than he would by heading the next caretaker government. The sooner he takes the decision to quit, the better the chances of getting out of the ongoing crisis. What alternative does Justice KM Hasan have other than to reject the post? There has already been an intense debate over the issue.

I believe in the interest of national unity the President should initiate a process where discussion can take place with regard to all possible alternatives as stated in the Constitution. This should be the first step toward overcoming a deadlock.

**Gopal Sengupta**  
On e-mail

#### Bankrupt politicians

I am glad, shocked and worried at the same time reading about dialogue on electoral reforms between main parties. Here in New York I try to read at least 3 to 4 dailies from Dhaka and everywhere it quoted Abdul Jalil as saying that if Mannan Bhuyyan was serious about talks he should show up at a tea party. And next morning it was different statement: "Tea party and dialogue are not the same thing." In my view, Abdul Jalil is not eloquent at all and sounds like more of a union or upazilla level leader. As much as we appreciate Mrs. Ambassador's efforts, it would have been a shame if Mannan Bhuyyan ended up at the tea party for dialogue.

On the other hand, it should have been the responsibility of BNP to address the issue of electoral reforms. If you think you have done a good job, have formed a good strategic alliance with other parties then why would you worry about addressing the opposition's concern. They are always delusional about their own success and are always forcing the opposition to take a hard line. Leaders of BNP also make lousy remarks about the opposition's rally but I think the opposition staged a good rally recently.

**Mohammed Islam**  
On e-mail