

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.

## Please feel 'embarrassed'



I believe the problem is not with Mr. Hasan or Mr. Aziz and feeling "embarrassed" by those guys even would not help solve the present crisis created in the country. The main problem lies with the two women heading the two major political parties who do not believe in any solution except confrontation.

Can you imagine how irresponsible they could be by leaving the country for pleasure trips at such a crucial juncture when the entire country was looking forward to the dialogue and on the outcome of which the country's future depended! They are the roots of all evils. Their intransigent behaviour will never allow them to come to a solution even when the country is facing a grave threat. It was Khaled Zia who with the ulterior motive to come back to power by hook or by

crook amended the age limit of the Chief Justice to pave the way for a party man to become the head of the caretaker government so that he could manipulate the election result in their favour. Had this irresponsible act been not committed, the present grave situation facing the country would not have occurred in the first instance. It would, therefore, be worthwhile to seek their "embarrassment" first. Unless these two women are removed from the helms of the national affairs, no peace or progress will come to this country ever.

So, let us urge these two women, "Please feel embarrassed and retire and thus save the country from destruction."

**Rafique Ahmed, Gulshan, Dhaka**

### Why only justices?

In the constitution only the justices have been given the priority of being caretaker government chief. I think it was a wrong decision. There are many people in the country who may be more efficient, competent and neutral than the justices. I am not saying that justices are not efficient, competent and neutral, but I want to say that they should not be the sole stakeholders of the quality of being a caretaker government chief. There are many educationists, economists, diplomats, lawyers, journalists, social workers, bureaucrats, human rights workers etc. who are not less worthy than the justices. The justices should have been one of the options. The present political standstill has happened only due to this clause.

There is also a problem in the selection process. The selection process could have been more democratic and transparent. The process I want to suggest is like this: The caretaker government chief will have no history of political

involvement and s/he will have the minimum educational qualification and administrative experience, and no background of corruption or dishonesty. The political parties and civil societies can determine the minimum qualifications. The selection process will have two phases.

First phase: Existing voters of the country will primarily select their nominees by mobile sms. One person will have only one vote to cast. To ensure it every willing voter will have to register his or her phone number with his or her photo. The numbers registered will be eligible for voting. If one person registers more than one number, computer database will find it out. Then 10 or 20 highest scores will be selected for the second round of voting. But before going to the second phase we need to take the consent of the selected persons. If anybody on the list refuses to contest, his/her name will be dropped from the list and new name(s) will be included from the list below the earlier cut point on the basis of the number of the votes they have got.

Second phase: Every political party will have one vote and the

party chief or anybody nominated and endorsed by him/her will cast the vote. Here the ballot will contain just the names of the selected 10/20 persons and the voters will just put tick mark against the name s/he likes. S/he will put tick mark against the name of only one person.

Every political party has to be registered with the Election Commission. To get registered as a political party a willing group has to fulfill some conditions that will stop the registration of many parties which represent a single party to influence the voting by having too many voters.

Then the highest scorer in the second round will be selected the caretaker government chief. Here a portion of the votes of the first phase can be counted.

This system will not allow an uneducated citizen or a non-cell-phone-holder to take part in the selection process. But I think it will be more democratic than the existing process.

**Zakir Hossain  
Bezpara, Jessore**



## Fight against corruption

The nation is now passing through a critical moment due in part to the issues that have occupied the forefront in political discourse which are the end result of Mannan-Jalil meetings followed by the demand for the repeal of current electioneering system and caretaker government. The parliamentary election is due to be held in January next year and factions within and outside the political parties are emerging. One of which is worth mentioning Col. (retd) Oli Ahmed's so-called Jihad against corruption in the government which is known to be supported by many including former president Prof.

Badruddoza Chowdhury. This initiative draws claps as it slaps the corrupt administration. Daunting task indeed, however, this initiative has pushed us to a big question mark. Firstly, had Mr. Oli been one of the big pool of the ministers of the Khaleda Zia administration, would he ever declare the war against corruption? The same is true about the former president. Had Bangabhaban not bid him an unceremonious goodbye would he be able to talk against the party's corruption? This is the party which these two recent jihadis belonged to for around last three decades. Has this nation been witnessing corruption only for the last few months?

**AKM Ahsan Ullah  
City University of Hong Kong  
\*\*\***

### To Col. Oli (retd)...

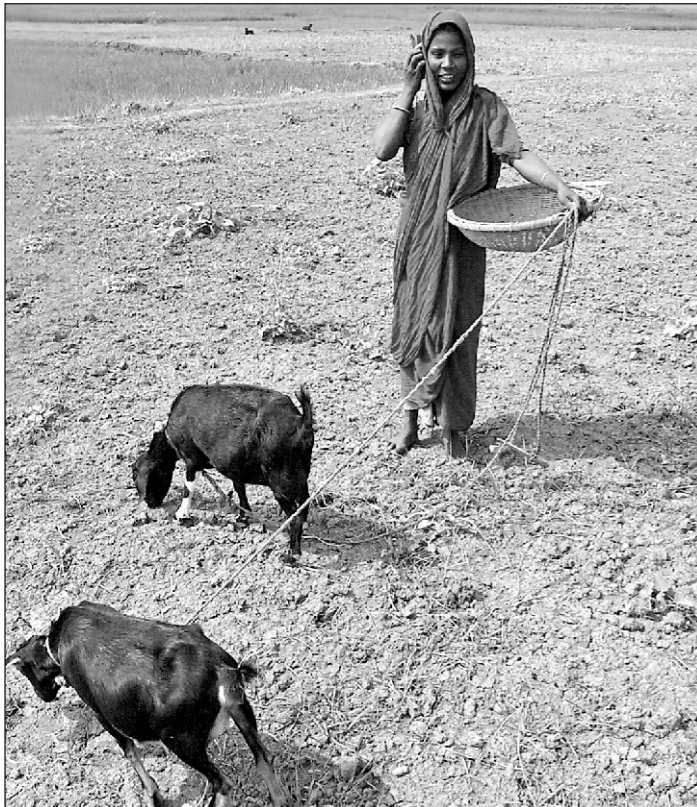
I am writing this note from Boston, USA to let you know that when I met you a few times before my departure for USA, I was happy to find that you had raised the voice against corruption in Bangladesh.

I am not a politician nor have I any thought to be one in the future. Please do make it clear to everyone that I am neither a politician nor a party to your or any political team. I had clearly mentioned that I would not take part in any election, which you clearly understood.

I am writing this note to mention that I am not in politics nor do I have any interest to get involved in future. I will always support anyone who is trying to eradicate corruption in Bangladesh.

**Air Cdre. Moin ul Islam (retd)  
Medford Street  
Malden, MA**

## Agricultural production



Bangladesh is a fertile land but the agricultural production is much less than what it should be. For example, the paddy production of Australia is three times more than Bangladesh. Though it is an agro-based country but we have to import agricultural products on a regular basis. Without production no nation can develop. So we should make our farmers aware; provide them loans without harassment, quality seeds, insecticides, and fertilisers. Moreover, the government must purchase these products at a competitive price. Example is better than advice.

In every union a multi-purpose agriculture farm should be established. It will be a model or example. Local farmers will be greatly benefited by such a farm.  
**Shafiullah  
Kuwait**

I hope Dr. Yunus is not serious about joining politics, as has been recently reported. I hope his pronouncements were meant to put pressure on political parties so that they take the call for honest candidates more seriously.

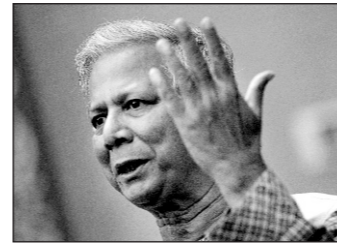
We have to get away from too much emphasis on personalities. What is more important in the long run is for institutions to evolve so as to strengthen democracy.

We cannot depend on the likes of Dr. Yunus or Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed of

Brac, extraordinary as they are, to save our country. Such deliverance, if at all is likely to be short-lived, and may indeed stunt the overall political progress necessary in the long run.

Strengthening of democracy in BD is possible if erstwhile politically powerless section of our society living in villages get empowered economically and educationally. They will then make their political presence felt. To the extent that Dr. Yunus, Mr. Abed and others are contributing to this important process, their work may have important political impact in the long run. Societies and consequently their politics change when new groups of people successfully

vie for political power. In this kind of tussle in a democracy, accountability is easier established. For instance, prosecution of the powerful for corruption is more likely when those in power are not part of the estab-



lished elite. In the process, rule of law is strengthened. This is a process of cleansing that is missing in current Bangladesh politics. I believe the moribund and rotten politics in Bangladesh is directly correlated to the same socio-economic elite controlling everything at the expense of vast sections of the country.

**Saleh Ahmed Tanveer  
Professor of Mathematics  
The Ohio State University  
Columbus, Ohio  
\*\*\***

Mr. Saifur Rahman's recent derogatory comments undermining the achievements of Nobel laureate Prof. Yunus and

Grameen Bank are shocking and speak of bad taste. Contrary to the insinuations made by the minister belittling Prof. Yunus, he (Prof. Yunus) never claimed any credit for the economic development of our country. He has only been trying to uplift the poorest of the poor to stand on their own feet through a novel and hitherto unheard of practice of providing them with micro credit without any collateral. Regarding the minister's other comment that Prof. Yunus' proximity to the Clintons earned him the Nobel Prize smacks of jealousy, unfounded logic and leaves a bad taste in the mouth. He should know that the Nobel Prize Committee is not the highly politicised Public Service Commission of Bangladesh.

People with humble background and upbringing are known to have attained high positions and power in life through diligence, merit and sometimes luck. One thing such people invariably lack is class.

**Tarique M. Ali  
Gulshan-2, Dhaka**