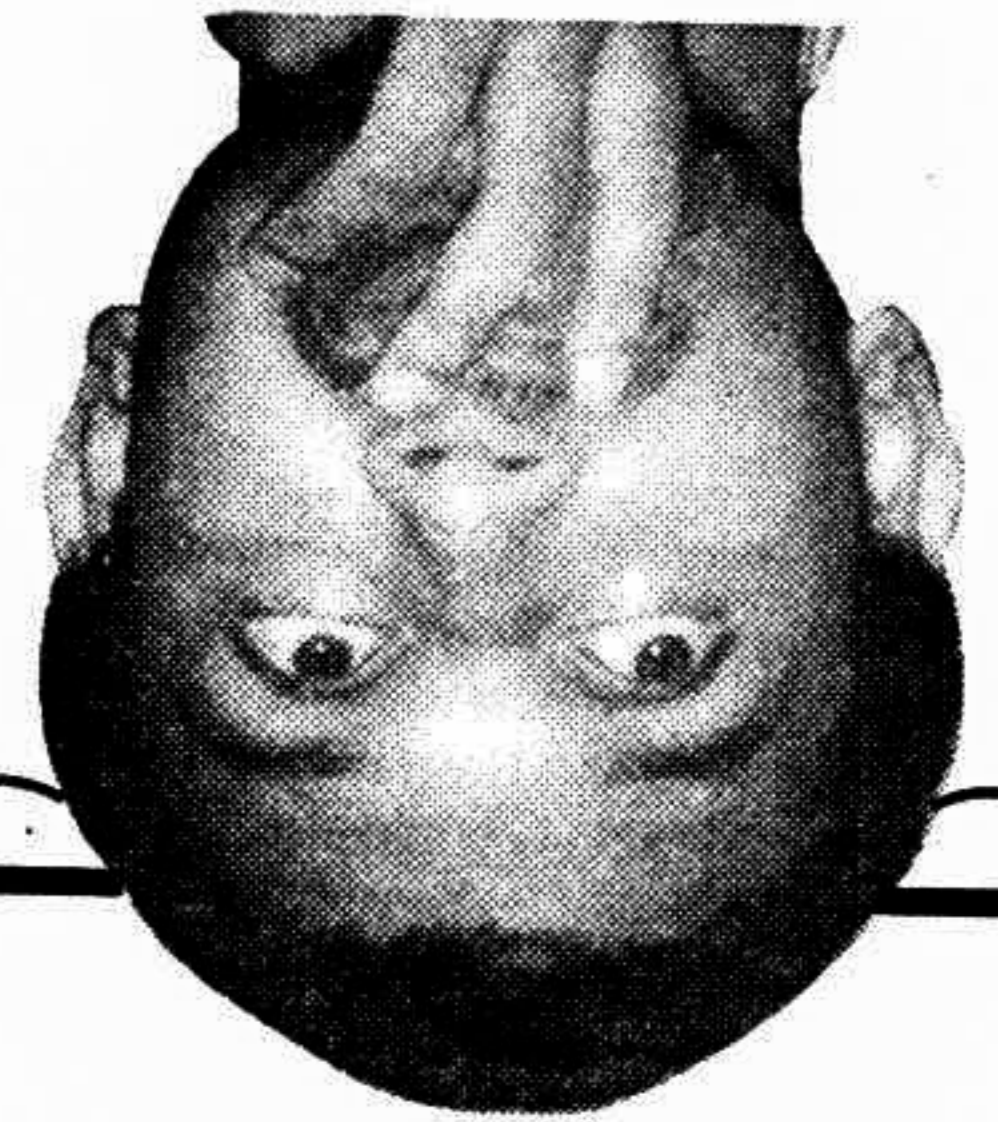


# YEP TALK



## THE YEP FORUM A NEW VISTA

OSAMA TASEER



The year 1998 was declared the year of the young. And this year witnessed the humble beginning of a new forum this is not a forum of any political affiliation or a any vested interest. This is also not a Forum of any trade or business. This is a new Forum of the

young.

Unlike any other group, this is essentially a group of dynamic Entrepreneurs and Professionals. Any young Bangladeshi falling into the broad category of Entrepreneurs & professional can join this group. However, this is a small group of dedicated individuals who have certain philosophy and are working with certain objectives in mind. The young people of Bangladesh who have acquired skills and impotency, have very little or almost no say in the affairs of the state which effect them all. It has been a practice that the young are always aporex at and seldom heard. In this age of globalization, trade and democracy, this is a totally unacceptable equatio. The enigmatic editor of the Daily Star, first mooted the idea of such a forum. He, through his indomitable spirit, gathered a small group of young Entrepreneurs and professionals from different fields to start this new forum. The first gathering at the British Council auditorium in December, 1997. With the support of the Daily Star, the YEP Forum started its modest activities with caution and conviction. The fantastic facilities of the British Council was an added impetus to the connection in making.

The YEP Forum is a divergent group. The foundation to the association is based on the philosophy that Bangladesh is moving towards the 21st century having learned little from the lessons of the past. The country has no sense of self, binding it together. Much of this may be attributed to selfish politics, a growing sense of indifference and leadership without vision. YEP role should be to look with clear eyes on issues, which affect us all, voice, the concerns of our young group, and initiate change using any and all practical tools available. YEP should always promote those ideals pertinent to National Interest, or at least the Greater Common Interest.

The objectives of the YEP Forum (YEPF) are classified in eight broad categories. The objectives are

- (1) Promoting peoples participation in building a modern & humane society.
- (2) Promoting accountability in governance, judiciary, public and private enterprises.
- (3) Building and projecting the national image.
- (4) Raising awareness among people of their rights, and the rights of

others.

- (5) Promoting alternative thinking & leadership.
- (6) Promoting and developing human resources.
- (7) Fostering an environment conducive to the development of young people.

**"The country has no sense of self, binding it together."**

Promoting awareness on the value of our natural resources and environment. Similar to many other groups this Forum has also an educated group of professionals as its members. Only difference is that these educated group are enlightened, lperated & dedicated. Although coming in from divergent professions and specializations they are all converging on the philosophy of the Forum. The task of getting so many independent individuals coming in from different professions to work with the same theme, is itself difficult task. But through the year 1998 and through different activities we have fostered a working relationship to carry our dreams ahead. YEP member is working voluntarily by sparing some time from their professional life. The spirit of sacrificing same time for our society is also on very high on the priority list. Other wise, this sort of grouping is almost next to impossible.

The YEP Forum is divided in 11 chapters based on different professions. The events of different professions are coordinated and put into action by the relevant chapters. Each chapter is represented in the Core Group of the Forum. The Core Group is responsible for coordination, integration and implementation of different activities as a whole.

The year 1999 is going to be the consolidation of the Forum. The new group will now have a formal chapter and will be duly registered. The democratic practice is upheld in every activities of the group. Our asset is out valued and dedicated members. We have also planned new adventures for the new year keeping in view the approaching millenium. Some of our plans among others are (a) Daily Star Page by YEPF. (b) Resource Centre. (c) Meet the Young People Face to Face with the Policy Makers. (d) Profession Oriented Session/Workshop. (e) Career Counseling. (f) Inter Profession Discussion. (g) Global Exchange Programme.

The Forum has a long way to go. This is only the beginning. With our conviction towards our goal, the YEP Forum plans to act as the only unique platform for the Young. The Forum is truly dedicated to the ideals set forth by ourselves. As a group of DOERS, we shall turn our plans into realities, we shall overcome the hurdles & open if possible a new vista for the Young of Bangladesh.

(The writer is an Entrepreneur & Co-ordinator of the YEP Forum.)

## ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF YEP

KHALED HAMID CHOWDHURY



Since the inception of the Daily Star YEPF, one year has gone by quite briskly. The young lawyers greeted the idea of such a forum with ample expectation. The significant role played by the lawyers in building a society need not be stressed too often. But what was always lacking was a "voice" to express the concern, the ideas and thoughts of the young ones to this profession. Daily Star provided us with that "voice". During the year, some work has been done by the young lawyers to prepare the papers in relation to law reform, professional ethics, transparency and accountability in the legal system etc. But so much remains to be accomplished.

As far as our profession is concerned, we would like to see young lawyers find suitable chambers with some decent allowance to start with to encounter the early hard days in their career. More co-operation from the seniors is so revered. At the same time the Bar Council and the authorities concerned should take steps to improve the vocational ability of the lawyers which is so lacking. Here there is a wide gap between what is studied at the academic stage and that what is faced by a young lawyer in the courts. The services of young able lawyers should be made use of in the field of law reform. Seeing the same faces of the profession almost at all levels, be it at home or abroad does convey others the idea that experience is of such vital importance in the legal profession. But unless the young ones are given a chance, then where will the experience come from? We would also like to see the rules of the Bar Council more strictly applied so that instances of malpractice would not reoccur. Seniors and juniors have to work as a team to improve the overall standard of advocacy and to maintain the dignity and proficiency of this noble profession.

At the national level, we would like to see that democratic values

**"There is a wide gap between what is studied at the academic stage and that what is faced by a young lawyer in the courts."**

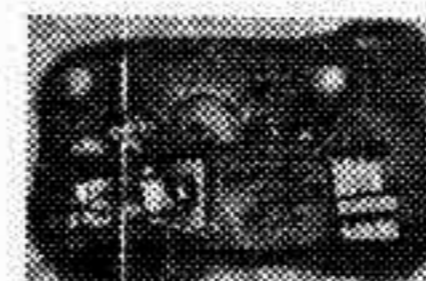
are adhered to in its true sense. There should be more transparency and accountability among those entrusted with the power and responsibility of running the government. Signing agreements of vital importance in a hasty manner without consulting the experts and maintaining secrecy in vital matters involving public interest is an impediment to the development of democracy. To the politicians, we may ask some very basic questions which are probably at the heart of every ordinary citizen of our country. One day our politicians will have to find some time to look back, ponder and tell the nation how much they have really contributed to the development of our nation since its independence; what standards or examples have they set for its citizens to follow. Do they really believe that people observe hartals to show their solidarity with the political issues (or rather issues created by the politicians?) or they stay at their homes to avoid their person and property coming under threats of violence by handful of armed political activists. If it is the right of the politicians to call hartals, then what about the rights of the people to continue with their normal life? Why is every non-issue made an issue just for the sake of creating an atmosphere of disturbance? What interest of the nation is served by engaging students into politics of violence? Why do they encourage teachers of the Universities to indulge into colourful panel politics which in turn ruins brilliant careers? Why do they change their views like a flash when they go from power to the opposition and vice versa? For how long would they resort to superficial slogans and give constant demonstrations of their shallowness? Do they ever feel that the tolerance of the people should not be stretched too far?

To try and find answers to some of these, much needs to be done by the young professionals in the coming days.

(The writer is a Barrister & practicing law.)

## Towards a Shared Vision of Human and Social Capital Creation

Quazi Mahmud Ahmed



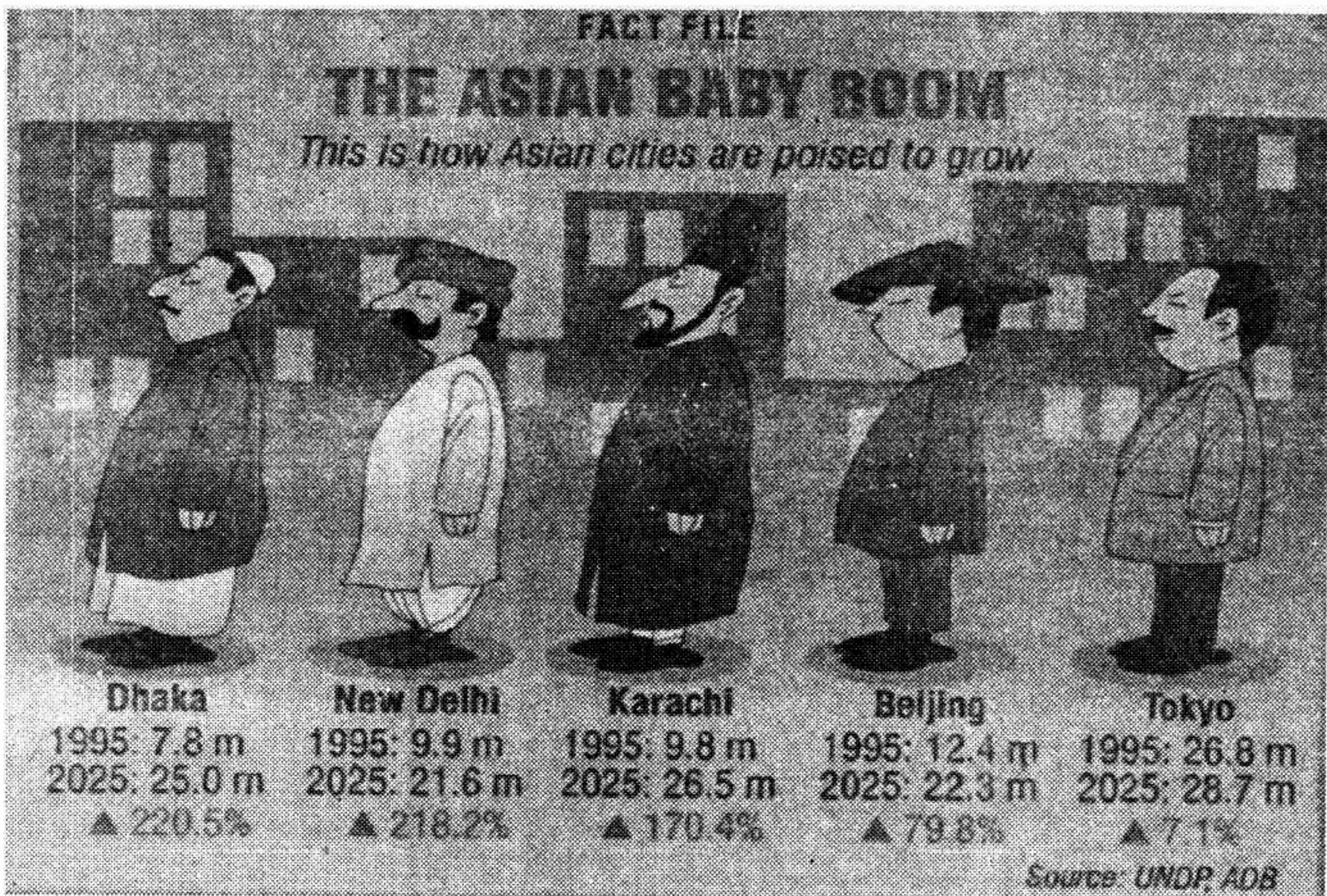
As we approach the beginning of the third millennium, it is an appropriate time for us to look back and reflect on what we have achieved as a nation and what has remained undone. We are proud to have achieved our independence and freedom. We freed our country from tyranny in nine months but it has been close three decades and we still are groping in the dark and fighting among ourselves. Where is the spirit that freed us? Why have we given up so early in the journey? How come we are so happy with the so-called political freedom only when economic and other forms of freedom remain unachieved? The simple truth is that there have been too much politics and too little development.

Admittedly, it is tempting for any conscious citizen to go for prescriptions and I am not an exception here. I would like to take this opportunity to put forward a simple but powerful idea: a vision that may be called as the Vision 2021 Bangladesh. The rationale behind calling it a vision 2021 is that we in Bangladesh need a long term perspective, not a short-term view. The year 2021 is also significant because of the following two reasons: first, in the year 2021, Bangladesh will be celebrating its golden

**"A vision that may be called as the Vision 2021 Bangladesh"**

jubilee, its 50th anniversary as an independent nation. And the relevant question is what kind of Bangladesh do we want to arrive at? Second, do we need to remind us what the spirit of Ekushey (Bangla for 21) February mean to us? We as members of the civil society need to articulate a vision for Bangladesh—a dream that can become a reality through hard work and commitment. Today, standing on the eve of the 21st century, there probably is no time as good as this. Starting with the young entrepreneurs and professionals of various fields, the roundtable discussions on this shared vision may gradually incorporate the politicians, the business community and the like. Still another series of discussions may integrate the younger generation including students of madrasahs, colleges, orphanages and schools. No doubt that many differences will emerge through these Vision 2021 roundtables, but with the help of social scientists we can summarize the major common areas of working together as a nation. At least common priorities can be identified. It certainly will be improper for me to pre-judge the outcome of such a nation-wide exercise in soul searching, but my gut feeling tells me that at these two priorities are likely to be on the top of the agenda: developing human capital keeping in mind the 21st century challenges and creating social capital, that is, the ability in our people to work together to build the nation in spite of our differences in political orientation, religious or ethnic origin, etc. We have shown that we can muster social capital when we face a crisis, but we must go one step ahead and create a national value system that fosters social capital in peace time nation building.

(The writer is a Faculty member, school of Business, North South University)



## ARE WE PREPARED FOR THE 21ST CENTURY?

SYEDA NASRIN AKHTER

Perhaps the most talked topic last year in each seminar, symposium, workshop and conference in each level was the next millennium. Our expectations, our preparedness overcoming the limitations to become more competent & in every way to become an active participant of the 21st century. In YEP Forum most possibly (in our country) it was discussed most. Each member of the forum deeply felt he/she should do everything required to prepare him/herself to become the best professional in his/her respective field, because that's the only way to help the nation to be best prepared to face the new century. Although it is every citizen's duty to work within his/her area to serve the cause yet who else can help the nation best than the teachers community, be it in the primary, secondary or tertiary level?

Are the teachers of our country carrying out their primary responsibilities (except for a few) wholeheartedly? Have they taken their profession just like any other job? Don't they ever feel that they owe something more to the society than any other person? Can a teacher think of self improvement without his/her students' improvement? Outside the classroom do we feel concerned about the student's future? Have we ever felt that we are moulding the generation next and it is very much possible to mould them the way the nation needs? Are we only to lament over the past, saying gone are the days when the teachers were honoured more than the parents? Can't we just bring back the values we have lost? Can't we try to stop the degeneration of the community in many respects? If you are not prepared to take the load, you may look for any other job which will fetch you more money. Yes, teaching is a laborious job. Once you have decided to be a teacher, you have given yourself the

**"Can a teacher think of self improvement without his/her student's improvement?"**

responsibility of preparing the future generations. No matter at what level one is teaching, one may be a primary school teacher living in the remote countryside who really depends on the salary for his livelihood, one may be a very modern college teacher living a very urban life or a university teacher maintaining a very busy schedule for taking classes in one side and preparing for his higher degrees on the other-but nothing really stops him from becoming a real friend, philosopher and guide to his/her student as long as he is motivated enough.

Our appeal to the young please stop blaming the education or any other system rather let us start creating awareness for changing any system which is not pragmatic enough. We believe gradually success will be achieved. The demand of the time is a group of well educated, smart, trained & motivated teachers who would really be capable of moulding the future generation to be competent enough to face the new millennium.

Can't we dream that we would be the best teachers of the century and would best serve the nation.

The Teachers chapter of YEP form offers you the platform to act from that will energise the young and motivated ones to work hand in hand towards a brighter future.

Throughout 1998 each chapter of YEP form was involved in various activities and it has planned exciting activities during 199 too. Anybody who feels the way we do, are invited to share the dreams and activities to the YEP members.

A very Happy New Year to all.

(The writer is a principal of B.A.F Shaheen School english medum.)

## IT'S TIME TO WORK TOGETHER

Bangladesh is a young country but hardly there is any scope for the young people to express their views on matters that concern the nation and themselves. Young people in our society are only spoken to but seldom, if ever, heard. Our young people have acquired skills and competence that need to be recognised and brought into the mainstream of our planning and policy making process. It is therefore, very important that we hear our young people. Not only because they are far more knowledgeable and competent than ever before, but also because information revolution and globalisation have opened up a whole new world of opportunity in the forefront of which lies the young entrepreneurs and professionals. This is true for the whole world, and more so for Bangladesh. Therefore with a view to giving the Young Entrepreneurs and Professionals an opportunity to speak their mind, and express themselves in a way that our leaders and policy makers can listen, THE DAILY STAR has decided to organise a forum and open a weekly page.

I. To hear what young entrepreneurs and professionals have to say about :

- A. Future direction of our country - How to become an active participant of the 21st Century World.
- B. Future direction of their respective professions - How can we become a more competent nation.

### Participation

We invites you the Business, Lawyears/Judiciary, Engineers/Architects, Doctors, Teachers/Researchers, Writers/Poets/Artists, NGO workers, Bureaucrates, Journalists, Economists/Bankers to join our forum.

Participation is free and open to all young entrepreneurs and professionals between the age of 25 to 35 years. Please contact Mr. Rafi Hossain, The Daily Star Address : House No-11, Road No-3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh. Tel : 866772-4, Fax : 88-02-863035, E-mail : dstar@bangla.net