

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.

Dr. Yunus: Pride of the Nation

Oh no, not again!

Bombing in 63 districts at a time in Bangladesh by the Islamic militants.

Once again devastating floods in Bangladesh; Bangladesh becomes the most corrupt country of the world again - declares Transparency International.

How much can one endure?

But no, there is something new in the air Dr. Muhammad Yunus of Grameen Bank has been nominated for the Nobel Prize this year for his revolutionary contribution in the field of micro credit!

Yes, Dr. Yunus, the pioneer of micro credit programme, is another name of success and glory. 'The Grameen Bank' project, an invention of a simple method by a man from the world's poorest country has become a model for so many developed and developing countries of Asia, Europe, America and Africa for changing the fate of their underprivileged people.

It would be very difficult for a foreigner to understand the plight of the poor women in our villages. It was Dr. Yunus who discovered that only a very small amount of interest-free loan can be offered to the poorest womenfolk to break the vicious cycle of poverty. Money will not change them; they will change themselves. The loan amount will only be a weapon to fight against poverty. For the poor villagers he started his 'Grameen Bank' project. Ninety-five per cent people who avail loans from 'Grameen Bank' are women who have tremendously changed the fate of their own families. Almost flawless rate of loan repayment is the key to the success-story of Grameen Bank.

Grameen Bank's \$9 interest-free loan for the beggars is another success story. The street beggars are now busy in projects like goat-rearing and poultry-farming. And for its fund Grameen Bank has never taken any local or foreign donation. Because along with the donor's money comes too many conditions, contradicting Grameen-Bank's objectives. It has generated the funds from its own projects.

For me, it was a moment of great honour when my Math Professor called me out in the middle of the class and asked if I had heard about Dr. Yunus and the fact that he has just been awarded the Nobel Prize. I gave him a proud "yes" for an answer and happily declared that Dr. Yunus is one of the most popular and treasured names in Bangladesh. And I also let him know about this legendary man's contribution to our economy. My Professor was more than impressed.

Babul Salsabil
University of Richmond,
Virginia, USA

As I was browsing through yahoo website, this afternoon's breaking news in the world section caught my eyes "Yunus, Grameen Bank win Peace Prize."

The 13th of October is one of the days that we Bangladeshis should feel really proud of, because on this day the first Bangladeshi received the Nobel Prize - The Noble Peace Prize - 2006. Professor Yunus, the pioneer of the special concept of 'Poverty Alleviation Through Micro Credit' believes, "Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty." This concept brought him the world's greatest coveted peace prize.

On this great occasion, I urge upon the leaders of the two leading political parties of our beloved country, Bangladesh, to forge unity and choose Professor Yunus as the head of the upcoming caretaker government to bring back tranquility and restore peace for all in Bangladesh, irrespective of caste and creed, political, ideological and religious differences.

Finally, I appeal to Professor Yunus to take quick pragmatic actions to restore peace in our country and across the globe.

Adity Das Gupta
Dilu Road, Dhaka

This is our moment in the sun! Dr. Yunus winning the Nobel Peace Prize is such a huge achievement for Bangladeshis all over the world, the pride we are feeling at the moment really cannot be expressed in words. While people residing in Bangladesh are doing their usual celebrations with the "potkas" and gallivanting in the streets, we (Bangladeshi students studying abroad) have found a new method of celebrating. I woke up this morning to see about ten instant messages giving me the fantastic news. Within a matter of hours, every Bangladeshi on MSN Messenger (a popular instant messaging service) seemed to have a profile name bearing some congratulatory note to Professor Yunus. It was amazing how we (the Bangladeshis on my campus) were walking around with big grins on our faces as we proceeded to tell our friends about our wonderful achievement. Bangladeshi pride was brimming to the maximum.

Congratulations and thanks to Dr. Yunus for putting us on the map for something other than topping the corruption list. Bangladesh is extremely proud of you!

Aazia Hossain

Massachusetts, USA

Dr. Yunus of Bangladesh and the Grameen Bank have been jointly awarded the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize. Congratulations to Dr. Yunus who made Bangladesh proud for his benevolent work.

Dr. Yunus, an economist, the founder of the Grameen Bank said that the prize money of £ 730,000.00 would be used to fund more innovative ways to help the poor of the country.

He is now the symbol of our hopes and aspirations.

Dr. Muhammad Yunus is the immortal soul of Bangladesh.. The whole world is grateful to you for your great contribution to poverty alleviation.

MA Gafur Howlader

London

The most deserving laurel has finally been achieved. The brilliant Dr. Yunus has made Bangladesh proud. Believe me when the news spread yesterday we felt like being on top of the world. It's the same feeling as I had when as a raw teenager on 16 December 1971 I witnessed from a very close distance the surrender of General Niazi to the allied forces.

A couple of days back your paper carried my write-up where I said Bangladesh has all the potential. Now Dr Yunus has taken us to the top. It's a dream come true for the nation.

Saleque Sufi

On e-mail

Dr. Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank today emerged as the winners of the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize for their pioneering work in lending to the poor.

Mr. Yunus, 66, from Bangladesh, started the Grameen Bank over 30 years ago, to provide small loans micro credit - for the poor. In announcing the award, the Norwegian Nobel committee said the prize - worth 10m Swedish kronor (£728,971) - was going jointly to Mr Yunus and Grameen Bank for "their efforts to create economic and social development from below".

"This is fantastic news for all of us, for Grameen Bank, Bangladesh, and all the poor countries and all the poor people all around the world," Mr. Yunus told the Norwegian television.

The committee said: " Dr.



Muhammad Yunus has shown himself to be a leader who has managed to translate visions into practical action for the benefit of millions of people, not only in Bangladesh, but also in many other countries.

"Across cultures and civilisations, Yunus and Grameen Bank have shown that even the poorest of the poor can work to bring about their own development."

Ruhul

On e-mail

It's great news! A Bangladeshi has been chosen for the Nobel Peace Prize! I personally congratulate the great visionary who changed lives of millions.

I am happy to see the press release from the Nobel Committee, which says, "The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2006, divided into two equal parts, to Dr. Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank for their efforts to create economic and social development from below. Lasting peace cannot be achieved unless large population groups find ways in which to break out of poverty. Micro credit is one such means. Development from below also serves to advance democracy and human rights."

I hope this achievement of Bangladesh will influence the projects and policies of World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) in future.

Let's celebrate this success as a national achievement in the world arena, after 35 years of our independence!

Muhammad Ali Bukhari
A Bangladeshi-Canadian Journalist
Toronto, Canada

Professor Yunus and Grameen Bank have won the Nobel Prize for their work on 'advancing economic and social opportunities for the poor, particularly women'.

This news came to my family with a lot of joy and pride. No one understands the image of our nation better than someone in an international career. We are popularly known as a 'poor nation' in literature, 'corrupt' to the neo-liberal propagandists, 'caterer' to Londoners, 'moderate Muslims' by H K Thomas' definition, illegal migrants to a few so called wealthy countries etc. But this prize is certainly a great honour to us.

Long live professor Yunus! You have convinced the world leaders that poverty can be made a thing of

the past. Now your challenge would be to inspire our leaders that visionary politics is possible. Congratulations to you, your colleagues, members of your bank and your family.

Khurshid Alam

On e-mail

On behalf of Canada Bangladesh Chamber Of Commerce, I am congratulating Professor Yunus on his winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

Dara Abu Zubair

On e-mail

I was watching live the cricket match between Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. In a break, between the overs, I was surfing other channels. My eyes suddenly stuck on the breaking news in RTV. Dr Yunus and Grameen Bank of Bangladesh have won the Nobel Peace Prize! My heart pounded, I felt something in my throat and I could not check tears. I could not breathe for a while. Instantly, I switched over to BBC news. The Nobel Peace Prize Committee was declaring the winner.

A bright son of my country has won the Nobel Peace Prize. How do we reward you, Dr Yunus?

Iqbal Ahmed
Mirpur Cantonment, Dhaka

Congratulations to you, Dr. Yunus. You have made us proud. I have no words to express what I am feeling about your great achievement.

Raihan
Engineer, Huawei Technologies Ltd.

I am simply delighted at the news. This is long overdue and I am feeling so much excited that it appears that I have got it. We should celebrate it. Definitely, this is a great achievement and pride for all of us and especially for Bangladesh. It brought respect for Bangladesh at a time when the country is facing image problems due to violence, political polarization and near failed governance.

It was very interesting that last night I was teaching in a class. I was talking about micro credit, Grameen Bank, Professor Yunus, Hillary-Clinton, 'welfare to work' and especially about the 'cell phone lady' and her achievement. I am pleased that finally you made it. You brought pride to us.

When I attended your micro credit summit in Washington DC in 1996 and the standing ovation that you received from the global community made me convinced that you

would get it.... the question was when. I had been waiting for such an announcement.

Abdul Momen
Boston, USA

I would like to congratulate Dr. Yunus for winning the Noble Peace Prize for Bangladesh. I met him eleven years ago when some of the students from North South University went to Grameen Bank for a field trip. We were all amazed by his humility as well as sense of humour. But he had more surprise for me.

One day in a barbershop of a small US town the old barber asked me where I was from. I said I was from Bangladesh. Then he asked me, "Do you know Dr. Yunus?" I knew him from Vanderbilt University and I heard that he is doing some good work in his country. Since that day many people in the USA mentioned his name to me. I knew that one day he would be rewarded for his good deeds. I also hope this great achievement inspires many more Bangladeshis to become involved in life-changing initiatives.

Mahmud Zaman
San Diego, California USA

We the Bangladeshis can do everything, and we have won the Nobel Prize. We are now proud to tell that we are Bangladeshis, we don't know how far we can carry it, but we all are optimistic like Dr. Muhammad Yunus.

Md. Sahabuddin
BBA, University of Dhaka

Congratulations to Prof. Yunus. Over the years his name has been heard and finally he is duly honoured. But I am surprised that he received it for peace. Rather, he should have been awarded the prize for economics.

Gulive, Lalmatia, Dhaka

First Tagore, then Amartya Sen and finally our very own Dr. Yunus. This is the type of news that can make a Bangladeshi proud. Especially to us, who are studying overseas, it is great news. We have to defend our country every now and then to our classmates, who are from the rich part of the world. When they asked about Bangladesh and its poverty and corruption - I replied no we are not a country of poverty and political corruption, we are a country of tigers and a country of possibilities. When they said, "Tell us about the possibilities of Bangladesh." I said, "Look at our cricket team!" We beat

Yunus. This man brought an incredible pride for you and us all".

Mannan
Pan United Shipping Pte Ltd,
Singapore

When everyone in the country, and in Europe, and in major global media have been celebrating the Noble Peace Prize to Dr Yunus and Grameen Bank, The Economist termed this prize "Losing its lustre!"

The Economist based its report on the 'definition' of 'peace', saying that 'peace' would mean absence of war (and possibly only limited between parties or nations, essentially armed), human rights violation, or terrorism. The article says that terming Professor Yunus or Grameen Bank a "peace-maker" would be "a stretch".

From a view of a reader, I find this definition given by The Economist to be too narrow, somewhat (intentionally?) skewed. The word "peace" means (apart from the normal, non-warring condition of a nation or parties) freedom of the mind from annoyance, distraction, anxiety. Or simply, it means tranquility, serenity. The magazine missed this 'larger' picture, or, rather, the complete definition of the word.

Possibly The Economist doesn't know what war against poverty and basic human needs we in Bangladesh are fighting. Possibly the magazine also doesn't know how it feels to actually spend at least 40 days a year with less than one meal a day, and how 'peaceful' it is to have the access to the fund that'll ensure more affordability, and less numbers of days of single meals.

Ironically, economics is the science of production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services, as well as the material welfare of humankind. The latter would ensure 'peace' in every household, something that silently Grameen Bank has been trying to do. Even more ironically, the magazine under discussion derives the very name from "Economics".

The same article condemns that this prize looks for an equal regional distribution: "an expectation ... that the award should rotate between regions of the world ... This year it is Asia, last year the recipient was from the Middle East, the year before from Africa". Well, does this mean that The Economist doesn't really want the award to rotate, and rather be limited to a certain region?

Worse, the article suggests that to ensure value of the Noble Peace Prize, it should be withheld from being awarded for a year or more. In pursuit of maintaining the sanctity of the prize, how do we intend to overlook the numerous initiatives that are running around the world outside America and Europe in bringing order to the society, public well-being, or simply empowering the less fortunate?

I really couldn't find a logical ground why The Economist took this stance.

Zeeshan Kingshuk Huq
Uttara, Dhaka

I had been expecting this news for a few years yet when I saw it on the BBC website shortly after it was announced, I found myself making phone calls all around the world spreading the good news! This is without a doubt one of the proudest moments in the history of Bangladesh! Congratulations, Dr Yunus. You inspire a whole nation. You probably don't remember, but it was an honour to meet you in San Jose, California and Dhaka. Something that will motivate me to think about doing things that most of us think impossible. For many years to come.

Shabbir A Bashar, PhD
Director, BETELCO

Kakrail Road, Dhaka

Like other days it started with an extremely cold breeze and home sickness. I went to our kitchen and

turned on the TV. Believe me I couldn't believe my eyes. Dr. Yunus got the Nobel Prize!

All my friends came to me to congratulate.. I was just thinking it's not only Dr. Yunus and Grameen Bank, we all the Bangladeshi people got the prize! Sometimes I feel very bad when my teachers ask me why Bangladesh is the champion in corruption! Normally I don't answer but now I found something to say. I couldn't say how I am feeling.. I was really depressed about our homeland but Dr. Yunus and his Grameen Bank showed me that the light is not far away.

All the day I kept my eyes on the TV and saw Norwegian and English TV channels broadcasting this news...I believe this news is something special to me and others who live in Norway because this prize was announced from Norway.

I really cannot explain my feelings on this success of Dr. Yunus and our country.. I salute our hero.

Hopefully, we can expect a better future for our country. And I am looking forward to watching more and more good news from Bangladesh.

Sumon Ahmed
MSc in Business Administration,
HIA, Kraitsand, Norway.

After I explained to my 10-year old son the concept of micro credit and Nobel Prize, he told me a story, which I could not resist but share with all. Following is the story in his own words:

"There was a big house (the earth) owned by a landlord (God) with lots of boarders (animals). Then a new boarder came (human) in the room, where all the lights (countries) were out. Slowly the lights came on, but one (Bangladesh) never really turned on. Then finally an electrician (Dr. Yunus) turned it on (made Bangladesh famous)." By Shabab (Inspired by Dr. Yunus)

Congratulations to Dr. Yunus for stirring up the nation with pride and joy!

Nasim Haider
Engineer, Dhahran
Saudi Arabia

Through The Daily Star I want to express my heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Yunus. I strongly believe that after independence in 1971 and restoring democracy in '91, Bangladesh witnessed the biggest achievement as Dr. Yunus and his Grameen Bank won the Nobel Peace Prize 2006.

Ahmed Ruhul Shaki
Banani, Dhaka

At a time when the Hasina-Khaleda duo has plunged the country into a dark bottomless pit of hopelessness, the announcement of award of 2006 Nobel Peace Prize to Professor Yunus & his Grameen Bank gives a reason of hope that individual contributions could resolve the country's problems in various sectors.

I however do not believe that poverty alleviation is the only solution for lasting peace in this country. I think it will not be unreasonable to point out that most of the rich people in this country are the greediest, most corrupt and are among the group of people who are the first to break laws of the country. They are one of the prime reasons of moral degradation & destabilization of the society. You cannot have peace, if corruption is the accepted norm in a society. However crazy it may sound, I would like to see some individual coming up with a project that would motivate people to do away with corruption, raise moral standards & ethics, and to be law abiding citizens.

For his role, Professor Yunus & his Grameen Bank deserved the Nobel Peace Prize.

Syed Husain, Old DOHS, Dhaka

