

OPEN LETTER TO ALL

Yunus seeks people's views on floating political party

Says he wants to create new political culture

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus in an open letter to the people yesterday asked for views on his plan to float a political party to establish political goodwill, proper leadership and good governance and build a new Bangladesh.

He observed that the current political climate seeks to destroy the potential of the country and so without a comprehensive change there, it would never be possible to take the nation "to the height it deserves."

In the letter, he called on everyone to briefly outline how he should go about the task and how they can contribute to it.

"If they say 'go ahead', I'll join politics...form a party," he told reporters at Zia International Airport (ZIA) minutes before flying to Kolkata to receive 'Shera Bangali 2006' (Best Bangali) award. This is his second trip to India in little over a week.

Yunus has been elected the best Bangali of 2006 by the people of West Bengal and the Bangali community across India through SMS

My personal letter to you

Dear citizen,

I am writing this letter to you with the hope of receiving a personal reply from you. You might have noticed in what situation many people requested me to join politics and why I had to consider it with utmost importance. I, like you, witnessed where our political culture has brought the country and how it attempted to destroy the country's future possibilities. The way the present caretaker government is trying to create an acceptable atmosphere by carrying out necessary reforms has made me optimistic along with all citizens of the country. In this situation, I feel it with my heart that I should, showing due respect to the people's expectation of me, participate in the mission of taking the nation to the height it deserves. It is now clear to all that it is not possible to reach the goal maintaining the existing political culture; it is only possible by bringing a comprehensive change to the culture. Through my work and experience, I feel with all my heart that the people with their innate

participate in the mission of taking the nation to the height it deserves. It is now clear to all that it is not possible to reach the goal maintaining the existing political culture; it is only possible by bringing a comprehensive change to the culture. Through my work and experience, I feel with all my heart that the people with their innate

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Muhammad Yunus

votes.

ETV Bangla of Kolkata will confer the honour on Prof Yunus at a reception today in the Science City Auditorium in Kolkata.

Known throughout the globe as the banker to the poor, Yunus made it clear that he would not proceed if his letter fails to draw strong feedback from the countrymen.

Addressed to every individual, the letter was circulated among the reporters who went to the ZIA to cover his departure for the neighbouring country.

"The way the present caretaker government is carrying out reforms necessary to create an acceptable atmosphere has made me optimistic along with all citizens of the country," it reads.

He said he knows joining politics could leave him controversial. Still, he is ready to take the risk if the people reckon that his coming into politics would help usher in a new political climate.

The microcredit pioneer said he thinks it is high time to get rid of all past frustrations and form a proper political structure conducive to

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Judiciary finally separated

CrPC ordinance promulgated

UNH, Dhaka

The president yesterday promulgated Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 completing the legal process of separating the judiciary from the executive.

"President Iajuddin Ahmed has approved the Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 for separation of the judiciary," said a communiqué from Bangabhaban.

Attorney General barrister Fida M Kamal told UNH over cellphone that he would submit the Ordinance before the full hierarchy of the Supreme Court today to meet the latest deadline.

The long-awaited ordinance to amend the century-old Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) for

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Maniruddin resigns as ACC commissioner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Commissioner Maniruddin Ahmed tendered his resignation to President Iajuddin Ahmed yesterday morning.

Maniruddin did not attend office yesterday and sent the letter of resignation to the president through his personal assistant.

In his resignation letter he said he is submitting the notice of resignation in accordance with section 10(1) of the ACC Act on the basis of earlier discussions with the president, he told The Daily Star last night.

According to section 10(1) of the ACC Act, an ACC commissioner will

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Partisan law officers may face removal

JULFIKAR ALI MANIK

The government may soon remove the state law officers loyal to the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami fearing that they might become biased to high-profile leaders of the immediate past government during their trial for corruption.

All the state law officers were appointed on political consideration and many of them are actively involved with BNP and Jamaat politics while a large section of them are incompetent, high-level government sources said.

The government may remove these law officers before initiating the trial of the graft cases against the political and business bigwigs

and top corrupt people.

Several members of the caretaker government's committee on anti-corruption have already taken some preparation in this regard. The next meeting of the committee, headed by Law Adviser barrister Mainul Hossain, is likely to discuss this matter to take a decision.

Presently at the lower courts across the country there are 63 public prosecutors (PP), 1236 assistant PPs, 61 government pleaders (GP) and a few hundred additional GPs and assistant GPs. Almost all of them were appointed in these positions considering their political affiliation with the four-party alliance while some of them are known to be 'party cadres'.

At the Attorney General's Office

(AGO), there are one attorney general (AG), one additional AG, 37 deputy AGs and 76 assistant AGs. Almost all of them were appointed on political consideration during the past alliance government.

The government need efficient law officers as it intends to fight the graft cases with solid evidence but it is feared that the existing lower court law officers might not serve the purpose, sources said.

"They have taken benefits from the past government. As they were politically loyal to individual leaders, they might not serve loyalty to the state," said a source, adding, "The political bigwigs who would be tried at the courts are very influential. The law officers need to be

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Local govt polls set to miss schedule

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Elections to Dhaka, Rajshahi and Khulna city corporations are unlikely to be held on time because of the state of emergency and lack of a credible voter list.

The Election Commission (EC) has shelved the plan to hold elections to the three city corporations, tenure of which will expire in May and June this year while elections to the local government bodies are supposed to be held within 180 days before expiry of their tenure.

The EC has discussed the issue and will soon take a decision in this regard, Election Commissioner Sohul Hossain told reporters at his office yesterday.

Sources said considering the prevailing complexities of holding the election to the three city corporations, the interim government is planning to introduce the provision for appointment of administrators to the local government bodies if election is not held after expiry of their tenure.

The immediate past BNP government had initiated move for introducing the provision for appointment of interim administrators to local government bodies but it dropped the idea in the wake of severe criticism from political parties and election watchdogs.

The EC had planned to hold election to the three city

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Flat tyre stalls flights at ZIA

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

An aircraft of Saudi Arabian Airlines aborted takeoff yesterday due to a tyre puncture and caused the suspension of landings and takeoffs of other aircrafts at Zia International Airport for several hours.

Civil aviation sources said the pilot of the plane (flight SD-801) with 339 people onboard aborted the takeoff detecting a puncture in a front wheel. They told The Daily Star last night that takeoffs and landings were suspended till 3:00am today as the aircraft could not be moved from the runway. They said the authorities were making frantic efforts to move the plane from the runway before 3:00am.

However, sources said a number of small aircrafts landed at ZIA

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HOW IT HAPPENED

TAKE THAT LITTLE PIECE OF LAND, SON! AND MR. FELU, TAKE THIS TIN-SHEET... NO QUIT THIS TIME!



Relief goods, 52,000 sacks of expired lentil seized in Bogra raid

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

The joint forces yesterday raided four warehouses at Silimpur village in Shahjahanpur thana and recovered over 52,000 sacks of date expired lentils worth around Tk 14 crore along with relief materials from Prime Minister's Relief Fund including several thousand pieces of blankets, sweaters and saris.

The estimated value of a total of 52,028 sacks of date expired lentils was Tk 14 crore. The relief materials, with Prime Minister's Relief Fund tags on them, included 4,475 pieces of blankets, 1,900 pieces of saris and 890 pieces of sweaters.

Police arrested from the scene Mohammad Shokrana, owner of the four warehouses, and Saiful Islam Saiful, general secretary of Bogra district BNP and special representative of the former prime minister.

The arrestees told the law enforcers that Tarique Rahman, son of former prime minister Khaleda Zia, sent the relief materials to them for distribution among the destitute.

Locals said Mohammad Shokrana also had close ties with BNP leaders and was a general member of BNP. The other arrestee Saiful however denied having any BNP link with Shokrana.

Govt may go for limited VoIP licensing

Waits to get recommendations from tech body by Feb 15

SHARIER KHAN

A seven-member technical committee is expected to recommend the government by February 15 how to award licences for the voice over internet protocol (VoIP) quickly by protecting national interest.

The committee is also considering limiting the licences to Bangladeshi companies only for now to maximise financial gains for the country, sources said.

A quick awarding of licences for VoIP operation has become urgent in the backdrop of the recent crack-down on the illegal internet telephony which has bogged down the cheap and easy international callingsystem.

At the same time, however, in the absence of a common platform through which all VoIP calls would be channelised for monitoring, the awarding of the licence could deprive the government of the same earning that was being drained away by the illegal VoIP operation for the last seven-eight

years. "That is why, the committee is tilted to the idea of awarding limited VoIP licences for now," said a source close to the committee that held a meeting yesterday. "The committee is now reviewing the international call handling capability of the state owned Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTB). The call demand is higher than BTB's capacity and the VoIP licences may be awarded only to handle calls which the BTB cannot technically deal with," he said.

The total call demand of the country hovered around 16 million minutes before the crack-down on illegal VoIP began last month.

BTB sources said it can handle up to 12.25 million minutes of overseas calls a day.

"But this does not mean that everyone is able to connect to Bangladesh as they did before," said an official, adding, "People who have been using illegal VoIP to call Bangladesh will not have that

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Satkhira introduces Online Banking for the first time



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