

## My personal letter

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sense of endeavour and creativity can achieve the impossible if political goodwill, competent leadership and good governance can be established. If I have to form a political party in response to the people's desire, it will be dedicated to this very objective.

I have received pure love and respect from people of all ages ranging from the poorest to the most powerful. I do not know when again a Bangladeshi individual will have this good fortune. By the grace of Allah, I am a very fortunate man. There is nothing left for me to desire. I know that joining politics is to become controversial. I am ready to take the risk if you think me joining politics will help in ushering in the political climate.

It is high time to form the proper political structure conducive to the huge task of building a Bangladesh we all dream of, by freeing ourselves from all past frustrations. I need the active participation and assistance of you and all others like you if I have to go forward with this mission. I need your advice on how I should go forward. I also want to know how you want to participate and assist in this task. The efforts of you and me to realise everybody's desire for a new politics in order to build a new Bangladesh will get strength if these can be learnt from you in the form of a letter.

You can give your advice in your own style on any topic regarding the formation of a new political party. I can point out some topics as examples: a) how the party can stay involved with the people of all villages and neighbourhoods and work to realise their expectations; b) how the party can be helpful to the common people in their daily struggle and in solving their problems; c) how the organisations of the party can be built on the basis of spontaneous devotion of men and women of all ages and professions; d) what can be done to encourage the eager, enthusiastic, honest and competent people of all levels to align with the party and to become active in it; e) how the honest and competent among them, having public support, can be nominated for different local and national elections; f) how can we ensure transparency and honesty of all the people involved with the party, and of the party itself; g) how democracy can be established within the party; h) how can the flow of opinions directly from the grassroots level be ensured; and i) how the officials and employees serving in state institutions can be prevented from turning into activists of political parties -- your thoughts and advice on many such questions are vital.

At the same time, it is important to know what role you (and your friends) can play in the party, how you can actively contribute or support, is also very important to know.

(Translated from Bangla by The Daily Star)

## AKM Mosharraf

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and other facilities in jail.

Mosharraf was sent to jail on Friday, as hearing on his bail petition was not held. He was taken in following a GD filed under the Emergency Powers Rules 2007.

Our Netrokona correspondent adds: Durgapur magistrate court in Netrokona yesterday sent LDP presidential member and former lawmaker MA Karim Abbasi to Netrokona jail after rejecting his bail prayer.

Police produced Abbasi before the court with a home ministry proposal for a 30-day detention.

Abbasi was the president of Netrokona district BNP for 15 years and elected MP in Netrokona-1 (Kalmakanda and Durgapur upazila) constituency in 1991 and 2001 from BNP ticket. He was also the whip of Jatiya Sangsad from 1991 to 1996.

He left BNP and joined the LDP on October 26 in 2006 accusing the BNP leaders, especially former state minister for home Lutfuzzaman Babar of massive corruption.

Our Noakhali correspondent reports: The joint forces arrested Bashurhat municipality commissioner, also Poura AL vice-president ABM Siddiq with a pipe-gun and two bombs early yesterday.

## Maniruddin resigns

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have to provide a month's notice before he resigns.

He requested the president to take necessary actions as per rules and regulations, he told The Daily Star, adding that he is now waiting for the president's decision.

Maniruddin admitted that as ACC commissioners they had failed to meet the people's expectations to effectively combat corruption.

Earlier on Tuesday, President Iajuddin Ahmed asked Justice Sultan Hossain Khan, Maniruzzaman Miah and Maniruddin to resign.

Justice Sultan and Miah resigned from their posts of ACC chairman and commissioner, but Maniruddin did not follow suit.

A few officials of the defunct Bureau of Anti-Corruption (Bac), who were not given appointment in the ACC, put a lock on Maniruddin's office door and accused him of numerous irregularities and corruption.

Maniruddin, however, said the accusations are false and that he never received or siphoned off money from the funds allocated for anti-corruption investigations.

He said Tk 5 lakh was withdrawn for this purpose in full accordance with the law, and that six officers were given

For example, you can play the role: a) of a member of a village or neighbourhood-level organisation; b) of a pioneer of the party's welfare initiatives; c) of a local organiser; d) of an organiser of a community organisation; e) of an activist taking party calls widely among the people; f) of an adviser/researcher/theoretician for the party; g) you can contribute to the party by using your special skills or expert knowledge in its service; h) by taking a leadership role in popularising the party as an enthusiastic supporter; i) by demonstrating your organising power; and so on.

I want to know your opinion and get your advice whether you are a political leader, activist, leader or worker of an association or organisation, industrialist, businessman, professor, teacher, shopkeeper, farmer, labourer, artist-writer-thinker, professional, journalist, service holder, housewife, teenager, youth or an expatriate Bangladeshi.

Please write a short or detail personal reply to my letter. Your friends, all members of your family, neighbours, classmates and colleagues can also put in their thoughts in the same letter. You can reply through email and distribute copies of it among all your acquaintances. You can also send a short reply through SMS and encourage all your acquaintances to do the same. You can send copies of my letter to your relatives and friends abroad and encourage them to reply. It will not be possible to come out clean from old politics if a strong momentum for a new politics is not created. We will not be able to reach our goal with feeble support.

I hope my letter and your reply to it will only be the beginning of our sincere communication. The communication established will be able to go forward actively towards a common goal from now on.

You can use my following address to send your reply or may arrange to send it to me in any other way.

Contact Address:  
Dr Muhammad Yunus  
HALMars  
6/D, 66 Outer Circular Road  
Moghbazar, Dhaka 1217  
Fax: 9334656  
Email: prof.yunus@gmail.com, dryunus2006@yahoo.com  
You can call the following numbers for inquiries about the letter: 01713082277, 01717760870  
Waiting for your reply.

With thanks and greetings,  
Muhammad Yunus  
February 11, 2007

(Translated from Bangla by The Daily Star)

## BSF kills farmer

BSS, Rangpur

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) killed a Bangladeshi farmer yesterday initiating gunfire between the BSF and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on Amjal border under Hatibandha upazila in Lalmonirhat.

Sources said the dead Abdul Karim, 25, son of Mujibur Rahman of frontier village Amjal, was irrigating Boro field inside Bangladesh territory near Doikhoa BDR outpost in the morning.

BSF troops of Lal Bazar camp under Koochbehar 6 BSF Battalion illegally intruded into Bangladesh territory and shot dead Karim without any provocation, sources added.

## CA assures

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forward through achieving economic progress," he said.

Fakhruddin said this when visiting members of the UK House of Lords Baroness Paula Uddin and Lord Nazir Ahmed called on him in his office.

The chief adviser reiterated that his government's main objectives are to hold a credible election and keep the wheels of economy moving.

Referring to corruption, he said the caretaker government has already taken steps against the corrupt people and to create an environment for holding the elections free from any influence of black money.

He said the arrested persons, including the politicians, would be treated as per the law of the land. "The government is very conscious in this regard, he added.

When asked about the timeframe for holding the elections, Fakhruddin said it would depend on the reforms required in the election process.

Lauding the role of the present caretaker government, Baroness Paula Uddin said the Bangladeshi community in the UK has extended its whole-hearted support to the steps taken by the caretaker government.

"Both the Bangladeshi community and the UK government feel that you are in the right track," she told the chief adviser.

The Bangladeshi-born baroness also said that in this situation the British investors as well as the expatriate Bangladeshi have expressed willingness to invest in the country in a true sense under the "able leadership" of Fakhruddin.

Expressing gratitude to the expatriate Bangladeshi in the UK, Fakhruddin said the support of the Bangladeshi community will inspire the caretaker government in completing its tasks.

Foreign Affairs Adviser Dr Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and UK High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury were present on the occasion.

## Dr Kamal

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magistrate yesterday for its trial.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Jalal Ahmed transferred the case to the court of Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shamsul Alam.

The other defendants in the case are former Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) secretary Enayetur Rahim, former SCBA vice-president Subrata Chowdhury, barrister Tania Amir and advocates Sheikh Awsafur Rahman, Subrata Saha, Khairul Alam Pipul, Mohammad Khasruzzaman, Subravardi, Syed Mamun Mahbub and Habibur Rahman, an outsider.

Of them, Habibur Rahman is still at large and the authorities concerned had earlier published an advertisement in the dailies asking him to surrender within seven days from the day of publication of the advertisement.

On December 22 last year, Detective Branch (DB) of Police Inspector Naimur Rahman, also the investigation officer (IO), pressed charges against 13 including Dr Kamal, Amir and Rokan, showing 28 people as prosecution witnesses.

Barrister Omar Sadat, son-in-law of BNP leader and former minister Shahjahan Siraj, filed the case with the CMC's Court on December 4 against four lawyers and 50 to 60 unidentified people, including lawyers, for vandalising the offices of the chief justice and the attorney general and disturbing court proceedings on November 30.

Those named in the complaint were Rokanuddin Mahmud, Enayetur Rahim, Subrata Chowdhury and Sheikh Awsafur Rahman.

The IO, however, pressed charges against Dr Kamal and eight others, as evidence leading to their involvement in the incident was allegedly found during the investigation of the case.

Omar Sadat in his complaint said Rokan asked the accused lawyers and outsiders to vandalise the chief justice's office, courtrooms, other public property, and threaten the attorney general.

During the updating process of the voter list and its printing, allegation of corruption was raised against the chief justice stayed the proceedings of three writ petitions minutes before a HC bench was about to issue a rule on a writ challenging the legality of the president taking the post of chief adviser to the caretaker government.

Leaders of the 14-party alliance, allegedly taking money, awarded a number of supposedly inefficient companies the task of printing the updated voter list for the general elections.

Sources said a few officials did not cooperate with the joint secre-

## VolP licensing

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facility now as most VolP operators have suspended their operations. The BTTB system cannot provide the same facility."

In other words, the BTTB cannot provide enough mobile interconnections. "But we are considering an increase of interconnections to end this problem," he said.

Headed by Saiful Islam, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) professor of electrical and electronics department, the committee has held several meetings and its members are taking opinions of various IT experts.

It is expected to file its recommendations to the government after February 15 and that recommendation would be materialised by the BTTB and the Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC).

Sources said the committee emphasises on setting up a common platform to ensure transparency in the VolP operation.

The move to set up this platform was initiated in mid-2006, but it underwent three rounds of tender bids without any achievement. The present situation demands that both the VolP licences be awarded soon and the common platform be ready to operate to ensure maximum revenue for the country.

However, the creation of this platform may take another six months.

Meanwhile, a few IT experts, internet service providers (ISPs), and Public Switch Telephone Network (PSTN) operators association appealed to the committee to limit the licences to Bangladeshi companies only.

They said the mobile companies owned by foreign investors repatriate hundreds of millions of dollars as profit, and VolP licences will only increase that profit.

"They would continue to enjoy growth even if VolP licences are not awarded to them as 90 percent of international calls are terminated through mobile phones anyway," he said.

"Our young generation has somehow learnt how to operate in this area—it is time we gave them an opportunity for our own sake," he added.

Other members of the committee are Buet electrical and electronics

department Chairman Satya Prasad Majumder, BTTB member Ashraful Alim, Chief Executive Officer Lt Col Ziar Rashid Safdar, a member of the Signal Corps of the Armed Forces Division, post and telecommunications ministry Director ATM Monir Alam, and BTRC Director Rezaul Quadar.

The BTRC in late 2003 announced legalisation of the VolP, a cheap telephony based on internet technology that was booming illegally with the help from influential quarters. But the BTRC mysteriously refrained from awarding licences seemingly under pressure from the influential VolP operators who were bagging more than a thousand crore taka a year. The government and the BTTB have been the biggest casualties of this.

**CALL SYSTEM RECOVERS FROM SHOCK**

The recent crackdown on illegal VolP operators spearheaded by the Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) for the first time destroyed the backbone of this illegal business. Initially, this affected the international call system everyone was accustomed to.

On the other hand, overseas calls through the BTTB system have shot up from a daily 3.5 million minutes to 8 million. This covers half of the daily total demand.

Bangladeshis living in North America and Europe—the biggest users of VolP calling cards—had initially remained almost disconnected from Bangladesh. Now immigrants, who were used to making calls to Bangladesh with calling cards at a rock-bottom price of US 4 cents per minute, are paying almost double to get a connection home.

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## Tk 1,080cr projects

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the Chittagong port and the Bangladesh government had to bear the expenses for carrying the fuel from there to depots at Baghbari.

Tapan said this unusual route would save at least one percent on transportation costs while the purchase through BPCCL would mean a \$1 less price per metric ton than that from Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC).

The committee also approved the proposal for appointing five contractors under the Road Network Improvement and Maintenance Project-1. The contractors—Abdul Monem Ltd (which received two contracts), Islam Trading Consortium Ltd, ACL, and RCL Progressive—would charge Tk 383 crore in total for their job.

Besides, it approved the plan for hiring Italy-based contractor Vetech-Sadelmi Consortium to renovate Unit-3 of the Karnaphuli hydropower plant at a cost of Tk 128.5 crore.

For the same project, approved the proposal for employing Italy-based consultants ELC Electroconsult, and S.P.A. Italy and a local firm DCC Ltd at a cost of Tk 10.31 crore. The Italian government has already agreed to provide 1.1 million Euro in soft loans for the project.

The other proposals okayed at the meeting include a Tk 65.3-crore primary healthcare service project of the Chittagong City Corporation, import of 30,000 metric tons raw fertiliser at Tk 25.67 crore and extension of service for German consultants Detecon International GmbH to restructure the Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) for Tk 4.64 crore.

Yunus noted that the people of the country could make anything that seems impossible possible with their innate endeavour and creativity given that a proper leadership, a goodwill and good governance are in place.

"It won't be possible to come out of old politics if a strong momentum for a new politics is not created. We will not be able to reach our goal with feeble support," he continued.

He sought personal reply detailing how the party could work to realise the popular expectations, have on board the honest and competent ones, ensure democracy and transparency within the organisation, and so on.

He urged all to respond through letters, emails or SMS.

Talking to the reporters, he said he never thought he would join politics, he was rather looking forward to an election with participation of all the political parties.

It would be pointless to have on the team those who have long been perverting the political landscape, he said adding, "There must be a sharp distinction so that the new politics could really be new."