

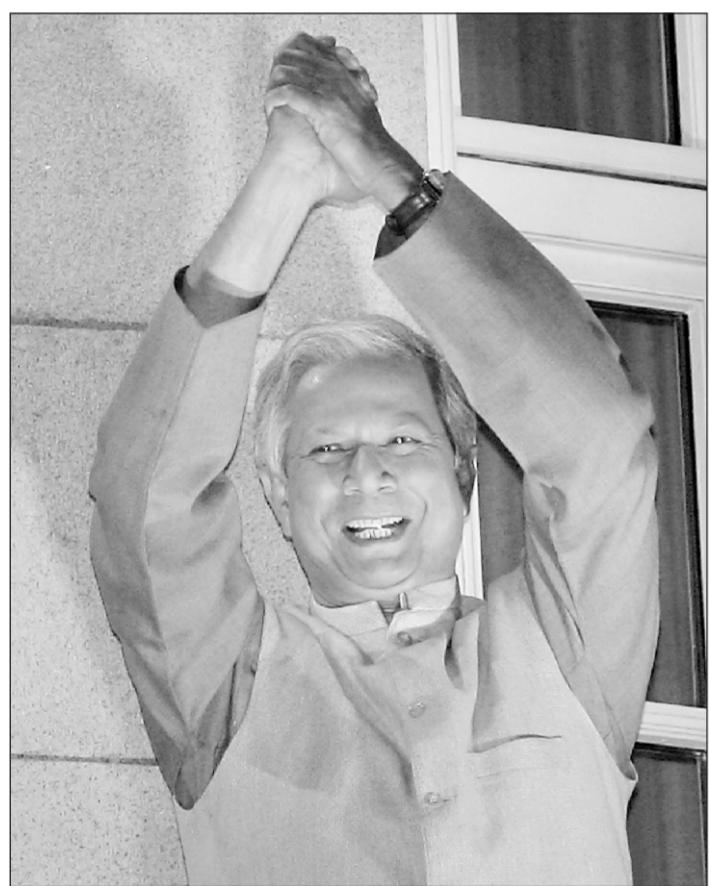
Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

## An open letter to Prof. Yunus

I have read Dr. Yunus' open letter to all citizens and finally saw some light at the end of the tunnel. I have talked to a number of people regarding his letter and have heard mixed reactions. Some of the people were very excited to hear his decision to form a political party and feel that this is the right move. Also, on the other hand, some of the people are concerned about his lack of political experience and they fear that he might be polarized eventually. While I can respect both views, here are some of my points as to why I support his decision to form a political party and believe that he is a good choice.

1) First of all, all of us are aware of the political turmoil that has been going on for decades. I do not want to go to the exact number of years to avoid any further political debates. We have given the opportunities to the two major parties on the last three elections and unfortunately both the parties have failed miserably. Also, there were lost opportunities in a lot of areas and if we think about the rate in which our neighbouring countries have been making progress, we can get depressed very easily!

2) Dr. Yunus is a very successful economist and a business and social leader as well. He can have a much better understanding and intellectual ability to explore opportunities for our country and try to make improvements.



2) There is no question about Dr. Yunus' education, integrity, experience and his ability. Even though he lacks experience in politics, he has a proven track record of being a successful business and social leader.

3) Third, we need to change our messy political culture and practices. The present and previous ruling parties have established a paradise of corruption and the whole nation literally became hostage. During the 50s and 60s, the bright and smart people used to come to politics. In recent days, if we take an account of the current elected members of our parliament, we will have a hard time finding some honest people who deserve some respect. If Dr. Yunus can bring some honest people in his party, he can play a big role to change this ill political culture and attract young and talented individuals.

4) Finally, according to a TV report, more than 98% of the people support the current caretaker government. However, while everyone has finally got some space to breathe, no one is sure what is going to happen after the election is over. We, the people, have seen true faces of our political leaders and are tired of listening to them. At this point of time, I think Dr. Yunus has made a bold and timely decision and should be supported by the people. A politician is not an idol and he

has to take decisions according to his political beliefs and ideology, which may or may not be envisioned as the ideal solution.

Dr. Yunus and his political party will have a long way to go and will face lot of obstacles. However, with our mounting level of debt and level of corruption, we cannot expect that any leader or any party can come and change the situation overnight.

At the end of the day, we can at least think of a leader who we can trust. What option do we have besides hoping?

**M. Yamin Iftekhar Chowdhury**  
Atlanta, Georgia, USA

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This refers to "Yunus getting people's views on his plan" (The Daily Star February 13, 2007) where Prof. Yunus has given a clarion call, for cooperation in his proposed endeavour, to all who wish well for the excellent political health of Bangladesh.

As Prof. Yunus, being a Noble laureate, is an international celebrity with unimpeachable integrity hence people from other countries will also like to join this political party under such competent control and guidance as of Yunus, by coming to Bangladesh, for the simple reason that this political experiment, especially for the uplift of the poor will work as a model for other developing countries also including my own country India.

4) Dr. Yunus is a very successful economist and a business and social leader as well. He can have a much better understanding and intellectual ability to explore opportunities for our country and try to make improvements.

5) We do not know your political feelings, as you were not involved in any of our major national political events; like our language movement and war of independence.

6) Most amazingly, during your recent Delhi visit, you said you do not want to be president, as president has no power. At least we know from your statement that you want power. Is your politics for achieving power or for welfare of people?

Gandhi and Moulana Bhasani achieved a lot in politics for people without going to power. Why cannot you be like them?

**Monsur Ibrahim**

Florida, USA

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I am an expatriate Bangladeshi doctor living in UK & working for the NHS.

7) This will be the first and genuine step by any political party towards globalisation, which Yunus espouses so much.

**Hem Raj Jain**

New Delhi, India

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Thanks for personally writing a letter and e-mailing it to me. I received it on 2/11/2007. You want to know my personal opinion about joining politics and forming a political party. I am a freedom fighter, but for the last 35 years we are looking for political freedom, economic relief and honesty from the government, but we know these are hard to find. Our future is dark. So people are looking for ways to get out of this dirty politics. Our expectation is to change the present political culture and politics.

8) How is it possible? It will be hard and critical in Bangladesh.

We will bring some vital issues for your attention:

We are expatriates living abroad. Our appeal is that please reserve 10 percent of the seats for the expatriates in our parliament. (2) Restore Biman's Dhaka-New York flight. **Abul Hashem Bulbul** General Secretary, Feni Zilla (Bangladesh) Association, USA

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You have already placed yourself in history as the 1st Nobel Prize winner from Bangladesh. People of Bangladesh have accepted you as their pride. You gave us a good name. We feel proud of you. You definitely can join in politics, if you want to. But I have concerns about the technique, means and the timing you chose to be in politics. In response to your recent open letter to people of Bangladesh, I have following questions to you:

1. In your entire life before earning Nobel Prize, we never heard about your interest in politics. How a person who wants to do good for the nation was silent so long? Does that mean our country was going in the correct direction until recently?

2. Most importantly, we do not know your formula or layout of a "Dream Bangladesh". How can we give opinion when we do not know how you will lead us and achieve for us a "Dream Bangladesh"? You didn't give us a guideline as to how you will eradicate our poverty, unemployment and solve all other problems.

3. You recently said all political leaders are corrupt. I would like to know your evaluation of Sk. Mujib who spent 15 years of his life in prison and gave us freedom. I would like to know your opinion about Moulana Bhasani who always stood for the oppressed people. I would also like to know your opinion on army generals turned politicians -- General Zia and Ershad. I need to know your evaluation before I can give my opinion about you in politics.

4. You recently said, we have to come out of old political trend and need a new party. Do you mean there will be only one party i.e. only your party in this country and no AL, BNP, JP, LDP, Jamaat and others?

5. We do not know your political feelings, as you were not involved in any of our major national political events; like our language movement and war of independence.

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Florida, USA

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I am an expatriate Bangladeshi doctor living in UK & working for the NHS.

7) Thank you for raising the conscience of the nation and helping to bring about the current changes. There is no doubt that there is urgent need for reform in many sectors, institutions, politics, business, administration and judiciary & even in the practice of medicine.

Your intention to join politics is supportable provided you do not directly involve yourself in the running of the country. You should remain the conscience of the nation, the voice for the poor & voiceless, for decency & fairness, for progressive ideas & views. Because if you directly get involved, your reputation will be tarnished, your failures will reduce your effectiveness. We have got a good chance through you. Our nation is fortunate to have this chance, so please do not take any wrong step. Please consider every option. Bangladesh is full of talented, honest & dedicated people. They need to be encouraged to join politics and run the affairs of the country. I shall be very willing to join you and them in helping our country to become a decent, progressive country where we can all live together in harmony and peace.

**Abul Hashem Bulbul**  
General Secretary, Feni Zilla (Bangladesh) Association, USA

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Hats off to the current CTG for its brave and honest stand on different issues.

As I write here, the caretaker government led by Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed has completed its first month in office. None can deny the fact that in even this short period of time, this former bureaucrat's government has achieved phenomenal success. Possibly for the first time in Bangladesh, former ministers and other influential and notorious members of Bangladesh's elite have been detained and are being interrogated about their misdoings. It is now up to the caretaker government to hold these plunderers accountable for all their abuses of power. After months of social and political turmoil peace and serenity has finally been restored to our troubled country and a large portion of the credit goes to the efforts of the current government.

Another sign of relief is that raids are finally being conducted by our joint forces (the pride of our country) on the influential wrong doers and that they have been successful in recovering land illegally occupied by a section

of our elite and in striking fear into the hearts of all those who have looted public wealth. Indeed, our entire nation and every honest and patriotic person in our great golden land will salute the efforts of the caretaker government and our noble joint forces. After being crippled by years of dynastic rule and blatant nepotism, the ordinary people of Bangladesh hail Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed government for its bold stance against corruption, the professional competence being displayed and above all the honesty and devotion that has been marked as being one of the current government's golden attributes. Every honest Bengali rests his or her complete confidence in Dr. Fakhruddin Ahmed and once again hats off to him and his administration for the splendid job that they are doing.

**Ahsan Mosharraf**  
On e-mail



London, UK

### Unhygienic condition at park

Kudos to the joint forces for netting small and big fishes of corruption. However, the history of the country did not witness any event where big criminals were brought to justice in time. The time has come to give exemplary punishment to those who thought they were always above and away from law.

**Shehzad Shams**  
DOHS Baridhara, Dhaka

### Passport office

I'm a Non-Resident Bangladeshi, living in Britain for the last 4 years. Now I'm in Bangladesh and recently went to the passport office for my wife's passport. There is corruption and systems loss in this important sector of Bangladesh government. I applied for a passport which normally takes 3 days (great lie) but it has been almost 15 days and I haven't got the

passport yet. Everything has been done regarding the passport like police verification and the report already reached the passport office but the attendant who is giving information regarding any passport inquiry asked me to come after one week while he was having a carrot and thousands of people were waiting for that particular man. I asked him why he was taking one more week as my passport is urgent and I paid the fees for three days, he just laughed at me and his face became like I had made a great mistake, I don't know why.

Anyway, I believe that in this field there is so much corruption from top to bottom level. Besides, there are so many brokers outside.

The issue should be addressed by the relevant authorities.

**Shamim Parvez**

### Congratulations!

Your front page multicolour cartoon of 12 February was excellent. It justifies the belief that a picture depicts more than a thousand words can. The cartoonist deserves great appreciation.

Really, the shamelessness of the politicos is a shame and a slur to the country. This is the real image of Bangladesh projected by these unscrupulous people who are making us laughing stock to the world at large.

**S. A. Mansoor**

Gulshan, Dhaka

## Thanks, caretaker government

Today we are very happy to have a competent caretaker government after much struggle. Its method of solving political problems has been appreciated highly by everyone. Now we seem to be breathing freely & feeling secure after a long time without any hindrance & violence.

At this moment we think there is no need for any election because the common people know very well whoever comes to power misuses state property & gets engaged in accumulation of wealth. The political party leaders in our country dream always of being wealthy because it is the easiest way for party leaders to amass a lot of property through illegal means. Being a owner of illegal wealth is a chronic disease from which the great nation will have to be protected urgently by the caretaker government. The common people of our country are fed up with unrest, violence, corruption, killings etc.

We appreciate the newspapers for publishing reports on top leaders involved in the accumulation of illegal wealth & believe they should be punished.

We believe an independent judiciary can play an important role in establishing justice.

**Asad**  
New DOHS, Mohakhali, Dhaka

We, the Bangladeshi people, who are living/working abroad, await the TV news with hope, as we know that there would be something new in every news session. May be some new balm or treatment will be given to the wounds in society.

When the CTG had taken the ruling baton in hand, it was really a very tough and challenging time. It's still a challenge to hold a fair and free election. Other than this, the CTG has taken some bold decisions to separate the Judiciary and to privatise three of the commercial banks. Like the three banks if Bangladesh Railway, Kamlapur Container Terminal and Chittagong Seaport could also be privatised, they could bring huge revenues. I am working in a seaport in Saudi Arabia and here I see that most of the big and profitable organisations have been privatised and the country is earning huge revenues through them. Now the Chittagong port is a non-profitable organisation because of corruption and indiscipline. The same goes about the BR and the Kamlapur Container Terminal. If these organisations are privatised-- corruption will decrease and their activities will increase. I hope that the CTG will consider all these points.

We appreciate the newspapers for publishing reports on top leaders involved in the accumulation of illegal wealth & believe they should be punished.

**Zahirul Islam Bhuiyan**  
Dammam, Saudi Arabia

