

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.

Wasa bills

I, being a domestic consumer of Dhaka Wasa living in Mirpur area, would like to draw the attention of the Wasa authorities in particular and the readers in general to the following few lines.

It has been observed during the last few years that no meter reader visits any house to see for himself the consumption by the consumer, rather the meter reader, as I could gather, sends advice to the Wasa bill section (computer) after arbitrarily fixing units against each meter under his jurisdiction. The bill section prepares & sends the bill to consumers accordingly. As a result, the units which the meter shows never tally with the units appearing in the bill.

In the circumstances, I appeal to the Wasa authorities to kindly look into the matter.

A consumer
Mirpur, Dhaka

Telecommunication

Bangladeshis live abroad for their own livelihood, but at the same time they earn a huge amount of foreign currency, which ultimately contributes to our economy. Recently, Rab cracked down on a few illegal VoIP companies and almost all other companies have closed down their terminals in fear of that. This is certainly a good job done in today's perspective of Bangladesh. But the end state of this sort of action is not favourable for us who live outside the country. Due to the closing down of all the VoIP terminals, we cannot communicate with people in Bangladesh. This is especially true about the mobile companies operating in the towns and villages of Bangladesh.

My humble submission through you to the concerned authorities is that, you should always close down all the illegal VoIP terminals, but you should also consider all the possible after effects.

We the expatriate Bangladeshis don't want to remain cut off from our families.

Md Habibur Rahman

On e-mail

Interesting developments

When the two antagonistic parties are singing the chorus together, it is meant to be the wave of a panic-stricken tremor passing through the spine to the nerve centre. Not long ago, the mob rule, bloodletting on the streets of Dhaka, disruption of normal life and duties of the citizen and the breakdown of law and order in the country had compelled the government to declare emergency. The caretaker government has been slowly but steadily tackling the root of corruption and unethical activities of the immediate past government, which has been bailed by all.

Dr. Yunus and his team have vowed to change the political landscape of Bangladesh with the mandate from the people. But the political parties are scared and have demanded election as soon



A fresh beginning

Bangladesh is a country with the potential to become one of the leading economic players in the South Asian region. We have seen economic growth in the areas of garments, leather as well as other service sectors over the last couple of years. But the question is whether we can sustain the growth till the day it becomes an institutional strength. Bad political practices along with our poor social awareness have enabled the same section of people, from our independence, to manipulate the civil administration in their favour for corruption and

malpractice. But now we see an effort being made to achieve a social norm and establish a political culture of fairness and justice.

People of Bangladesh are simple and they have a way of taking things as they appear. As this wind of change is blowing, we need to ask ourselves whether it will be sustainable. Once a great man said that revolution will bear fruit once the trees are grown. Shall we be able to taste the fruits of hope in the long run? Over the years we have turned into human beings who are numb toward corrup-

tion and irregularities. To get our jobs done, particularly in the government offices, we give bribes and tell lies. General people had no choice. Now as the systems are turning toward transparency we need to get ourselves acquainted with the new law of order and integrity.

Our commitment toward the good practices should be cast in stone so that it cannot be erased once a democratically elected government comes to power.

Md. Tareque Aziz
Uttara, Dhaka

However, the calculation for power savings shown is flawed. Taking his total lighting load as 156MW, then replacing all the light bulbs by CFLs will not be 156MW; as the CFLs will itself consume about 60MW to provide illumination!

The effective savings would be (156-60) 96MW at most.

The average retail price of CFL is around Tk 12.50 per watt. The total cost for the CFLs will be Tk 12 crore. In effect we will add 96MW power into the system by spending Tk 12 crore; if all filament bulbs are replaced piece-meal at one go, without waiting for the bulb to fuse at random intervals. This is precisely what has been done in Australia and earlier in South Africa.

The moot question is when will Bangladesh do so?

S.A. Mansoor
Gulshan, Dhaka

While the government is asking shopkeepers to shut down their businesses after evening, one of its advisers has given assent to trade bodies' proposal to reduce weekly holiday to one day.

Wouldn't one extra workday consume a huge quantity of electricity that could be diverted to meet the power crisis?

Mithu Sarker
Dhamondi, Dhaka

Failed politicians

Please accept that you all have failed to deliver your services to the nation and citizens. If you believe in "By the people, for the people and of the people" theory of democracy, I sincerely ask you to have a look at daily online opinion poll in almost all newspapers. The result is clear, transparent and full of vision. It indicates that 90-97% of the people do not respect you, cannot have faith in you, feel unsafe to put you in power. They wholeheartedly support and appreciate the contribution of the present caretaker government and praise it. As NRNs, we see hope and feel good to talk about our country now.

Rabindra Bhattacharjee, Ph.D.
Research Scientist
Osaka University

Nation's achievement
In the online edition of a Bengali daily on 22 February 2007, one writing, under the column: "Opinion", caught my attention. The name of the writer of that column was not mentioned there.

The writer mentioned that the independence of Bangladesh in 1971 was the achievement of the

politicians. I strongly disagree with this idea. The independence is the achievement of the nation. It is not, and cannot be termed as the achievement of a group of people. The whole nation got involved in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971, and suffered due to it. People from every class of the society joined the war at that time, and the personnel of the Army were at the forefront. Three million lives needed to be sacrificed to achieve the independence. I want to know from the writer of that column: how many of them were politicians?

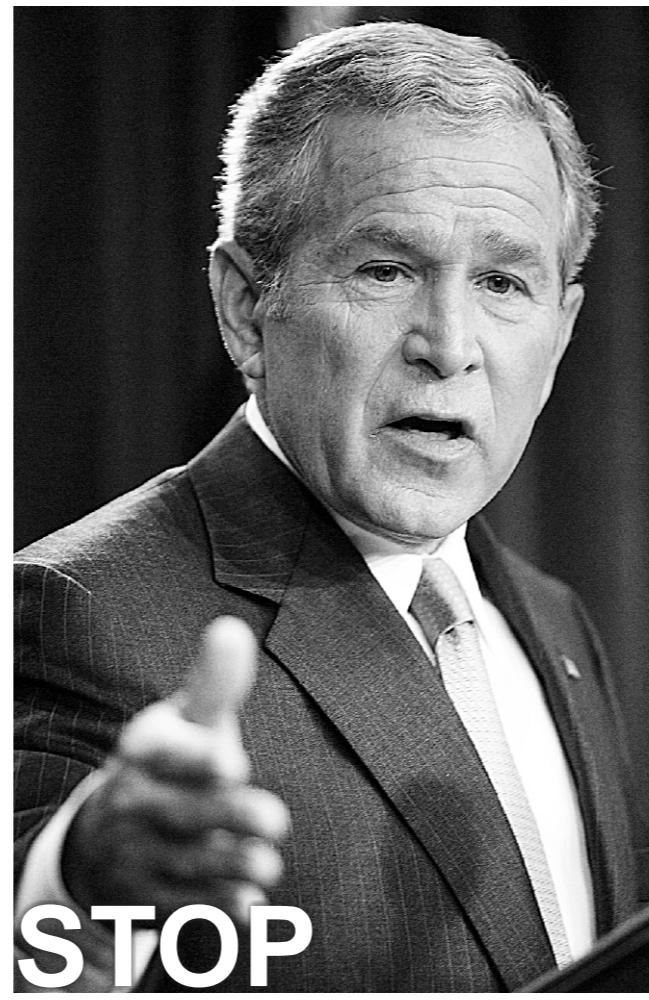
In the said writing, the writer also criticised Dr. Yunus mentioning why he is now joining politics after criticising the politicians a few days back while he was in India. Political leaders are one of the most important clusters of people in any society as they lead the country, run the government, and make decisions on behalf of the people. They are good for the society as long as they are benevolent, e.g. Dr. Mahathir. They are bad for the society when they become like the politicians of Bangladesh today corrupt to the core. In the last 25 years or so, the politicians of Bangladesh have made Bangladesh the most corrupt country of the world. They have polluted all the government departments with corruption and partiality. And they have made crores of taka by "eating up" the resources of Bangladesh. They did the common people of Bangladesh no good, and caused them misery only. That is why the politicians of Bangladesh today deserve not only criticism but also punishment. But Bangladesh needs good politicians, because the country should ultimately be led by the politicians. That is why, we need someone like Dr. Yunus to come to politics.

Razib Mohammad
The Australian National University
Canberra, Australia

Well done, but...

It is really refreshing for us, the people of Bangladesh, to see a government actively working and taking steps against corruption and dishonesty that has plagued our beloved nation for the last few decades. This drive has unearthed many corrupt politicians and businessmen. Also, many structures have been partially or completely demolished and the recovery process of government properties is underway. In short, at least for now, it looks like we are moving toward good things - things that we can be proud of.

In this hubbub of anti-"all that is bad" movements we must take into account the final outcome of each and every step. In the last few days, people with low income have suffered a lot directly or indirectly. What will be its after effect? Thousands of small traders and hawkers have been evicted but how will they feed their families? Who will give them an alternative to live?



President Bush

President Bush has lied to our nation, waging a catastrophic war in Iraq that has only brought tears and pain amongst those he claimed to safeguard against the tyranny and madness of (now murdered) Saddam Hussein. The victims are on both sides - here in the USA amongst the soldier-families of thousands killed and maimed to fight Bush's dirty war, and the millions there in the killing fields of Iraq. Hundreds of billions of US treasury bills are lost to the merchants of war, who prey on our innocence so that a vicious cycle of perpetual war can be continued thereby making them filthy rich.

The war in Iraq has not made us safer. It has made the situation worse than our worst dreams. Yet, Bush is unperturbed. He is now preparing the groundwork for war against Iran. So as one would have expected, false accusations against Iran are now made routinely so that our disinterested people can be misled and agitated for war once more. Bush and his entourage of warmongers have not been ashamed of their past crimes, and in all likelihood they will not be deterred now from their malicious campaign against Iran.

The Congress and the Senate must stop this madness. Time and again we have seen war is no solution to political and economic problems. And yet our president behaves like a lunatic repeating the same mistakes. All measures must be taken to avoid war with Iran, including opening direct channels of communication with Teheran. The US leaders must understand that Iran is not Iraq. Whether we like him or not for outwitting CBS's Mike Wallace (let alone our President), Dr. Ahmedinazad is not Saddam Hussein, nor his government a military oligarchy. It is a populous, democratic state with a population that is solidly united behind Iran's legitimate right to acquire nuclear technology. Iran has not done anything that abuses the rights of a free nation to pursue peaceful means to acquiring nuclear technology, the same rights that we took for granted for ourselves and many of our allies in the West. Our reaction to Iran's pursuit of nuclear energy is hypocritical and criminal to the core. If we cannot stop our own nuclear reactors, we simply have no right to ask Iran to stop its.

Most importantly, we simply cannot let Bush act as God, knowing the future. There is a name for such a behavior - blasphemy! I hope our so-called God-fearing President reflects on this Biblical fact before losing his mind and securing his spot amongst the worst of the despots to rule our world. He must be stopped.

Dr. Habib Siddiqui
Philadelphia, USA

An appeal to chief adviser

Dr. Fakhruddin must be passing a busier time than any time throughout his dazzling professional career. Besides, he is holding the most august responsibility that someone can think of in life. We expect and plead 100% success for him. But two apparently insignificant but heartbreaking items are probably remaining out of his sight. One is the plight of Oriental Bank depositors. It can never be accepted why depositors of a nationalised bank should undergo suffering for having trust and confidence in the govt. The fault lies with godfathers, to some extent some bankers and finally the government. Why should the poor depositors bear the brunt when such a great banker has been placed as executive head of the country? I earnestly hope and pray the government release the funds for depositors immediately and allow normal transaction of the bank.

The second item is the EEF (Equity Entrepreneur Fund) operation. During his time as governor of Bangladesh Bank, newcomers and enthusiastic entrepreneurs enjoyed the maximum benefit. Maximum (EE) funds were provided to genuine entrepreneurs for the economic development of the country. That (EE) fund has also been kept inoperative. How the economy will grow if the genuine entrepreneurs do not get the support of EEF? Indeed, he deserves salute from the genuine entrepreneurs of this country. He allowed new entrepreneurs to go for ventures, which are vital for national economy. Considering all his commitment, I would appeal to him to solve these two problems immediately.

Md. Abu Yusuf

Dhaka

Also, there is an ongoing drive against illegal structures; which, if we take the number of buildings destroyed, is successful. But who authorized these plans in the first place? Where are those people, who either willingly or after taking bribe, had approved those plans without parking places? They are the people in different government organisations and they will almost certainly approve such plans in the future too if the correct price is paid!

A man who suffered such illegal destruction in Gulshan/Baridhara held a press conference a few days ago. We have read in newspapers that an honorable adviser has said that no structures will be destroyed without the permission of the advisory board to review the case. But is that order really effective?

We believe that much attention is given on "effects" instead of "causes". If the root is intact, no matter how many times you cut the branches it will grow over and over again.

A reader
On e-mail

The nation is with the govt

You have come to rescue the nation at a critical juncture. While the rest of the developing world moved at light speed towards development, Bangladesh just crawled during the last 35 years. The education system suffered irreparable damage. Talented people shunned Bangladeshi politics. Politics became a money-making business. Political parties condoned all kinds of corruption. Innocents had nowhere to go. They seem to have resigned to the cruel fate.

Show the other side of the coin. You have a one track mind. Carry out some reforms, starting with slave labour. I am talking in plain language!

Md Abad, Dhaka

outside Bangladesh, are with you. A Bangladeshi
California, USA

Dr. Yunus

I am in favor of a third force. But it is really too hard to create a third force in Bangladeshi politics. If you really dream of Sonar Bangla, I welcome you to politics with some suggestions:

Please don't stand in the centre of power, you better stay on the sidelines and work like a planner. Which is being done by Sonia Gandhi in India. As a result, your eyes will remain open.

Finally, I am afraid of losing an honest and hard working person like you who can be derailed from his present way of dynamic work when he runs the show(power)?

Md. Mosiur Rahman thakur
Paribag, Dhaka

BGMEA

We are pampering BGMEA, the rich milking cow.

It should improve PR & self-image. Tell the public your internal weaknesses & what you are doing about it and do not put forward your long lists of grievances to the govt. at regular intervals. Familiarity breeds bad images. One of our close relations is a GM, he looks after five RMG factories in a company, for more than a decade. Never allowed to go abroad. He travels home-office in rickshaw, and works overtime daily. Amenities & facilities? A clerk?

Show the other side of the coin. You have a one track mind. Carry out some reforms, starting with slave labour. I am talking in plain language!

Md Abad, Dhaka

Continue the rescue operation

Considering the prevailing situation, we want to say that the country needs cooperation from all sections of society to fulfill the present government's missions. The civil administration definitely needs cooperation from the armed forces to fulfill people's desires to curb corruption and hold a free and fair election.

The AL chief said that she would not be able to arrest and punish the corrupt people if she is elected. An ex-PM's statement reveals how powerful the corrupt leaders are. It also reveals the inability and lack of courage to bring the corrupt to justice.

Instead of glorifying a rare Bangladeshi innovation, they have condemned it! The AL and the BNP do not represent 140 million Bangladeshis. The women leaders of the two political parties need soul searching. They need to understand that at this juncture Bangladeshi people do not need election. People want a complete overhaul of the political culture.

You are doing a great job! We salute you for taking this unruly bull by the horn. The Bangladeshi nation and its people, both in and

port from the armed forces. Amanul Bhuiyan Mukul
Canberra, Australia

World Cup prospects

Can we do anything in the upcoming cricket World Cup? Are we really up to that level of competing against the better teams? These are the questions that we ask today because our team still needs good and strong leadership.

Our players must learn from their mistakes to perform better.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

The govt needs time

I think we should not forget under what circumstances the present caretaker government has come to power. We all know that the President had already given his consent for the election to be held on 22nd January 2007. I think we agree that if 14-party alliance did not withdraw their nominations, the elections would have been held.

The alliance announced boycotting the election and demanded that the president should postpone the election, appoint a new chief advisor, reconstitute the Election Commission, prepare a correct voter list and introduce voter ID card. It was not only on their and international pressure that the president was forced to form this new "caretaker government" but I believe our Armed Forces played a vital role in this actions. Our thanks to them that they saved the country from ruination.

The two major alliances did not imagine that they were creating a situation which would act like a boomerang. I believe if they realised that the situation would take such a turn the alliances might have come to an understanding.

We should not forget that fair democracy is our goal but it does not mean that the caretaker government should not take reasonable time to create an environment for a free and fair election.

Engr. Mahbubul Islam

Australia



Ban campus politics

This caretaker government has taken the initiative to reform many sectors of our country. I think they are still ignoring a sensitive area which is politics in educational institutions.

Student politics has already proved that it is a harmful practice for students. It has brought nothing but session jam, anarchy, looting, terrorism and corruption in educational institutions. At the same time, teacher politics tarnishes the image of our public universities. It should not go further.

I earnestly request the education adviser to take a close look at this matter. This is also related with the election. As this government is working for creating a real level playing field for a free, fair and credible election, so they should take immediate

steps to ban politics in educational institutions.

It should be taken up on a priority basis. I hope this government can do this for refurbishing the image of the universities as well as strengthening our educational system.

Our neighbouring countries have made tremendous progress in different fields. They are developed because their education system is developed. So I hope our government will take some initiative to develop our education system.

Mohammad Anisur Rahman
Pahartali,
Chittagong