



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.



Poor fire preparedness

Thanks to live coverage by Bangla Vision we have seen how helpless our firefighters and those inside and on the roof of the BSEC Bhaban were.

We should know when and how to escape fire. Consider running from the building. We should stay in the building only if there is a good possibility of controlling the fire within a few seconds and avoiding further loss of life or great loss of property. Assess the type of fire, its fuel and combustion sources, its size, and its proximity to people or valuable property.

Cutting off the gas and electricity should be the first task if you find a fire inside your kitchen. When a person's clothes are on fire, the person will usually panic and run; the wind created by the movement will rather activate the fire. It is necessary to tell the person to "stop, drop and roll" on the ground (or to force him/her to do so), and to roll him/her in a cloth when available. We should not use a fire extinguisher because the chemical agent may harm them. We must never try to put a wet cloth on any part of our body to protect it from fire. The water

from the cloth will heat up and can create steam and scald the skin where the cloth is placed.

Meanwhile, we should advise our children not to flirt with fire and our friends not to smoke while reading lying on bed inside a mosquito net. Don't forget to switch off the gas burner in your kitchen before leaving your apartment and the electric iron after ironing your dress.

Maswood Alam Khan
Banani, Dhaka

The devastating fire at the BSEC building last Monday not only created fear of death among the victims trapped there but also caused great anxiety to thousands of people.

The owners of high-rise buildings should ask themselves whether the fire-fighting arrangements are adequate in their buildings. In most cases the arrangements are poor.

Kamrul Islam Zharo
Janpur Bankpara, Sirajgonj

Courage and commitment

It was shocking to see the inferno and the consequent deaths and misery of the people trapped at the BSEC Bhaban. We also witnessed great demonstration of people's courage. Crisis creates saints and leaders. We are living in a country which has always been led by people of dubious character. But look at the common peoplehow dedicated and courageous they are!! Our hats off to them!

Shawkat Hossain
Kabul, Afghanistan

I would like to commend the rescuers' brave effort to save the trapped victims of the fire. Many of the volunteers showed unprecedented courage.

It once more proves that the ordinary people of this country are good, selfless and are willing to sacrifice everything for others. This sadly is not seen in our politicians and leaders, who would sacrifice all others for their own gains. What a contrast! Let it be a true lesson for the politicians. It is they who are corrupt and not the common people of this country.

We should salute and recognise those heroes of the Karwan Bazaar fire.

We would also like to know why there was only one ladder available. If it was not for the heroic effort of many including Major Siddique, Major Imran and other unsung heroes of the fire service, there would have been disaster.

Those who risked their lives for others should not be forgotten. Was this not what Ekushey was all about? Selflessness. The heroes have given

Bangladesh a beacon of hope at a time of political despair and uncertainty.
M Uddin
London, UK

Dr. Yunus' campaign

I am a strong supporter of what Dr. Yunus is trying to do. It doesn't take a genius to see that this is "Mission Impossible" for anyone who attempts it. However, to deride his initiative without offering a constructive alternative is to accept that the country is doomed for eternity. As a nation, we have real problems but we also have a massive image-problem. I have not heard Dr. Yunus

claim that he has all the solutions to the real problems-- in fact, he is asking for ideas. However, I have no doubt that the credibility he commands internationally will attract the factors of growth that are currently finding their way elsewhere.

Dr. Yunus is the best "brand ambassador" that Bangladesh has. The goodwill he generates internationally is a prized asset for us and it is suicidal not to nurture that asset. I am baffled by the extent of skepticism that has accompanied his desire to lead us. I am also amused at the ferocity with which the limitations of micro-credit are being debated right now. To me, it is the spirit not detail of Grameen that is striking. Whether you agree with its wider benefits or not, it is an incredible story of an idea that broke convention, that was executed thoroughly and marketed effectively. Dr. Yunus has the best chance of applying that spirit once again and turning politics on its head in our country. He may well fail in this venture, but I hope he doesn't.

Lutfey Siddiqi
Singapore

To Dr. Yunus...

Will you please declare (a) Total amount of loan paid out (b) Interest collected on the loan (c) Expenditures of Grameen Bank (d) Balance profit held so far.

The above statement will encourage citizens to respond to your call and the so called politicians, civil society etc to keep quiet.

Gustav
On e-mail

Avoid mistakes

Up until this point Dr. Fakhruddin did everything almost correctly to address the problems facing the nation. But my attention was drawn to a report that he had etched his name on a marble slab to lay the foundation for a new D.S.E. complex.

I was hoping that the chief adviser would avoid such gaffes.

Shaheen Subhan
On e-mail

Bridging power gap

I have read with interest the Energy Adviser's interview in the fortnightly "Energy & Power" magazine of 16 February. The Adviser has laid emphasis on increasing power generation capacity. The "double checking" of the repair and mainte-

AL focuses on reforms

What news could be better for us than the AL focusing on party reforms? A new gesture to reform the party by strengthening internal democracy, bringing transparency to the party's accounts, and modernising the system of induction of members, provide us a fresh air of breath. Of course, those who believe in the cleansing process within the party would be more reliable and trustworthy when it comes to a broader thing such as establishing democracy in the country. This I think

is great news, especially when it comes from a very big political party in Bangladesh. It provides the members of public an opportunity to rethink about the political parties in Bangladesh, and may be the BNP would take the same reformation policy very soon.

To gain public support and confidence they will have to make it happen and they have to realise the fact that only flowery words of promise won't help.

Sady Mirza, Cambridge



nance work of power plants carried out during the fag end of BNP regime implies something seriously wrong in it. Was it another instance of corruption; which was the usual activity of those days? Connecting captive power to the grid will take time, particularly for interconnection and reverse power flow interlocks and protection. It may not be possible by this summer; maybe very partially if started today.

The total technical approach was presented by the undersigned in a joint paper titled "Aggregation and Dispatching of Captive Generator Sets for System Load Reduction and Capacity Relief" at the international conference on Electrical and Computer Engineering held in Dhaka in December 2002. Unfortunately, the PDB then did not give any importance to it; with everyone being more interested in milking the Cash Cow for new power generation proposals. Demand side Management has been implemented in the most rudimentary form as a crash programme only through load-shedding. The illuminating South African solution should be the basis for our short and long term model. Even load-shedding is not impartially done in Dhaka. It seems to be on a preferential basis as we see it to our peril in the practices that differ between circle one and two in Gulshan every day. Is this not a form of corruption favoring the privileged?

Regarding the Adviser's request as published in the interview, I have already volunteered as published in the "Letters to the Editor" in The Daily Star on 23 Feb. 07. They can contact me (mobile- 0172-6210744) for consultation on this subject.

S.A.Mansoor
Gulshan1, Dhaka

Punish them

The caretaker government is doing wonders in Bangladesh. The corrupt elements should get exemplary punishment. I do realise that the western countries are against capital punishment but to rid our country from the cancerous claws of corruption, there is no other option.

Enamul Haque
Biomedical Science student
Sydney, Australia

Don't put pressure on the government

Bangladesh under the present caretaker government is making some significant progress and as such the general public welcome it. The people of the country really need this kind of honest and effective leadership. Unfortunately, the leaders of the two main parties are demanding election.

They are certainly worried with the steps taken against their corrupt leaders.

It seems that without those influential persons these parties are

not confident of winning the election. We have seen their governments in the past. There is little controversy that these parties are largely based on support from dishonest and corrupt politicians. They have polluted national politics and are responsible for losing the confidence of the people. As Dr. Yunus commented about those leaders, they just care about money, not the people.

It is extremely important that the preconditions of a fair and free election are met before going into the 'election-festival'. So far, the present government is doing that job satisfactorily. This government has been able to carry out tasks, which the political governments had failed to do. We need such a strong government for the benefit of our nation. So, my appeal to the leaders-- please don't put pressure on the government and let it do its job.

Let the people enjoy the gifts of good governance. At the same time, I will urge the government to stick to its policy and not to bow down to any pressure.

Parvez Monon Ashraf
Dallas, Texas, USA

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