

Yunus writes letter to all

FROM PAGE 1

declaring the decision to join politics and form a political party following your encouragements. I also told you that the probable name of the party would be 'Nagorik Shakti'. This time, in my third letter, I write to you to inform you that I have decided to stand aside my efforts to form a political party. Encouraged by your supports and motivated by the hope of creating a new political stream, I took the decision to join politics. By taking this decision, I was ready to put all my life's works behind me to enter a new life and I enthusiastically started the work to form a political party. As the first step in forming a party, I started the process of building a strong organising team. The plan was to introduce the team to everyone after the ban on indoor politics is withdrawn and move forward with the formation of the party. But, despite my all-out efforts I could not create a team that can boost my confidence. In the light of the experience I have gained from this process, I think, I will not be successful even if I wait for a longer period. So, I have taken the decision to stand aside by accepting the reality that it is correct not to go any further down the path.

A great sense of hope has prevailed in the country following the declaration of the state of emergency and the formation of a new caretaker government. New doors have been opened in the political arena. A new opportunity has been created to bury the hostile, divisive and conflict-centric politics by creating a political stream under the new leadership to take the country's economy forward. Everyone has understood that these opportunities do not come always. Everyone in this country feels that the impossible can be made possible through the innovations if good political will, competent leadership and good governance can be ensured.

I decided to join politics in this perspective. We had a single dream: to create a corruption-free political stream that is unified, consensual, empathetic, peaceful, secular, and committed to radical economic growth; a dream to turn the country into a self-assured nation by freeing the people from conflict, distrust and disappointment. We all know where we have to go. When we know the destination, we can try our best to reach - I took my initiatives with this belief.

You have responded to my call by sending many letters, faxes, emails, and sms to support my initiative. You have given advices by sending letters to newspapers. You have also given your suggestions in newspaper post-editorials and television discussions. A number of you have informed me after you have formed preparatory teams in your areas. A number of expatriates have informed me after forming their committees. Young people both here and from overseas have voluntarily come forward to give their time and talent. I am grateful to all of you. I am extremely sorry to stand aside politics after giving you the hope. I have taken this decision early so that further disappointment does not

increase.

I dedicated all my strength towards forming a party. As part of the first step, I concentrated on forming an organisational team. I wanted to create it in such a way so that it creates confidence in people and so that it can generate massive political force even though it is a new party.

After I announced that I would form a party, people known or unknown to me, politicians, and people who aren't politicians but are interested in politics contacted me. I urged them to join the party. I also contacted people who did not contact me but whom I thought would strengthen the party with their presence. When I was on foreign trips, I daily contacted several people. The people who were working on my behalf towards forming a party also continued in maintaining contacts with them.

Through this communication process, one thing became clearer that those who were encouraging me will not join politics themselves and will not give public support because of their own problems. And those who are in political parties, will not leave their parties, at least, now. They might join later if the political situation changes. After calculation, I realised that nothing much is being accumulated. So, whom will I form the strong team with?

I went ahead with creating the party by not breaking my pledge not to veer from the components required to build a political party that is transparent, corruption-free and successful. I went forward with the approach that I thought would best establish a new political path. From working on this, it became increasingly clear to me that the people who I needed with me to present a strong and bright alternative to the people, will not be with me. Some of them are involved with political parties, some of them who are not in politics but are enthusiastic about it. They all want a new political path to be established and they are enthusiastic about changing the country's political culture. But, I could not bring them with me. Those who initially showed encouragement, I saw that they are becoming less and less encouraging.

That is when I started to question myself should I keep going or should I stall the process and wait? Or should I completely stop the initiative to form a party? I opposed the formation of a weak party. Instead of trying to create a new political arena with a weak party, let us wait for someone else to make the effort and succeed.

I am trying. Those who were with me from wherever they were are also trying. We are again presenting the need for a new political stream through our efforts. Now someone else has to come forward to fill this void. I hope they become immensely successful.

This country is at the doorstep of great potential. The next five years are a very important period for us. This is the time of change. It is the time to make big political and economic decisions and to implement

those decisions. It is the time to make Bangladesh the hub for regional commerce and communication by taking advantage of our geo-strategic location by linking with regional transport systems and establishing the deep-sea port. Our country is filled with the rich coal and gas reserves in a world thirsty for energy. It is the time to use these vast mineral resources for the country's development. It is the time to build up the country's human resources and making it resource for the nation and the world by establishing a global standard of education and training. It is the time to ensure that the remittance from non-resident Bangladeshis are used productively and link their skills and money to the country's development. It is the time to strengthen local government.

The time has come to shift the nation's economic and political gears. The nation's spirit is ready to graduate to far higher levels. What is needed now is the creation of a new political party and leadership who can properly and skilfully do this.

We should not fail in our duty to change the political and economic situation.

I express my deep and sincere gratitude and thanks to everyone who gave me their love and compassion despite my faults and limitations.

Muhammad Yunus

May 3, 2007

Rejoinder

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relationship or into any type of partnership with Tarique Rahman, senior joint secretary-general of BNP.

Moreover, the allegation of Anis Ahmed being arrested is completely untrue, said the rejoinder signed by Abdur Rahim, executive director and head of legal and corporate affairs of MGH Group.

"With respect to refunding money gained through ill-means appeared shocking given the legitimate businesses of MGH group representing world class brands as well as companies in Bangladesh and abroad thus taking the new spirit of Bangladesh to the global market," the rejoinder added.

OUR REPLY

The rejoinder did not categorically refute the allegation of refunding money to the government exchequer by MGH Group. The Daily Star report was mainly about retrieving illegally earned money by the government from seven businessmen and Anis Ahmed was one of the seven.

These businessmen were involved in a shady deal -- sale of a foreign tea company. The deal was made abroad early last year in secret, but the payment was made from Bangladesh through illegal channels. Law enforcement agencies recently forced the businessmen to pay the amount to the exchequer through several pay orders.

EC to hold talks

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respond to this question now."

CEC ATM Shamsul Huda at a meeting with the law adviser on April 4 asked the government to withdraw the ban on indoor politics so that EC can hold dialogue with political parties first.

But the ban continues, and in this situation the EC opened its planned series of talks by holding a discussion with eminent personalities on April 26.

Sources in the caretaker government said possibility of withdrawing the embargo soon is slim.

Meanwhile, the EC at an inter-ministerial meeting at its secretariat yesterday discussed ways to implement its mega project for simultaneously preparing voter list with photographs and national identity cards.

The EC secretary however said the EC was held to collect some information from the ministries and departments concerned.

Secretaries to the ministries of home affairs, planning and LGRD, and director generals of the bureaus of statistics, and passport directorate were present at the meeting chaired by the CEC.

"Assistance from the home ministry is required if national identity cards are to be prepared along with voter list as the ministry has a project for such identity cards," the EC secretary said.

"I hope he will contribute to the nation without being involved in politics as he is a highly renowned individual all over the world," he pointed out.

Replies to a query, Humayun said the electoral roll ordinance and rules will be amended before starting the task of preparing voter list with photographs.

A pilot project for studying feasibility of the voter list project in a rural and an urban area is expected to start towards the end of this month, he said.

The EC is now working for amending the service rules for its secretariat staff, he said. "Discriminatory provisions in the service rules will be amended."

Examination of the 320 controversial upazila election officers will be held on May 18, he said.

admired all around the globe.

"He decided to retreat from politics the same way he had decided to join politics using his talents, experiences and judiciousness," he said.

Rashed Khan Menon, president of Workers' Party of Bangladesh said Dr Yunus has finally taken "a wise decision... I welcome him as he has finally realised appropriately that those who inspired him to join politics are no more with him," said Menon, a key leader of the AL-led 14-party alliance, adding that he either made wrong calculations or failed to understand the reality that led him to retreat from politics.

But he hoped that Dr Yunus would play a role of national guardian although he was controversial by wanting to join politics.

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Hasanul Haque Inu was astounded and surprised at Dr Yunus' decision to retreat from politics.

"When he decided to join politics, we welcomed him and hoped that he could contribute positively in the politics of Bangladesh. But in the challenging arena of politics, he has taken a quick decision for which I am really surprised and astounded," said Inu, also a key leader of the AL-led 14-party alliance.

Maj Gen (retd) ZA Khan, adviser to the BNP chairperson, said it was a good decision because success in politics would be difficult without a strong political organisation.

"I hope he will contribute to the nation without being involved in politics as he is a highly renowned individual all over the world," he pointed out.

Former Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) President Prof AFAAMS Arefin Siddique said Dr Yunus has taken a wise decision by retreating from politics and for this decision, the people of the country will consider him a pride of nation.

"As a Nobel laureate, the people don't want to see him in shallow-minded politics. They want Dr Yunus to play important roles in different international forums as the voice of Bangladesh," said Prof Siddique, who among other Dhaka University (DU) teachers had opposed Dr Yunus to be made a speaker at DU convocation this year after he decided to join politics.

Welcoming Dr Yunus for retreating from politics, BNP joint secretary-general Nazrul Islam Khan said as there has been lack of acceptability of opinions of leading personalities in the society due to their different political stand and deviation, Dr Yunus could fill the gap as an acceptable, learned and successful person

Competent judges

FROM PAGE 1

Chief Justice Mohammad Ruhul Amin on Sunday said "the damage done to the judiciary in the recent years will take more than 20 years to remedy".

Different quarters including the lawyers and civil society members welcomed the statement but were unanimous in calling for immediate actions to cleanse the court system of politicisation and the judges lacking qualifications.

The interim government too has dropped hints that it is weighing up options for restoring the image of the higher judiciary. Law Adviser Mainul Hossain Wednesday said the judges in question must go and as a last resort the government might opt for the Supreme Judicial Council.

Referring to the chief justice's statement, Mostafa Kamal said the issue has long been seeping through various channels and he [chief justice] has made a bold statement by making it public.

"I have strong feelings that the chief justice who is a man of principle and is credited with being a non-nonsense man must be having some programmes up his sleeve to remedy the problem that he has so boldly highlighted."

On possible approaches to dealing with the judiciary, Justice Kamal said the Supreme Judicial Council is applicable in a situation where a judge ceases to be capable of properly performing the functions of his office by reason of physical and mental incapacity, or if a judge becomes guilty of gross misconduct.

He added, "I would respectfully say that if a judge cannot understand law, cannot appreciate facts, cannot read or dictate judgment in the open court, it is not too difficult to prove that by reason of physical or mental incapacity he has ceased to be capable of properly performing the functions of his office."

"Painful though it may be I see no other way but to invoke the Supreme Judicial Council if such cases of incorrigible judges exist."

He said that there may be a second group of judges who are technically above board and may not have committed any mischief attached to the provisions of Supreme Judicial Council but because of their behaviour in and out of the courts, or general appearance and movement they do not appear worthy to be judges of the highest court.

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judge.

Mostafa Kamal from Koroish village in Kochua upazila and Mohammad Shohag from Kochua

President Praganando Mohathero also spoke on the occasion.

Ex-minister Mosharraf

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Mosharraf's accomplices took Tk 7 lakh from her husband Sujan Mondol for sending him to Italy. Although they failed to send her husband to the country, they further demanded Tk 2 lakh from her.

Following the case, Metropolitan Magistrate Mizanur Rahman directed the officer in charge (OC) of Jatrabari Police Station to register the complaint as an FIR (first information report) upon investigation into the matter.

Two extortion cases were filed yesterday against ex-state minister for education ANM Ehsanul Haque Milon with a cognisance court in Chandpur, reports our correspondent.

It said there is an ample discrepancy between income and expenditure of the former BNP lawmaker from Keraniganj. He had made enormous wealth through abuse of power and bribery.

In the both cases, it was alleged that on November 22 last year, Milon's accomplices demanded toll from Mostafa Kamal.

On March 25, 2005, as Kamal refused to comply with their demand, Milon's goons assaulted Kamal at Koroish in Kochua. They also assaulted Shohag at Monpura area of Kochua.

Following the cases, the magistrate ordered the OC of Kochua Police Station to investigate into the cases.

ACC deputy directors (DD) Sharmin Ferdousi and Jibon Krishna Roy, also the IOs of the case, submitted the charge sheet of the case filed against former state minister for labour and employment Amanullah Aman and his wife Sabera with Kafraul Police Station.

In the charge sheet, the IOs said Aman and his wife acquired properties including house and vehicles valued over Tk 10 crore, even though the FIR (first information report) of the case mentioned Tk 8.28 crore.

The former president retained a staff of 198 and used 36 vehicles after he stepped down. The constitution allows a former president to use two cars and a staff of about 25.

This is the first time the Sessions Court passed a bail order.

Two others are managing director of private satellite TV channel ntv Enayetur Rahman and former BNP MP Harun Rashid from Chapainawabganj 3 constituency.

They were arrested for tax evasion during import of a luxurious automobile by abusing duty-free car import privilege for members of parliament (MP).

Harun Rashid MP purchased the luxury vehicle, a Hummer, on April 25, 2005 using his duty free privilege and sold it to Istiaq violating his bond made to the parliament that he would use it for at least three years before handing it over to anyone else, the police said in the forwarding report, adding that Istiaq later sold it to Enayet.

Defamation Case Dismissed

Another Dhaka court yesterday dismissed the defamation case against Kazi Tajul Islam Faruq, who had filed a criminal case against Awami League (AL) chief Sheikh Hasina for extorting Tk 3 crore.

In their charge sheet, the IOs mentioned that the two accused had accumulated assets worth over Tk 24.39 crore through illegal means.

Examination of the 320 controversial upazila election officers will be held on May 18, he said.

Moreover, Nasir's son Helal transferred Tk 2.83 crore from their

justice to oversee the functioning of everyone holding constitutional posts.

He added, "Our country may try this informal and effective in-house procedure for disciplining the errant judges."

He then lamented that parliament has not yet enacted any law prescribing other qualifications for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court.

Recollecting his days as a lawyer, he said only five to six High Court judges could comfortably and successfully discharge the duties for the East Pakistan judiciary.

Over the years, the number of judges, lawyers, and cases have risen but the backlog of cases has yet to come down, he said adding that the current situation in the higher courts warrants a regime looking after load management, case flow, and matters relating to inventory.

He also emphasized the need for a court administration equipped with modern technologies and adequate technical staff to overcome the problems confronting the judiciary.

British High Commissioner Anwar Chowdhury, who was also present at the meeting, said UK has specific proposals to increase cooperation in countering terrorism.

He said both Bangladesh and Britain are willing to work together against the global threat of terrorism.

He said the government is committed to ensure equal rights for the people of all religions and faiths, which is constitutionally recognised.

"Whatever are the achievements and successes, the country belongs to all. Here, all irrespective of caste, creed and religion are the citizens of the country."

He said Bangladesh is a bright example of communal harmony in the world. People of different religious communities have set up a great tradition in Bangladesh by living peacefully for decades after the independence.

Greeting the members of the Buddhist community on the occasion of Buddha Purnima, the chief adviser said they belong to a big religious community of the world and they have a big responsibility to establish peace and harmony in this region as well as in the world.

Religious Affairs Adviser Maj Gen (retd) Dr ATM Matiur Rahman, Sangarh Dharmasen Mohathero, Sanghanayak S. Darmapal and Parbat