

Government, Prof. Yunus and microcredit



PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

The recent change in Grameen Bank Ordinance has raised many questions in the mind of conscious citizens. Does the government really want to establish its control over Grameen Bank? We need to wait for some time to get the answer. The motive of the government would be clear in its next move. Everyone will admit that GB is the creation of Prof. Yunus. He struggled a lot for the establishment of GB. The success that Grameen has seen is only because of the charismatic leadership of Prof. Yunus. No one can think better about Grameen Bank than Prof. Yunus. So the government should value the opinion of Prof. Yunus in selecting the next leader for this Nobel winning organisation. Prof. Yunus has become an international icon. Many famous people and organisations are coming forward to materialise his concept of microcredit. Is it not a matter of pride for us? Bangladesh is the homeland of microcredit. Almost one third of the population is involved in microcredit and it would not have been possible without the passive support of Bangladesh government. It would be unfair to deny the contribution of world famous MFI organisations like Grameen Bank, ASHA and BRAC to our rural economic development. These organisations are working in many countries of the world.

We often see some economists criticise microcredit without having any practical experience on rural economy. Did they spend any moment of their life with poor people? They explain everything from their bookish knowledge. There may be some negative sides of microcredit like multiple lending and high interest rates. But we should think positively how to remove the negative impacts of microcredit by keeping these organisations alive, not by destroying them. We hope the government will not destroy our country's image before the world community which we have achieved through microcredit.

Jabun Naher
Dhaka

What to do during earthquake

Earthquake strikes suddenly, without any warning. During the earthquake get under a sturdy piece of furniture. This will provide some protection from the falling objects that can injure you during a quake. Find safe places in every room of your home and your classroom. Look for safe places inside and outside the buildings where you spend time.

Wait in your safe place until the shake stops, then check to see if you are hurt. You will be better able to help others if you take care of yourself first, and then check the people around you. Move carefully and watch out for things that have fallen or broken. Be ready for additional earthquakes called "after-shocks." Be aware of fires. If you must leave a building after the tremor stops, use the stairs, not the elevator.

If you're outside during an earthquake, move away from under buildings, trees, streetlights, and power lines. Crouch down and cover your head.

I urge the school teachers to educate the children about earthquake preparedness.

Mobarak Ali
RK Mission Road, Gopibagh, Dhaka

Lessons from the blackout in India

The recent blackout in India is one of the worst cases of power grid failure the world has ever seen. The massive power failure left nearly half of India's population without electricity for two days. Although there maybe many reasons behind this large scale load shedding, one cannot deny the fact that the electricity consumption through home appliances has risen sharply in recent years. Air conditioners, washing machines, personal computers, laptops, smartphones have become almost necessities instead of luxuries. Power systems are designed to handle a specific amount of load, if the load exceeds the limit, the system is sure to crash.

In Bangladesh we also need to address this risk of a gross

power failure. Our systems are already overstretched and new loads are constantly being added. So to keep our systems from being overburdened any further, illegal power lines need to be searched out and eliminated and wastage of electricity must be stopped. Air conditioners, washing machines, coffee makers in homes and offices should not be used unless absolutely necessary. We can either take measures now to fix our power sector or just wait for the disaster to strike.

Shahriar Kabir
Dept. of EEE, BUET, Dhaka

The curse of quota system

The aim of the Liberation War was to get an exploitation-free Bangladesh where everybody would get a job based on merit. But it is very shocking that the meritorious students are being deprived and discouraged to contest in the government job due to the quota system. If this system continues, one day the country will become a land of inefficient people. Therefore, I urge the government on behalf of the students to end this discriminatory quota system and give all of us equal opportunity in the job market.

Solaiman Hossain
University of Dhaka

A great writer

Most of the English medium students don't read Bangla novels. I was among them, but when I read Humayun Ahmed's novel 'Himu Rimande', I started getting interested in Bangla books. Any person could get attached to his books because of his fascinating writing style and easy language. Humayun Ahmed's death has left a scar in our hearts. But he will always be alive in his books and in our hearts.

Ahmed As Sami
Class-7
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Mass transport drivers must abide by traffic law



PHOTO: AMIRUL RAJIV

It is needless to point out that undernoted bus stops are one of the major contributing factors to the unresolved problem of gridlock. Bus drivers seem to consider any place a potential bus stop wherever they can pull over. Nowadays, bus drivers are pulling over at any place, on any part of the road without taking into account the hindrance in the traffic flow. Moreover, besides creating traffic blockades, the buses leave their passengers no choice but to get off at the middle of the road putting their lives to risk. A recent accident in which a university student was the victim was primarily due to this haphazard offloading of passengers. This is also one of the reasons that people prefer private transport to public transport. Therefore I would sincerely ask the authorities concerned to take necessary steps to relieve the citizens of this peril.

Tahmid Samiul Mowla
Student of Grade X
The Aga Khan School, Dhaka



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US worried at govt actions on Grameen Bank

Calls for transparency in MD selection process (August 6, 2012)

Dr Islam
Our government completely failed to understand that GB is an institution of utmost global importance.

Amdem, USA
US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton indicated to Sheikh Hasina during her visit to Bangladesh that she (Hillary) would not appreciate any change in the Grameen Bank. She was actually against the government's takeover of the bank. By the proposed change in the bank, the government is challenging the power of the

United States. This is, so to say, a clash of power. While we do not make any comment on the result of the clash, the US may put Bangladesh in many difficult situations which will adversely affect the country. Diplomatic challenge is not a very thoughtful foreign policy.

Objective Observer
This is our country and this is our government. If one government commits any wrong, another will put it right. But it is not understood as to why US should be involved in our

internal affairs. We have not forgotten that Bangladesh came into being despite bitter opposition from the US government.

Nasim Hasan
Our markets are flooded with fake money; still the government says there is nothing to worry about. We are continuously being insulted by the acts of our so-called politicians, both nationally and internationally. It seems like there is no end of it. People of Bangladesh are paying the price for electing these politicians over and over again.

Shah Asad Ahmed
The drama will result in nothing but heighten the honour of the only Nobel laureate of Bangladesh.

A Bangalee
The chairman of Grameen Bank being a government man will necessarily pick up a government man as its managing director. There will never be any transparency in

this case. The intention of the government is to bring Grameen Bank under its complete control.

Translucent
An institution founded by a Nobel laureate and owned by over eight million poor women needs to be protected.

Bonnie Rashid
GB is an institution that reflects our national pride. We the citizens should go to any lengths to protect GB.

Saleh Md. Shahriar
Of course transparency is needed. But in the name of legal step and transparency, a noted institution like Grammen Bank cannot be ruined. Since the bank is a Nobel prize winner, the global community cannot remain silent.

Wahid
USA closed 200 banks in the last three years. Now, why are they worried about a bank in

Clever river grabbers

A last page photograph, of a multi-storied building, was published on 7th August, in a local English daily. It clearly showed illegal occupation of a river. Further it demonstrated the audacity and power of the building owners who adopted the illegal means to grab the rivers.

For them having easy access to this 'no-man's land' is really an astounding act. Technically it should be 'Khas' property owned by the government. It is the sole owner of all natural rivers and big water bodies.

All that is needed by the grabbers is an approved building plan, and the guts to construct the building. Add to it the ingenuity and the cunning of manipulating the records. That can be done for a price. In this case, possibly the necessary price has been paid to the right people at the right place and time! Small wonder the owner(?) of the land and river is investing in the building. It is not impossible to investigate and scoop out the facts behind the illegal act shown in the photograph.

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Do not destroy Grameen Bank

We are watching with disbelief the government's action against Nobel prize winner Prof. Muhammad Yunus.

It is so bizarre that we are feeling deeply ashamed and outraged. Has the government gone crazy that it is acting like this? The government is trying to destroy Grameen Bank, which won the Nobel prize jointly with Dr. Yunus. It is making amendments to the Grameen Bank Ordinance and by doing this the government is depriving the real owners, 8.3 million people of whom 95% are poor rural women.

What could be the real reason behind these vengeful steps? Is it because at one time Prof Yunus expressed his wish to float a political party? Or is the Awami League-led government unable to tolerate his fame at home and abroad? Whatever may be the reason, it is disgraceful and unacceptable.

The people of Bangladesh should be united to protest the humiliation of Prof Yunus by the government and also its attempt to take control of the Grameen Bank. The government must return to its senses.

Nur Jahan

Replica of Noah's ark!

A Dutch contractor and millionaire Johan Huibers has made a replica of Noah's ark following the proportions laid out in the holy Bible. It took nearly four years to reproduce the ark.

In the holy Qur'an the story of Prophet Noah (AS) and his people has been related to a number of suras namely sura 57 (Nuh), sura 11 (Hud), and sura 23 (al-Mu'minin), and many ayats. Those who were righteous and boarded Noah's ark responding to the call of the prophet as per the directive of the Almighty Allah were saved from the destruction. As the ark rested on Mount Judi, Noah (AS) prayed:

"O my Lord! Enable me to disembark with Your blessings, for You are the Best of all to enable us to disembark." Holy Qur'an, 23:29.

May Allah bless us to follow the path of righteousness.

Professor M Zahidul Haque
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PHOTO: ABOATTIME.COM