

The outflow of the 'skype conversations' can hardly be imagined elsewhere in the world. PHOTO: STAR FILE

observes that the major flaws behind the garment building collapse in Savar boil down to the lack of good governance, the inability to properly handle a disaster and learn from the past. "These are the facts that the international arena learns through its media. It becomes clear to them what conclusion to draw about our country," he says.

Jahangir concludes that despite nationalism being one of the pillars of our constitution, we are majorly falling short to uphold it. There is yet for the government to do as he puts it, "The external publicity wing at the foreign ministry must be strengthened so that it builds a positive image. Our governments think image building is similar to the government's image building. The real image building is that of a country, which has always been subject to political gain and agenda. The governments must realise they are temporary, their programmes are subject to change with the changes in the government but the country's interest is perpetual."

Professor Salimullah Khan, a noted essayist and academic, however remains dubious about how image building would help without a palpable change in politics.

"Since liberation, the successive governments that have been in charge of the nation's affairs – they really did not do a very good job. The inefficiency of the bureaucracy is a legend. So the image of the nation is based on this reality. Unless you are ready to confront this, house painting or image building won't do. Instead, you have to do some house cleaning," he alludes.

The professor remains critical of the international press media. In summary, he says that when the international arena is not content with our performances, they indicate it through the stance of media reporting. "Media doesn't stand on its own feet but on some big giant's shoulders. Today, the way our ruling classes here are running the country is not to the best of the liking of their masters in the west."

Khan also reasons how the thin demarcation between fact and rumour are being obliterated every day by the misuse of social media and the way it is referenced by news organisations, even the international media. "When reporting about a third world country, they take less care and behave less responsibly. Take the rumours regarding the number of Hefajat casualties between May 5 and 6 in the capital. Reporting of media like the CNN and Al-Jazeera shows that their content is often based on pure rumour and speculation. First of all, the CNN reported, the number of casualties as several thousands, then they came down to several hundreds and then to 50 or so."

"Even a famed local human rights body incorrectly reported the casualties. When they were confronted by the journalists here, they said they took it from the social media. It was an example of a completely unsubstantiated report. So this totally speculative and wishful report has been given vent by a media as good as the CNN, at least for a few hours," he adds.

Veteran journalist and researcher Afsan Chowdhury, also a former BBC correspondent,