

Microcredit can cut poverty by half by 2015, says Yunus

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Dr Muhammad Yunus in his keynote paper presented at the Commonwealth Lecture in London yesterday said poverty in the world can be reduced by 50 per cent by 2015 through extending microcredit facilities.

The lecture, held at the Commonwealth Institute, was on 'How poverty in the world can be reduced by 50 per cent by 2015'.

"It will be possible through opening the door of micro credit to the masses, which will enable them to change their lot", BBC quoted Dr. Yunus as saying.

Dr. Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Bank and a pioneer in micro credit movement, said this will be more possible in Bangladesh than in other countries as about one crore people is already under

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Save rivers from dying

Watchdog for water management bodies, raising issues at Kyoto conference suggested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Experts at a roundtable yesterday painted a gloomy picture of the country's coastal people whose livelihood is severely affected by frequent cyclones, storms and the raising sea level due to climatic change.

The country must come up with a holistic approach to save the rivers from dying and to protect the livelihood of the poor and depleting fish resources, they said at the roundtable on "Water and Poverty: The Human Dimensions".

Ministers, water resources experts, environmentalists, bureaucrats, NGO executives and members of the civil society took

part in it.

It was organised by The Daily Star in collaboration with the Coastal Area Resources Development and Management Association (CARDMA) and held at the Star conference room.

They suggested setting up a national watchdog to monitor activities of different water management bodies.

A national coordination council should also be formed with the Prime Minister as its head to coordinate water management activities, strengthen regional and international cooperation in the field and ensure Bangladesh's due water share of regional rivers, they said.

They suggested the government to raise water-related issues at the 7-day 3rd World Water Forum (WWF) beginning in Kyoto, Japan on March 16. The roundtable was a preparatory to the WWF.

Water Resources Minister L K Siddique was the chief guest while Environment and Forests Minister Shahjahan Siraj was the special guest. The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam moderated the discussion.

It was attended by, among others, Quamrul Islam Siddique, Chairman of Global Water Partnership-South Asia, former secretary to the government Dr Tawfiq-e-Elahi Chowdhury, BB, Dr Atiq Rahman of the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies

(BCAS), Dr Ainun Nishat, Country Representative of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Prof K B Sajjadur Rasheed of Department of Geography and Environment at Dhaka University, Dr Asaduzzaman, Executive Director of Barendra Multipurpose Development Authority (BMDA), Dr Monowar Hussain, President of Comilla Proshika Centre for Development (CPCD), and Tahaful Anwar Khan, member of the Joint Rivers Commission (JRC).

Shahjahan Siraj accused India of depriving Bangladesh of its due share of the Ganges water despite a

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PHOTO: STAR

Water Resources Minister L K Siddique speaks yesterday at a roundtable themed, "Water and poverty: The human dimensions", co-organised by The Daily Star and the Coastal Area Resources Development and Management Association (CARDMA). Hasna J Moudud, president of CARDMA, (left) and Environment and Forests Minister Shahjahan Siraj (right) were also present.



Journalist Rumi passes away

UNB, Dhaka

Masud Ahmed Rumi, a sports journalist and freedom fighter, died of cardiac arrest at his Monipuripara residence in the city at 11 am yesterday. He was 55.

Rumi was the senior reporter of Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) and member of Bangladesh Sports Journalists' Association.

He left behind his mother, two brothers, two sisters and a host of relatives and admirers.

The first namaz-e-janaza for Rumi was held at Awlad Hossain

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Railway demolishes illegal structures in 2 city areas

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Railway authorities yesterday evicted illegal establishments from its lands in Tejgaon and Nakhhalpara areas.

In a five-hour drive that started at 10:30am, the railway authorities demolished all the illegal structures on both sides of the railway tract from Tejgaon to Nakhhalpara.

Ten railway policemen assisted by another 30 from Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) and 30 labourers took part in the drive.

The Railway authorities had undertaken such drives previously several times but in vain. On each occasion the structures were re-established within a few days.

This time, on demolishing all structures, the authorities removed the wreckage by goods wagons to check reestablishment.

"Such eviction drives are nothing new. They have been launched

four to five times in the past two months," a Bangladesh Railway official told The Daily Star last night.

"The authorities are planning to set up dual gauge from Kamapur Rail Station to Jamuna Multipurpose Bridge," the official said.

Sources said more than two thousands poor people became homeless after the eviction and are forced live in open spaces in various places of the city.

Bomb scare at city market

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Market-goers had to undergo checking at the posh Eastern Plaza shopping complex in the city yesterday following an unidentified caller' telephonic threat to blow it up

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PHOTO: AFP

Australian batsman Michael Bevan plays one on the on-side against New Zealand at Port Elizabeth yesterday. He made 56.

Barisal city polls Kamal threatens to agitate if army not deployed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Expelled city BNP president and a mayoral candidate for the first BCC polls, Ahsan Habib Kamal said yesterday that he would organise a mass movement if the army was not deployed for the polls within the next 24 hours.

He termed the local administration biased and influenced by his rival candidate IS Whip Mujibur Rahman Sarwar. Kamal believes there is no alternative to deployment of the army if the polls are to be held peacefully.

He alleged that his workers and supporters were being harassed by the cadres of his rival in different places in the city.

Meanwhile, legal steps are

under way to challenge the validity of Sarwar's nomination, as he faces charges of tax default and doing a full-time job with financial benefits.

In a press conference held at a local restaurant yesterday noon, Kamal said that 26 of his election offices were attacked, ransacked or occupied by Sarwar's cadres.

"They are creating panic openly and going from house to house to threaten my workers and supporters. Election rules are violated every day by Sarwar's men, but the law enforcers are silent," Kamal said.

Servicemen and professional groups like teachers, employees of government, semi-government

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Reuters regrets stories on cinema blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Reuters has officially regretted its stories on Mymensingh cinema bombings in December.

"Reuters is sorry that this unfortunate incident occurred," the news agency said in a letter signed by William Sposato, the Editor for South Asia.

Sposato met the home minister at his office at 11:00am yesterday and handed over the letter to him.

"The government has accepted the letter and decided to end the matter," a deputy secretary of the home ministry said.

Seventeen people were killed in bomb attacks on four cinema halls in Mymensingh on December 7, 2002.

Reuters quoted Home Minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury as telling its local stringer on telephone that the blasts could be the work of al-Qaeda militants. The home minister challenged the report the following day, saying that he had no conversation with any journalist

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The cattle route Smugglers now pay 'tax' for livestock, walk free from border posts

MORSHED ALI KHAN back from Satkhira

The government seems to have adopted an unwritten policy since January to impose 'tax' on smuggled livestock to face a severe crisis of beef and 'make life easier' for thousands along the border with India.

Cattle smugglers now walk free from border check-posts, known as corridors and manned by the paramilitary BDR, police and officials of the National Board of Revenue, said locals and sources in

RAT nabs 7 listed criminals

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Rapid Action Team (RAT) arrested Habibur Rahman alias Kuddus, a listed criminal and one of the members of Sweden Aslam Group, from Karwan Bazar area in the early hours of yesterday.

Police said Kuddus is accused in several criminal cases filed with different police stations in the city.

The RAT also nabbed five members of Pichchi Hannan Group from Kazipara area yesterday.

They are Hakim, Liton Miji, Monir, Billal and Siddique. Meanwhile, Pallabi police arrested Nuruzzaman alias Lotus, a listed criminal from Section-7 on Monday night.

The arrestee is accused in 17 criminal cases filed with Pallabi police station.

the BDR.

The 'policy' has not only increased revenues but helped the poor along the border, who have long depended on smuggling, euphemistically, informal trade.

Now, the smugglers pay less than before and walk on the main road without fear of arrest.

Before the policy was in force, a cattle smuggler risked losing his stock, once caught by border guards.

"When someone goes across the border, he informs a BDR camp about how many cattle he is going to bring," said a source.

After his arrival, the camp-in-charge issues a receipt mentioning the number of cows and buffaloes he brought.

The 'importer' then goes to the nearest corridor and pays the office for the stock. On his return to the camp, the camp-in-charge verifies the payment slip and marks each cow and bull with the receipt num

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	Sun Rises	Sun Sets
Mar 12		6-08 pm
Mar 13	6-11 am	

Prayer Timings		
Mar 12		
	Azan	Jamaat
Fajr	5-15	5-45
Zohr	12-45	1-15
Asr	4-32	5-00
Maghrib	6-13	6-20
Esha	7-35	8-00

Source: Islamic Foundation