

Equip youths to remove poverty

Prof Yunus distributes Grameen Bank higher education loan in Tangail



Prof Muhammad Yunus

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Tangail

Prof Muhammad Yunus has said the young generation has to take the responsibility to remove poverty and illiteracy from society. For that, they should be properly equipped with knowledge and expertise.

He was speaking as chief guest at a function organised to distribute Grameen Bank higher education loan to 12 students of Government Saadat College at Karatia in Tangail on Saturday.

Prof. Yunus, Managing Director of Grameen Bank (GB) said many poor talents in the country are forced to stop education only for want of money. Soft loans can help build their career as well as change the society. Education loans on easy terms can

also be introduced by other banks and financing institutions, he said.

With Saadat College Principal Prof Dr Mohammad Kamruzzaman in the chair, the function was addressed by, among others, GB Deputy Managing Director Dipal Chandra Barua, Tangail Deputy Commissioner Saifuddin Ahmed Majumdar, GB Regional Manager in Tangail Kazi Mohammad Aatur Rahman, Secretary of Saadat College Teachers Association Prof Abdur Rahim Khan, Prof Fatema Chowdhury and Assistant Prof AKMDidar.

Three students from among the 12 loan recipients also spoke on the occasion.

The 12 were given loans totalling Tk 7,06,000. Seven of them, all first year honours students, got Tk 77,000 each. Of the rest, one got Tk 73,000,

one Tk 50,000 and three others got Tk 19,000, Tk 13,000 and Tk 9,000. The loans were given according to their needs.

Repayment of the loans bearing 5 per cent interest rate will start after completion of their academic period. The interest will be waived if they can repay the loan before end of their academic period, according to GB sources here.

Prof. Yunus said Bangladesh can find its place among developed countries in only 15 to 20 years if it can turn the huge manpower into resources. This is possible if concerted efforts are made involving the government, NGOs and the civil society, he said.

Micro credit can play a vital role in this regard. Time has come for bank-

ing institutions to change their outlook, he said.

Recalling his experience, he said, "When I was thinking to expand activities of Grameen Bank in districts in 1978, bank officials told me that poor people would not return loans. I threw a challenge and started loan distribution in Akur Takur Para area in Tangail town in 1979.

"My conviction came true. The poor proved to be good clients.

Later on the day, at another function at Mirzapur, Prof. Yunus distributed Tk 4,000 loan each to two woman beggars and a Grameen Palli Phone to another to give up begging.

Bangla Bhai's wife remanded again

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Wife of JMB second-in-command Siddiqui Islam Bangla Bhai, Fahima Chowdhury, was placed on a 10-day fresh remand yesterday.

Netrakona police produced her before the court of First Class Magistrate Aminul Islam, praying for 10 days' remand.

The Officer-in-charge of Netrakona Sadar police station said he hopes important clues to militant activities by Bangla Bhai will be found by interrogating her.

Transport strike in Gaibandha threatened

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Gaibandha Motor Malik Samity and Motor-Truck Sramik Union on Sunday threatened to go for an indefinite transport strike from April 16 if the authorities did not meet their three-point demand by April 15.

The demands are ban on plying of 'Nasim' on the highway, stopping of operation of Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) buses through densely populated areas and repair of Gaibandha-Shaghata, Palashbari-Ghoraghat and Gaibandha-Nakaihat roads.

4 Harkatul Jihad cadres get 20-yr RI in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Four alleged cadres of Islamit outfit Harkatul-Jihad were jailed here Sunday.

Additional District and Sessions Judge of Khulna, Kabita Khanam, in her judgement sentenced them to suffer 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) each, for making bombs.

Rubel alias Mamun, Abul Bashar, Faruque Ahmed and Farhadul Islam Tuhin were convicted under Section 3 and Section 4 of Explosive Substances Act.

Each of them was fined Tk 5,000, in default, to suffer one year more RI.

Five charge-sheeted Ansars, Noor Mohammad, Rajab Ali, Ashiqur Rahman, Humayun Kabir and Matiar Rahman Shikder, were acquitted of charges.

The prosecution story in brief is that the convicts were severely injured in explosion of bombs they were making in Room No 145 of Hotel Rupsha International in the city on December 24, 2003.

The Ansars on-duty allegedly

helped them escape from there. But the four were later arrested by police with help of local people. The Ansars were also arrested.

Police recovered a large number of bomb-making materials and booklets on Islamic militancy from the hotel room.

SI Mohammodullah lodged FIR with Khalishpur Police Station on December 25, 2003 as complainant accusing nine persons including five Ansars.

SI Masud Pervez of the same police station submitted charge-sheet to court against all the nine FIR-named accused on March 8, 2004.

Statements of 12 out of 18 prosecution witnesses were recorded during trial of the case.

The convicts are cadres of Harkatul-Jihad, according to sub-inspector (SI) Mohammadullah who was the first investigation officer (IO) of the case.

1,000 homeless in Bogra tornado

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bogra

About 1,000 tornado-hit people of three villages in Dhunat upazila are passing their days in great misery under the open sky for the last three days.

Dhunat Upazila Project Implementation Officer (PIO) Azher Ali Mondol said 140 families were rendered homeless in the devastating tornado that lashed the villages Friday evening.

Houses of 110 families were totally destroyed at Madhabdanga village while 13 families lost all their belongings at Banderbari village and another 17 families lost their houses at Bhutbari village, he said.

Bogra Deputy Commissioner (DC) Abdul Mannan said the administration distributed Tk 70,000 as house building grant among the tornado victims of Madhabdanga,

Bhutbari and Bhandarbari villages. He said the government also distributed 30 kilogram (kg) of rice to each tornado-hit family.

Maize on over 506 acres of land, paddy on 250 acres of land and vegetable on 10 acres of land were totally damaged in the three villages.

Laily Begum, a tornado victim, said her two-room house was totally destroyed. She is now living with her children under the open sky. Describing the severity of tornado, she said her house was flown away like a paper.

While visiting Bhutbari and Madhabdanga villages this correspondent found that the houses were raged to the ground completely. There were only heaps of rubble everywhere in the two villages.



PHOTO: STAR

One of many families still under the open sky after Friday's nor'wester that battered three villages in Dhunat upazila in Bogra.

Govt out to shirk reforms fearing polls defeat: AL

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sathkira

The government is reluctant to reform the caretaker system and the Election Commission as it knows it will not retain power if the next general election is held in a free and fair manner, said Awami League (AL) central leader and former minister Talukdar Abdul Khaleque MP.

"So, they have adopted a dilly-dally tactics and looking for pleas to thwart Awami League's demand for reforms", he told a public meeting at Shyamnagar KB High School ground yesterday, organised by the local AL unit.

He reiterated that there will be no election without reforms.

Khaleque claimed that Islamist militant organisations Jamaatul Mujahideen, Bangladesh (JMB) and Jagrata Muslim Janata Bangladesh (JMJB) are creations of Jamaat-e-Islami, a partner in the ruling coalition.

When newspapers reported violence and killings by militants earlier, Jamaat leaders denied their existence, saying they were creation of the media.

Now they are trying to befool the

people by saying that the party has no link with militants, Khaleque said.

"Analysis of their (Jamaat leaders) statements made at different times will prove everything", he said.

The militants were let loose to blast bombs and create anarchy in the country as part of a conspiracy to blame the opposition and fish in troubled waters, the former minister said.

"Those who try to divide the society using religion are real enemies of the country", he added.

Khaleque also came down heavily on the government for its alleged failure to ensure power and fertiliser to farmers during the peak season of IRRI-Boro cultivation.

"In Kansat, 14 people were killed just for demanding uninterrupted power supply. This is unthinkable in a civilised society".

The ruling parties want to perpetuate power by utilising party cadres and law enforcers, he alleged and called upon the people to unite and intensify the agitation to topple the 'failed government'.

11.5X3

6x2

14X3