

Feature Development

Social Summit of the Poor: Northern Bangladesh

by AM Ahmed

FEW poor people in Bangladesh know of the United Nations. Not one knows that the UN Social Summit is due to take place...

Each of the 20 families who form one of the 10,000 primary groups gains strength from their neighbours and fellow group members...

social unit but in themselves are too small to wield real influence in their village. For this reason, mature groups combine in broader Federations at Union level...



Another summit, an expression of the organisation and solidarity of the poor.

Copenhagen will attract the powerful and influential, the knowledgeable and the committed — all experts, at second hand. In Northern Bangladesh, the poor will discuss the problems from first-hand knowledge and immediate experience.

and to value their daughters, parents to appreciate the value of schooling. One family member learns how to look after livestock, another to cultivate a sustainable and intensive home garden year-round...

the concerns and demands of the organised poor. Once a year, the general meetings of the each Federation is held. These are large events where up to 1,000 can attend to elect their leadership...

Small is Beautiful Banking

GLANCING at the international media, no one would think anything other than chronic floods and cyclones ever happens in Bangladesh.

More than 1.6 million people all over Bangladesh. Most loan recipients are women who buy a cow or some chickens to raise the family's income level.

numbers of poor," says David Gibbons, executive trustee and founding member of Cashpor. Except for one, all Cashpor members are non-governmental groups that do not get support from national governments and international development agencies.

'Farmer's Friend' Lives up to its Name

by Md Roushanuzzaman

A darkness descends over villages in northern Bangladesh, the muffled sound of shuttles and murmur of water joins the usual evening noises.

The farmers are working their pumps to irrigate the rice paddies. This is the explanation offered to a curious visitor with a great deal of pride.

From beginning to end, the treadle pump — unlike other technologies which have proliferated in the country — is pure Bangladeshi



Working with 'Krishak Bandhu'

Mr Deb was moved by the backbreaking efforts of the villagers who desperately tried to irrigate their small patches of land by carrying water in clay pots and pitchers from distant ponds or reservoirs.

much of the country. International Development Enterprises (IDE), a US-based company funded by some American businessmen and the Swiss Development Corporation, has been promoting and marketing the pump under the brand name, 'farmer's friend'.

Price has been a major advantage as a treadle pump is only about Taka 1500 (US \$38) including installation cost. And the cost for operation and maintenance in one year comes to about \$1.

PAKISTAN is proposing to tighten controls on non-government organisations (NGOs) on the grounds that many are a threat to national security.

Islamabad's plan — which has sparked an outcry from some of the country's 85,000 NGOs — is further evidence of growing nervousness worldwide by national governments and international institutions about the rapid rise of private sector aid initiatives.

Government Backlash Tries to Rein in Private Groups

Tariq Butt writes from Islamabad

For years, non-government organisations have been heralded as close to the people, flexible and unbureaucratic. Now, reports Gemini News Service, Pakistan has joined a growing number of government which have begun to question their accountability and effectiveness.

Funds from foreign countries must be brought to the knowledge of the government because their use might harm national security and interests," says Dr Sher Afgan.

which are involved in anti-state activities and harming the interest of the country and the law will help in checking them... The law provides for strict action against those

pendence and control their work. NGO workers interviewed for this report asked not to be quoted by name for fear that government would cut financial or other assistance to their organisations.



NGOs which had been involved in malpractices in the past." His position is supported by Ghulam Yasin Soomro, a researcher at the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, who argues that the government must monitor NGOs as it does doctors who have to be licensed to practise to protect the patient's interests.

British Aid Statistics

- Total ODA expenditure rose by \$51 million to \$2,172 million in 1993/94. Of this \$1,930 million went to developing countries and \$181 million to countries in transition in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.