

Micro-credit to people with disability to reduce poverty

Speakers tell opinion-sharing meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Providing micro-credit to people with disability can reduce overall poverty in the country, said the speakers at an opinion-sharing meeting in the city yesterday.

They said though the government and some non-government organisations have taken different steps to reduce poverty, there are no special measures for lending micro-credit to challenged people to make them self-reliant.

The meeting titled 'Micro-credit for the hardcore poor and participation of the people with disability' was organised by Action on Disability and Development (ADD) in association with Palli Karma Sahayok Foundation (PKSF), Jatiya Protibondhi Nari Parishad and Jatiya Trinomul Protibondhi Sangstha at LGED Bhaban.

The speakers said development of the country is not possible without incorporating the people with disability in the mainstream of development.

This is also very important to reduce poverty and attain Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), they added.

The speakers said out of the country's extreme poor 15 lakh are the challenged people, and without

developing them it is not possible to achieve the MDGs.

They said the people with disability cannot participate in the country's development activities due to some negative perceptions about them among the people in all spheres of life, even in their own families.

Akhtar Hossain, chairman of Jatiya Trinomul Protibondhi Sangstha, said the challenged people who are neglected in the society and even in their families are also deprived of their rights.

Though the government has reserved 10 per cent jobs for the challenged people, their fate is yet to be changed as they cannot make themselves capable due to lack of adequate facilities, he added.

Adan Islam, advocacy officer of ADD, said the challenged people face mainly three types of discrimination- institutional, environmental and attitudinal while challenged women are more neglected than their male counterparts.

Low income, negative approach, lack of awareness, education and training in skill development activities and reluctance to give loans often make the capable challenged people incapable, she added.

Existing micro-credits for the hardcore poor should also be

extended to challenged people, she said, adding that if given micro-credits, people with disability could contribute significantly to the wellbeing of the country.

Mosharrif Hossain, country representative of ADD, said incorporating the people with disability into all activities is a must to reduce poverty.

He said unless the micro-credit financing programme is made challenged-people-friendly, development of the country will not be possible.

He urged all to come forward so that the challenged people can get employment opportunity and lead a normal life like others.

Speaking as chief guest Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, managing director of PKSF, said the distressed condition of the people with disability will not change until they are brought to the mainstream of development.

"If we can ensure micro-credit financing programme flexible for them, we will be able to empower the people with disability economically," he added.

M A Hakim, general manager of PKSF, Eric Henley, senior social development advisor of DFID, Umme Kulsum Ranjana, chairman of Jatiya Protibondhi Nari Parishad and 118 union level challenged people were among others present at the meeting.

Muslims in Britain enjoy greater freedoms

Says British envoy

UNB, Dhaka

British High Commissioner to Bangladesh Anwar Choudhury yesterday said Muslims in Britain enjoy greater freedoms than most other places in the world - the same rights as any other British citizen.

"There is no contradiction in being British and being Muslim," he said in a statement on the first anniversary of the July 7 bomb blasts in London.

"And the Government and all British citizens share the same obligations, too: to engage, to be inclusive and to understand others."

"As we reflect on the tragic events of one year ago, we should remember that the acts of terrorism were attacks on us all," the high commissioner said, conveying condolences to the victims' families.

"People of many different faiths - Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs and Jews - were killed or injured in the attacks: people from 19 different countries, including from Bangladesh."

These were indiscriminate attacks that perverted the name of a religion and sought to create mistrust and division, he said. "We owe it to the victims not to erect artificial barriers or to give in to ignorance, mistrust and fear."

Anwar Choudhury emphasised that "Our united response should be to recognise our common values - peace, respect, tolerance and compassion and to strengthen them."

"Today, there is an obvious challenge for the majority of Muslims and it is simply to reclaim Islam from the extremists. It is to turn this destructive resurgence into a renaissance - that enhances the lives of Muslims and enriches the wider human existence," he said.



Family members of slain former finance minister Shah AMS Kibria and civil society members line up in front of the High Court in the city yesterday as part of Blue for Peace programme demanding fair trial of the Kibria murder case.

DU Social Welfare teachers call off strike

DU CORRESPONDENT

Classes and examinations of Institute of Social Welfare and Research of Dhaka University (DU) will resume tomorrow following the withdrawal of work abstention by the faculty members.

The teachers called off their strike after their demand for 'removal of the director during the investigation' was met.

University authorities appointed Prof Syeda Feroza Begum as new director of the institute on June 29 complying with the teachers' demand for removal of director Prof ASM Aliqur Rahman for the sake of impartial investigation into allegations against the director, sources said.

Prof Atiq handed over the office to Prof Feroza on July 2 after receiving letter from the authorities.

Teachers of the institution went for work abstention after DU syndicate had formed a six-member probe committee, headed by Prof Tazmeri SA Islam on June 19, saying that investigation might be influenced if the director remains in the chair.

Teachers' allegations against the director included administrative irregularities, corruption and autocratic behaviour with the teachers.

One senior teacher of the institute said that teachers at a meeting on Wednesday decided to resume classes and examinations as their demand was met.

Meanwhile, Prof Atiq said that for the sake of impartial investigation, he decided not to be in the chair. He informed the matter to the authorities and they took the decision accordingly.

CIRDAP'S FOUNDING ANNIVERSARY

Dhaka to help construct new complex

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh will help Cirdap construct a new complex having an international conference centre and dormitory to accommodate any high level dignitaries, said LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday.

"We have observed that Cirdap (Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific) auditorium has become an important venue for serious policy dialogue and debates in Dhaka," he said at the 27th founding anniversary of Cirdap at its auditorium in the city.

With its convenient location and beautiful garden, the Chamei House can be developed as an important centre for policy consultations and cross fertilisation of ideas, he said following Cirdap's director general's proposal for constructing a Cirdap complex within the existing campus.

"We reiterate our full support to the centre and assure our full cooperation for its smooth functioning in Dhaka for the years to come," said Mannan Bhuiyan as chief guest of the ceremony.

With huge network in the field of rural development Cirdap, as a prime regional institution, has vast potentials to offer the member countries through mutual collaboration and cooperation, he pointed out.

Economic growth is necessary but not the only condition for poverty reduction, Mannan Bhuiyan said, adding, "Perhaps, for this reason the Asia-Pacific region, despite being one of the fastest growing regions in the

world is still beset with acute poverty."

Considering the fact that poverty is disproportionately concentrated in rural areas of the region, Cirdap has a vital role to play as a pioneering regional organisation to facilitate coordination of policies and activities related to rural development and poverty alleviation, he added.

Dr Durga P Paudyal, Cirdap's director general, said in the last 27 years the inter-governmental organisation completed over 300 projects in which over 200 research reports have been published while over 5000 rural development functionaries have been given training or exposure to new approaches of community development in different countries.

Cirdap also developed new strategy in the context of new challenges to specify the methodology and procedure for realising its mission to assist national action, promote regional cooperation and act as servicing agency at the regional level, he noted.

In his welcoming speech, Dr Durga said Cirdap is also developing a mechanism to connect all member countries in knowledge development process.

Dr B Sudhakar Rao, director (training) of Cirdap, also spoke at the function chaired by Rafiqul Islam, secretary to Rural Development and Cooperatives Division.

Amini to be cross-examined for 'threatening' Proshika chief

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court will cross-examine legislator Maulana Fazlul Haque Amini, chairman of an Islami Oikya Jote (IOJ) faction, on August 20 in connection with threatening Proshika President Qazi Faruque Ahmed.

Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Shafiqur Anwar will ask the lawmaker on that day whether the statements of seven witnesses were true.

The court set the date after Amini and Faruque appeared before the court yesterday.

Meanwhile, Faruque's defence lawyers submitted a petition saying they would produce Brahmanbaria correspondent of Dainik Bhorer Kagoj as a prosecution witness who ran the news on Amini's provocative statement.

On the other hand, Amini's lawyers opposed the petition saying the prosecution submitted the petition only to delay the trial.

After hearing both the sides, the court directed the complainant to produce the witness before the court on the scheduled date.

Earlier, the court had recorded statements of seven witnesses since charges were framed against Amini on January 11, 2001.

Amini at a meeting in Brahmanbaria on April 19, 2000 said Faruque and other employees of the Proshika would be killed on that very night.

The report was first published in Dainik Bhorer Kagoj on April 20. Later, the same news was published on other newspapers. Amini did not contradict the news or defend himself.

Faruque filed a case with the Court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate against Amini on May 14, 2000. Following the hearing, the court summoned the accused but he failed to show up.

The court issued arrest warrant against Amini on July 2 the same year. Amini appeared before the court and obtained bail the next day.



PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia gives away Golden Jubilee Medal to an eminent scientist at the inaugural ceremony of Golden Jubilee celebration of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR) in the city yesterday.

PM unveils cover of books on War of Liberation

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday unveiled the covers of two sets of books on the War of Liberation at her office and asked the authorities concerned to make those available in educational institutions and libraries of the country soon.

Liberation War Affairs Ministry published the books based on histories of eleven sectors and brigades.

The books, titled 'Bangladesher Shawdhinata Juddho: Sector Vittik Eithas (Sector-based History of Bangladesh Independence)', has 11 parts describing eleven sectors. Another book, titled 'Bangladesher Shawdhinata Juddho: Brigade Vittik Eithas (Brigade-based History of Independence)'. Over 100 people, including 16 scholars and experts, were engaged in collecting and compiling information for the books and publishing them.

The price of a set (11 parts) of Bangladesher Shawdhinata Juddho Sector Vittik Eithas is Tk 2,500 while that of Bangladesher

Shawdhinata Juddho Brigade Vittik Eithas is Tk 320.

Unfolding the books, Khaleda thanked those involved in this important work and stressed the need for massive publicity and spread of these books so that the nation as well as the new generation could know the real history of the War of Liberation of 1971.

Those involved in preparing the books appraised the prime minister that the books describe the real history of the War of Liberation in an objective manner.

State Minister for Liberation War Affairs Prof Rezaul Kairam, Anti-Corruption Commission member Prof M Moniruzzaman, former Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Emajuddin Ahmed, Barrister Mainul Hossain, Prof KM Mohosin of University Grants Commission (UGC), director general of Bangla Academy Prof Abul Kalam Manjur Morshed, Prof Jasimuddin Ahmed and Maj Gen (Retd) Imam-uz-Zaman, were present on the occasion.

JU students demand exam schedule

JU CORRESPONDENT

Students of 2004-2005 academic session of Economics department of Jahangirnagar University (JU) yesterday submitted memorandums to authorities concerned to press their two-point demand including publication of semester final examination schedule in seven days.

The students submitted the memorandums to Prof Jinatunnesa RMM Khuda Khandaker, chairman of the department and Assistant Professor Asrarul Islam Chowdhury, chairman of examination committee.

They pointed that the first semester took eight long months to be completed from April 18 to November 28, 2005 while second semester began on December 27, 2005. Although May 15, 2006 was dated for the beginning of second semester final examination, it was deferred on June 15, 2006. But no schedule has been prepared till now regarding the examination.

"It is impossible to announce a fresh examination schedule in seven days. I have already convened a meeting for next week to know the reasons behind such an incident," said Prof Jinatunnesa.

TA Ganguly Debate begins

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the slogan 'Let all the social ideas be connected with logic', Archbishop TA Ganguly Debate Competition 2006 began at Tejgaon Church Community Centre in the city yesterday.

Students of 14 schools and colleges including Notre Dame College, Holy Cross College, Saint Joseph High School and College, Holy Cross High School, Saint Gregory High School, Saint Francis Xavier's Girls' High School, Bandura Holy Cross High School, Saint Joseph High School, Savar are participating in the competition.

The daily Amar Desh Editor Amanullah Kabir inaugurated the two-day debate competition organised by Dhaka Christian Chhatra Kallyan Sangha, a students' welfare organisation, under the supervision of National Debate Federation.

Debate for Democracy Chairperson Hasan Ahmed Chowdhury Kiran chaired the inaugural session while NTV Chief News Editor Khairul Anwar Mukul was present as special guest.

National Debate Federation Chairman Tazul Islam Chowdhury Tuhi, Secretary General Mostafizur Rahman Khan, Dhaka Christian Chhatra Kallyan Sangha President Prono F Costa and General Secretary Tapas Sannicholas also spoke on the occasion.

Urs Mubarak

The annual Urs Mubarak of Fakhru Mahaddesin Hazrat Moulana Abdul Ghafoor (R.A.) will be held at 78 Shantinagar in the city on July 9, says a press release.

On the occasion, Quran Telawat will start at 10:00am and doa at 12:00 noon, followed by distribution of Tabaruk.



Rokia A Rahman, former advisor to the caretaker government and chairman of Presidency University Foundation, gives away certificate to a participant of a free computer training course in the city recently. The University Campus has been organising the course regularly for meritorious and poor students.

US floating hospital provides wide range of medical services

1,389 patients receive treatment

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

The USNS Mercy, an American Navy hospital ship, winds up its visit tomorrow after carrying out a weeklong humanitarian assistance mission in Bangladesh.

The hospital ship, which anchored in the Bay near Cox's Bazar coast, some 30 nautical miles off the port city of Chittagong, on July 1, has provided a wide range of medical services as well as technical and civic assistance.

The floating hospital under the command of the US Pacific Fleet carried out its humanitarian mission here jointly with the Bangladesh Navy while Chittagong Medical College Hospital (CMCH) acted as the patient screening and referral site.

The Mercy medical team worked closely with the local medical professionals to provide treatment to 1,389 patients ashore as

well as aboard the ship.

Some 199 patients underwent surgeries and 62 of them were operated on at the 399-bed floating hospital. The USNS Mercy mainly focused on conducting cleft-lip and cleft-plate surgeries.

In addition, a total of 6088 examinations were carried out, sources said.

The Mercy medical team also shared professional expertise with the doctors at Chittagong Medical College Hospital in different fields.

Exchanging views with journalists at a press conference at the hospital yesterday, the members of Mercy medical team observed that the medical care professionals in Bangladesh are very efficient and skilled.

Bangladeshi physicians and nurses as well as medical technicians have skills, talents and a great interest in learning, they said. But there is a lack of equipment required for diagnosis,

surgeries or post-operative care, they added.

"They could be well compared with the same professionals in developed countries and we have mutually benefited by sharing experiences and knowledge," said LT Gene Sherrod, a Critical Care Nurse of the USNS Mercy. But they require a bit exposure to medical technology, he observed.

Captain Dennis Amundson said that Mercy mission is being carried out in conjunction with non-governmental organisations, and in close coordination and partnership with local medical care professionals.

Prof Dr Tahmina Banu of Paediatric Surgery department of CMCH and Jonathan Cebra, director of the American Centre in Dhaka, were also present at the press conference.

The next destination of the floating hospital is East Timor.

Landlord ransack car showroom, loot Tk 26 lakh

Claims Nippon Autos owner

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The landlord of a car showroom along with around 50 people allegedly ransacked, looted Tk 26 lakh, and stole a multi-purpose vehicle from the car showroom at the city's Panthapath area yesterday afternoon.

They swooped on Nippon Autos Limited around 3:45pm and started ransacking the showroom. At one stage they pushed all the cars from the showroom to the road outside.

Locals rushed to the spot and managed to capture three alleged vandals including the landlord of the shop. Later police took them to Tejgaon Police Station for interrogation.

Mannan Chowdhury Khosru, one of the owners of Nippon Autos Limited, said, "When I reached the spot from a bank the vandals snatched Tk 26 lakh from me."

"They also stole a multi-purpose vehicle from the showroom," he added.

Sources in the Nippon Autos Limited said a few months ago the landlord of the showroom had an agreement with Nippon Autos Limited to sell the land to the car business at Tk 50 lakh. But later the landlord expressed his reluctance that led to a dispute between him and the owners of the car business.

"The rental contract of the showroom with Nippon Autos has expired and they are still not giving the possession of my land back. So, I went there to remind them to leave the shop soon," said Syedur Rahman, the landlord, denying allegations of ransacking, snatching and stealing the vehicle.



Obituary

Maissa Karim, only daughter of Iftekhar and Nasrine R Karim, passed away on July 5 at Trinity Hospice in London at the age of 31, says a press release.

Maissa was diagnosed with brain tumour and was being treated at Memorial Sloan-Kettering hospital in New York.

Maissa is survived by her parents and husband.

Her body will be flown in Dhaka from London on July 9 and kept at her family residence at Zohra Villa, Dhanmondi, for those wishing to pay their last respect.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Dhanmondi Taqwa Mosque after Asr prayers on July 9. She will be buried at the Azimpur graveyard.

Friends, relatives and admirers are requested to attend the prayers for salvation of the departed soul.

Alhaj Sadeque Uddin

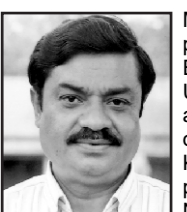


Alhaj Sadeque Uddin, former deputy secretary and secretary of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh, passed away at his Indira Road residence in the city on Wednesday due to old age complications, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons and two daughters.

He was laid to rest at village Kamalkathi under Rugganj upazila in Narayanganj.

Md Gias Uddin



Md Gias Uddin, president of Employees Union (CBA) and supervisor of Bangladesh Krishi Bank, passed away at National Institute of Heart Disease at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar in the city yesterday at the age of 52, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, one son and one daughter.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of National Professor AKM Nurul Islam will be held at the sector 3 Ja'me mosque at Uttara in the city after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

Relatives, friends and admirers have been requested to attend the qulkhwani to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

Prof Islam passed away on July 1.

Bomb splinter kills a woman

A CORRESPONDENT, Gazipur

A woman was killed in a bomb explosion during a fight between two groups of criminals at Ershadnagar, Tongi in the city on Wednesday night.

Noorjahan Begum, 45, wife of Noor Mollah Nuru, was killed on the spot after a splinter of a bomb hit her back at around 10:00pm, police sources said.

Police said two local criminal groups, Picchi Hossain group and Jamal group, locked horns over establishing supremacy in extortion in the area.

At one stage, they began to fire shots and explode bombs while Noorjahan was returning home from his sister's residence.

After being hit by a splinter of a bomb allegedly thrown by Picchi Hossain group, she fell down on ground and locals rushed her to hospital, where doctors declared her dead.

Tongi Police Station Sub-Inspector Mizanur Rahman filed a case against 60 persons including Picchi Hossain and Jamal Liton.

WEATHER TODAY Rain likely UNB, Dhaka. Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty wind is likely at a few places over Dhaka, Chittagong, Barisal and Sylhet divisions and at one or two places over Rajshahi and Khulna divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today. Moderately heavy falls are also likely at places, Met office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country. Highest temperature 35.4 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Jessore and lowest 25.2 degree Celsius at Feni. The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:17am tomorrow. Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were: City/Town Temperature in Celsius (Max Min) Humidity in percentage (Morning Evening) Dhaka 30.9 27.0 86 86 Chittagong 32.0 28.2 84 88 Rajshahi 33.3 27.7 87 97 Khulna 32.8 26.8 91 79 Barisal 31.5 26.8 87 92 Sylhet 29.2 26.5 96 -- Cox's Bazar 32.0 28.5 80 94