

# BOOK ON IMPACT OF MICROCREDIT LAUNCHED 'Bring systematic change to society to cut poverty'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at the publication ceremony of a book yesterday observed that poverty cannot be alleviated only through microcredit programme, rather a systematic change in politics and society is needed to reduce it.

They said microcredit helps the poor survive in the initial stage but could not bring changes to their fate.

Renowned economist and Chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue Prof Rehman Sobhan unveiled the cover of the book titled 'Socio-economic and indebtedness related impact of microcredit in Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city.

Edited by Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad, the book on a survey conducted among 2500 rural people was published by University Press Limited (UPL).

Poverty can only be tackled through a broader political level as it is a systematic problem created by injustice of a society, said Prof Rehman Sobhan.

He suggested bringing about systematic changes in society and providing assets for the poor to alleviate poverty.

He also observed that poverty would never be eliminated until and unless the function of market in a market economy is democratised.

Prof Rehman Sobhan also appreciated the microcredit programme as the poorest section of society are receiving loans



PHOTO: STAR

CPD Chairman Prof Rehman Sobhan unveils the cover of a book titled 'Socio-economic and indebtedness related impact of microcredit in Bangladesh' at the National Press Club in the city yesterday. On his left is Dr Mohammad Farashuddin and on his right is Qazi Kholiuzzaman Ahmad.

without collateral under this programme, which also ensures a successful repayment system.

"Earlier, only a limited number of people had access to bank loan, but now two million poor people became credit worthy, which is also very significant," he said.

Microcredit gains popularity in the country as the formal banking system could not meet the growing demand for loans, he added.

Dr Mohammad Farashuddin, former governor of Bangladesh Bank, said, "I do not think that the microcredit can bring any changes to the fate of the people."

"There is no guideline in the microcredit system on how to come out of the vicious cycle of

poverty," he pointed out.

He also criticised the microcredit programme for its high interest rate. The value addition to microcredit is also very low, he added.

Referring to the findings of the book, Qazi Kholiuzzaman said microcredit is creating obstacles to bringing changes to society. "In fact, it entraps the people into a cycle of loan," he added.

Prof Moinal Islam of Chittagong University said microcredit is not the solution, only a good political party and a good government can alleviate poverty.

Dr Nazmunnesa Mahtab of Dhaka University, columnist Syed Abul Maksud and Mohiuddin Ahmed of UPL also spoke.

## Bogra deputy jailer suspended

UNB, Bogra

Fazlul Haq, deputy Jailer of Bogra Jail, was suspended yesterday for negligence of duty and an investigation into departmental case against sub-inspector Saiful Islam started.

Informed sources said the action was taken against them for allowing district BNP leader Mahbubur Rahman a close meeting with former state minister Mir Nasiruddin in custody in Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Medical College Hospital on Saturday.

Another report said Goalunda Ghat thana officer-in-charge was closed to the Rajbari Police Lines yesterday.

Police Super Moniruzzaman said OC Omar Farooq was withdrawn from the police station for administrative reasons.

In Narsingdi, sub-inspector Shah Alam was suspended for negligence of duty.

SP Shahabuddin Khan said Alam acted irresponsibly in investigating the death of a man in terrorist attack.

## Reception to Yunus today

The Asiatic Society of Bangladesh will accord a reception to its Fellow Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus at its auditorium at 4:00pm today, says a press release.

Prof Yunus will deliver an address at the reception with Society President Prof Emajuddin Ahmed in the chair.

## DEMOLITION OF SLUM

## HR bodies concerned

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Several human rights organisation and professional groups yesterday expressed deep concern over the eviction of Shat Tola Bosti (slum) dwellers at Mohakhali in the city violating the High Court directives.

Bangladesh National Women Lawyers' Association (BNWLA) in a statement yesterday urged the caretaker government to make alternative arrangements for the slum-dwellers.

The statement read, 'This eviction forced thousands of women, children and elderly persons to live inhumane life'. It also termed the police behaviour to the slum-dwellers as 'inhumane'.

In another statement, Bangladesh Sramajibi Nari Maitri, an organisation of working women, protested the demolition of the slum violating the High Court directive.

## 60 creative people from remote areas honoured

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prothom Alo and GrameenPhone yesterday honoured 60 people from remote areas who have been contributing to socio-economic advancement of the country.

These unsung heroes have been doing their bit in their areas but never received any recognition. Prothom Alo had published weekly special reports on their achievements last year.

They received crests, certificates and mobile phone sets with GrameenPhone connection at the reception ceremony in their honour at Bangladesh-China Friendship conference Centre in the city yesterday.

The recipients include Akikun Nahar, founder of Nabapran Mahila Samity, Habibur Rahman, a physically challenged person who has stood by fellow people with disability, Arzina Khatun who successfully fought poverty even after her husband deserted her, Altaf Hossain Altu Mia, a farmer who became a millionaire, Dr Ashir Ahmed Babu, Dr Manbendranath Sarkar, Harun-or-Rashid and Principal Ishak Ali.

Receiving the award, Akikun Nahar of Mymensingh said, "This is a Nobel prize to me."

Former adviser to the caretaker government Akbar Ali Khan, Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed of Biswa Sahitya Kendra, GrameenPhone Managing Director Eric Aas, Prothom Alo Joint Editor Abdul Qayum and Deputy editor Anisul Haq were present at the ceremony.

Akbar Ali Khan said there are many creative people in the country and that women are doing excellent jobs.

He called for strengthening political and economic institutions to fight poverty.

He also identified power crisis, extortion and lack of communication network as major obstacles to the development of the country.

Dr Abdun Noor Tusher conducted the programme while Subir Nandi rendered a song.



PHOTO: STAR

A large number of people throng Bangla Academy in the city yesterday, the last day of Amar Ekushey Book Fair.

# People's participation a must to deliver health services to all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People's participation is the only way to deliver health care services to vulnerable groups in the society, which will help the nation achieve Millennium Development Goal (MDG) in health sector, health specialists said at an international seminar yesterday.

The experts also said people will be able to identify and understand their problems and build their capacity to address those issues if different projects on people's participation in health specially community based health care programmes are introduced.

Plan Bangladesh in association with Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) organised the seminar on 'People's Participation In Health' at the Brac centre in the city where representatives from India, Malaysia, Philippines, Pakistan, Brac, ICDDR,B, German Red Crescent Bangladesh and other development agencies shared their experience on community participation in health care.

Participants also said time has come to change the traditional strategy of top to bottom because health services for all will not be ensured without creating health awareness among the people.

Secretary to Health & Family Welfare Ministry Ehsan Ul Fattah said country's health sector continues to face a number of challenges but it will be easy to overcome the barriers if people's participation is ensured.

"Only the government cannot take health services to the poor people in the society. United efforts of NGOs and donor agencies are required to improve the quality and deliver essential health care services to people," Fattah said while addressing as a chief guest at the seminar.

Canadian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Barbara Richardson said impressive changes have taken place in Bangladesh in improving health situation of the population but still a large number of people have limited access to health care.

She also said CIDA will assist Bangladesh in improving people's health status through strengthening the capacity of the national health system and increasing access to those services especially for women and children.

Edward Thomas Espey, country director of Plan Bangladesh, said Plan has been implementing community health care programme titled Community Managed Health Care (CMHC) in 11 districts for the last five years with support of CIDA, Gonoshasthya Kendra, Lutheran Aid to Medicine, Dusthya Shasthya Kendra and Bangladesh government.

Robert Chambers presented the keynote paper at the seminar where Plan Communication Specialist Paul Subrata Malakar, Project Director Dr Wahidul Islam and Health Adviser Dr Selina Amin also took part.

## CA extends financial help to ailing journo

UNB, Dhaka

The government yesterday provided Tk one lakh to ailing journalist Quddus Afrad, Dhaka Bureau chief of Chittagong-based daily Purbokone.

On behalf of Chief Adviser Dr Fakhruddin Ahmed, his Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim handed over a cheque for Tk one lakh, donated from the Chief Adviser's Relief and Welfare Fund, to Shahnaz Parvin, wife of Afrad, at the CA's office yesterday afternoon.

Afrad, also Bangladesh correspondent of Indian Ananda Bazar Patrika, has recently undergone bypass surgery at Ibrahim Cardiac Centre. He is now recuperating from the operation at his residence.

## Pro-AL teachers, student bodies boycott DU convocation

DU CORRESPONDENT

The 43rd convocation of Dhaka University was held at its central playground yesterday with due spontaneity and enthusiasm.

DU authorities conferred an honorary Doctor of Laws degree on Nobel laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus at the convocation ceremony.

A total of 7,755 graduates, including 4,050 female students, received certificates while 61 students were awarded 84 gold medals for their outstanding academic performances at the convocation.

President Iajuddin Ahmed, also the DU chancellor, presided over the programme and handed over the certificates.

However, Pro-Awami League and progressive teachers and different student organisations boycotted the convocation in protest against the presence of President Iajuddin and Prof Muhammad Yunus at the convocation.

They also took the decision protesting the authorities' controversial and mysterious position about making Prof Yunus the convocation speaker.

DU authorities cancelled the decision to make Prof Yunus the convocation speaker amid student and teacher agitations.

But once the speech of Prof Yunus ended, Blue Panel teachers said that the authorities cheated with the teachers and students, as the speech of Yunus was an "unofficial convocation speech".

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, former DU Teachers' Association president, said, "We were afraid that the authorities would make Yunus deliver the convocation speech and cheat us," adding that the 24-page speech of Dr Yunus was indeed a convocation speech.

Meanwhile, police picked up three activists of Bangladesh Chhatra Mukti, the student front of Hizb-ul-Tahrir, at High Court intersection while they were demonstrating against Prof Yunus.

The detainees were identified as Monirul, 4th year student of Statistics, Uthsha, MSS student of Anthropology and Zakaria, 3rd year student of IER of DU.

During their protest, students termed Prof Yunus as an imperial agent and waved black flags.

## Shaheed Comrade Tajul Day today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Shaheed Comrade Tajul Day will be observed in the country today, marking the

23rd death anniversary of Shaheed Tajul Islam, one of the pioneers of the country's workers' movement.

On the occasion, different political parties and workers' and socio-cultural organisations have chalked out elaborate programmes including placing wreaths at the temporary altar made in memory of Tajul and holding memorial meetings.

## Death anniversary

Today is the 4th death anniversary of Shaheed Matru Rahman, a freedom fighter and former minister, says a press release.

On the occasion, foods will be distributed at various orphanages at Pirganj in Rangpur. All are requested to pray for salvation of his departed soul.

## Ruhul Amin

Today is the 32nd death anniversary of Ruhul Amin, founding general secretary of Bangladesh Sramik Federation, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and discussion will be held at his village home at Hossainpur at Sonaimuri in Noakhali today.

A discussion will also be held at the central office of the federation at Tophkana road in the city at 4:00pm.

## Ashaduzzaman Babu

Today is the third death anniversary of Ashaduzzaman Babu, a politician and a social worker, says a press release.

On the occasion, a doa mahfil and quarakhwani will be held at his father's residence at Courtpara in Kushtia.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to attend the programme and pray for salvation of the departed soul.

## BDR, BSF trade gunfire in Benapole

A CORRESPONDENT, Benapol

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) traded gunfire on Putkhali border area in Benapole yesterday evening after two Bangladeshi cattle traders were wounded in BSF firing.

BDR sources said BSF members of Angral camp first opened fire on a group of cattle traders who were coming back from India with cattle. Jamal Hossain, 33, and Khokon, 28, were wounded in the attack.

When the BSF men tried to drag the wounded people into India, BDR men retaliated with fire. Then both the BSF and BDR fired 60 rounds of gunshots for about one hour.

The wounded people are now undergoing treatment at a local hospital. The condition of Jamal is said to be critical.

Tension has been running high on the both sides of the border.

## Arif, Moyun on remand

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

Sylhet Kotwali Police yesterday took city BNP chief Ariful Haque Chowdhury and Moulvibazar Pourashava Chairman Foyzul Karim Moyun on one-day remand for interrogation in the case filed by contractor Nuruzzaman.

First class Magistrate Devjit Sinha, Sylhet sadar cognizance court, granted it as the police sought seven-day remand.

One of the 50 corruption suspects, Sylhet city BNP President Arif surrendered to the army camp at Sylhet stadium on 25 February.

On February 17, Nuruzzaman filed a case against Naser Rahman and seven others, including Arif and Moyun.

## 465 killed in 2 months

Says BHRC report

UNB, Dhaka

A total of 465 people were killed in different incidents across the country in last two months—from January 1 to February 28—this year.

On an average 7.88 people were killed daily during the period, according to a survey carried out by Bangladesh Human Rights Commission (BHRC) based on newspaper reports.

The BHRC report said of the victims, 346 were killed due to social violence, 36 by law enforcers and 24 for dowry, 15 were political killings, 19 killed in border areas, 13 in mass beating and nine after rape while three died due to physicians' negligence.

Of the rape victims during the two months, 20 were women and eight children while nine were killed after rape and one committed suicide afterwards.

Listing violation of human rights during the period, the report said 13 people died in jail 'hajat', seven fell victims to trafficking and nine of acid attack, while five journalists fell victims to torture.

The BHRC expressed deep concern at the killings and urged the law enforcement agencies and the concerned authorities of the government to take measures so that such killings could be brought down to zero.

## Case filed against city clinic for irregularities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court filed a case against Medi-stopes Clinic at the Elephant road in the city, as it failed to show certificate of the Department of Health and trade license from the City Corporation.

The court led by Metropolitan Magistrate Rokan Ud-Doula found that the clinic does not have any ambulance of its own, lacks paramedic technician for pathological test and date of storing oxygen in the oxygen cylinders is not written on it.

The court found that the pathological tests are done by the nurses, which is illegal and very risky for pregnant women.

The court filed a case against the clinic and ordered three high officials of the clinic Dr Yasmin S Ahmed, Dr Mohammed Morshed Alam and Dr Israt Choudhury to produce all the necessary documents by 10:00am today.

The court went to warehouse of

Bushra Enterprise at Gulshan Shopping complex at Gulshan-1.

The court earlier had sealed this warehouse for allegedly storing and marketing date expired milk powder. It could not inspect the inside of the warehouse as it had failed to break the heavy lock and other security system.

The court had issued warrant against the two owners Lokman Hossain and Faruque and ordered them to appear before the court by February 25.

As they did not appear, the court conducted the drive yesterday. It was convinced that locks and seal stamps put by the court were broken by the owners to shift illegal goods from it.

It ordered the Gulshan Police Station to file theft case against the owners and arrested an employee Mojammel Haque, who was fined Tk 1 lakh or in default one-year imprisonment.

| WEATHER TODAY  |                        |      |                        |         |
|--|------------------------|------|------------------------|---------|
| UNB, Dhaka   |                        |      |                        |         |
| Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.  |                        |      |                        |         |
| Rain or thundershowers, accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind, is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions at the regions of Jessore, Kushtia and Comilla. |                        |      |                        |         |
| Day and night temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country. Met Office said in a forecast.   |                        |      |                        |         |
| Highest temperature 32.3 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Chittagong and lowest 12.6 degree Celsius at Srimongal.  |                        |      |                        |         |
| The sun sets in the capital at 6:01pm today and rises at 6:20am tomorrow.  |                        |      |                        |         |
| Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:  |                        |      |                        |         |
| City/Town  | Temperature In Celsius |      | Humidity in percentage |         |
|  | Max                    | Min  | Morning                | Evening |
| Dhaka  | 30.7                   | 18.4 | 41                     | 47      |
| Chittagong   | 32.3                   | 18.0 | 43                     | 40      |
| Rajshahi   | 30.5                   | 15.8 | 70                     | 61      |
| Khulna   | 30.5                   | 19.0 | 76                     | 60      |
| Barisal  | 30.4                   | 16.5 | 71                     | 71      |
| Sylhet   | 30.6                   | 16.5 | 58                     | 37      |
| Cox's Bazar  | 31.6                   | 18.7 | --                     | 49      |