

**READERS**  
respond

Here are some comments that came in response to Friday's *The Daily Star* report headlined 'Microcredit's mega feat'.

**Towhid Salam**

Given the inflation for over 18 years, how does this increase in daily income translate as real progress? Anyone in Bangladesh can tell you that what you could purchase with \$1 back in 1990 cannot be purchased with even \$2 in 2008. So, are people really in a better position now? One wonders.

**Matiur Rahman**

The findings of the research should be weighed with a grain of salt as it lacks in causality analysis, said so by Mr Zohir. Maybe, remittances by expatriates played a role in it. The survey questionnaire should have asked the sampled households if they had any expatriate working overseas. Study could lead to different results if borrowers from microcredit institutions and non-borrowers in the same economic circumstances were compared. Again, this project's source of funding might have some elements in its findings.

**MBI Munshi**

Improvement in the lives of one crore people could easily be due to increased remittance and employment in the RMG sector. Why is microcredit solely being credited for this economic uplift?

**Sheikh Momnirul Islam Opee**

Anyone who read the book 'Freakonomics' of Stephen Dubner and Steven Levitt or even watched its reel version would understand how misinformed we all are. The book also allows you to explore alternative thinking or those missing connections. So, do not be just overwhelmed by these statistical findings often dominating our headlines in the dailies.

**M Inamul Haque**

This figure of earnings per day appears too low per capita against the figure of present per capita average income per day. Income per family and interest paid (or not paid) are not shown here. Microcredit interest rates remain too high compared to normal bank interest. I appreciate Dr Zahir's comment but it is only a quarter of the glass.

**Dr Rahman**

Thank you very much Microcredit Summit Campaign for opening our eyes. This is the first time Bangladesh displayed one of the great ways to eradicate poverty to the world. We feel proud and happy. Previously we were 'famous' as a flood affected, poor nation. Now we can feel proud of pioneering microcredit.

**Smrity**

I believe we are yet to address the most important point of caring for the life and livelihood of the field workers of microcredit.

I believe there is still enough scope to be caring towards the staffs deployed for the field operation of microcredit. Within the short time of their inception, many non-government organisations (NGOs) get nice offices at different places and costly vehicles for some chief officers.

And all those facilities would little contribute in the life of the field workers. And they are the people who shoulder the stress for operating or earning the big volume of profit for the organisation.

Ok, later is better than never. Lets start our mission to be a little bit kind to the field workers, for whom, owners enjoy much luxury, reputation, name and fame. Ultimately only morality, civility, honesty, simplicity and sincerity triumph.

**Nasarullah**

Microcredit has, to some extent, played some hidden roles to this effect but I would say that the large volume of job opportunities created under various sectors including garments, overseas employment opportunities, teaching institutions, real estate, agricultural outputs, food assistance by various donor agencies including UNWFP and various rural infrastructural development programmes played greater roles. Above all, some socially supported development programmes and motivational performances by NGO's created some positive impact.



Lakhs of the world's Muslims offer Juma prayers on the bank of Turag in Tongi yesterday, as the second phase of Biswa Ijtema begins. (Story on Page 20)

PHOTO: STAR

**Women's chores as economic activity on cards: Muhith**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to recognise chores performed by women as economic activity, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith yesterday.

The minister also said the government already discussed about this long-awaited demand of women, with institutions concerned formulating strategies in this regard.

Speaking at the inaugural session of a two-day national council meeting of Bangladesh Mahila Parishad, Muhith said women contribute almost 30 percent of the country's economic activities.

"But, the actual figure of their (women's) contribution will be more if their chores are recognised as economic activities," he said at city's BIAM auditorium.

Though women achieved significant success in different sectors, their empowerment rate in the local government bodies and parliament is still not satisfactory, the minister observed.

He said laws to protect women from all sorts of violence is very important though many may claim that laws are not executed properly at all cases.

The minister said torture like 'fatwa' against women used to occur inside homes and seldom came to light. But now, these incidents are being heard and protested against.

Muhith said strategies were adopted with due importance in the sixth five-year plan, to be finalised shortly, to ensure women's rights and living standards.

Over 300 representatives of Mahila Parishad from 61 districts participated in the council.

Mahila Parishad President Ayesha Khan said the actual empowerment of women would not be ensured unless they are politically empowered. She demanded one-third seats in the national parliament be reserved for women and provisions for women to contest in polls directly.

Mahila Parishad General Secretary Dr Maleka Banu and Norwegian Ambassador to Dhaka Ragne Birte Lund also spoke in the function.

**Firm stand against border killings urged**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Human rights activists yesterday said the government should take strong position to stop killing on border by Indian Border Security Force (BSF).

They also criticised India's activities in bordering areas saying India gave commitments repeatedly to stop border killings, but did not follow its promises in reality.

The remarks came from the inaugural session of a two-day discussion on "Problems of people of border area and our duty" held in the city.

Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) Executive Director Sultana Kamal said, "People residing in border areas have been suffering a lot."

"We do not think about the matter

seriously until we lost Felani," she said. "We may be a small country, but we should show our power to pursue India to stop BSF's killings."

Imtiaz Ahmed, professor of International Relations of Dhaka University, said BSF is playing role of judge and executioner.

"According to international law, no one can kill any person during crossing the border without permission until they are found with firearms", he said.

"Goods worth about US\$ 3.5 billion enter Bangladesh from India through border while goods worth US\$ 0.5 billion go into India from Bangladesh."

Imtiaz said the fence is set up to control the smuggling rather than to stop it. "The killings will be stopped if

we could institutionalise the market."

Suman Chowdhury of Panchbibi of Joypurhat described how cattle are smuggled through borders. "BSF shoots Bangladeshi when they do not get share of smuggled goods."

Residents in border area are needy people, he said. They do not get proper facilities. Even VGF or VGD cards are not allowed to the families that lost members to BSF, he added.

BSF killed 252 people and abducted 116 others between 2008 and 2010, according to a paper ASK presented at the discussion.

Tapon Bose, executive director of South Asian Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR); and Kiriti Roy, secretary of Bangladesh Manobadhikar Surakhya Moncha; also addressed it.

**GPIT starts formal journey**

METRO DESK

GPIT was launched with a two-day long grand inauguration ceremony at GP House in the city yesterday.

GPIT is an international B2B company with a profit balance and stable corporate clientele. It is the first Offshoot Company from Grameenphone, says a press release.

Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir was the chief guest. Senior government officials, diplomats and leaders of IT industry were present.



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**Project Finance and Operations Coordinator**  
Dhaka, Bangladesh

ShoreBank International Ltd. (SBI) is managing a project to develop a mobile banking platform that will reach the poor, with funding from the Gates Foundation. The locally based Project Finance and Operations Coordinator would assist the Project Manager and visiting consultants in project support, business development and general office administration.

**Key Responsibilities:**

- Contracting – work with SBI's offices in Chicago and DC to ensure compliance with contractual terms and conditions.
- Cost tracking, reporting and budget tracking
- Managing relationships with local regulatory authorities, government bodies and service providers.
- Developing new business opportunities
- General office management, including assisting with travel arrangements, maintaining budgets, and other administrative activities.

**Qualifications:**

- Previous project management experience
- BBA or equivalent undergraduate qualification
- Demonstrated understanding of accounting and bookkeeping principles and procedures
- Good communication, analytical and writing skills
- Background with an International NGO or similar
- Currently resident in Bangladesh, with ability to travel extensively in country and abroad

**Languages:** Fluency in Bengali and English

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PHOTO: COURTESY

Guests at a science seminar on "Updates of advanced patient care management in Apollo Hospitals Dhaka" organised by the hospital in Chittagong city recently.

**Froebel school fun fair ends in Ctg**

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A daylong school "Fun Fair" ended here yesterday in the port city with much fanfare and festivity.

Froebel Play School organised the annual fair with the slogan "Play and learn" at Chittagong Jela Kira Shanstha (CJKS) Gymnasium hall.

It was organised in observance of the 100th birth anniversary of Syedna Mohammed Burhanuddin Saheb, spiritual leader of Dawoodi Bohra Community.

Chittagong city Mayor Mohammad Manjur Alam inaugurated the fair as the chief guest. Huwra Zohair presided over the programme.

Indian Assistant High Commissioner Somnath Ghosh, Consulate General of Russian Federation Vladimir Igorov, and Chittagong Development Authority (CDA) Chairman Abdus Salam also spoke.

Later a cake-cutting ceremony was held. The programme ended with Sheikh Hakimuddin Delhiwala's speech who is thought representative of holiness in Chittagong.

Various kinds of stalls for kids and adolescents were set up including bookshop and magic shop. Games, horse ride, mask making, and fishing game were also held.

**NOTICE OF CAUTION**

It has come to our knowledge that few dishonest land brokers and fraudsters are approaching various renowned individuals and institutions with fake sale proposal of our wholly owned land located at Plot No. NW(J) 5, Road No. 51, Gulshan Model Town (on Kemal Ataturk Avenue) measuring 1 bigha 6 katha and 14 chatak. We neither intend to sell the said property nor have appointed any individual/institution in that regard.

In the given circumstances, any transaction undertaken with any such land broker/fraudsters shall be illegal, fraudulent and unenforceable in the eyes of law. Hence, we caution all concerned persons to refrain from undertaking any transactions with such individuals with regards to the said property.

- Iftekhar Ahmed Khan, Constituted Attorney of Intekhab Ahmed Khan

The Daily Star **Coming out tomorrow - Star Campus**

**Linking Young Minds Together**

The Daily Star offers campus based weekly magazine 'Star Campus' - the ultimate magazine for the young generation - a common platform for the college and university students and academicians - to share their ideas, thoughts, dreams, opinions and views. Star Campus is an endeavour to bring into the center stage the visionary aspects of our college and university students, alongside their lifestyle, cultural trends and their multidimensional talents. Star Campus is a magazine broadly based on campus life! It contains articles, academic news, achievements, travelogues, interviews, book reviews, quiz, milestones, academic tips, profiles of educational institutes, cultural and extra-curricular activities in campus, jokes, cartoons, photographs and much more. This is a magazine Of the Students, By the Students and For the Students.

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