# Grameen bins Muhith

future for the organisation at the same time.

Grameen's response came a day after Muhith explained his government's stance with diplomats and representatives of development partners at a meeting at Bangladesh Secretariat on Thursday. Grameen said the minister's comments did not reflect the real situation. Here is Grameen's full response.

1. In a written statement, the honourable finance minister mentioned that Grameen Bank is not a nongovernmental organisation, but a government institution. His statement is not totally correct. Because, according to the Grameen Bank Ordinance, 75 percent of the ownership of the bank belongs to the landless members of the bank while the rest belongs to the government. In fact, the capital provided by the government is only 3.5 percent. Besides, the finance minister himself has said in his written speech that Grameen Bank was established in 1983 through an ordinance with some unique characteristics. Grameen Bank is a unique bank. The closest example in nature is Asian University for Women. 2. The finance minister

told diplomats that Prof Muhammad Yunus was formally requested to hand over the charge of the managing director to the deputy managing director during the review [of Grameen activities]. In an answer, Prof Muhammad Yunus had told the finance minister that his presence was important for the sake of the review work. He is the chief of the bank and has been working as its chief executive since its birth. He holds a big part of the memories of the organisation. It would not be proper to exclude him [from the organisation] during the review.

3. The finance minister has also said actions need to be taken to remedy the situation as Prof Yunus has been occupying the post illegally. Professor Yunus has always said that he obeys law and is holding the post of managing director in line with the 4. The finance minister

said, "According to the Grameen Bank Ordinance, the bank's board of directors can appoint its managing director after taking prior approval from Bangladesh Bank. In this case, it was not followed. It was mentioned several times in Bangladesh Bank's audit report." In fact, according to the

ordinance, the board of directors of Grameen Bank had appointed Prof Yunus as the managing director after getting prior approval from Bangladesh Bank. The ordinance was not disobeyed in that case. Besides, the statement that "it was mentioned in Bangladesh Bank's audit report several times" was not true. In fact, Bangladesh Bank started auditing on the basis of 1997 accounts and continued it every year. Only once -- in 1999 -- the Bangladesh Bank team has raised an objection about the appointment of the managing director. For this, Grameen Bank sent a compliance report to Bangladesh Bank and it [BB] was happy with the report. Since then, Bangladesh Bank has never raised any question about the appoint-

ment of the managing direc-5. The honourable finance minister at the meeting said there was no proper evaluation of Grameen Bank's activities for 27 years. He also mentioned that Bangladesh Bank did not attach proper importance to the organisation's activities. In fact, Grameen Bank is, perhaps, the most intensely evaluated organisation among local organisations. The World Bank, research organisations, universities and individuals have conducted valuable researches [into Grameen Bank), and

6. The remark made by the finance minister that Bangladesh Bank did not give much importance to the organisation's activities is not true either. Grameen Bank has been audited by may begin in the following

Bangladesh Bank almost every year. Moreover, in recent years, representatives from Bangladesh Bank have participated in Grameen Bank's board meetings for reviewing the audit reports. The audit and compliance reports have been thoroughly reviewed in the presence of high officials of Bangladesh Bank. Besides, Grameen Bank has regularly been sending reports on compliance and management activities of the bank [to the central bank] willingly or being advised. 7. After Thursday's meet-

ing, the finance minister said: "We had long been trying to find a respectable way of bringing changes to the management of Grameen Bank. When I informed Dr Yunus about the issue, he said the organisation will collapse without him." This statement of the finance minister is not correct. He only raised the issue in connection with the review committee. Before that, he had never raised the issue. In respect of the review, he proposed that Dr Yunus stay aside temporarily. Prof Yunus said a sudden decision like this would leave an adverse impact on the bank. Anything that may create panic among depositors and borrowers of Grameen Bank must not be done. Moreover, he did not feel it was neces-On March 15, 2010, Prof

Yunus handwrote a letter to the minister mentioning a smooth transition. He also read and explained the whole letter to him. It was indicated that the minister liked the process. Now there should not be the slightest scope to doubt Prof Yunus' intention of handing over his responsibilities in a congenial environment (so that uncertainty is not created), ensuring a sustainable future for the organisation. As he approached 60 and 70 years of his age, he wished to leave, but it was opposed within Grameen Bank. So, he handed over his handwritten letter to the minister without telling anybody this time. He was waiting for the minister to initiate a process in order to prepare his colleagues mentally.

did not take any step to this effect, Prof Yunus first telephoned the secretary of the banking division of the finance ministry, requesting him to appoint somebody as chairman to Grameen Bank. On September 14, 2010, he sent a letter to the secretary for the same purpose, but the ministry did not respond. Later on December 19, 2010, another letter was sent with a request for an appointment of chairman/acting chairman to Grameen Bank's board of directors. No step was taken in 2010 to appoint a chair-

As the finance minister

8. After the meeting, the finance minister told journalists that Prof Yunus crossed 60 years in 1999, but Grameen Bank gave no response to this effect. This comment of the finance minister is not correct at all. It has already been mentioned that only once, in 1999, a question was raised in an audit report regarding the appointment of managing director, but the issue was settled after a response from Grameen Bank. Since then, Bangladesh Bank had never raised questions about it in its audit reports or any other letter.

#### YUNUS' LETTER TO MUHITH

Below is the full text of Prof Yunus' March 15 letter to Finance Minister AMA Muhith:

Dear Muhith Bhai,

Grameen Bank was created

15 March, 2010

at your own initiative. Now is the time for the bank to move to its next phase. I will have to step down from the post of managing director of Grameen Bank. I'll hand over the responsibilities of findings were published in this organisation to the second generation. But the handover process must be smooth. I am really fortunate that the responsibility of overseeing this transition

has fallen on you. The transition process

The tenure of the present chairman of Grameen Bank board, Mr. Tabarak Hossain, will end on 26 April, 2010. We can begin the transition process keeping this date in

We can fill the position of chairman in one of the following ways:

Option I:

The tenure of Mr. Tabarak Hossain, the present chairman of Grameen Bank board, may be extended up to 31 December, 2010. At that time, I can step down from my post of managing director. I may be appointed as the chairman of Grameen Bank board on 1 January, 2011. This will ensure the continuity in the Bank remains. The staff and borrowers will not get scared by the suddenness of my departure.

In the past, I have tried on several occasions to step down. Each time I tried, it created a wave of panic everywhere within Grameen

Present deputy managing director of Grameen Bank may take over the responsibilities of managing director. Ms Nurjahan Begum is the present deputy managing director of Grameen Bank. She is an efficient and competent administrator and she has been with Grameen Bank since its birth. Option II:

If there is any objection to extending Mr. Tabarak Hussain's tenure, one of the following persons mentioned below may be appointed as the chairman for one year. I present below the names of the proposed persons in order of my preference. 1) Mr. Syeduzzaman

2) Dr. Jamilur Reza Chowdhury

3) Mr. Khalid Shams

When their term ends in April, 2011, I can be made chairman. Nurjahan Begum can take over the responsibility of managing director.

I am looking for an opportunity to meet you to discuss this matter Grameen Bank has grown over years with its own norms. The bank is directly linked with the lives of 40 million people. It is a big responsibility for us to ensure that there is a smooth and proper transition in this institution. I hope that with your cooperation we shall be able to carry out this responsibility in a befitting way.

Please accept my best wishes.

Yours truly, MuhammadYunus

#### HC disposes FROM PAGE 20

backlog of cases will gradually come down.

During the last five months, some 60,000 cases were disposed of, reducing the number of pending cases to 2.97 lakh, sources at the court said.

On assuming office on September 30 last year, Justice Khairul Haque took measures for prompt settlement of more than one lakh criminal cases pending with the HC, according to sources.

### Nine dead in Pakistan mosque blast

AFP, Nowshera

mosque in militant-infested northwest Pakistan killed at least nine people and wounded around 30 more as it ripped through Friday prayers, police and medics said. Hundreds of people were

A bomb attack on a packed

coming out of the mosque or waiting for a charity meal when the blast hit, police said, adding that the bomb Nowshera.

had been planted inside the building near the town of Witnesses described scenes of panic, the mosque's windows and doors blown out by the

strength of the explosion

and blood sprayed on the

building walls.

## Tigers hit

that should serve as a benchmark of overconfidence.

The large scoreboard on the eastern side of the ground said it all --Bangladesh bowled out for 58 runs in 18.5 overs and barely an hour later, West Indies had completed the rout in 12.2 overs, even before the sun set. It was nothing short of a

proud comeback by Darren Sammy's men after West Indies had suffered a whitewash at the hands of the Tigers in 2009 but it was a complete reversal yesterday when a three-man bowling attack strangulated the home side into complete submission. It was Bangladesh's lowest-ever ODI total and the fourth lowest in World Cup history. The middle-order batting which had only per-

formed occasionally and

seldom delivered surren-

dered completely and the

unwillingness to fight

should be considered a major worry. After Tamim Iqbal and Imrul Kayes failed to give their customary solid start, the slide began and the moment captain Shakib Al Hasan's uncertain 'twoshot' prod was beaten by the tall left-arm spinner Suleiman Benn, the Tigers

had their fate sealed in

maroon.

The way Sammy and Roach celebrated Tamim's dismissal for a duck was proof enough of their ploy to remove the best batsman of the team. Imrul Kayes, on five, followed suit and nicked a simple straight one from the medium-pacer Sammy. Junaed Siddiqui batted firmly, stroking four sweetlytimed boundaries in his 27ball 25, which ended up being Bangladesh's highest score.

Junaed's knock showed the merit of batting first on a wicket that offered low bounce and were tailormade for the Tigers. In between the Rajshahi lefthander's charge, Mushfigur Rahim flicked one straight to short midwicket, placed precisely to ensnare the shot-a-minute Tigers' batsmen. Rahim was one of three ducks in the innings and his dismissal was soon followed by Junaed's, an attempted flick at a Roach yorker that had LBW written all over it.

Shakib's wicket made it five for 41 and when Mohammad Ashraful walked into the burning deck, the Tigers should have saved face with some gritty batting. Instead, Ashraful, Naeem Islam, Rokibul Hasan and the tailenders were dismissed quickly, giving Benn a fourwicket haul and three each to Roach and Sammy.

Chris Gayle, ironically, gave the sell-out holiday crowd something to cheer about with six boundaries in his 36-ball unbeaten 37, the West Indies losing only

### Bus kills

FROM PAGE 20 set the bus on fire. The driver

and his helper, however, managed to escape. The mob blocked the

highway for an hour and damaged around two dozen vehicles, causing a severe traffic jam, said police. They withdrew from the

highway around 11:30am. Aminur Rahman, sub-

inspector of Savar Police Station, said Monira's body was handed over to her relatives after an autopsy. Victim's brother has filed

a case accusing the unnamed bus driver. Earlier last month, another speeding bus

crushed a school-going boy at the same spot while he was returning home with his Radio Colony Model School,

About 1,500 students of its teachers and several thousand locals staged a demonstration on Dhaka-Aricha highway to protest the incident. They set five buses afire and ransacked over 50 other

vehicles.

Devon Smith in their short chase.

BNP to gauge

The format of the pro-

Party's Senior Joint

posed tour will be fixed soon

to implement the plan by

Secretary General Mirza

Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yester-

day said they were discussing

the issue to finalise the matter.

central organising secretary

said a number of sub-

committees, led by senior

leaders, might be formed to

ies will coordinate the

programme in their respec-

tive divisions, noted the

skeptical about the execution

of the plan as they saw several

such initiatives go awry.

in September last year.

However, many leaders are

The party even failed to

organise the proposed district

tours of the chairperson by

November last year. National

Standing Committee of BNP

took the decision at a meeting

About the chairperson's

visit to districts, Mirza Fakhrul

said the programme is still on

Circle in Dhaka, recovered

15 hill myna, 25 alexander

parakeet, 50 rose-ringed

parakeet, five white-

throated kingfisher, 10 jun-

gle myna, 15 lesser whistling

teal and 200 lovebirds, said a

All the birds except

mynas were released in

Modhupur forest on that day

while the mynas were sent to

safari park in Cox's Bazar on

Thursday to be released

The officials filed a case in

Tapan Kumar said the

Formulation of a project

this connection under

unit will expand its activities

across the country to protect

to save wildlife in India,

Bangladesh, Nepal and

Bhutan is at the final stage,

wildlife habitats and

addressing conflict between

Ailing Delwar

The BNP leader, however, is

now "out of danger," said

Mirza Nazim Uddin, chief of

intensive care unit at Square

Singapore, Delwar's family

members sought blessings

from the countrymen for his

General Secretary

Mahabubul Alam Hanif

vesterday visited Delwar at

ery," Hanif, a special assis-

tant to Prime Minister

Sheikh Hasina, told report-

Many BNP leaders, work-

Delwar, 78, was trans-

ferred to the Square Hospital

from Modern Hospital on

Thursday night when his

condition worsened due to

breathing complications,

said Nazrul Islam Khan, a

standing committee mem-

Modern Hospital on

February 22 with old-age

Senator Kerry

close eye on the situation.

"I am deeply concerned

by efforts to remove

Muhammad Yunus as man-

aging director of the

Grameen Bank," he said in a

statement released in

The head of the US Senate

committee hoped both sides

would reach a compromise

Washington on Thursday.

He was taken to the

ber of the party.

problems.

**FROM PAGE 1** 

ers and supporters also

visited their ailing leader.

"I pray for his quick recov-

the Square Hospital.

Meanwhile, AL Joint

Before leaving for

human and wildlife.

FROM PAGE 20

Hospital in Dhaka.

quick recovery.

It will help protecting

wildlife.

he added.

immediately into the wild.

Wildlife Conservation Act.

press release yesterday.

and will be organised soon.

Rare birds

FROM PAGE 20

Seven organising secretar-

make the tour successful.

Talking to The Daily Star, a

**FROM PAGE 20** 

mid-April.

leader.

added the insiders.

The Tigers go off to Chittagong and much soulsearching is expected in the port city where they next take on England on March SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard of the World Cup Group B match between

Bangladesh and the West Indies at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Mirpur on Friday: BANGLADESH Tamim c Sammy b Roach Imrul cThomas b Sammy Junaed Ibw b Roach Mushfigur c Sarwan b Sammy 0 Shakib b Benn

Rokibul c Pollard b Sammy

Ashraful cThomas b Roach 1 Nayeem cThomas b Benn Shafiul c Pollard b Benn Razzak not out Rubel b Benn Extras: (nb-1, w-1) Total: (All out in 18.5 overs) 58 Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-16, 3-25, 4-36, 5-41, 6-51, 7-56, 8-56, 9-

Bowler 19 5.5 0 21 Sammy WESTINDIES Smith b Nayeem Gayle not out Bravo not out Extras: (b-2, w-5)

Did not bat: Sammy, Sarwan Chanderpaul, Pollard, Thomas, Benn, Miller, Roach Fall of wicket: 1-29

Total: (For one wkt in 12.2

overs)59

Shafiul Nayeem Razzak Ashraful Shakib 0.2 Result: West Indies won by

#### had-pthe whom kemar FROM PAGE 1 relations with the US on a

comprehensive range of issues starting from trade to investment. Not only bilateral relations, we also have common stance on many international issues. "We don't think the gov-

ernment decision will affect our relations, and this is not logical as well," she said at a press conference at the foreign ministry yesterday. Her comments came a day

after US Ambassador James F Moriarty said his government is "deeply troubled" by the process of "removing" Nobel laureate Prof Yunus from the bank he founded nearly three decades ago.

The government has taken the decision following the law of the land, which has not violated any international agreement with any country, Dipu Moni said.

An independent and sovereign country has the authority to take decisions, and it is not linked with international affairs, she added.

Dipu Moni said the government believes in democracy and rule of law which is equal for all. "If there is any violation of the law, the government has the responsibility to correct it."

The government has stakes in the Grameen Bank, and it can take any decision under the Grameen Bank Ordinance and other banking or company acts, she told reporters. Asked about international

community's concern, she said there may be reactions, as Prof Yunus has international reputation and he received various awards. On US Secretary of State

Hillary Clinton's possible meeting with Yunus in Washington on March 8, she said: "They're longtime friends and they may discuss many things. We don't know the agenda. It's absolutely their matter.' When told the meeting will discuss the removal of

Bangladesh.

matter is now in the court.

press conference.

Foreign Secretary Mijarul

Quayes and other high offi-

cials were also present at the

to maintain Grameen Bank's autonomy and effective-"Institutions like the Grameen Bank make a sig-Prof Yunus, Dipu Moni said nificant contribution to she has no comment. She Bangladesh's development would not also comment on whether the US is interven-

and democracy and Professor Yunus' life-long ing in the internal affairs of work to reduce poverty and empower women through She refused to further microloans has deservedly comment on the issue, as the received world-wide attention and respect," added

John Kerry.

website.

The statement is available on the US Senate

assistance from their employing companies of Chinese, Russian, Korean, Turkish and

Italian origins. Foreign ministry sources said a total of 2,969 Bangladeshis, who were employed in Libya, have returned home until yesterday evening.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) is arranging evacuation of most of them and the government will repatriate at least 42. Employing companies are helping the rest. "If situation demands the

government will go for a fullscale evacuation," said Dipu "We are ready for any

evolving situation as our prime concern is to ensure safety of our people in Libya," Dipu Moni told the press briefing at the ministry yesterday. Replying to a question, she

said the government has no exact figure of Bangladeshis in Libya; it could be 50 to 60 thousand. Meanwhile, with the help

of the international commu-

nity, aid agencies have been

able to ease congestion at the Tunisian side of the frontier. "Thanks to a rapid response from the international community, significant progress has been made with the evacuation of Egyptians

Tunisia," said Melissa Fleming, spokeswoman of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Nevertheless, another 12,500 people still needed evacuation, said the spokes-

Over 10,000 of them are Bangladeshis, and the UNHCR said two flights were

planned for them yesterday,

reports AFP.

Dipu Moni at meetings in Geneva on Tuesday requested IOM director general and ICRC president for steps to repatriate the Bangladeshi workers.

The government will share with the IOM a certain portion of the expenses of charter plane or ship in the evacuation operation. "We have our financial and manpower constraints to deal with the situation," she said.

Replying to a question, Dipu Moni said some places within Libya were insecure while some were relatively

24,913 workers safe where Bangladeshi work-

ers can stay.

Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes, Expatriates' Welfare Secretary Zafar Ahmed Khan, Additional Foreign Secretary Mustafa Kamal and other high officials of both the ministries were present at the briefing.

Nazmul Islam, an official helping repatriate the Bangladeshis stuck at Tunisia border, told The Daily Star over the phone yesterday afternoon that around 3,000 Bangladeshis were living under the open sky while the rest are in the camps. They would be soon

the IOM and ICRC, he said, adding the international agencies are struggling to assist so large number of migrants. There was no food crisis vet, he said, and the

shifted to the camps set up by

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was providing medicines to the As they travelled distances and were not bathing for

days, they are desperate to fly

home. "We are asking IOM for

quick repatriation of our

citizens. They are trying," the

Bangladeshi official said, adding but the IOM has its limitation too. Nazmul said only two officials of Bangladesh are managing travel documents and other nationalities from for its refugees without passports. Engaging more officials could help accelerate the process, he noted.

He, however, said the

influx of troubled

Bangladeshis towards the border is now thin. As per the information from the Egyptian side, around 5,000 Bangladeshis

were staying on the no-man's

land along Libya-Egypt bor-

der, he noted. Shahjalal International Airport every day remains crowded with relatives inquiring about the arrival of the stranded Bangladeshis.

Abu Bakar of Sabujbagh, Dhaka said his younger brother Saju called him two days back, asking him to tell the government to bring him backsoon. "He is at the border for

the last three days," Bakar told The Daily Star at the airport yesterday. "If the government does not repatriate him soon, he said, he would die."

and several hundred of them

began chanting for an end to

Gaddafi's four decades in

Gaddafi. It's over. Forty years

of crimes are over," said

Faragha Salim, an engineer at

advanced toward the key Ras

Lanuf oil terminal, 600 km

east of Tripoli, calling for

foreign air strikes to set up a

no-fly zone after three days of

not stop until we liberate all

this country," Mustafa Abdel

Jalil, head of the rebel

National Libyan Council told

supporters of the two-week-

Ahmed Jabreel, an aide to

Abdel Jalil, said if there was

any negotiation "it will be on

one single thing -- how

Gaddafi is going to leave the

country or step down so we

can save lives. There is noth-

Rebel volunteers defend-

ing else to negotiate.'

old uprising.

"Victory or death ... We will

attacks by government jets.

In the east, rebels

the protest in Tajoura.

"This is the end for

## Intense battle

In the east, rebels fired a

sustained barrage of mortar bombs and rockets at a military base in the oil terminal of the eastern port of Ras Lanuf, which lies on a strategic coastal road, and the army returned fire with artillery. Rebel sources told Reuters they had taken the town's airport. In Zawiyah, about 50 km

west of the capital, pro-Gaddafi forces fought for hours with rebels who have been holding the town center, two residents told Reuters.

'From 11:00am until now Gaddafi's mercenaries, mainly from Africa, have been opening fire on people here," said a local man called Ibrahim. "Hundreds of victims are now in the town hospital." "We have no choice but to

continue our fight against this dictator." The account could not be verified independently. An oil facility at Zueitina,

south of the Libyan rebelheld city of Benghazi, has been damaged and was on fire, Al Jazeera said, showing a video of black smoke rising from an oil plant. Abdullah al-Mahdi, a

rebel spokesman, told Al Jazeera opposition fighters would attack the capital once a "no-fly" zone was enforced by international powers to try to shatter Gaddafi's grip on the North African oil producer. Western nations have called for Gaddafi to go and

are considering various options including the imposition of a no-fly zone, but are wary about any offensive military involvement to stabilize the world's 12thlargest oil exporter. In Tripoli, shooting rang humanitarian crisis, espeout across Tajoura district as

Gaddafi loyalists broke up a crowd of protesters seeking an end to his long rule and shouting "Gaddafi is the enemy of God!" The demonstrators spilled

ing the opposition's expanding grip on the coast road said a rocket attack by a government warplane just missed a rebel-held military base which houses a big ammunition store in the eastern town of Ajdabiyah. The air attacks have failed to stop the rebels using the coast road to push their front line west of Brega, an oil terminal town 800 km east of Tripoli. President Barack Obama said he was concerned a bloody stalemate could develop between Gaddafi and rebel forces but gave no sign of a willingness to intervene militarily. "Muammar

Gaddafi has lost the legiti-

macy to lead and he must leave," Obama said. The upheaval is causing a

cially on the Tunisian border where tens of thousands of foreign workers have fled to safety. But an organised international airlift started to relieve the human flood from Libya as word spread to refugees that planes were taking out of the Murat Adha mosque after Friday prayers, them home.