

# Grameen bins Muhith

**FROM PAGE 1**  
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 law.

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 appointment of the managing director.

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 findings were published in books.

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 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 meeting, 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 necessary.

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.

As the finance minister 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 chairman.

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:*  
15 March, 2010  
Dear Muhith Bhai,  
Grameen Bank was created 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 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 may begin in the following

way:  
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 mind.  
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 Bank.  
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 Hossain'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,  
Muhammad Yunus

**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, Nowsheera**  
A bomb attack on a packed 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 coming out of the mosque or waiting for a charity meal when the blast hit, police said, adding that the bomb had been planted inside the building near the town of Nowsheera.  
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.

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**Tigers hit**  
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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 white-wash at the hands of the Tigers in 2009 but it was a complete reversal yesterday when a three-man bowling attack strangled 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 performed occasionally and seldom delivered surrendered 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 'two-shot' 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 sweetly-timed boundaries in his 27-ball 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 tailor-made for the Tigers. In between the Rajshahi left-hander's charge, Mushfiqur Rahim flicked one straight to short mid-wicket, 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 four-wicket 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

**Devon Smith** in their short chase.  
The Tigers go off to Chittagong and much soul-searching is expected in the port city where they next take on England on March 11.

**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:

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Roach	6	0	19	3
Benn	5.5	2	18	4
Sammy	7	0	21	3

**WEST INDIES**  
Smith b Nayeem 6  
Gayle not out 37  
Bravo not out 9  
Extras: (b-2, w-5) 7  
Total: (For one wkt in 12.2 overs) 59  
Did not bat: Sammy, Sarwan, Chanderpaul, Pollard, Thomas, Benn, Miller, Roach  
Fall of wicket: 1-29

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Shafiqur c Sarwan b Sammy	0			
Imrul c Thomas b Sammy	5			
Junaed lbw b Roach	25			
Mushfiqur c Sarwan b Sammy	0			
Shakib b Benn	8			
Rokibul c Pollard b Sammy	4			
Ashrafur c Thomas b Roach	11			
Nayeem c Thomas b Benn	1			
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Extras: (nb-1, w-1)	2			

Total: (All out in 18.5 overs) 58  
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**Result:** West Indies won by nine wickets.

**Dipu Moni**  
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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 government 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 Prof Yunus, Dipu Moni said she has no comment. She would not also comment on whether the US is intervening in the internal affairs of Bangladesh.

She refused to further comment on the issue, as the matter is now in the court.

Foreign Secretary Mijarul Quayes and other high officials were also present at the press conference.

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**BNP to gauge**  
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added the insiders.  
The format of the proposed tour will be fixed soon to implement the plan by mid-April.

Party's Senior Joint Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said they were discussing the issue to finalise the matter.

Talking to The Daily Star, a central organising secretary said a number of sub-committees, led by senior leaders, might be formed to make the tour successful.

Seven organising secretaries will coordinate the programme in their respective divisions, noted the leader.

However, many leaders are skeptical about the execution of the plan as they saw several such initiatives go awry.

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 in September last year.

About the chairperson's visit to districts, Mirza Fakhrul said the programme is still on and will be organised soon.

## Rare birds

**FROM PAGE 20**  
Circle in Dhaka, recovered 15 hill myna, 25 alexander parakeet, 50 rose-ringed parakeet, five white-throated kingfisher, 10 jungle myna, 15 lesser whistling teal and 200 lovebirds, said a press release yesterday.

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 immediately into the wild.

The officials filed a case in this connection under Wildlife Conservation Act.

Tapan Kumar said the unit will expand its activities across the country to protect wildlife.

Formulation of a project to save wildlife in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan is at the final stage, he added.

It will help protecting wildlife habitats and addressing conflict between human and wildlife.

## Ailing Delwar

**FROM PAGE 20**  
The BNP leader, however, is now "out of danger," said Mirza Nazim Uddin, chief of intensive care unit at Square Hospital in Dhaka.

Before leaving for Singapore, Delwar's family members sought blessings from the countrymen for his quick recovery.

Meanwhile, AL Joint General Secretary Mahabubul Alam Hanif yesterday visited Delwar at the Square Hospital.

"I pray for his quick recovery," Hanif, a special assistant to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, told reporters.

Many BNP leaders, workers and supporters also visited their ailing leader.

Delwar, 78, was transferred 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 member of the party.

He was taken to the Modern Hospital on February 22 with old-age problems.

## Senator Kerry

**FROM PAGE 1**  
close eye on the situation.  
"I am deeply concerned by efforts to remove Muhammad Yunus as managing director of the Grameen Bank," he said in a statement released in Washington on Thursday.

The head of the US Senate committee hoped both sides would reach a compromise to maintain Grameen Bank's autonomy and effectiveness.

"Institutions like the Grameen Bank make a significant contribution to Bangladesh's development and democracy and Professor Yunus' life-long work to reduce poverty and empower women through microloans has deservedly received world-wide attention and respect," added John Kerry.

The statement is available on the US Senate website.

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Talking to The Daily Star, a central organising secretary said a number of sub-committees, led by senior leaders, might be formed to make the tour successful.

Seven organising secretaries will coordinate the programme in their respective divisions, noted the leader.

However, many leaders are skeptical about the execution of the plan as they saw several such initiatives go awry.

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 in September last year.

About the chairperson's visit to districts, Mirza Fakhrul said the programme is still on and will be organised soon.

## Rare birds

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Circle in Dhaka, recovered 15 hill myna,