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# Star BUSINESS

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DHAKA THURSDAY JANUARY 10, 2013, e-mail:business@thedailystar.net

## Grameen Shakti lights up rural backwaters

### The company installs more than one million solar home systems

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Prof Muhammad Yunus and his Grameen Shakti team were showered with praises from people of all strata for installing more than one million solar home systems across the country.

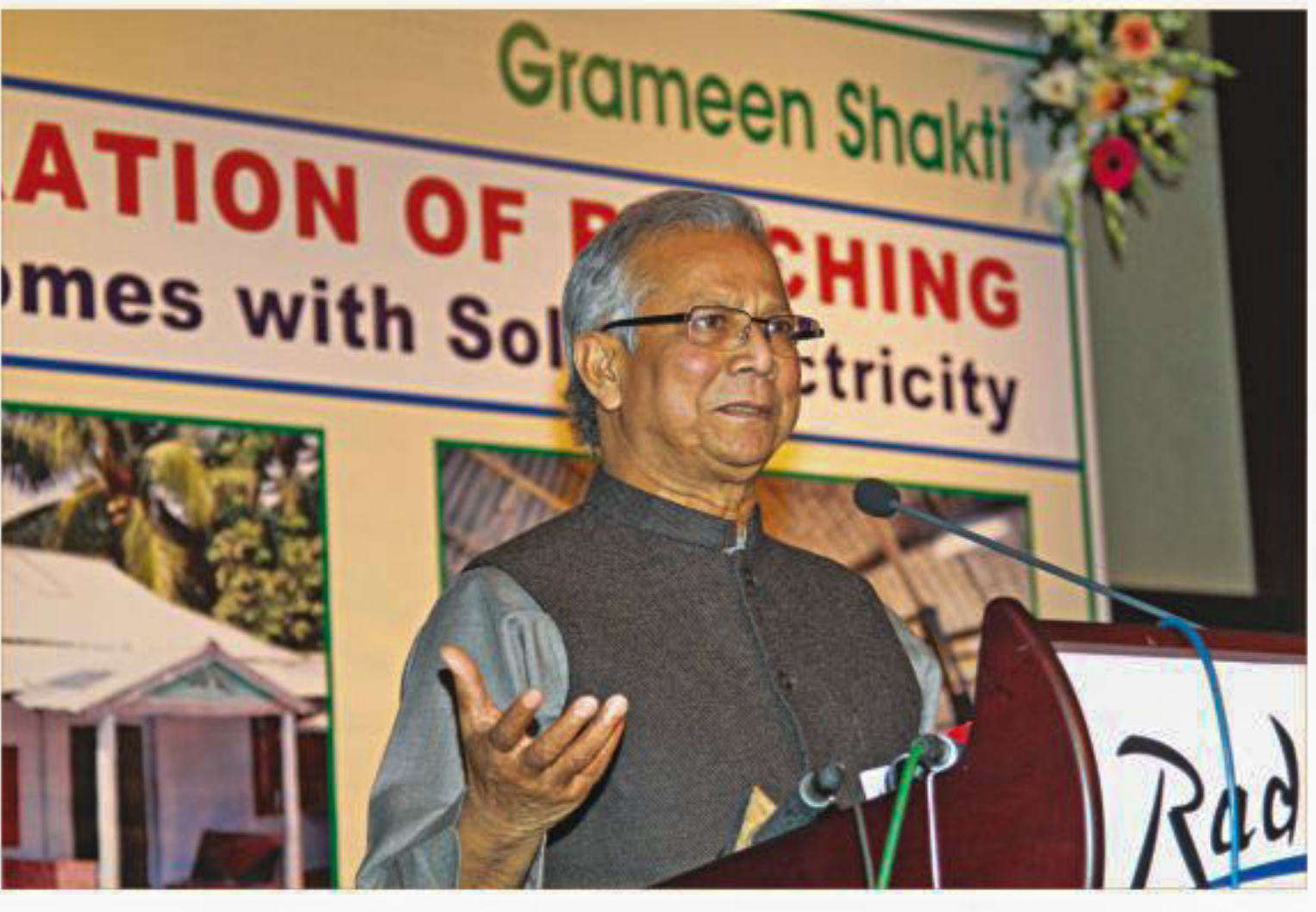
Economists, academics, development partners and diplomats also urged the Nobel laureate to move on to greater heights by lighting up the rural Bangladesh and transforming lives.

The acclaim came at an event, which was organised to celebrate the milestone set by Grameen Shakti.

Speaking at the programme at Radisson Hotel in Dhaka, Ellen Goldstein, country director of the World Bank, said this is an impressive achievement.

"When the programme was initiated, the target was only 500,000 solar home systems in five years. Now the partners are installing 60,000 systems per month."

"This is an astonishing achievement and sounds something in the science fiction. This is a perfect example of a well-



Nobel Laureate Prof Muhammad Yunus speaks at a programme organised at Radisson Hotel in Dhaka yesterday to celebrate the installation of one million solar home systems by Grameen Shakti.

GRAMEEN SHAKTI: AT A GLANCE	
Set up in	1996
Districts covered	64
Villages covered	50,000
Total beneficiaries	8m
Solar home systems installed	1.02m
Improved cook stoves installed	595,516
Biogas plants installed	24,206
Power generation capacity	53 MW

structured public-private partnership under a well-managed financing system."

She said the World Bank spent \$400 million globally to promote renewable energy in the first phase of the plan, and plans to spend another \$150 million alone this year in the second phase.

The WB will support Bangladesh to move to a higher level like

mini-grid and solar irrigation, Goldstein said.

The solar home systems are 100 percent Bangladeshi and operated by the local people, she said.

"These have created opportunity for the rural population to buy electricity at affordable prices. The system has transformational effect on the lives of the children."

Hossain Zillur Rahman, a former caretaker government adviser, saluted Prof Yunus and his team for taking solar electricity to millions of people living in rural areas, instead of a few rich.

Ainun Nishat, vice chancellor of BRAC University, said the future would be in renewable energy and solar energy is coming in a big way.

"At the international level, it is said that 'Think globally, Act locally'. We are proud that Grameen Shakti has acted locally to take lights to people," he said.

The solar panels have empowered people, he said. "Now young girls and boys in the villages have access to information."

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## Citycell caught in frequency dispute with regulator

ABDULLAH MAMUN

Citycell found itself in a frequency dispute with the regulator as the mobile operator did not receive as much radio frequency as it paid for.

In August, the operator got its cellular phone (2G) licence renewed for the next 15 years after paying Tk 333 crore for 10 Megahertz frequency in the 850 MHz band.

The total price was Tk 450 crore at Tk 45 crore for per MHz spectrum.

The operator was supposed to pay the remaining amount in the next instalment.

But while receiving the licence, the operator found the regulator allocated 8.82 MHz to it.

Citycell officials said the company received a demand note from the regulator to submit Tk 450 crore for 10 MHz frequency and it did so.

But the regulator finally allocated 8.82 MHz spectrum in Dhaka and 6.30 MHz outside the capital.

However, the operator instantly requested the regulator to provide the 10 MHz it asked for.

Mehboob Chowdhury, chief executive officer of Citycell, said they will pay the rest amount after getting the entire frequency.

He said, "We have submitted our representation to the BTRC to solve the problem and I firmly believe the regulator is making all efforts to ensure the allocation through a transparent process."

But officials at Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) said they do not have enough frequency in the 850MHz band to allocate to Citycell.

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## Dhaka bourse CEO resigns



Musharraf M Hussain

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Chief Executive Officer of Dhaka Stock Exchange Musharraf M Hussain resigned yesterday apparently due to strained relations with the board of the premier bourse.

"I have submitted my resignation letter to the DSE board as I did not find any job satisfaction here," Hussain told The Daily Star by phone.

He also said he did not receive due honour from the DSE board. The Daily Star could not reach any board member for comment despite repeated attempts.

Hussain joined the premier bourse as its chief executive on January 1 last year after the post had remained vacant since September 8, 2011 as the DSE could not find an appropriate person for the top job.

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## NBR targets three lakh new taxpayers

SOHEL PARVEZ

The National Board of Revenue looks to net three lakh new taxpayers by June through a countrywide survey, a senior NBR official said yesterday.

"We have already started our survey to find and expand the number of taxpayers," said Md Alauddin, member in charge of tax survey and inspection at the NBR.

The NBR set up panels in all of its 31 tax zones to find out people who have taxable income but are yet to have taxpayer identification numbers (TINs).

The revenue authority targets homeowners or landlords in metropolitan cities, shopping malls, newly developed growth centres and upazilas that register growing economic activities.

The tax administrator has so far found 2,500 persons who have no TINs but have taxable incomes during its survey that started on December 19 last year, Alauddin said.

The target is to issue three lakh new TINs, he said, adding: "Three lakh TINs mean three lakh new taxpayers."

"We will ask people to get TINs who have taxable income based on our findings through the survey. We will not press those who do not earn enough to pay taxes," he said.

The tax administrator initiated the survey to net new taxpayers as its officials believe that a huge number of people do not pay taxes, despite having taxable incomes.

Currently, less than 1 percent of Bangladesh's 15 crore people pay taxes as only 12 lakh people out of 34 lakh TIN holders submitted returns in 2011-12.

During the current fiscal year, the NBR aims to increase income tax collection by 24 percent to Tk 35,300 crore from Tk 28,360 crore a year ago.

Collection grew 27 percent to Tk 9,823 crore in July-November of 2012-13 from Tk 7,728 crore the same a-year-ago period, according to the NBR.

Field offices were asked to send updated reports of the survey by every two weeks, Alauddin said.

On ensuring submission of tax returns by the people, who will be issued TINs through the survey, he said the headquarters will monitor whether they are submitting returns or not.

## Development activists to convene in Dhaka to discuss post-MDG targets

### CPD-hosted three-day meeting starts on Jan 11



From left, Khondaker Golam Moazzem, senior research fellow of Centre for Policy Dialogue; Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow; Mustafizur Rahman, executive director; and Fahmida Khatun, head of research, attend a press conference yesterday at its office in Dhaka to announce the Southern Voice on Post-MDGs meet.

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

Experts from developing countries will gather in Dhaka early next week to talk about agendas and targets to set following completion of millennium development goals (MDGs) in 2015.

Some 19 experts from South Asia, Latin America and Africa will attend the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)-hosted three-day meeting, beginning on January 11, on a new global initiative, Southern Voice on Post-MDGs.

As the MDGs approach the 2015 deadline, the international development community is focusing on articulation of post-MDG framework, issues and targets.

Taking note of the global power imbalance, knowledge asymmetry and MDG delivery experience, the initiative seeks to channel its inputs from devel-

oping countries' perspectives into the ongoing global discussions.

"This initiative intends to leverage the evidence-based knowledge and policy experience in the South [developing and least developed countries] to influence the emerging global development agenda," Debapriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of CPD, said in a press briefing.

The MDGs set in 2000 by UN member states aims to achieve eight main targets by 2015 that include: eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Of the eight targets, two -- ensuring environmental sustainability and getting international support -- are out of Bangladesh's control.

"But compared with any country in Africa, Bangladesh has fared well," Bhattacharya said.

The country has made progress in five of the areas that include reducing the level of poverty, ensuring universal primary education and reducing child mortality, he said.

Progress in reducing malnutrition and maternal mortality, however, remains slow," he added.

"But as the MDGs deadline nears, active participation of civil society and governments of developing countries, also termed as South, has become important so that their voices and issues become reflected in the development agendas to be set for the next phase."

Mustafizur Rahman, executive director of CPD, said developing countries were not properly included in the framing of MDGs in 2000.

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## TAZREEN FASHIONS FIRE Wal-Mart pressured to name suppliers

BLOOMBERG, New York

Wal-Mart Stores Inc is under increasing pressure from investors and labour-rights groups to name its garment suppliers after a fire in Bangladesh killed more than 100 people at a factory that made its clothes.

Proponents say public disclosure of supply chains -- a move made by Nike Inc and other retailers in recent years -- encourages accountability that leads to factory improvements in countries where unsafe conditions are widespread.

After the blaze at the Tazreen factory on Nov 24, labour rights organisations have called on Wal-Mart and other companies to take more direct responsibility for the suppliers and factories that make their garments.

Wal-Mart maintains low costs in part by "turning a blind eye" to the conditions and safety of workers around the globe, according to John C Liu, the New York City Comptroller.

"Wal-Mart's refusal to shed light on its suppliers and hold them accountable for their human and workers' rights practices reflects a cavalier attitude toward compliance at the highest levels of the corporation," Liu said in an e-mailed statement.

Liu is a trustee and investment adviser to the New York City Public Pension Funds, which holds about 4.9 million Wal-Mart shares, an investment of about \$337 million.

"As a corporate policy, we don't discuss our supplier relationships," Kevin Gardner, a spokesman for Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart, said in an e-mail.

Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, has more than 100,000 suppliers, according to its website.

## Morgan Stanley to cut jobs

AFP, New York

US bank Morgan Stanley plans to eliminate 1,600 jobs in the coming weeks.

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