

Sanitation linked to poverty cut

Bhuiyan tells workshop

BSS, Dhaka

LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan yesterday said the nationwide sanitation campaign was an integral part of the country's overall efforts to fight poverty.

"Weak sanitation system leads to ill health, growing treatment costs and unemployment eventually lingering the poverty chain," he said while speaking as the chief guest at a workshop on "Achieving 100 per cent sanitation by 2010: Media perspective."

The children, he said, are the worst victims of poor sanitation system with their high exposure to waterborne diseases, like diarrhoea, typhoid and jaundice, that are mainly caused by unhygienic and open latrines.

He cited the example of an area in Satkhira, where the people had to spend 20 per cent of their total income for frequent treatments up to 2003.

Local Government, Rural Development (LGRD) and Cooperatives Ministry and Forum of Environmental Journalists of Bangladesh (FEJB) jointly organised the workshop in cooperation with WaterAid Bangladesh at the Jatiya Press Club.

Bhuiyan said neither the policymakers nor the media should forget that the hygienic life has a direct

impact on economy, sound health, environment, solvency, poverty alleviation and protection of child rights.

He urged the mainstream media to give an extra focus on success stories of the sanitation campaign changing community behaviour and health so the people in other areas can follow suit.

"Media has the most important role in creating public awareness and turning it into a social movement," he said.

He said around 70 per cent families in Dhaka city have already been brought under sanitation coverage, but the problem lies with the floating people, who live in open places and footpaths. The government has set a target to set up 100 public toilets in Dhaka city and many more mobile toilets to keep the city clean.

FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury moderated the discussion.

The News Today Editor Reazuddin Ahmed, BSS Chief Editor Gaziul Hasan Khan, Jatiya Press Club General Secretary Shawkat Mahmud, Badiul Alam, AKM Hanif, Prof Dr Momahhad Mujibur Rahman, Elahi Newaz Khan Saju, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan and resident representative of WaterAid Khandoker Zakir Hussain also spoke.