

Khagrachhari under massive afforestation plan

JASIM MAJUMDER

The government plans to bring over three lakh acres of unclassified land under participatory afforestation at eight upazilas in the hilly district of Khagrachhari.

The initiative has been taken considering the successful performance by the different government and non-government organisations (NGOs) in the participatory afforestation programme in the district.

The stakeholders of the programme include nine horticulture centres, Agriculture Extension units, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Institute, Khagrachhari Chamber of Commerce and Industry and non-government organisations

Proshika, Epek and British American Tobacco Bangladesh (BATB). They have distributed over 20 lakh saplings free of cost in the last five years since 2001 for afforestation in the district.

To encourage afforestation further, a seven-day tree fair was organised in Khagrachhari town on June 27 where government and non-government organisations set up 30 stalls.

Sixteen socio-cultural organisations also took part in the fair organised by the Department of Forest and district administration of Khagrachhari that created awareness about the benefits of afforestation.

BATB distributed 2.75 lakh saplings free of cost among the

people in the fair that ended on July 3.

Local lawmaker Abdul Wadud Bhuiyan in his speech at the inaugural function at the fair said government distributes over 2 lakh saplings of different timber-yielding, fruits and medicinal trees while BATB came up with 2.75 lakh more saplings free of cost to help the people save themselves from different calamities side by side with reaping benefits from the afforestation.

District Forest Officer Shah-E-Alam told the inaugural ceremony that more than 1,000 gardens, small and large, were developed in Khagrachhari in the last five years with the help of different government and non-government organisations. The

government organisations supplied 9 lakh saplings, BATB 7 lakh and other NGOs 4 lakh free of cost.

While addressing the function Deputy Commissioner Humaun Kabir called upon all to come forward in afforestation following the footstep of Nobel Prize winner Africa's Earth Mother Extraordinaire Wangari Mathai, who contributed a lot in saving the nature through tree plantation.

Mohammad Nasim, manager of Khagrachhari Leaf Area of BATB, told this correspondent that apart from distributing 7 lakh saplings free of cost they also provided different technical supports for afforestation by the Khagrachhari people during the last three years.

Sources at Rural Development Board (RDB) at Dighinala said they received 11,000 saplings from BATB.

Zila Parishad Chairman Monindra Lal Tripura said they always provide all sort of supports and extend necessary help to encourage people in any effort for tree plantations in the district.

Abdur Rahman, 59, said they received 20,000 saplings free of cost for plantation on their lands.

Some 2200 farmers, chairmen, members and people from all walks of life got saplings and necessary supports from government and NGOs to make the afforestation programme in Khagrachhari a success, said the sources.



Following the downpours of the monsoon, most of the city roads are now in a miserable condition making movement of both the vehicles and the pedestrians difficult. The road in front of Chittagong Port Hospital bears a testimony to the plight of the city dwellers.

STAR PHOTO

State of primary education deplorable in Ctg

SHAHIDUL ISLAM

Around 150 villages under 20 police stations have no primary schools to give an impression how deplorable the state of primary education in Chittagong is.

With more than 1,000 posts of headmaster and assistant teacher vacant and existing schools having little or no facilities, the situation is getting all the more frustrating. Worst still, the number of dropouts is alarmingly on the rise.

In the said areas, there are 1,635 primary schools and around 9,000 teachers. Besides, there are around 1500 primary educational institutions, including registered schools, community schools and madrasas.

Fatikchhari, the largest police station (thana) of the district, topped the list of ignominy with 88 villages having no primary schools followed by Patiya (13 villages), Lohagara (11),



Unaware of danger, a girl stands under the dilapidated roof of Ghatfarhadbeg Munshi Abdul Aziz Government Primary School.

STAR PHOTO

Chandanaish (9), Banskhali (8), Raozan (5), Boalkhali (5), Anwara (3), Satkania (3) and Sitakunda (2).

The existing primary schools also lack facilities like drinking water and toilet, sources said. Around 500 schools do not have any arrangement for drinking water for the students while around 350 schools run without any toilet.

Students carry bottle or flask for water with them but the real problem is absence of toilet, for which most of them especially the girls are to suffer severely," said a teacher at Sitakunda.

He said "We draw attention of the local administration and political leaders time and again but they had no time to pay little heed to our cries."

The offshore island Sandwip is in most appalling state as far as water and toilet facilities are concerned. Here, 65 schools have no arrangement for drinking water while 50 have no toilet. Sandwip is

followed closely by Patiya, Banskhali, Chandanaish, Raozan and Fatikchhari in this regard.

Lack of teachers is another reason for degrading the quality of education in Chittagong region. The primary schools of Mirersarai have a shortage of 114 teachers, Raozan 104, Fatikchhari 102, Banskhali 86, Satkania 82, Rangunia 78, Sandwip 76, Anwara 56, Chandanaish 52, Chandaon 44, Patiya 43, Boalkhali 38, Bandar 30, Double Mooring 25, Hathazari 18, Panchalaish 15 and Sitakunda 11.

Although the ratio of enrolment at the primary level is satisfactory, the number of dropouts has been mounting. Of the thanas, 10 have recorded with more than 20 percent dropouts. Boalkhali has the highest number (40%) followed by Patiya (34%), Chandanaish (32%), Sitakunda (28%), Satkania

(27%), Lohagara (26%), Rangunia (23%), Banskhali (22%), Chandgaon (21%), Anwara (21%), Panchalaish (18%), Hathazari (18%), Fatikchhari (17%), Kotwali (14%), Sandwip (11%), Pahartali (10%), Mirersarai (10%), Double Mooring (7%) and Bandar (6%).

An official said the government has a plan to appoint 6,000 new teachers for the primary schools across the country in 2006 and if it is implemented in time the quality of education in primary schools will improve in Chittagong as well as in the country.

"For lack of optimum teachers we can't carry the inspection work of the existing schools regularly," he said, adding that once the schools have sufficient teachers and staffs they would do good for the nation and the number of dropouts would come down as well.

Aktel-Drishty debate begins

Speakers at the inaugural function of a seven-day debate competition here underscored the need for practice and application of logics for making correct decisions in every sphere of life.

The practice of logic should begin from student life, as they are the future leaders to take the country towards right direction, they said.

The debate titled 'Aktel-Drishty Debate Competition' organised by Drishty, a cultural organisation began at Shilpakala Academy on Saturday.

Managing Director of TM International Bangladesh Limited Ahmed Bin Ismail as the chief guest inaugurated the competition with Drishty Chairman Safia Ghazi Rahman in the chair.

Chittagong University teacher Ahsanul Alam Parvez, TM International Head of Corporate Affairs Javed Tareq, Drishty Chittagong President Masud Bakul and General Secretary Saif Chowdhury also spoke at the ceremony.

The programmes include 14th Inter-school Parliamentary Debate, 6th Inter-college Debate and 3rd Inter-university Debate competitions. Fifteen schools, eight colleges and nine universities are participating in the competition.

'Inform on criminals'

Deputy Commissioner (Port) of Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) Dr Nazmul Karim assured the people

of Halishahar Housing Estate of maintaining law and order situation in their locality.

He stressed the need for creating awareness among the dwellers and urged them to inform the law enforcers about the criminals.

The CMP official was speaking as the chief guest at a view-exchanging meeting on 'Law and Order and Security' organised by Halishahar Housing Estate (Block-I) Mahalla Unnayan Committee on Friday.

Committee President Md Sirajul

Hoque Chowdhury presided over the meeting. Assistant Commissioner (Double Mooring Zone) Mohammad Ilias, Officer-in-charge (OC) of Halishahar Police Station (PS) Abdur Nur, and residents ABM Abdul Kadir, ABM Abdul Bashir, Badul Alam Khan, Abu Hashem, Golum Kibria, Kamal Uddin, Mosharraf Hossain Dipu, and Liakat Ali Babul also addressed the ceremony.

Other office-bearers are Senior Vice President: Jahangir Alam Dobash, Vice President: Md Hakim Ali, Joint Secretary: Jebal Hossain Dobash, Organising Secretary: MA Musa Bablu, Finance Secretary: Md Waliulah, Publicity Secretary: Azizur Rahman, Sports and Cultural Secretary: Shafiqul Alam Hazari, and Social Welfare Secretary: Kazi Khorshedul Alam Putul.

Md. Matizul Islam, Narottam Saha, Ashrafuzzaman Akash and Ataur Rahman were elected as members at the election.

The company has no license to run the factory, sources said. The company had been manufacturing those banned and harmful drugs since July, 2004 without taking any

action.

Deputy Director of Fire Service and Civil Defence, Chittagong Rashedul Islam Mazumder was present as chief the guest at the certificate giving ceremony of the training course organised in cooperation with Fire Service and Civil Defence authorities on Thursday.

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action.

Mr. Zakaria conducted the election as chief election commissioner while Basudeb Saha and Md.

Moniruzzaman were the election commissioners.

Educate children for socialisation'

Chittagong University (CU) Vice Chancellor Professor M Badul Alam

said that there is no alternative to education for the socialisation of the children.

Our children at first gets familiar with their families where they are born and then with the society through their educational institutions, he said.

Prof Badul said this while he was addressing as chief guest the certificate giving ceremony of the primary school scholarships organised by Chittagong

Kindergarten Association at the Engineers' Institution auditorium on Saturday.

CU Arts Faculty Dean Professor Mansur Uddin Ahmad, vice chairman of Engineers' Institution, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong Chapter Md Nurul Karim, Chief Education Officer of Chittagong City Corporation (CCC) Rawshan Akter Hanif and Senior

Sub-Editor of the Dainik Azadi Rashed Rouf were present as special guests.

The speakers underscored the need for improving the quality of primary education for the sound mental development of the children.

Later, Prof Badul distributed certificates and prizes among the students.



A condolence meeting was held at Muslim Institute hall here on Friday to pay rich tribute to Professor Chowdhury Anwarul Karim, one of the founding member of Muktijuddher Bijoy Mela organising committee and former student leader.

ZOBAIR HOSSAIN SKOPE