

# Take up eco-friendly sustainable development projects

Bapa, IEB seminar told

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a seminar yesterday said development projects should be taken up considering river, environment and the interest of poor people.

Development projects involving embankment, irrigation and electricity often cause harm to environment and people, they said.

The seminar titled 'Poor people, poorer rivers : Growth paradox in South Asia' was jointly organised by Trans-boundary river group of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok (Bapa) and Civil Engineering Division of the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) at the seminar hall of the IEB in the capital.

The speakers said due to urbanisation and anti-environmental developmental projects, demands of water are increasing day by day whereas usable water are decreasing

sharply in the country.

They said the amount of usable water per person has decreased 70 percent in last 55 years while demands of water increased by 17 percent during the same period.

The speakers fear that the total water flow will be marginalised further with the withdrawal of waters in the upstream of the Himalayan rivers.

They warned that the gradual reduction of water flow in the rivers would also bring down the ground-water table causing severe environmental disasters.

Leading water expert Prof Ainun Nishat said the use of surface and deep water is increasing indiscriminately through irrigation which is the main cause for bringing down the ground water table in the country.

"Though Bangladesh has finalised National Water Plan but it is not implementing it," said Nishat, also the country representative of

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

"Thousands of people are becoming homeless due to bank erosion of 234 rivers most of which originated from India. Only river training can protect people from the erosion and for this purpose government should identify the erosion-prone point and build embankment on both side of the rivers," he added.

Dr Sudhirendra Sharma, chair-

man of Ecology Foundation in New Delhi, said development projects especially the infrastructure development projects are not favourable for flow of river water, environment and poor people.

Renowned economist Dr Atiur Rahman said development works should be taken on basin-base wise such as Ganga basin, Brahmaputra basin and Meghna basin.

"India and Bangladesh should work together for the greater inter-

est of South Asian countries," he added.

Currently, the Brahmaputra is the source of 90 percent water in dry season followed by the Meghna with 9 per cent. In rainy season again, the Brahmaputra remains the major source of water with 51 percent flow, followed by the Ganges with 24 percent and the Meghna with 15 per cent, he added.

Engineer Kabir Ahmed Bhuiyan, chairman of Civil Engineering Division of IEB, presided over the seminar which was also addressed by Prof Feroze Ahmed of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) and Prabin Man Singh of Water and Energy Users' Federation (WAFED) in Nepal.



Children draw pictures at an art competition organised by Prothom Alo Bandhusabha at AR Plaza at Dhanmondi in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR



Economist Dr Atiur Rahman speaks at a seminar titled 'Poor people, poorer rivers: Growth paradox in South Asia' jointly organised by Bangladesh Paribesh Andolok (Bapa) and the Institution of Engineers Bangladesh (IEB) at the seminar hall of the IEB in the city yesterday. Sitting from right are Engineer Kabir Ahmed Bhuiyan, Dr Sudhirendra Sharma, Prabin Man Singh and Md Rezaul Karim.

## 57 juveniles still languishing in Kashimpur jail

UNB, Dhaka

Even after more than two and half months, no step has yet been taken to bring back 57 inmates of Kishore Unnayan Kendra (juvenile development centre) at Tongi from Kashimpur Central Jail where they were transferred on May 23 for safe custody.

It is a clear violation of the Children Act, high court ruling, UNCRC and most importantly, setback in progress that has been made on releasing children from confinement, said sources at the 6th National Task Force formed for implementing a High Court order regarding child right.

Of the 97 children who were sent to Kashimpur jail, 57 are still languishing there. The decision of transferring the children was taken by the authority following an uprising in the Kishore Unnayan Kendra (KUK), Tongi.

The incident was sparked by the failure to escort six children to attend their court appearances on May 23.

"We are expecting to bring back the children to the centre by August 15," said M Hossain, the super of KUK.

Asked about the delay, he said they could not bring back the children as some construction works were going on as part of the safety measures in the centre.

Inmates of juvenile development centres have been persistently voicing their concerns since a long time over the delayed court process and the failure to take them to court on the case appearance day, the Taskforce sources said.

But the Children Act, 1974 clearly provides that a child's presence in court is not mandatory for court procedure, they mentioned.

Moreover, instead of managing the matter by implementing the procedure, a drastic measure has been taken by transferring children to Kashimpur Central Jail. This is completely against the spirit of the Children Act, 1974, as well as the suo moto judgement by the High Court Division (Suo moto no. 248/2003), said a Taskforce source.

The High Court on April 9, 2003 issued a suo moto rule asking the authorities to immediately transfer the juveniles detained in jails to correction centres and other approved homes.

The source said that transferring children to adult jails from a development institute like KUK is a violation of rights of children and would cause further harm to them.

"Such protest on the part of children are rooted in the failure of the juvenile justice administration to deal with children's cases according to the Children Act, 1974," he said.

The Taskforce source suggested that the children should be brought back to the Kishore Unnayan Kendra, Tongi and start dialogue more effectively with the children to find quick and sustainable solutions in compliance with the Children Act, 1974.

The authority should conduct court process without delaying for children's appearance in court with support from probation officers, the Taskforce recommended.

On August 6, secretary of Local

Government Division of the LGRD Ministry SM Jahurul Islam visited Kashimpur jail-2 to meet the 62 children who were then kept there under safe custody.

The children urged the Secretary to take them back to the Tongi KUK as soon as possible.

The secretary also visited the Konabari Kishore Unnayan Kendra to monitor the services delivered by the Department of Social Services to the inmates of the centre.

The Secretary during talks with the children in the centre was requested to develop the KUK as educational institute as there is no market value of the training currently provided by the centre.

On the 6th National Taskforce meeting held on November 27 last year, chairman of the Taskforce Dr Kamal Uddin Siddiqui directed the Local Government Secretary to form a committee to make a third party assessment to identify the appropriateness of a report placed in the meeting.

Shajahan Miah, 35, a mason of Mirpur area in the city, was electrocuted by the nearby electric wire while pulling a pipe of a water pump at an under-construction building.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the doctors declared him dead.

Nannu Miah, 28, was electrocuted when he was switching on an electric button in North Bishil, Mirpur Mazar Road at around 1:00am and died on the spot.

The body of the victim, Shahnoor Rahman, 25, was found at a marshy land at the village around 8:00am. His hands and legs were tied up.

According to police, Shahnoor was kidnapped at gunpoint by Babu Morol and Haidul Morol who are now at large.

The police have taken the wife of slain fish trader into custody for interrogation as Babu Morol had illicit relations with her.

## Int'l Youth Day today

Bss, Dhaka

The International Youth Day will be observed in the country today with focus on the issues of youths and their role in the nation-building efforts.

The day is being observed in Bangladesh since 2000 following the resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1999.

This year's theme of the day is "Tackling Poverty Together".

Department of Population Science of Dhaka University in collaboration with Dhaka University Journalists Association has taken a two-day programme with the support of United Nations Fund for Population (UNFP) from today.

On the first day of the programmes, a colourful procession will be brought out from Aparajeya Bangla and on the second day, a roundtable discussion will be organised in the Planning and Development Academy auditorium.

Dhaka Cycling Club will arrange a cycle march from Dhaka University Fine Arts Institute to Central Shaheed Minar at 11:00am today with a call to make cycling popular to reduce transport costs as well as for good health.

Marking the day, Bangladesh Jubo Union will organise a signature collection campaign and "symbolic missile destruction" programme in front of the National Museum at Shahbag, protesting Israeli attacks in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Jubo Nagarik Adhikar Jote and Green Voice held a rally at Battala of Shahbag here yesterday morning marking the day.

They called for end to harassment and deception in the name of giving job to youths at home and abroad.

## Road accident kills one in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

One person was killed and ten others injured in a collision between two passenger buses in Patiya Upazila yesterday.

The identity of the dead could not be known immediately.

The head-on collision between a Chittagong-bound bus and Patiya-bound local bus took place at Manshar Tek at around 4:00pm, sources said.



Members of Garments Sramik Sanghati stage a demonstration at Muktangan in the city yesterday demanding need-based minimum wage, allowances and maternity leave.

