

SAFE WATER, SANITATION IN RURAL AREAS

Tk 47cr to be spent from Gram Sarkar allocation

Says LGRD adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government has decided to spend Tk 47 crore from allocation of Gram Sarkar to ensure safe water and sanitation in rural areas this year, said Mohammed Anwarul lqbal, adviser to the Ministry of the Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD).

It was disclosed in a launching ceremony of a project 'Sanitation, Hygiene Education and Water Supply in Bangladesh' (SHEWA-B) at a city hotel yesterday.

SHEWA-B is a project aimed at ensuring access to improved water supply and sanitation for 30 million people of 34 poorest districts across the country by 2011.

Presenting the data of alarming death rate in the world in various diseases caused by unsafe water and unhygienic sanitation, the adviser said Bangladesh has been sincerely working to address these issues for long.

Stressing the need for ensuring 100 per cent sanitation coverage by 2010, the adviser further said the

country has achieved 81 per cent coverage at the end of 2006 with a growth of about 48 per cent over the last three years which was the highest in the South Asian region.

"This hygiene-focused project will boost the current initiative with the demand driven community-led approach. It will reduce mortality, morbidity and malnutrition due to unsafe water and unhygienic sanitation," said lqbal.

UK Department for International Development (DFID) will contribute US\$ 62.8 million and Unicef \$9.3 million while the government will invest \$16.9 million in the five-year long project.

First phase of two-phased SHEWA-B will cover some 19 districts, including three in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) from 2007 to 2009. The second phase will add 12 more districts and 300 villages in the CHT.

DFID Senior Programme Manager Tom Crowards mentioned that around 36 million people in Bangladesh have no access to safe drinking water.

Unicef Representative Louis-

Georges Arsenault in his speech said "We will put emphasis on active interaction with millions of ordinary people, including school children, urban and rural populations, mothers and fathers".

The school component of SHEWA-B will provide both separate and appropriate toilets for boys and girls, and will incorporate hygiene education to help address the challenges Bangladesh faces in school retention rates, particularly for girls.

The programme will also cover slum areas in the main pourashavas in the programme districts.

SHEWA-B is an expansion of the successful implementation of the Rural Hygiene, Sanitation and Water Supply Project (RHSWSP) with DFID support in 37 upazilas.

Among others, Secretary to Local Government Division Safar Raj Hossain, Secretary to Primary and Mass Education Mosharrif Hossain Bhuiyan and DPHE Chief Engineer Mustafizur Rahman were present.

584m yen Japanese grant for quake risk cut in S Asia

UNB, Dhaka

Japan will provide 584 million yen of grant assistance to the Earthquake Risk Reduction and Recovery Preparedness Programme for South Asian Region through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Notes to this effect were exchanged on March 17 in New York between Kenzo Oshima, Ambassador to the Permanent Representative of Japan to the UN, and John Ohiorenuan, Deputy Assistant Administrator and Senior Deputy Director, Bureau for Crisis and Prevention and Recovery, (UNDP).

This assistance will be implemented as part of measures for disaster prevention and reconstruction assistance that former Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi pledged in the Asian-African Summit, which was held in Indonesia in April 2005.

The Asian Disaster Reduction Center (ADRC), IRP's constituting institution in Japan, will provide technical support to implement the project. It is expected that Japan's knowledge on and experiences of seismic hazard will be fully used.

This is the first assistance through an international organisation as a grant aid for disaster prevention and reconstruction.

In Asia where natural disasters often occur, South Asian region is particularly one of the most natural-disaster-prone regions, such as to tsunami in the Indian Sea in 2004 and the earthquake in Pakistan in 2005. The number of victims by the natural disasters (deaths and injuries) as well as economic damage are so great that they are giving major damage on the development efforts within the region.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Manikganj

Manikganj Jail Superintendent Abul Kalam Mohammad Azad passed away at Manikganj Sadar Hospital yesterday at the age of 57.

He left behind his wife, two sons and a daughter to mourn his death.

He has been suffering from diabetic and kidney diseases since long, family sources said.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Chasta village in Pabna district after a namaj-e-janaza at Manikganj Jail Gate.

Death anniversary

Today is the 32nd death anniversary of K a z i M o h a m m a d I d r i s, eminent journalist and litterateur, says a press release.

On this occasion, a milad mahfil will be held at the residence of his eldest son Kazi Mohammad Sheesh, 12-A, Eskaton Garden Road, Eastern Housing Apartment, Flat No-301 after Asr prayers.

Mrs Azizah Idris has requested his friends, relatives and admirers to attend the milad mahfil to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

He served in scores of dailies and weeklies in different capacities. He also has a number of novels and translated books to his name.

Syeda Afifa Fatima

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the second death anniversary of Syeda Afifa Fatima, wife of DESA Superintending Engineer Mirza Tariqul Husain, says a press release.

She donated a piece of valuable land at Shantibagh to WASA to solve the water supply problem in Shantibagh, Malibagh and Shahjahanpur areas.

Her family has organised special prayers, milad mahfil and feast at an orphanage in the capital to mark the day.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers have been requested to pray for the salvation of the departed soul.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwani of K o l (Retd) Kazi Haider Ali, son of late Kazi Ashraf Ali of Bagerhat, will be held at 14 UN Road, Baridhara, in Dhaka after Asr prayers tomorrow, says a press release.

He passed away at the Apollo Hospital in Delhi, India, on March 20.

His body will arrive in Dhaka at 9:30am today. The first namaz-e-janaza will be held on the same day at Bashundhara Jame Masjid at Road No 1 after Zohr prayers and the second janaza at New DOHS Masjid after Asr prayers. He will be buried at the Army Graveyard in Banani.

Friends, relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the namaz-e-janaza and qulkhwani.



PHOTO: STAR

BFUJ and DUJ leaders greet eminent journalist Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury with a bouquet at a programme at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Form body at every mosque to curb terrorism

Khatib urges imams

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Khatib of Baitul Mokarram Mosque Maulana Obaidul Haque has called upon the imams of all mosques to form a musallih committee at every mosque to watch and identify whether any individual or group spreads extremism in the area.

The musallih committee comprising 10-12 prominent personalities of the area will find out the existence of extremism and try to uproot the terrorist elements from the society, he said.

Delivering presidential speech at a conference of Ulemas on 'Extremism or terrorism does not exist in Islam' at Osmani memorial hall in the city yesterday, he said there are around three lakh mosques in the country and if all the imams of those mosques take an initiative, the remaining terrorists could be eliminated very soon.

He also urged the imams to make people understand the role played by Prophet Muhammad (SM) in establishing peace in the society.

Maulana Obaidul further said the ulemas and religious teachers unitedly raised voice against recent terrorism in the name of Islam.

Majlish ul Ulema Bangladesh organised the conference participated by Islamic scholars, madrasa teachers and religious leaders from all over the country.

The speakers at the conference strongly protested the propaganda against madrasa education and pointed out that no madrasa teachers or students were involved in recent terrorism activities. Those who were arrested by the law enforcement agencies for terrorism basically penetrated from outside to malign Islam, they said.

According to them, the Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JBM) is misinterpreting Islam and leading a section of young people towards terrorism, which is not supported by major section of religious people.

As a religion of peace and progress, Islam does not support any sort of extremism and terrorism, they said. They also categorically denied allegation of sheltering terrorists in Quawmi madrasa.

This is very unfortunate that the media often spread misleading information about madrasa education due to lack of knowledge or misinterpretation of different terms, they observed.

Maulana Mohiuddin Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Maulana Abdul Hai Bokhari, Prof Abdul Wahab Nadvi, Mufti Mohammad Waqqas, Maulana Mufti Sadaruddin, Maulana Obaidur Rahman Mahbub and Maulana Mohiuddin Rabbani also spoke.

The conference also declared 16-point Dhaka Declaration explaining the consequences of terrorism and extremism from Islamic reli-

gious point of view. The declaration pointed out that those who violate law and order and create anarchy in the society are the enemies of Islam.

Referring to the verses from holy Quran, the declaration said the terrorists would be subject of punishment and hardships in the life after death.

Those who kill people through hurling bombs or spraying bullets are, according to the Quran, the enemies of the entire mankind, it said. The declaration also demanded exemplary punishment to the terrorists for maintaining peace and stability in the society.

Maulana Mohiuddin alleged that a section of intellectuals often

points fingers to madrasa education while searching the root of terrorism in the society. Although Islam does not support terrorism, a section of media tries to malign Islam relating it with terrorist activities, he pointed out.

Mufti Waqqas urged the ulemas to formulate specific plans and programmes for bringing the diverted people back to the actual spirit of Islam.

During recent series of bombings, all mosques and madrasa leaders unitedly protested the activities and categorically told the people that Islam never supported this type of subversive activities, he said.



PHOTO: STAR

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad speaks at an ulema conference on 'Extremism or terrorism does not exist in Islam' at Osmani memorial hall in the city yesterday.

12 held for illegally selling groundwater to Sangu

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A mobile court arrested 12 people, including the owner and staffs of an ice factory, in Char Pathaghata area in the city yesterday for lifting and selling groundwater to off-shore Sangu Gas Plant in violation of Wasa and Chittagong Port acts.

The court also seized MV Prantik, a water tanker, and MT Dynamic, a tug vessel, during a raid on the upstream of river Karnaphuli. The vessels carried water to Sangu Gas Plant from MS Ice Factory and Cold Storage Company at Char Pathaghata on the south bank of river Karnaphuli, sources in the mobile court said.

Acting on the statements of the crew, the mobile court raided the ice factory and unearthed the system of pilfering water.

The court found that the factory

authorities have been lifting groundwater through five illegal deep tubewells and selling it to Sangu Gas Plant for industrial purpose without taking permission from the authorities concerned.

The sources said around 30,000 metric tonnes of groundwater were sold to the Sangu Plant in the last one year.

A contractor company Mars Services bought water from the ice factory at Tk 70 per metric ton and sold it to Sangu Plant at Tk 765, the sources added.

Chittagong Port Authority (CPA) Magistrate Md Munir Chowdhury conducted the drive.

He told The Daily Star that such unplanned lifting of groundwater might cause serious natural disaster such as landslide and change the direction of the river.

Dipjol's wife arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police arrested Rumana Monwar, the wife of film actor and DCC ward commissioner Monwar Hossain Dipjol, from her house at Mirpur in the city last night.

A team of police officials picked up Rumana from the house at Courtbari at around 9:00pm in connection with a case filed under Arms Act on March 8, police said.

Later, she was taken to the custody of Cantonment Police Station.

Discussion on combating trafficking

A discussion on 'Ethics and Norms' with regard to reporting on human trafficking issues was held at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium yesterday, says a press release.

Nari Unnayan Shakti (NUS) organised the discussion for the media people as part of its efforts to combat human trafficking.

A total of 45 journalists from the electronic and print media took part in the discussion supported by The Daywalka Foundation, IOM and ATSEC, Bangladesh.

Farida Yasmin, president of Bangladesh Journalists' Forum against Human Trafficking, presented the keynote paper highlighting the code of conduct for journalists writing reports on human trafficking issues.

Sunny Petit, deputy director, The Daywalka Foundation, USA, Rosy Hossain of Academy for Education Development and Farhana Malaya Chowdhury of International Organisation for Migration (IOM), were present at the discussion presided over by Afroja Parvin, executive director of NUS.

The Daywalka Foundation announced that it will give awards to reporters for two best articles -- one in Bengali and the other in English -- on trafficking issues. The reports should be submitted by October 2007.

JP (Monju) hails chief adviser

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Jatiya Party (JP) Chairman Anwar Hossain Monju and Secretary General Sheikh Shahidul Islam congratulated chief adviser for offering Munajat at the mazar of Bangabandhu and showing state honour to the late national leader, says a press release.

In a statement, they also hailed chiefs of three services for attending the programmes.

They also lauded the decision for handing over the maintenance of Bangabandhu's home complex to the public works ministry.

They said the decisions taken by the caretaker government are timely.

PLA delegation leaves Dhaka

UNB, Dhaka

The 11-member Chinese PLA delegation, led by its Deputy Chief of Academy of Military Science Major General HU Guangzheng, left Dhaka yesterday after a five-day visit to Bangladesh.

Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Operations and Training) Air Commodore SM Ziaur Rahman saw him off at Zia International Airport.



PHOTO: STAR

BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia offers prayers beside the coffin of party standing committee member and former lawmaker KM Obaidur Rahman at his Banani residence in the city yesterday.

6 robbers held in Ctg

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Chittagong

Six of a ten-member gang of robbers were held with firearms and booty while preparing for robbery here in the port city yesterday.

Sources said a team of police from Khulshi Police Station, acting on a tip off, raided a house, reportedly used as a den of the robbers, at Diesel Colony adjoining to Jhautala Bazaar at around 7:00am.

Six robbers, who were preparing to commit robbery, were held with four light guns loaded with cartridges.

Police also recovered 10 tolas of previously looted gold ornaments from the possession of robbers, sources said.

The arrested robbers were identified as Morshed Hossain alias Dulal, 20, of Azimpur of Hathazari, Asgar Hossain, 20, of Banshkhalai, Abul Kalam, 22, of Faridganj of Chandpur, Noman Parvez, 25, of Lohagara,

Solaiman, 30, of Patiya and Rahmat Ali alias Tipu, 22 of Hathazari.

In primary interrogation, the robbers confessed that they were members of a gang that committed several robberies at different city areas, including Khulshi, Kotwali and Pahartali recently, said Officer in Charge (OC) Kazi Sahabuddin of Khulshi PS.

They also disclosed the names of the rest four members of the gang, he said.

"We are investigating their involvement in the daring robbery where valuables worth Tk 25 lakh including around 100 tolas of gold ornaments were looted from the house of a businessman at city's Chandanpura area on March 15," said the OC.

Two cases, including an arms case were filed with Khulshi PS in this connection, police said.

## WEATHER TODAY

### Rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two to places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions and the regions of Jessore, Kushtia, Noakhali, Comilla, Chittagong and Barisal in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky elsewhere over the country, Met office said.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country.

Highest temperature 34.0 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rangamati and Iswardi and lowest 15.9 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:10pm today and rises at 6:00am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.6	24.0	87	58
Chittagong	30.5	29.0	75	90
Rajshahi	33.0	17.7	67	41
Khulna	32.2	23.4	80	62
Barisal	31.8	25.5	97	73
Sylhet	33.9	19.5	55	40
Cox's Bazar	30.8	20.2	75	86

## DHAKA TODAY

### Founding anniversary

Liberation War Museum has taken a weeklong programme beginning today to mark its 11th founding anniversary and Independence Day. Venue: Museum premises. Time: 5:00pm.

### Medexpo 2006

The inaugural ceremony of the 4th International Medical Exposition 2006 will be held. Venue: Ball Room, Dhaka Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:30am.

### Seminar

The award giving ceremony of Bangladesh will hold its 28th annual general meeting. Venue: Bangladesh College of Physicians and Surgeons auditorium. Time: 9:30am.

### Roundtable

The Daily Naya Diganta and Brac jointly organise a roundtable titled 'The role of Ultra Poor Campaign (CFPR-TUP) in developing the living standard of the ultra poor'. Venue: Cirdap auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

### Award giving ceremony

The award giving ceremony of Standard Chartered Financial Express Corporate Social Responsibility Award will be held. Venue: Radisson Water Garden Hotel. Time: 6:00pm.

### Seminar

A seminar on 'Water scarcity in Bangladesh: The ways out' will be held to mark the World Water Day. Venue: Department of Public Health Engineering auditorium. Time: 9:00am.

### Certificate distribution

Bangla Academy will give away certificates to the participants of its 47th computer training course. Venue: Academy seminar room. Time: 11:00am.

### Conference

The annual marketing and sales conference of Acme Laboratories will be held. Venue: Bashundhara Convention Centre. Time: 10:00am.

### Roundtable

Transparency International Bangladesh organises a roundtable on 'Government service commission: Crises and ways out'. Venue: National Press Club. Time: 11:00am.

### Report launch

Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI)