

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 Iqbal, 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 Iqbal.

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 Mosharrat 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 Ohrerhuan, 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.

The musalli 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 Haque further said the ulamas and religious teachers unitedly raised voice against recent terrorism in the name of Islam.

Majlis 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 Jamiat Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) 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 Abdul Kalam Azad, Maulana Abdul Hai Bokhari, Prof Abdul Wahab Nadvi, Mufti Mohammad Waqqas, Maulana Mufi Sadaruddin, Maulana Obaidur Rahman, Mahibub and Maulana Mohiuddin Rabbani also spoke.

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



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

The musalli 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.

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, Clg

A mobile court arrested 12 people, including the owner and staffs of an ice factory, in Char Pathaghat area in the city yesterday for lifting and selling groundwater to off-shore 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 landslides and change the direction of the river.

The court found that the factory

DHAKA
TODAYFounding
anniversary

Liberation War Museum has taken a weeklong programme beginning today to mark 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.

Annual general
meeting

Save Environment Movement organises a seminar on water contamination and its reactions on the environment. Venue: Movement office, Kalabagan. Time: 5:00pm.

Roundtable

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

Award giving
ceremony

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) will launch a report on 'Media in development: Linkages between socio-economic development and diversified media in Bangladesh'. Venue: BEI auditorium. Time: 10:00am.

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.

Memorial meet
on Waheedul
Haque tomorrow

Members of different organisations, including Chhayanaut, will perform in the cultural function.

Unite to prevent
rise of evil forces

Gaffar Chy tells journos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Renowned journalist and political analyst Abdul Gaffar Chowdhury yesterday called on newsmen to be united so that no evil forces can raise its ugly head in the country.

Journalists should work with honesty to bring changes to society, he said, adding that they became successful in leading the country in the proper spirit while the politicians have failed to do so.

Abdul Gaffar, an expatriate Bangladeshi in London, is now visiting the country after a long time.

Lauding the role of journalists, he said young reporters have done a great job in recent years by exposing misdeeds of rulers.

"Journalists must have their own opinions, but division among them across the political line is unfortunate," he said.

Abdul Gaffar, who penned the famous song 'Amar Bhaiyer Rokte Rangano Ekushey February', was speaking at a programme titled 'Adda' (friendly chat) at the National Press Club in the city. Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) and Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) organised the programme.

Abdul Gaffar is now working to make a film on the life of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

"We have already set up a film company for this purpose. I am now writing the script and I hope that renowned actors such as Amitabh Bachchan will play key roles in the film," he said.

The film will portray the whole life of Bangabandhu, including his school days and the days he spent in a Pakistani jail during the War of Liberation, he added.

The shooting of the film will begin in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan in December simultaneously and legendary actor Amitabh Bachchan will play the role of Bangabandhu, Gaffar said.

The film will be released in Dhaka, Kolkata, Mumbai and London, he added. "I have already made a film on the assassination of Bangabandhu," he said. BFUJ President Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul moderated the programme attended by Shamkhal Editor Abed Khan, The Bangladesh Observer Editor Iqbal Sobhan Chowdhury, Aminul Haque Badsha, Maj Gen (retd) AMSA Amin, Swapan Kumar Saha, Habibur Rahman Milon, Shafiqur Rahman, Abdul Jalil Bhuiyan, Altaf Mahmud and Omar Faruque.

Listed criminal
Liakat's brother
Nannu arrested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Detective Branch of police arrested Shaukat Hossain Nannu, brother of top listed criminal of Five Star Group Liakat Hossain, on Tuesday evening for his involvement in criminal activities.

Sources said Nannu, 40, also a former union parishad chairman, is wanted in seven criminal cases, including murder and extortion, by Ramma police from where he was sent to court.

Nannu has been absconding for the last few years to evade arrest.

Fake Rab, DB
men rob trader
of Tk 60,000

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Five fake members of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) and Detective Branch (DB) robbed a businessman of Tk 60,000 in the city's Banani area on Tuesday.

After interrogation, he was handed over to Ramma police from where he was sent to court.

Nannu has been absconding for the last few years to evade arrest.

Ziaul was seated in the middle between the two fake DB men while another sat behind him. The microbus exited Banani Road 11 through Mohakhali and took the flyover after which Ziaul was blindfolded.

They searched Ziaul and took his mobile phone and all his belongings. They also questioned him about various topics and assaulted him.

When the men removed his blindfold after an hour and forty-five minutes, Ziaul found himself at Dhamondi Road 27. The microbus took the next left turn and then turned right towards Nazrul Institute where it stopped and the men threw him out.

His mobile phone and other belongings were returned, but he was robbed of Tk 60,000 he was carrying in a brown envelope.

Memorial meet
on Waheedul
Haque tomorrow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A daylong meeting in memory of journalist and Tagore song specialist Waheedul Haque will be held on Ati Bhawal High School premises under Keraniganj upazila in Dhaka tomorrow.

The programme will begin at 9:30am.

Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui will be present as chief guest with educationist Matiur Rahman Bhuiyan in the chair.

Members of different organisations, including Chhayanaut, will perform in the cultural function.



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

Solaiman, 30, of Paliya 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 Khaleda Zia.