

SOCIAL INVESTMENT SCHEME  
WB okays additional \$8m interest-free credit

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank approved an additional finance worth 8.0million US dollar in interest-free credit to sustain and expand the activities under the Social Investment Program Project (SIPP) in Bangladesh.

A WB release yesterday said the SIPP is a community-driven scheme supporting village-level infrastructure development, social assistance and income-generating activities.

The additional financing for the SIPP, which was approved by the World Bank on March 18, 2003, will continue to support development of sustainable and effective institutional arrangements at the local level, through which communities are empowered to address their own basic needs.

It was mentioned in the World Bank release that as of March 15 this year, about 2 million people in 950 villages had benefited and about 1,400 community-managed subprojects had been implemented, ranging from rural roads to schools, to tube-wells, under the programme.

"The project has been successful in demonstrating the capacity of rural villagers to prioritise needs and manage resources, empowering them to play an active role in shaping poverty-reduction efforts at the local level," said Xian Zhu, World Bank's Country Director for Bangladesh.

"This additional financing will be critical to build on existing gains and enhance the developmental impact of this well-performing project," he added.

The additional financing will allow for activities in villages presently served by the project to be deepened, with a particular focus on strengthening community-driven institutions of the poor, building upon both the existing implementation capacity and results to date.

It will also enhance the focus on inclusion of the youth and respond to community demands for increased support for economic activities and employment opportunities.

Project activities will also be extended into a limited number of villages in four additional districts.

"The project gives these communities a chance to build their confidence and show what they can achieve," said Meena Munshi, World Bank Senior Economist and project team leader.

The credit from the International Development Association (IDA), World Bank's concessionary arm, has 40 years to maturity with a 10-year grace period. It carries a service charge of 0.75 percent.



PHOTO: STAR  
A mobile court yesterday discovers a fake soft drink factory raiding a house in North Manda yesterday. The court arrested two people and fined the institution Tk 3 lakh in connection with making fake Tang, a popular powdered soft drink.

Press freedom can't exist in isolation from democracy  
Mainul tells Dhaka Sub-Editors' Council meet

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law and Information Adviser Barrister Mainul Hossain yesterday said freedom of press cannot exist in isolation from democracy and fundamental rights.

"Freedom of press is a component of democracy and where there is no democracy and fundamental rights, there cannot be freedom of press," he said while speaking at a function marking the 6th founding anniversary of Dhaka Sub-Editors' Council at National Press Club auditorium in the city.

Barrister Mainul urged the journalists to be free from biased or irresponsible journalism.

He said as the government is apprised of the state of affairs from newspapers, the journalists should present correct information so that appropriate steps can be taken for the welfare of people.

"Democracy and corruption cannot go hand in hand," the adviser said, adding, "Corrupt persons should be punished for the sake of democracy."

Reiterating the government's pledge to hold election, he said people expect that good governance would be established in the country through next election.

Speaking on the occasion, Editor and Publisher of The Daily Star Mahfuz Anam laid emphasis on quality journalism.

He said, "We should be proud of being journalists, and the society has conferred us the freedom of press for our role in social development. To protect this freedom we need quality journalism."

Mahfuz Anam said the role of sub-editors is very important in ensuring high standard of journalism.

He said the circulation of a newspaper is a testimony of the popularity of that publication which is the achievement of journalists.

Therefore, owners and publishers must give due recognition of their role, he added.

Adviser of ATN-Bangla Saiful Bari stressed the need for unity and professional knowledge of sub-editors to achieve their dignity.

DSEC President Shah Muhammad Mutasim Billah chaired the programme where Chief of News of RTV Syed Ishtiaq Reza, Managing Director of RD Group Fakhruzzaman, Masum Billah, Kaikubad Mollah and Ashraf Ali also spoke.

TWO CRIMINAL CASES  
Nanak, Azam, 15 others asked to appear in court on June 21

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday directed Bangladesh Awami Jubo League chairman, its general secretary and 15 others to appear before it on June 21 in two criminal cases filed against them.

After scrutinising the case docket and other relevant documents, Metropolitan Magistrate Shafique Anwar fixed the date and directed them to appear before the court on the scheduled date.

The accused are Jubo League Chairman Jahangir Kabir Nanak, General Secretary Mirza Azam, Jubo League leaders Mohiuddin Mohi, Nurunnabi Chowdhury Shaon, Abul Bashar, advocate Kazi Najibullah Hiru, Mainul Islam Khan and activists Shafiqul Islam, Mansur Rahman, Khairul Islam, Omar Faruque, Faisal, Babu, Khokon, Sohel, Rasel and Jewel.

The first case was filed with Paltan Police Station on May 6 last year against Nanak, Azam and six others for damaging vehicles and creating obstruction towards police duty in front of North gate of Baitul Mokarram Mosque.

The second case was filed with the same police station on June 12 the same year against Nanak, Azam and 12 others for damaging vehicles and creating obstruction towards public traffic.

Following the cases, Nanak, Azam and others got bail from the High Court till submission of the chargesheets.

The investigation officers (IOs) pressed charges against them on different dates in July this year.

Training course for prison personnel ends in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day training course for prison personnel aiming at reducing crime, drug dependence and preventing the spread of HIV concluded in the city on Saturday, says a press release.

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) with the assistance of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Department of Prisons, USAID and Family Health International (FHI) conducted the programme which was coordinated by South-South Centre, Bangladesh.

Deputy jailors, chief wardens and wardens of Dhaka Central Jail took part at the training programme under a project titled 'Police, Prisons, Narcotics and Community Services'.

The purpose of the training programme was to strengthen the skills of the officials working inside the jail to make the inmates aware of health, well being of their families and reduce the risk of HIV infection.

Lauding the content of methodology and content of the training as chief guest, Col Ashraful Islam Khan, additional IG prison, hoped that the officials who attended the course will utilise their knowledge to create awareness among the inmates of jail about the danger of drug dependence and risk of HIV/AIDS.

Additional IG prison Col Md Sirajul Karim presided over the session which was attended by Khondkar Zakiur Rahman, programme officer of FHI, and Dr Amzad Ali, national programme officer of IOM.



PHOTO: STAR  
Garbage thrown on the Kuril Bishwa Road by Dhaka City Corporation causes immense environmental pollution, much to the disgust of the commuters and locals. The picture was taken yesterday.

Illegal cable factories unearthed in Chittagong

CU CORRESPONDENT

A mobile court yesterday unearthed two factories that were manufacturing duplicate electric cables of Eastern Cables and BRB Cables at Askarabad area in the port city.

The court seized 5,000 metre duplicate cables, T&T wire, PVC compound, television jack, monogram of Philips and Hitachi, and huge quantity of machineries before sealing the factories off.

The court, led by Chittagong Port Authority Magistrate Munir Chowdhury, found that the factories were built at a two-storey building and a semi-pucca house at the area and were manufacturing and marketing duplicate PVC cables of the companies without any licence from the concerned Bangladesh Standard Testing Institute (BSTI).

The thermal stability, diameter and thickness of insulation of the seized cables were less than the ideal measurement of the BSTI standard and also were not able to carry loads, sources said.

The cables cause electric short circuit and damage electronic goods in residences and factories, they added.

The factories were running after the name of Star Cables Factory, Bangladesh Cables Factory and Siddique Cables Factory and marketing the cables as Eastern Cables, BRB Cables, Hitachi and Philips Cord.

Chittagong Metropolitan Police (CMP) and officials of Eastern Cables and BSTI assisted the mobile court during the drive.