

Tk 130cr Japanese grant for development

Bangladesh will receive 2213 million yen equivalent to Tk 130 crore as grant assistance from Japan under three agreements signed in Dhaka for three development projects, said a press release yesterday.

The projects are Improvement of the Storm Water Drainage System in Dhaka City (Phase-II), Human Resources Development Scholarships (JDS) and Establishment of the Meteorological Radar System in Moulvibazar.

Ambassador of Japan to Bangladesh Masayuki Inoue and Secretary of Economic Relations Division Aminul Islam Bhuiyan signed the Exchange of Notes at ERD on behalf of their respective governments.

Under the first agreement, 919 million yen equivalent to Tk 54 crore will be provided for the improvement of the Storm Water Drainage System in Dhaka City (Phase-II).

As the urban drainage is one of the most important and urgent issue, this grant will be utilised for improving and reinforcing the existing infrastructure of drainage facilities as well as urban health, safety and hygienic conditions in the high priority drainage zones in the capital.

Considering its importance, the Government of Japan has been supporting the project since 1991.

Since then three pumps having 10 m3/s capacity and other relevant equipments were installed and these facilities are contributing to environmental development in the

capital during rainy season.

The grant will cover reinforcing the capacity of earlier-constructed Kalyanpur Pumping Station and sludge removal capacity through open channels and drainage pipes, and procurement of various equipments.

Earlier, under a Japanese grant the basic design of this project was prepared by the government and Dhaka Vasa is executing the project.

The second agreement was signed for the establishment of Meteorological Radar System in Moulvibazar at a cost of 1000 million yen equivalent to Tk 59 crore.

Bangladesh is a land which is always affected by flood, flash floods, storm, cyclone and other natural

calamities. All these natural calamities cause significant setback of national economy and living standard of people.

Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) and Flood Forecasting and Warning Center (FFWC) are unable to obtain adequate data for providing weather forecast and warning for flash flood or flood causing heavy rainfall in the northern Sylhet, the upper river basin of Meghna, and Meghalaya Hills which are located out of the detection range of the existing radar network of BMD.

Flash flood occurs frequently in these areas, but the existing warning system is not functioning efficiently.

So an improvement of the warn-

ing system is very important because an early warning is the key component for the success of disaster management.

Japan has been assisting in the construction of meteorological radar system in Bangladesh in order to ensure the country's sustainable development.

In order to adopt preventive measures from natural disaster, the Government of Japan, upon request of the Government of Bangladesh had earlier completed the Basic Design Study for the establishment of Meteorological Radar System in Moulvibazar.

The construction of new Doppler Radar Station in Moulvibazar will be most effective for timely forecasting and warning to minimise the damages in lives and properties in the regions.

There are also meteorological radar systems in Rangpur, which was built in 1999, and another one in Cox's Bazar, which was inaugurated in April this year. A project to improve such system at Khepupara is going on.

The third agreement was signed for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) programme for the next year at a cost of 294 million yen equivalent to Tk 17 crore.

Under this programme, the government will start selecting candidates for 7th JDS in August this year.

A total of 20 people will be selected for studying in Japan for two years from July 2008.



Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue and ERD Secretary Aminul Islam Bhuiyan sign the notes regarding Japanese grant assistance for improvement of the Storm Water Drainage System in Dhaka City (Phase-II), Human Resources Development Scholarships (JDS) and Establishment of the Meteorological Radar System at Moulvibazar at a ceremony in the city yesterday.

British minister concerned at loss of life

UNB, Dhaka

British Foreign Office Minister Dr Kim Howells MP expressed his deep concern at the loss of life and injury following Monday's devastating landslide in Chittagong.

In a message, he said "Our thoughts go out to the people of Bangladesh, and particularly to those who have lost, or are missing, loved ones."

Howells said he was encouraged to hear that a number of survivors were found Monday-Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Japanese Ambassador Masayuki Inoue expressed his profound shock at the loss of lives and property in landslides in Chittagong.

In a message to Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed, he prayed for salvation of the departed souls and also conveyed his heartfelt sympathy to members of the bereaved family as well as to the injured people in the incident.

The Ambassador also hoped that the bereaved families would soon be reconciled with their tragic losses owing to the calamity.

Staff correspondent adds: Different social and political organisations yesterday expressed deep shock at the loss of lives in landslides due to torrential rains in Chittagong.

The organisations urged the authorities to make all out efforts for the treatment and rehabilitation of the affected people.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) President and former president AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury and General Secretary Major (ret'd) Abdul Mannan in a joint statement urged the rich to extend their helping hand for the affected people.

Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahidul Islam Selim in a statement blamed indiscriminate hill cutting and deforestation over the years for this landslide.

In a separate statement Karmojibi Nari President Shirin Akhter and General Secretary Sharmin Kabir urged the authorities to initiate precautionary measures in apprehension of flood across the country.

Bangladesh Jatiya Party, Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal, Bangladesh Manobadhikar Samannaya Parishad, Mahanagar Sarbajanin Puja Committee, Federation of NGOs in Bangladesh and Forum for the Silent Majority also expressed deep shock and conveyed sympathy to the bereaved families.

Cops feel unsafe to keep forest boss' wealth

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Uttara police are anxious about safety of the TK 1.50-crore moveable property kept in their station since seizure from the residence of now sacked chief conservator of forests (CCF) Osman Gani on May 29.

They yesterday petitioned the Metropolitan Magistrate's Court, Dhaka for immediate measures to shift those either to the Bangladesh Bank or Dhaka district treasury.

It could not be known though when the court's decision regarding the petition filed on security grounds would come.

The seized property has been a cause of concern as the police station does not have any vault or compartment for the safe storage of valuables or money in cash.

"We are worried as keeping such huge assets calls for extra safety measures," said Syed Nazrul Islam, officer-in-charge of the police station.

"It's a problem for us also because some of our men have to stand on guard round the clock for the movables when we were already faced with inadequate manpower," he noted.

The property kept in malkhana (store) of the police station includes local and foreign currencies worth Tk 1.6 crore, 103 tolas of gold, fixed deposits valued at Tk 11 lakh and savings certificates at Tk 22 lakh.

Meanwhile, wife of the ex-forest boss on Monday submitted an application to the home secretary, seeking permission to withdraw money from her personal accounts to bear everyday expenses.

The authorities froze all accounts of Osman Gani and his wife following recovery of the 'ill-gained' wealth.

Investigators yesterday said that Gani who had been remanded three times since arrest did not give any new information in the recent interrogation.

During the three-day remand that began Sunday, the sleuths checked the information he had given earlier.

Gani has named former forest adviser of caretaker government Fazlul Haque, a number of forest officials, and political leaders as linked to bribery.

The ex-CCF and his wife have Tk 20 crore with different banks and around 150 bighas of land, said sources.

Besides, the two own a five-storey building at the city's Jigatola and two plots at Purbachal and Uttara, they added.

Death anniversary



The 31st death anniversary of LA Chowdhury, a renowned social worker and politician, will be observed today, says a press release.

LA Chowdhury was a close associate of Sher-e-Bangla AK Fazlul Haq. He was also the general secretary of the then Jukta Front (Combined Front) in 1954 and president of Krishak Samik Party, Chittagong Branch.

A milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held at his grave at Chittagong after Maghrib prayers and at Naya Paltan Jame Mosque in Dhaka after Esha prayers.

Shamsul Alam



Today is the 10th death anniversary of Shamsul Alam, a politician and social worker, says a press release.

Popularly known as Nana Bhai, he was a close associate of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

He was also the founder-general secretary of Bangladesh Jewellers Samity and president of Greater Faridpur Samity in Dhaka.

A doa mahfil will also be held at the office of Bangladesh Jewellers Samity and at Nana Bhai's nephew Kazi Shirajul Islam's office in the city after Asr prayers.

Dr AH Shahadat Ullah



Today is the eighth death anniversary of Dr AH Shahadat Ullah, says a press release.

A doa mahfil will be held at Road No. 121, Gulshan after Asr prayers. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to attend the programme.

SMA Baqui



Today is the 2nd death anniversary of SMA Baqui, an advocate of Bogra Judge Court and the Supreme Court, says a press release.

He was also a senior sub-editor of the Bogra-based daily Korotoa.

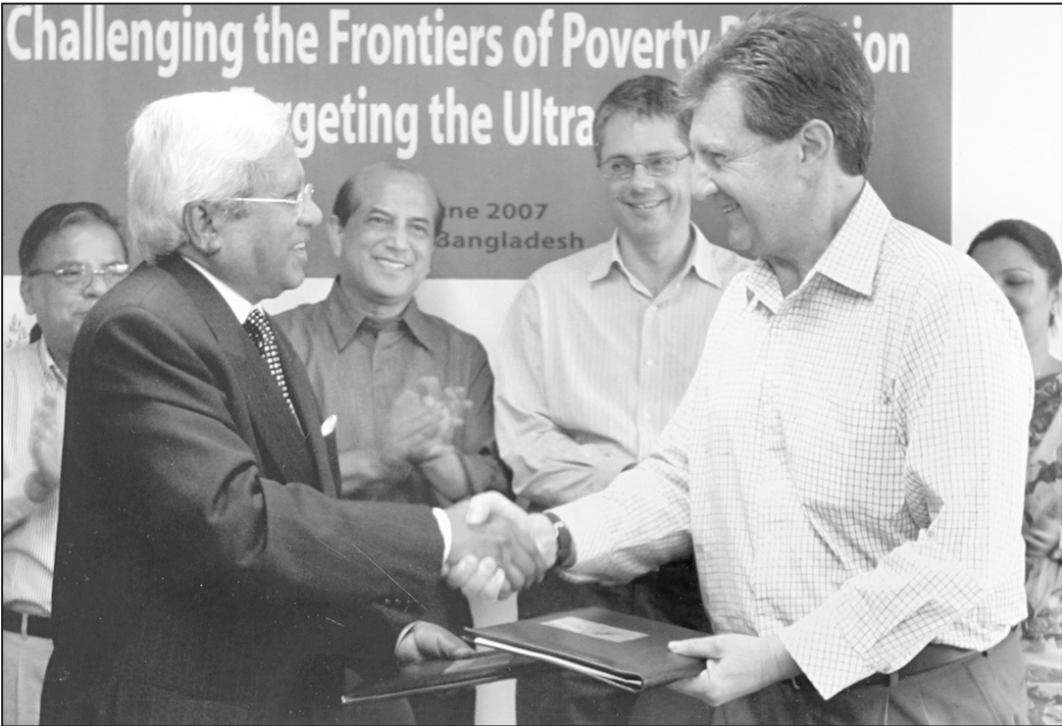
A milad mahfil will be held at his village home at Takahut in Kalai, Joypurhat.

Mohammad Nasir Uddin



Today is the 2nd death anniversary of eminent social worker and businessman Alhaj Mohammad Nasir Uddin, says a press release.

On the occasion, doa, milad mahfil and Qurankhwani will be held after Juma prayers at his residence at Nayapara in Habiganj on Friday.



Founder and Chairperson of Brac Fazle Hasan Abed and Director General of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Bruce Davis exchange copies of agreement at the Brac Centre in the city yesterday.

SEMINAR ON BANGLADESH IN LONDON

Concern over arrest of innocent people in anti-graft drive

ANSAR AHMED ULLAH, London

Speakers at a high profile seminar on Bangladesh have lauded the caretaker government's anti-corruption drives but expressed concern that innocent people are also being caught up in the wave of arrests.

They also expressed concern that the defendants were being held too long before trial, and that in some cases there was evidence of torture or ill-treatment in custody.

International Bangladesh Foundation organised the seminar titled 'Bangladesh: The Way Forward' at Moses Room in the House of Lords on Monday, with Lord Avebury, vice-chair of All Party Parliamentary Human Rights Group, in the chair.

MPs, MEPs, peers, representatives of human rights organisations, academics and members of diplomatic missions based in London attended the seminar. Syeda Muna Tasneem, counsellor of Bangladesh High Commission, gave an overview of the caretaker government's reform plans.

The speakers said that the

timeline of the end of 2008 for the elections should be maintained, and that if the election roadmap to be published in July shows that an earlier date was feasible, the timetable should be accelerated.

The seminar also noted that a commission to decide on land claims in the Chittagong Hill Tracts was being activated, and hoped that close attention would be paid to allegations of violations of indigenous people's rights.

Lord Avebury said, "I was glad to hear that the body of Chalesh Ritchil, the indigenous leader who was arrested on March 18 and died in custody the same day, has been exhumed with a view to conducting an autopsy. I had asked the Bangladesh government to conduct a full investigation into his death, and I understand that the exhumation will lead to a judicial inquiry."

The speakers expressed concerns over continued threat of terrorism and the threats against the Ahmadiyya Muslim community.

They also urged the caretaker government to respect human rights, provide legal aid and ensure that no torture takes place.

In his concluding remarks, Lord Avebury said, "The caretaker government has formidable tasks in their hand, which may need substantial help from the international community. The government has already asked for assistance in the immediate task of preparing the electoral register, and we look forward to hearing what response there has been, and what progress there has been on the promised roadmap. If there are other resources needed, we need to know how we can help."

Sultan Shariff of Awami League, Ayesha Chowdhury of BNP, Ayub Korom Ali of Gono Forum, Jeremy Corbyn MP, Baroness Pola Uddin, Robert Evans, Jean Lambert, Abbas Faiz of Amnesty International, Salim Malik of Ahmadiyya Muslim community, Prof Mustaq Khan of University of London, Dr Gareth Price of Chatham House, Brad Adams of Human Rights Watch, Dr David Lewis of London School of Economics, Rosie Cave of Safer World, Maggie Bowden of Liberation and Prasanta Barua also spoke.

SSC RESULTS

None passes from 248 institutions

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Not a single examinee in 248 educational institutions, including 165 Dakhil madrasas, could come out successful in this year's SSC or equivalent examinations while a total of 774 educational institutes, including 611 Dakhil madrasas, achieved 100 percent pass rate.

The number of high schools, madrasa and vocational institutions with zero success rate has increased significantly this year from 193 of last year.

On the other hand, the number of educational institutions with 100 percent success rate has decreased from 1429 of last year.

The educational institutions with zero success rate include 15 schools under Dhaka Board, 12 schools under Rajshahi Board, 19 schools under Barisal Board, three schools under Comilla, Chittagong and Sylhet boards each, 165 Dakhil madrasas under Madrasa Board and 28 vocational schools under Technical Education Board. Only Jessore Board does not have any such educational institution.

On the other hand, 52 schools in Dhaka, 39 in Rajshahi, six in Comilla, 13 in Jessore, 21 in Chittagong, 16 in Barisal, seven in Sylhet, 611 Dakhil Madrasas and nine vocational schools across the country achieved brilliant results with 100 percent pass rate.

A total of 985 examinees were expelled this year, which was 1,291 in last year, 17,46 in 2006, 3,381 in 2004, 13,217 in 2003 and 35,970 in 2002.

Examinees of 12 Cadet Colleges achieved glorious results in this year's SSC examination with 100 percent pass rate and 93.44 percent securing the highest grade point average (GPA-5).

A total of 442 examinees out of 473 scored GPA-5 or A+ and the rest of them got GPA-4 or A, a press release said yesterday.

Like the previous years, students of 12 cadet colleges, including three girls' cadet colleges, achieved outstanding results due to proper discipline and guidelines controlled by the cadet authorities, the release added.

Seminar

Ulashi Srijoni Sangha will hold a seminar on 'achieving financial development through production and export of international standard flowers'. Venue: IDB Bhabon. Time: 10:00am.

Workshop

Bangladesh Fisheries Research Forum organises a workshop on fisheries and aquaculture. Venue: Spectra Convention Centre. Time: 9:30am.

Trade exhibition

A three-day Thailand Trade Exhibition will be held. Venue: Sheraton Hotel. Time: 10:00am to 3:00pm (for trade); 3:00pm to 8:00pm (for trade and public).

Publication ceremony

Apublishation ceremony of four books on participation of women in liberation war will be held. Venue: National Museum. Time: 5:00pm.

Inauguration

The new office of the Tour Operators Association in Bangladesh (TOAB) opens. Venue: Haji Shamsuddin Mansion (Top floor), 17, New Eskaton.

WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SECTOR

More allocation sought to ensure safe water for all

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Include Water Supply and Sanitation (WSS) sector as a separate sector in the national budget as it is a priority component of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), said the speakers at a press conference yesterday.

They also called for doubling the allocation that has been made in WSS sector in the proposed budget and to meet the government's pledge of ensuring safe water and sanitation for all within 2010.

The press conference on 'importance of safe water and sanitation in the budget and its effect on national development' was organised by WaterAid Bangladesh, a non-government organisation, at the National Press Club in the city.

In his keynote speech, Dr

Muhammad Abdus Sabur, country representative of WaterAid Bangladesh, said the government's pledge to achieve the target of safe water and sanitation by 2010 has become uncertain due to inadequate allocation in the WSS sector in the budget.

The WSS sector was not shown as a separate sector in the national budget though the country's overall development depends on it, he said, adding the goal of MDGs would not be achieved without ensuring safe water and sanitation for all.

Dr Sabur said although the government-approved Sector Development Programme (SDP) stated that the WSS sector needs an annual allocation of Tk 2674 crore, only Tk 827.5 crore, which is only 30 percent of the total demand, has been earmarked for this sector.

"There is also no direction in the budget about how and from where the huge deficit will be met," he added.

Dr Sabur said every year Bangladesh has to spend Tk 10747 crore for the payment of debt interest and this money can be used in the WSS if the donor agencies cancel the debt interest.

He also urged the donor agencies to allocate more money in this sector and cancel the debt interest as they waive interest of many countries.

Dr Sabur also demanded proper monitoring of the spending of the allocated money in this sector.

Director Dr Syed Ishteaque Ali Jinnah and Programme Officer Ziaul Kabir of WaterAid Bangladesh were present at the press conference.

Australia to fund Brac's poverty reduction project

The Australian government will provide AUD 2.1 million (Tk 12.2 crore) for the Brac's Challenging the Frontiers of Poverty Reduction -- Targeting the Ultra Poor (CFPR-TUP) Programme, says a press release.

An agreement to this effect was signed between Director General of the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) Bruce Davis and Founder and Chairperson of Brac Fazle Hasan Abed at the Brac Centre in the city yesterday.

Australian High Commissioner Douglas Fosskett, AusAID Regional Counsellor Percy Stanley, senior Brac officials and other dignitaries were also present at the signing ceremony.

Speaking on the occasion, Bruce Davis appreciated the Brac's efforts to eliminate extreme poverty.

He said, "I am very pleased that Australia's aid will contribute to reducing extreme poverty of four million people in Bangladesh through this Brac programme. Brac is also making a significant contribution to the development of Bangladesh through its microfinance, health and education programmes."

Abed said, "We are grateful to the Australian government and the people of Australia for the support they are providing to some of the most disadvantaged and deprived families. On a pilot basis, this support will help many ultra-poor families transition to better lives and livelihoods."

The CFPR-TUP programme, which was launched in 2002, is a multi-donor funded initiative aimed at reducing extreme poverty in the country.

MAN 'BEATEN UP' IN CAMP

Army men start probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A team of army personnel visited the Concept Tower at Green Road in the city yesterday in connection with the Monday's incident in which a resident of the Tower was allegedly beaten up by an army captain over personal dispute.

The army men told the Concept Tower Welfare Society members that they were investigating the incident and assured them of a fair trial, Society President Akhtar Hossain told The Daily Star last night.

On Monday, five people in army uniform and two in plain clothes, including captain Shibli, took the resident, Mahbub Alam Liton, to an army camp in Shahbagh at around 7:00am from his home. In the camp, Shibli, a captain of engineering corps, and the other plainclothes person, who claimed to be a major, beat him up for half an hour, Liton told The Daily Star.

Captain Shibli's mother owns a flat on the 13th floor of Concept Tower and the dispute between them arose over the raising of a wall near the lift on that floor, Liton said.

The army personnel visited the Tower yesterday as Liton's wife Meher Afroz lodged a complaint with the Science Laboratory Army Camp against Shibli and six others on Monday.

"The army personnel videoed the areas around the lift on the 13th floor and talked to the members of the Welfare Society," said Akhtar Hossain.

The condition of injured Liton, who is now undergoing treatment at Samorita Hospital, has improved slightly, hospital sources said.

Four shanties gutted, 2 hurt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people sustained burn injuries in a fire that also gutted four shanties, including one that was used for producing fake engine oil, at Jatrabari in the city yesterday.

The injured were identified as Majedul, 35, manager of the factory and Mistar, 40. They were rushed to local clinics.

Sources said the fire originated from the shanty of one Mafizuddin Rana at Dhalpur Badal Sardar Goli at 12:00 noon where they used to produce fake engine oil.

The fire broke out after the shanty got extremely heated where the workers were busy producing fake engine oil and soon engulfed three nearby shanties.

Majedul and Mistar got injured in the fire while the inhabitants of the shanties were trying to get out of their shanties.

Three units of fire fighters rushed to the spot and extinguished the blaze after an hour-long effort.

Meanwhile, some local goons looted valuables from the shanty of one Sheuli when people were busy trying to put out the fire.

Prof Abu Saleh new VC of BUBT



Prof Md Abu Saleh has been appointed as the vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT) for four years, says a press release.

Before joining his new assignment on June 2, Prof Saleh was the chairman of the Department of Management Studies at Dhaka University.