

\$23m IDA loan for urban poor, village community

The government has signed two separate agreements worth US\$ 23 million with the International Development Association (IDA) to support village community as well as underserved segment of the urban poor in Dhaka city.

Secretary of the Economic Relations Division (ERD) M Aminul Islam Bhuiyan and World Bank (WB) Country Director Xian Zhu signed the agreements on behalf of the two sides at ERD on June 17, says a press release.

An additional financing of US\$8 million to the ongoing Social Investment Programme Project (SIPP) will continue to support development of sustainable and effective institutional arrangements at the village level.

Being implemented by the Social Development Foundation since 2003, the SIPP has been involving the communities in decision-making and implementation.

This innovative approach has saved very significant costs compared to similar works executed by public sector agencies.

Another additional financing of US\$ 15 million to the ongoing Second Poverty Alleviation Microfinance Project will help offer microfinance services to non-motorised transport pullers and poor rickshaw owners to restore their livelihoods affected earlier by the non-motorised transport ban.

Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), the implementing agency since 2001, will also administer the additional financing which is a separate loan and constitutes a new loan commitment.

The credit from the IDA, the World Bank's concessionary arm, has 40 years to maturity with a 10-year grace period, and it carries a service charge of 0.75 percent.

A manhole without cover in the middle of a road near Mirpur Bangla College in the city has long been posing danger to road users, but the authorities remain indifferent.

Over 57000 die due to smoking every year

Speakers tell discussion

More than 57000 people die of eight fatal diseases due to smoking every year, speakers at an anti-tobacco discussion said yesterday.

Forty-one per cent smokers suffer from cancer, heart ailment, high blood pressure and other lung diseases, the speakers added.

They were speaking at a discussion at the BIWA Head Office in the city. Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) and World Health Organisation (WHO) jointly organised the discussion on Smoke Free Environment, says a press release.

Speaking at the discussion, Bangladesh Inland Water Ways (passenger carriers) (BIWA) Acting Chairman Alhaj Md Badiuzzaman Badal said smoking has been prohibited in launches and water transports.

Badal said pasting of 'No Smoking' stickers is compulsory in launches and passenger vessels from now onwards.

He stressed creating awareness about bad effects of smoking as well as strict enforcement of the Smoking Control Act and mobilisation of a social movement against smoking both in urban and rural areas.

Law Commission member and former inspector general of police (IGP) Dr M Enamul Huq attended the discussion as the chief guest while Health and Family Welfare Ministry Joint Secretary Md Jahangir was present as special guest.

WHO National Professional Officer Dr Mostafa Zaman presented the keynote paper at the discussion while BIWA Vice Chairman Lutfur Rahman Raumi Kislu and Anti-tobacco Alliance Coordinator Saifuddin Mahbub were the main discussants.

They urged the journalists of print and electronic media to play their due role in creating mass awareness against smoking.

Dr Mostafa Zaman replied to the queries of participants in the discussion.

ELECTRICAL SHORT-CIRCUIT

Ctg port CCTVs not functioning

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

All the CCTVs (close circuit television) installed at different yards of Chittagong port stopped functioning as power supply to them was snapped due to an electrical short-circuit yesterday.

The power supply to the CCTV became snapped following an electrical short-circuit that took place in the switchboard of the control room at around 6:00am, sources said.

However, work was going on to restore the operation of the CCTVs, which was required for maintaining security of the port, soon, said the sources.