

Ensure transparency in local govt bodies

UP leaders in Satkhira urged

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Speakers yesterday at a unique budget session held at Sonakhal High School ground in Romjhannagar, a remote union in Shyamnagar upazila, urged the Union Parishad (UP) leaders to ensure transparency and accountability in local government bodies.

The programme, first of its kind in the area, was jointly organised by Manusher Jonno Foundation, a national NGO and Agragati Sangstha, a local NGO.

Over 1,500 people took part in the day long 'open budget session' which was presided by local UP chairman Alhaj Sheikh Alamgir Haidar while Agragati Sangstha director Abdus Sabur was present as chief guest.

Chairman Alhaj Sheikh

Alamgir Haidar presented a budget of over Taka 52, 95,100 and urged the people to cooperate with local government leaders to implement development programmes.

It was a different day for people in the area as the UP leaders faced local people who for the first time wanted to know from them about their agendas to develop their union adjacent to the Sundarbans.

The UP chairman replied to various questions at the session.

Lauding the initiative of local government body leaders for holding the open budget session, the chief guest said it would help greatly to ensure accountability of local government bodies.

Speakers said transparency and accountability is vital for good governance at the grass

roots level.

Local government leaders also urged the government to allocate more fund for local government institutions from the national budget so that UP can undertake more development projects independently.

The UP chairman urged local people to work unitedly to make their union a 'model' for the country.

Among others, Zulkheda Zaman, Mazed Gazi, Surat Ali, Rahima Parvin, Samsuddin Ahmed, Abdul Gaffar, Aklima Khatun, Sunnat Ali, Anwarul Hasan and Nuruzzaman addressed.

Teachers, farmers, journalists, businessmen, students and elite including women attended.

Erosion makes 2,000 families homeless

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Jamuna erosion has taken a serious turn rendering 2,000 families homeless in Kazipur, Sirajganj Sadar, Belkuchi, Shahzadpur and Chowhali upazilas.

About 20-metre of the main structure of a solid spur at Meghni in Kazipur collapsed yesterday morning, according to Water Development Board (WDB) officials.

Because of the erosion, about 200-metre area of the flood control embankment at Khokshabari collapsed, they said.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Sirajganj Ibrahim Khalil and army officials visited the spot.

Although, water of the Jamuna started receding in different places including Sirajganj point, but erosion has taken a serious turn along the western bank of the river.

Erosion affected families are

now living under open sky.

Almost 35 villages in the five upazilas are now under threat of extinction. Construction materials and buildings of Shimla Degree College which was established on the western bank of the Jamuna at Shimla village was sold on auction five days ago due to threat of erosion. Sirajganj Polytechnic Institution and Khokshabari Union Parishad building in Sirajganj Sadar upazila are now threatened by erosion.

Locals said, WDB undertook a dam construction project at a cost of Tk 10.5 crore on the western bank of the Jamuna, but it came to no help of locals due to its delayed work, locals said.

During a visit to Khokshabari village yesterday, this correspondent saw that many families had been shifting their homesteads to other places for safety.



PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Life came to a standstill in Patuakhali town as most areas went under 3-4 feet water yesterday during high tide. Lack of town protection embankment has aggravated the situation.

'Enact law to ensure rights of lower caste community'

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Members of lower caste community yesterday at a meeting held at village Khamia in Dumuria upazila called upon the government to enact laws to ensure their basic rights.

Organised by Bhumija Foundation, a Tala based NGO working for elimination of racial discrimination of the lower community, the meeting was presided by Asima Rani Das.

Speakers have taken a vow to establish their rights, otherwise they threatened a tougher agitation in near future.

They called upon people of all strata of life to come forward to guarantee their equal rights in society.

They lamented that the outcastes are facing all sorts of racial discrimination.

ensure basic rights for more than a century but they are yet to win in their fight.

They said that they want education for children. Now-a-days, more and more their children are being educated although the facilities are very limited, they said.

Speakers said they want to change in their fate. So, they wanted cooperation of people of all communities to achieve their goal.

They also wanted khas lands for their rehabilitation.

Among others, Mallika Mallik, Abdul Jabbar, Goutam Das, Madhuri Rani Das, Rabin Das, Moina Das, Bipul Das, Namita Rani Das, Kalpana Rani Das, Uttam Kumar Das addressed.

'Protect child rights'

Seminar at Netrakona told

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Mujumder attended it as chief guest. Retired secretary of Defence Ministry Salauddin Ahmed was present as the main speaker.

Terming the children as silent majority in the country, speakers said that it is high time to protect their rights. They urged the guardians of society to work for protection of child rights. They said that children should be given an opportunity to rectify their faults. They said that child criminals should be treated with love and care.

Among others, Md Haider Ali, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO), Purbadhal, Rafiqul Alam, retired Superintendent of Police (SP) and

General Secretary of BRPOWA, Mirjan Hagedag, Jonal Operations Co-ordinator, World Vision Bangladesh and Principal of Purbadhal Degree College Abdul Jabbar addressed.

All the officers-in-charge (OC) of 10 police stations in the district, lawyers, officials of World Vision, teachers of different colleges and journalists of different national dailies and electronic media attended the seminar.

Once slow learners now meritorious pupils

Dhaka Ahsania Mission's innovative programme makes learning joyful

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

was aimed at ensuring quality education in primary schools through joyful learning.

The six children attended a Sopan centre for 10 months where trained tutors taught them for two hours daily before or after school hours for six days a week. This resulted in strengthening of their basic foundation. 'The girls excel today at their school', said Belkati Non-Government Primary School headmaster Md Belal Hossain.

Kumud Ranjan Mondal, headmaster of Dongaghata Non-Government Primary School and Achinta Kumar Mondal, headmaster of 38 No Ghaghra Government Primary School also echoed similar views.

DAM has been implementing the CLAP or Bikash project in 11 unions of three upazilas in three districts since 2005, said DAM deputy executive director M Ehsanur Rahman. The unions, upazilas and districts are Panja, Keshabpur Sadar, Mongalkot, Trimohini, Majidpur Sufalkathi, Bidyanandakathi, Sagardan and Guri Ghona unions in Jessore, Olipura union of Raipura in Narsingdi and Alipur union of Sathkhira Sadar in Sathkhira, Rahman

said.

As many as 20,778 children have been brought under the fold of the programme, he said.

Other activities of the project are organising Camp, Parenting, Child Development Centre or Shishu Bikash Kendra-SBK and Pre-school intervention, said Dipak Roy, senior field manager of DAM Regional Office at Keshabpur in Jessore.

Camp is a community based learning programme designed to meet special learning needs of third graders to fifth graders while Parenting is a child rearing practice for mothers and would be mothers, SBK is organised to create home based early learning opportunity for children of 3 to 5 years and Pre-School is an intervention for children's school preparedness, he said.

DAM approach to primary education is new and innovative in the Bangladesh context. Generally schools in remote areas are selected where institutions for educating children are scarce.

DAM programme generates congenial and creative environments and co-operative attitudes among the learners. Even the remotest school

has all the attributes of quality education reflected in classroom practices which are sustained through regular monitoring. Community access to quality education is reflected in terms of high enrolment, low dropout rates and the achievement of students.

The programme is designed to serve the most disadvantaged communities. They are managed and supervised in a way that ensures quality and sustainable education at the least possible cost.

Apart from recording a relatively higher rate of attendance and attainment and fewer drop-outs which led to improved primary learning and literacy, DAM programme also made possible improved health and acceptance of new ideas in the working areas.

DAM's major development agenda is to give voice to destitute and poor people which will ultimately contribute to the improvement of the society in Bangladesh.

8X2

3X4

PHOTO: STAR
A facilitator guiding children at a Shishu Bikash Kendra (SBK) at Sagar Gano Kendra at Belkati in Panja union of Keshabpur upazila, Jessore.