

Adopt innovative approach for wetland development

C S Karim tells Hisal project launching ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture, Fisheries and Livestock Adviser Dr CS Karim yesterday called for adopting innovative approach of development to restore serene environment of wetlands and its unique natural community.

He was advocating the creative approach that some organisations had taken to educate the water-bound gypsies at the formal launching ceremony of 'Haor Initiatives for Sustainable Alternative Livelihoods' (Hisal) at the LGED auditorium in the city.

The adviser said, "It was not possible to bring their children to schools, so some organisations should take schools to them."

"We must not disturb the natural topography and its unparalleled lifestyle and feature. The signal of climate change is now very loud and clear...if the sea level rises by only 4 percent, 17 coastal districts would be inundated and this would bring out drastic changes in the social dynamics," said Adviser Karim while

replying to some issues raised during the discussion.

Terming 'haor' the missing link in development process, he insisted on the bottom-up approach in decision-making process.

"Let them calculate their own option for development and prior to giving them any option we should be very careful of the technology that we are adopting," he added.

He stressed on ensuring market facilities for the products the haor inhabitants will grow under this project so that they are not given throw-away price, adding that it is not possible to implement the land rights and fishing rights.

However, he assured all-out assistance from his ministry and said, "One cannot afford to forget seven percent of the whole population, we must find out strategy for them."

Syed Ataur Rahman, secretary to the ministry of fisheries and livestock, laid emphasis on revolving fund for the people in flood plains which would assist them even after

the end of the project.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, executive chairman of Power and Participatory Research Centre (PPRC), said Bangladesh has gained a lot in the broad-based poverty front, the next steps should be for specific region including char, haor and coastal zones.

A representative from Itna haor area of Kishoreganj district Supriti Rani Ghosh and Mithamoin upazila Chairman Asia Begum depicted their fragile existence in flood plains that frequently face erosion.

They said people have lived here for generations building their houses on large earthen mounds that remain above flood levels. When water enters Bangladesh from the hills of India, forming huge island seas and causing flood that last for up to seven months of every year, people's access to basic needs drastically shrink.

They struggle with food insecurity, lack of education and health facility.

Concern Worldwide

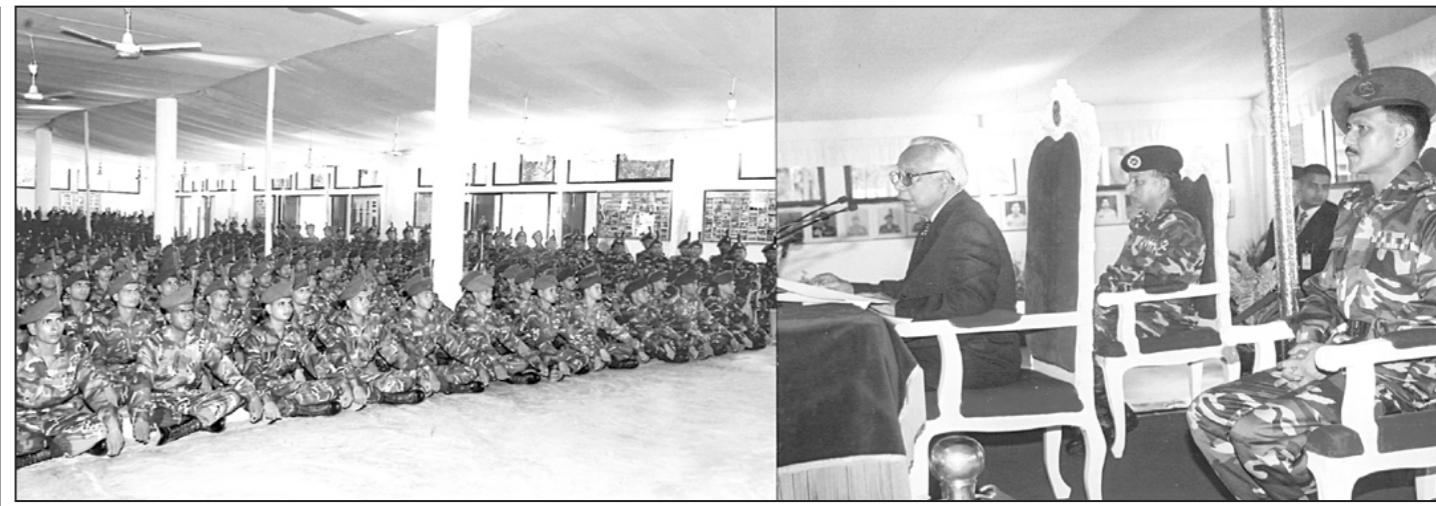
Bangladesh, in partnership with eight national organisations is implementing the project in the remote haors of five upazilas of Kishoreganj, Habiganj and Sunamganj districts located in northeastern part of the country.

The project will continue up to December 2011 and is funded by Concern Worldwide, Development Cooperation Ireland and the European Commission and would engage 90 percent women.

Through micro-financing, innovative and improved agro-based practices and by involving the local government in overall development projects, Hisal is committed to achieve its goal of empowering people.

With Country Director of Concern Worldwide, Bangladesh Kieron Crawley in the chair, the session was also addressed by its Assistant Country Director Oliver Wakelin and Regional Manager Idris Ali Khan.

The launching ceremony was jointly organised by PPRC and Concern Worldwide.



President Iajuddin Ahmed addressing the 32nd founding anniversary function of President Guard Regiment at cantonment in the city yesterday.

PHOTO: PID

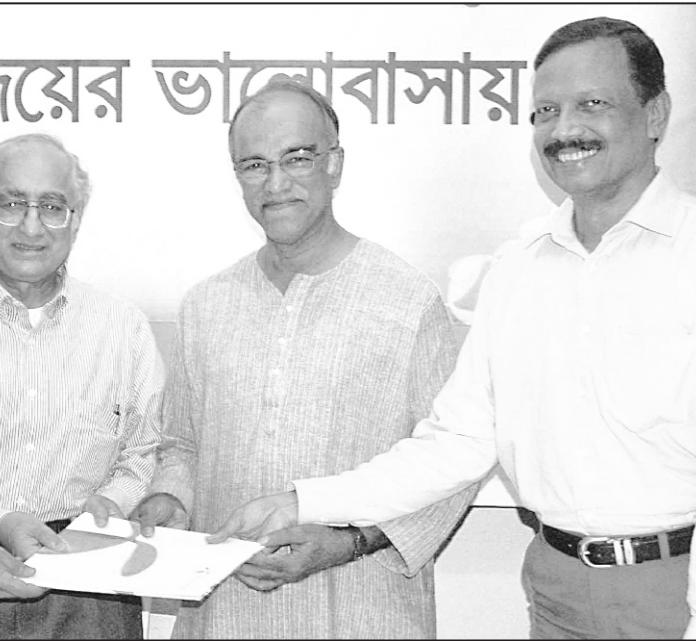


PHOTO: STAR

Kafil HS Muyeed, left, hands over a cheque for Tk 4 lakh to Mofidul Haque, second from right, on Liberation War Museum premises in the city yesterday. Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury, second from left, and Dr Salehuddin Ahmed, right, are also seen.

GP, Brac Varsity support for Liberation War Museum

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Brac University and Grameenphone yesterday donated the proceeds from the ticket sales of 'Pahela Baishakh Festival' to Liberation War Museum in the city.

The festival was jointly organised by Brac University and Grameenphone back in April.

Museum Trustee Mofidul Haque received a cheque for Tk 4 lakh at a ceremony on behalf of the museum authorities on its premises in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Mofidul Haque said the Liberation War Museum is no longer a private museum; rather it's a people's museum now.

He appreciated the initiative of the students of Brac University and hoped that the new generation will implement the spirit of the liberation war to help preserve its history.

Director of New Business Division at Grameenphone Kafil HS Muyeed said the Liberation War Museum is playing a significant role by not only preserving the history of the War but also presenting the history of the Liberation War before the new generation.

He urged other corporate houses to extend their helping hands for the development of the country in different ways.

Brac University Vice Chancellor (VC) Prof Jamilur Reza Chowdhury and university Pro-VC and Chairperson Dr Salehuddin Ahmed spoke on the occasion.

Death anniversary

Today is the 23rd death anniversary of AZ Hasibuddin Ahmed, a retired judge, says a press release.

He joined erstwhile Bengal Civil Service (Judicial Cadre) in Murshidabad in 1945. Hasibuddin hailed from Chakaria upazila in Cox's Bazar.

Relatives, friends and admirers are requested to pray for peace and salvation of his departed soul.

Begum Shafiuunnesa

Today is the 5th death anniversary of Begum Shafiuunnesa, mother of Advocate Ahsan MA Rashid Miah and Badshah, says a press release.

On this occasion, Qurankhwani, milad mahfil and doa will be held at her home at Bahadurpur under Shibchar Police Station in Madarapura after Juma prayers.

Only punishment to politicians can't end corruption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Corruption cannot be removed from the society by giving punishment to politicians only because corruption has entered into all tiers of government, non-government and private sectors, said the speakers at a seminar yesterday.

They however said as the country cannot run without politicians, time has come for honest politicians to serve the nation.

The seminar titled 'Establishment of institutional democracy and importance of reform' was organised by Bangladesh Reform Movement at the National Press Club in the city.

It was addressed, among others, by former Jatiya Party (JP) leaders and members of the civil society.

Former JP leader Kazi Firoj Rashid said politicians are not only responsible for corruption but many bureaucrats, businessmen and professionals are also guilty of corruption.

"The country cannot run by hiring new faces from the outside of political arena. Many honest politicians are still there in political parties. Now

this is the high time for honest politicians to come out from the grip of corrupt leaders," he said.

Kazi Firoj urged all decent politicians to be united and raise their voice against the traditional political culture and system, which had encouraged the corruption.

Another JP former leader Tazul Islam Chowdhury said no reform will be successful without reforms in party constitutions.

"A politician cannot express his opinion against the party's decision in parliament. Besides, lower-and-middle level politicians cannot speak against the decision of top leaders. This culture will have to be changed for the interest of the country," he added.

Columnist Rezaul Karim Talukder presided over the seminar where Anower Haq read out the keynote paper.

Political reformists Abul Hasan Chowdhury, Nur Muhammad Khan, Kazi Hayat and Abdul Khaled Mandal also took part in the discussion.

ASK concerned over move to form cell for phone-tapping

Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK) yesterday expressed concern over the government's move to form a cell for tapping telephones, says a press release.

The ASK release also said that mistrust between the state and people is not positive for democracy.

Referring to a newspaper report on a move of forming a national monitoring cell for phone-tapping, the human rights organisation said, "The government should not take any such step for the sake of national security that violates the basic human rights like personal liberty."

There is no contradiction between national security and personal liberty, rather these two should be considered as complementary for each other.

Referring to its previous statements on tapping telephones, it said monopolistic power of the executive is risky and therefore a sort of arrangement should be there to make balance in this regard.

"We apprehend that monitoring all the affairs related to tele-tapping by a single cell under the executive will threaten the liberty of the citizens," the press release added.

ASK hoped that the government will not do anything harmful for democracy and will be careful so that the steps taken for national security are balanced with citizens' rights.

Cheholum

Cheholum of Aspia Khanam Shapu, wife of Choudhury Abdul Majid, vice-president of Pragati Life Insurance Limited, will be held today.

On this occasion a mild mahfil will be held at Muslim Quarter, Habiganj after Juma prayers.

Her relatives and admirers are requested to attend the cheholum.

Light to moderate rain likely

UNB, Dhaka

Light to moderate rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at most places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Rajshahi, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in the next 12 hours until 6:00pm today.

Moderately heavy to very heavy rainfalls are also likely at places over Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong divisions, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged day temperature over the country.

Highest temperature 34.9 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sylhet and lowest 25 degree Celsius at Rangamati, Barisal and Bholna.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:50pm today and rises at 5:17am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in celsius	Humidity in percentage
	Max	Min
	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	30.8	25.6
Chittagong	27.0	25.1
Rajshahi	31.0	26.0
Khulna	29.8	25.5
Barisal	30.6	25.0
Sylhet	34.9	26.0
Cox's Bazar	28.6	25.5

On this occasion, Qurankhwani, milad mahfil and doa will be held at her home at Bahadurpur under Shibchar Police Station in Madarapura after Juma prayers.

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President Iajuddin Ahmed addressing the 32nd founding anniversary function of President Guard Regiment at cantonment in the city yesterday.

Cirdap to redefine its policies, programmes

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (Cirdap) is going to conduct country level studies in a bid to redefine its policies and programmes in the light of changed national and regional socio-economic situation.

"Cirdap decided to arrange country level studies to review the past policies and programmes and identify policy level issues and concerns of rural development," said Dr Durga Paudyal, director general of Cirdap, at a roundtable.

Cirdap organised the roundtable on 'Resetting Cirdap in the new global context' at its auditorium in the city to mark its 28th founding anniversary.

Cirdap, which was established in 1979 under the aegis of Food and Agriculture Organisation, promotes regional cooperation and act as a servicing institution in the area of rural development in the Asia-Pacific region.

Dr Durga Paudyal said Cirdap can continue its role for rural development and poverty alleviation, following up the issues of agrarian reforms, food security, environmental degradation and climate change and analysing their impacts on farming communities to help coun-

tries devise strategies to cope with them.

"It can also play a role in bridging relations among the regional associations like Saarc, Asean, ECO (Economic Cooperation Organisation) and work with national and regional NGOs," he said in his keynote presentation.

Speaking as the chief guest, Local Government and Rural Development (LGRD) Adviser Anwarul Iqbal said the role of Cirdap needs to work very closely and effectively to change the fate of the one-quarter of the world's poor living in rural areas of Cirdap-member countries.

He urged the Cirdap's leadership to draw a new charter so that it could work effectively with emphasis on rural development.

Referring to the meetings of Cirdap executive committee and governing council held in Manali last month, he said the policy-making bodies decided to organise a ministerial meeting in Dhaka in 2009 to come up with specific recommendations in order to reset the centre to cope with the present challenges.

"So, it is necessary to initiate some preliminary discussion on the matter and this roundtable is a first step in that direction," Anwarul Iqbal said.

Speaking on the sideline of the roundtable, he told reporters that Philippines has made some agrarian reforms and that the Cirdap is considering if such reforms could be replicated in other countries.

"Local government bodies are the driving forces for development. Therefore, strengthening those are very important," he said, adding that no development will take place if the local bodies cannot be strengthened.

Nazrul Islam, secretary to the Rural Development Division of the LGRD ministry, said Cirdap needs to work very closely and effectively to change the fate of the one-quarter of the world's poor living in rural areas of Cirdap-member countries.

He urged the Cirdap's leadership to draw a new charter so that it could work effectively with emphasis on rural development.

Bangladesh Economic Association President Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad said no development will be effective unless the living condition of the poor is improved.

Earlier, Adviser Anwarul Iqbal laid the foundation stone of an international conference centre with all modern facilities on the premises of Chameil House, the headquarters of Cirdap in Dhaka.

Bangladesh will provide a financial support of US\$2.3 million for the construction of the centre, which is expected to be the venue for the proposed ministerial meeting in 2009.

2007-08 budget is 'pro-poor'

Foreign adviser tells UN conference

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The budget for 2007-08 fiscal is 'pro-poor' and Bangladesh's experiences suggest that development is best achieved with 'home-grown' policies, Foreign Affairs Adviser Iftekhar A Chowdhury told a UN conference yesterday.

"Twenty three percent of our current budget is devoted to gender issues, and 57 percent to poverty alleviation; it is as pro-poor a budget as can be," he said at a panel discussion in Geneva during the UN ECOSOC High Level Ministerial Segment Conference, according to a Foreign Ministry press release.

"Bangladesh's experiences show that development is best achieved when a country is in control of its own destiny. Also, if policies followed are home-grown," he told the panel.