

# Inadequate sanitation biggest killer of children under five

WaterAid puts sanitation coverage at 39pc

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

While the government claims at least 88 percent sanitation coverage, WaterAid Bangladesh said the actual sanitation coverage in the country is not more than 39 percent.

Speakers at the launching ceremony of the Water Aid Global Report on 'Tackling the silent killer: The case for sanitation' said the gap must be covered by analysing the real situation, otherwise progress in the health sector is not possible.

Citing a Unicef-WHO report, the country representative of WaterAid Dr Md Khairul Islam said, "Although the government claims 88 percent sanitation coverage in the country but the exact scenario is not like."

The report highlights that inadequate sanitation is the biggest killer of children under the age of five but in Bangladesh it remains the most neglected part of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG).

It said if Bangladesh government does not allocate more budget in sanitation it will have to wait for 2022 instead of 2015 to fulfill the MDG target.

The programme was held at the Spectra Convention Centre in the city.

Dr Mustafa Jalal Mohiuddin, health and family planning secretary of Bangladesh Awami League, and Ghulam Muhammad Quader, ex-member of parliament from Jatiya Party, were present as guests of honour while Md Abu Bakar Siddique, joint chief of Physical

Infrastructure Division at the Planning Commission and Jane Crowder, infrastructure adviser of DFID, were present as panel speaker.

The report said around 97 lakh children die before reaching their fifth birthday and of them 24 lakh die due to poor sanitation across the world.

Of them, deaths could be substantially prevented by focusing on sanitation sector at the national and international level and it will also accelerate progress to achieve the UN MDG target for improved sanitation by 2015.

For every \$1 invested in sanitation, \$9 is returned to national economy in increased productivity and a reduced burden of healthcare, the report added.

The speakers called upon the

governments and the decision makers to prioritise sanitation to reduce child mortality alongside improving health and education to reduce poverty.

They said in Bangladesh, water and sanitation issues carry major public health implications, which directly need to be addressed while the sanitation facilities in schools and public places and their proper use and maintenance are again a big challenge to achieving the sanitation target.

"Investment in sanitation saves money of the government. It is not only saving money, it also works as building health of people," said Jane Crowder.

She said Bangladesh government is already committed, now there is need for increased monitoring.



Two devotees offer prayers at a temple on the occasion of Sree Sree Shyama Puja at Sutrapur in the city yesterday. Agradoot Puja Committee organised the event.



Prof Sarder Fazlul Karim, centre, receives the Sad Ali Akhand Literary Award-2008 from Bangla Academy Director General Syed Mohammad Shahed at a function at Bangla Academy in the city yesterday while Tahmina Hossain looks on.

## Human waste can replace 30m tonnes of chemical fertiliser a yr

Speakers tell view exchange meet

Staff Correspondent

Speakers at a view exchange meeting yesterday said organic fertiliser from human waste can replace around 30 million tonnes of chemical fertilisers per year if the country can be brought under eco-latrines project launched by an NGO.

Titled 'Ecological sanitation for eco-friendly and longer lasting sanitation system', the meeting was jointly organised by SPACE and WBB Trust at Imax Centre in the city.

SPACE Executive Director Azhar Ali presented a keynote paper in the meeting while WBB Trust Programme Manager Syeed Mahbul Alam moderated the programme.

The speakers said a latrine is filled up within a period of two to three years in traditional system, but an eco-toilet lasts for over 15-20 years.

The eco-toilet has two chambers and two solar panels to process the waste into organic fertiliser within six months, they said, adding that a traditional type of latrine needs changing its location after the period which needs extra space that is not available in slum areas and in

homes of the hardcore poor people in remote rural areas.

They further said a traditional latrine usually has leakages through which dirty water and urine come out causing diseases, adding the eco-latrines does not have such fault.

A farmer can have organic fertiliser twice a year facilitating him to cut application of chemical one, they said, adding that excessive and regular use of chemical fertiliser drastically reduce the fertility of the land reducing microbial population in the soil.

Speakers also said the traditional latrines made with rings and slabs usually damage after two to three years, the MDG to achieve 100 percent sanitation would be at stake.

A huge number of tradition latrines will need reconstruction after the period, which is totally impossible in the context of the country, they said, adding that the concerned authority should proceed in a planned manner in this end.

Azhar Ali of SPACE said the NGO is introducing such eco-latrines in different areas across the country.

Kamrun Naher, project officer of water and environment sanitation section of Unicef, and Kamruzzaman Bhuiyan, project manager of Bangladesh Association for Social Advancement, also addressed the meeting.

## CA conveys sympathy to affected families

UNB, Dhaka

Chief Adviser Fakhruddin Ahmed yesterday conveyed his sympathy to the relatives of those who have lost their lives at early Wednesday's earthquake in Pakistan.

The CA, in separate messages of condolence to the Pakistani president and the prime minister today, also expressed the hope that the government and people of Pakistan would face this calamity with resilience and fortitude.

A strong earthquake struck Ziarat and Pishin districts of Baluchistan before dawn yesterday, killing at least 150 people and injuring scores.

## Four new river ports to be set up

UNB, Dhaka

Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA) will set up four new river ports at Noapara in Jessore, Bhairab in Kishoreganj, Ashuganj in Brahmanbaria and Barguna.

BIWTA will spend a total of Tk 15.50 crore in this connection.

This was disclosed at a meeting at Shipping Ministry with its Adviser Maj Gen (ret'd) MA Matin in the chair yesterday.

The meeting was informed that BIWTA will repair four ferries and two pontoons at a cost of about Tk 14 crore during 2008-09 fiscal year.

Concerned senior officials were present in the meeting.

## CASES AGAINST AMAN SC upholds HC orders

Tuku, Dulu, Mamun get ad-interim bail

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Supreme Court (SC) yesterday upheld the High Court (HC) orders that earlier granted bail to former state minister Amanullah Aman in five separate extortion cases.

The five-member full bench of the Appellate Division headed by Chief Justice MM Ruhul Amin granted the bail to the BNP leader after dismissing five separate petitions filed by the government against the HC orders.

Meanwhile yesterday, the High Court (HC) granted ad-interim bail to former state ministers Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku and Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu and controversial businessman Giasuddin Al Mamun in separate criminal cases.

An HC bench comprising Justice Muzammel Hossain and Justice Afzal Hossain Ahmed granted bail for three months to Iqbal Hassan Mahmood Tuku in a corruption case filed by the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) on charge of amassing illegal wealth and concealing information to the ACC. In this case he was earlier convicted for nine years imprisonment.

Another HC bench of Justice Tariq ul Hakim and Justice Sheikh Abdul Awal granted bail for six months to former state minister for land Ruhul Quddus Talukder Dulu in two separate criminal cases filed under arms and explosives act in Natore.

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) filed the case for amassing wealth illegally and concealing the information to the commission and the special anti-graft court on November 15 last year, sentenced him to nine years imprisonment for the corruption.

The HC bench of Justice Md Arayesuddin and Justice Md Abu Tariq granted ad-interim bail to Giasuddin Al Mamun in an arms case in which he was earlier sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

Mamun filed an appeal with the HC against his conviction. The HC granted him bail till disposal of the Appeal.

Barrister Mahubuddin Khokon, counsel for Amanullah Aman, yesterday told newsmen that the extortion cases were filed at separate times against his client.

He said the HC earlier granted him bail on health grounds in the cases and the government filed appeals with the SC against the HC orders.

As the Appellate Division dismissed the government appeals, the HC orders of bail to him will remain upheld, he said.

Barrister Khokon, also the counsel for Dulu, said earlier the trial court rejected bail prayers filed by Dulu in this case. He then filed appeals with the HC against the trial court orders. The HC granted him bail upon the appeals.

Barrister Rafique-ul Huq appeared for Tuku, Advocate Abdur Razzaque Khan and Barrister Fakhru Islam moved for Mamun in the HC, while Deputy Attorney General Mohammad Ali Akanda stood for government in the Appellate Division.

## 'RTI ordn to cut journo's facilities'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The existing facilities of journalists in getting information from different public and private organisations have been curtailed by the Right to Information (RTI) Ordinance, said President of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) Manjurul Ahsan Bulbul at a seminar yesterday.

He said according to the ordinance some eight security and intelligence agencies would not have to provide information, and if so, the ordinance will not be of much helpful for the journalists.

Rather, these organisations which have been providing information to some extent at present would cease to give them in future by giving an excuse of the law, said Manjurul.

"However, still much depends on the formulation of rules and regulations," he added.

The seminar titled 'RTI Law Implementation: In Search of Forward Looking Strategies' was organised by ARTICLE 19 at the IDB Bhaban in the city.

The speakers stressed the need

for formulation of complete rules and regulations immediately where the detailed of the ordinance would be pointed out.

Speaking as chief guest, Barrister Fida M Kamal said it is good that the caretaker government has okayed the RTI.

What is important now is the political will of the elected government in implementing the ordinance, he added.

He also called for immediate formulation of an information commission (IC).

"It is time for us to lobby for an independent and strong commission," said Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, adding, the foundation has been working for formulation of draft rules to place before the government.

She stressed the need for building awareness at the grassroots level so that the common people could enjoy the fruit of the ordinance.

While presenting a paper titled 'Setting up an effective information commission' Prof Asif Nazrul of law department at Dhaka

University highlighted the importance of immediate establishment of the IC and setting up a selection committee to initiate the process.

"The financial independence of the commission is important to ensure its autonomy and the commission must set an example of openness," he said.

Barrister Tanjib-ul-Alam in his paper titled 'Framing rules under law', highlighted the need for rules to be framed by the government in consultation with the commission.

In his presentation titled 'Preparing for implementation: Role of stakeholders', SM Shameem Reza, assistant professor of mass communication and journalism department at Dhaka University, talked about the infrastructure upon which information access system would rest.

The seminar was introduced by Tahmina Rahman, director of ARTICLE 19, while Joint Secretary to law and parliamentary affairs ministry AK Mohammad Hossain, Member-secretary of the RTI Drafting Committee Khurshid Alam and Dr Hamida Hossain also spoke.

## Contribution of Bangladeshi labour in Qatari economy lauded

UNB, Dhaka

Qatari Minister for Labour Sultan Bin Hassan Al Dosari told Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury that Qatar welcomes Bangladeshi manpower and appreciates their contributions to the Qatari economy.

Iftekhar who is also in charge of Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment is now in Mania to attend the second conference of the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

Philippines President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo inaugurated the conference yesterday. Over 1000 delegates from 161 countries are participating in the conference, a release from Bangladesh mission in Manila said.

The Forum was also addressed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Iftekhar thanked the Qatari Minister for hosting so many Bangladeshi workers who consider Qatar their "second home".

He hoped Qatar would be able to take in more semi-skilled and skilled Bangladeshis to serve their growing economy.



Anti-British Movement veteran Kamakhya Roy Chowdhury inaugurates the conference of Udichi Shilpi Gosthi lighting candles at Shilpakala Academy in the city yesterday. On his right are cultural personality Nasiruddin Yusuf and Jatin Sarker.

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