

# Master plan to increase forest coverage up to 20pc soon: PM

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government is going to prepare a master plan to increase the country's forest coverage up to 20 percent in next six years, said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday while inaugurating the three-month countrywide 'National Afforestation Movement'.

The government is working on the plan to increase the forest coverage by 2015 under a Tk 450-crore project through social afforestation, she said this at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city.

The premier also inaugurated the Tree Fair-2009 on the Dhaka International Trade Fair premises at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar.

Though a country has to have at least 25 percent forest coverage of its total area, Bangladesh has only 10 to 12 percent (25 lakh hectares).

Hasina called on all the 15 crore people of the country to plant at least three trees each, saying that it would save the next generation.

"We must sustain trees and forests as they sustain our existence," said the premier.

It remains a wonder why the country lacks adequate forestland, though its soil is so fertile for tree plantation, she said, adding that trees and forests protect human beings



PHOTO: STAR

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina plants a sapling on the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre premises in the city yesterday after inaugurating the 'National Afforestation Movement'.

against natural calamities like cyclone, droughts and floods.

Temperature is going up in the country by 0.4 degree Celsius every year during rainy

season and the extent of cyclones is going high as a result, she said.

The government has already taken a project titled

'Community-based adaptation to climate change through coastal afforestation in Bangladesh'.

"We are going to undertake a river dredging project to maintain navigability, enhance water retention capacity and conserve the environment," said the PM.

Hasina also called for more and more forestation to face possible sea-level rise because of the global warming.

She gave away Prime Minister's National Award-2008 to 45 institutions and individuals under 16 categories for their significant contribution to the tree plantation campaign.

The PM also handed over shares of profits earned in social afforestation among six beneficiaries, including three women.

Secretary (in-charge) Dr Mihir Kanti Majumdar said in his welcome address that Bangladesh is one of the bio-rich countries in the world and the countrymen should not remain poor.

Chief Conservator of Forest Md Abdul Motaleb was present at the event with State Minister for Environment and Forest Mostafizur Rahman in the chair.

A host of government and foreign dignitaries, among others, attended the programme.



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka University students who have received Bronze Award in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award pose for photograph with the guests at an award giving ceremony at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the city yesterday. Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, sitting third from left, Osman Morad, fifth from left, and Dr Alauddin Ahmed, fourth from right, are seen.

## DUKE OF EDINBURGH'S AWARD IN BANGLADESH

# 261 students awarded for community services, self-development skills

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation, Bangladesh yesterday conferred Bronze Award on 261 students for their achievements in self-development skills and community services.

Educationists lauded the initiative of the Foundation, saying such efforts are extremely important for the young people to develop their inner qualities, honesty and integrity alongside academic education.

The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, which was set up in 1956 in England, is a programme of activities that can be undertaken by anyone aged from 14 to 25, regardless of personal ability.

In Bangladesh the Award started its journey on September 20, 2008. The Bronze Award, which takes minimum six months of efforts, comprises of four sections: a voluntary community service, acquiring a new skill, pursuing a physical recreation and adventurous journey.

The students who received the Bronze Award at Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre in the first Duke of Edinburgh's Award ceremony taught underprivileged children, led cleaning campaigns as their service option, while as physical recreation, some learnt Karate, sports or relaxing mind and body with yoga.

For skills some learned a foreign language or chose playing musical instruments, while for adventurous journey, the awardees had expeditions to different parts of the country.

The educational institutes from where students participated in the first ever Duke of Edinburgh's Award include American International University-Bangladesh, Bangladesh International Tutorial, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, European Standard School, Dhaka University, Grace International School, Jahangirnagar University, Maple Leaf International School, Mastermind School, Oxford International School and United International University.

Addressing the programme as the chief guest, Dr Alauddin Ahmed, adviser for education, social development and political affairs to the prime minister, said such programmes help individuals become confident and independent and achieve qualities of their own capacity.

"For Bangladesh, this type of self-development programme is an absolutely novel concept. Young people are the driving force of our country and this award will train them to make the society a better place to live in," he said.

Dr Alauddin Ahmed expected that the transformation of the award participants will groom them as competent human resources dedicated to take the country ahead.

Speaking as a special guest, Osman Morad, chairman of the board of trustees of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Foundation, Bangladesh, said, "A well rounded education involves

wide ranging extra-curricular activities that prepare the young people to accomplish major achievements in their lives."

Underscoring the need for developing practical skills, creativity, sympathy and understanding for the young people, he said he believes the programme will give them perfect platform to flourish as leaders and worthy citizens of

the country.

Morad said they would gradually spread the event across the country.

State Minister for the Ministry of Liberation War Captain (ret'd) AB Tajul Islam, heads of the participating institutes, trustees, national directors and members of the Award Foundation were also present.

## WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY OBSERVED

# 'Use pictorial warnings to discourage tobacco consumption'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

World No Tobacco Day 2009 was observed in the country yesterday as elsewhere across the globe with a commitment to stop tobacco consumption.

This year the theme of the day was 'Pictorial health warnings on tobacco products'.

Different organisations held rally, discussion, seminar and formed human chain in observance of the day.

The health experts said one person dies in every 10 seconds in the world due to tobacco consumption and the rate of tobacco consumption is higher in developing countries than the developed ones.

As tobacco is one of the leading causes of mortality and morbidity, it is important to create awareness in the society to stop smoking and chewing tobacco.

A pictorial health warning can be helpful in creating awareness about harmful effects of tobacco products as still many people in the country cannot read.

In observance of the day, Adhunik and World Health Organisation (WHO) jointly organised a discussion at the National Press Club in the city.

Citing a report of the WHO the experts said tobacco alone is responsible for 30 percent of all the diseases in the world, and 60 percent of all the mortal diseases.

They said the death toll from tobacco is more than any other things like war, natural disaster, HIV/Aids and other diseases.

National Professor Dr Nurul Islam, also founder president of Adhunik, chaired the event.

Speaking as chief guest Abul Kalam Azad, minister for information, said pictorial warnings would be more effective than written warnings in creating

awareness among the illiterate people who consist of the majority of total population.

He stressed the need for an action plan to combat the tobacco menace for a healthier society and called upon all to come forward in union to work against tobacco.

Tobacco use starts from the family where the younger generation follows the footsteps of their fathers, uncles and take up smoking, said Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, chairman of TIB Trustee Board.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance and Pratyasha jointly bring out a colourful procession from Shahbagh intersection in the city yesterday to mark the World No Tobacco Day.

He urged the older members of the families to quit smoking as the younger generation consider them as model to follow.

According to data presented at the discussion, there are around 100 crore smokers in the world and the number of smokers is higher among the poor.

The speakers urged everyone to quit smoking and use the money to buy fruits which

would be a healthier alternative.

M Mostafa Zaman of WHO, ATN Bangla Adviser Nawazish Ali Khan, UNB Chairman Amanullah Khan, Adhunik Executive Secretary MA Jabbar and Editor of Tobacco News Ali Neyamat also spoke on the occasion.

Bangladesh Cancer Society and Bangladesh Cancer Hospital and Welfare Home also organised a discussion at the National Museum in the city.

Taking part in the discussion, Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol, WHO representative to Bangladesh, mentioned that tobacco is one of the leading causes of non-communicable diseases.

Apart from health risk tobacco consumption has negative impact on the country's economy also, she said, adding that tobacco consumption is a deep-rooted problem and a holistic approach is needed to fight it.

Prime Minister's Health Adviser Prof Syed Modasser Ali, Vice Chancellor of Bangladesh Sheikh Mujib Medical University Prof Pran Gopal Dutt, President of Bangladesh Cancer Society Prof Molla Obayedullah Baki and Secretary General Prof Ahmed Sayeed also spoke on the occasion.

Students Anti-Smoking Committee also organised a street gathering in front of the National Press Club in the morning.

Bangladesh Anti-Tobacco Alliance and Pratyasha jointly organised a colorful rally in front of the National Museum at Shahbagh.

Speakers at the rally demanded pictorial health warning on all tobacco products and stopping illegal advertisement of tobacco products.

## SOCIAL NUTRITION PROGRAMME

# Tk 105cr for 5 NGOs to work in 63 UZs

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government yesterday gave responsibilities to five non-government organisations (NGOs) to run social nutrition programmes in 63 more upazilas.

The cabinet committee on purchase at a meeting approved Tk 105 crore yesterday for the NGOs for conducting the work. Besides, the committee also asked the health ministry to prepare an evaluation report on the on-going nutrition programmes in 109 other upazilas.

The programme focuses on food supplementation to the malnourished children under two years of age of ultra-poor families and

severely malnourished pregnant women.

Of the five NGOs, Voluntary Organisation for Social Development (VOSD) will receive about Tk 39 crore in two packages while the four other NGOs would get one package each. Of them, SKF Foundation will get Tk 15.97 crore, Eco-social Development Organisation (ESDO) Tk 23.86 crore, Srijoni Bangladesh Tk 10.14 crore and Thengamara Mahila Sabuj Sangha Tk 16.08 crore.

The meeting at cabinet division with Finance Minister AMA Muhith in the chair also approved the import of 30,000 metric tons of phosphoric acid at Tk 66 crore for DAP fertiliser plant.

When I make  
you smile,  
I earn one too.



Tonima Hossain  
Branch Sales & Service Manager  
Graphics Branch, Motilal

At BRAC Bank, tending to my departmental tasks only earns me my salary. What earns me my customers' smiles is a little heart.

Discover our services that will put a smile on your face:

- Services standardized across all branches
- Calls answered within 3 rings every time
- Complaints handled within 24 hours

Visit your nearest BRAC Bank branch and experience the 'Joy of Banking' with us. Talk to us at 01819 230000 or visit [www.bracbank.com](http://www.bracbank.com). Bank on unshakable trust.

BRAC BANK