



PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) in a drive dismantles illegal and risky hoardings from roadside shops and markets at Kalabagan in the city last night. The move came after the High Court on March 22 directed DCC to remove the billboards. (Story on Page 16)

## Meet rising demand for new tech

Yeafesh urges scientists

BSS, Dhaka

State Minister for Science and ICT Architect Yeafesh Osman yesterday urged the scientists to take necessary steps to meet the rising demands of new technologies.

He was speaking at the chief guest at a three-day International Conference on "Recent Advances in Physics" organised by the Department of Physics of Dhaka University (DU) in collaboration with the DU, University Grants Commission and the Ministry of Science and ICT at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban.

Presided over by the Chairman of the Department of Physics and Conference President Prof Dr Sultana Shafi while

Dhaka University Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique and Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Harun-or-Rashid attended the function as the special guests.

Yeafesh said, "We are living in a world where technological developments are happening at a very rapid pace. But we want those technologies available not just for the affluent. The spinoff from technologies like nanoscience, should reach the grasp of our citizens in the shortest possible time. The same is true to semiconductors and high temperature superconductors."

He urged the financiers to invest and develop those locally and consult our own scientists, physicists in particular. They must also have noticed that the present

government has taken concrete steps for generating power using the nuclear technology. He also requested the scientists to take the necessary steps to meet the rising needs in this regard.

Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr AAMS Arefin Siddique said Physics is an exciting intellectual adventure which expands the frontiers of our knowledge about nature. It is crucial to our understanding of the world around us, the world inside us, and the world beyond us. Physics is the most fundamental of the sciences and serves as a basis for many other sciences like chemistry, biology, oceanography, seismology and climatology, he added.

## Project for arsenic-free water in rural areas

UNB, Dhaka

With a view to increasing people's access to safe drinking water free from arsenic and pathogen in rural communities, the government has undertaken a project titled 'Bangladesh Water Supply Programme Project (BWSP)' with the assistance of the World Bank.

The project is piloting innovative measures like supply of small-scale piped water in villages through local public-private partnership model involving private sponsors.

The BWSP project focuses on rural and urban poor, ensuring their access to arsenic- and pathogen-free water, an official of the World Bank said, mentioning that under the project the World Bank is providing financial assistance to the government as 'grants, not loan'.

Under the project, 21 villages are now enjoying access to safe water through small-scale piped water provision. Out of 21 schemes, four schemes are now providing water supply to villagers while the rest 17 schemes are under implementation. Typically, a rural piped water scheme supports a village with up to 1400 households.

For each of the schemes, the world Bank grant covers 70 percent of the cost and the remaining 30 percent comes from private or NGO financing.

In the early 90s, a vast majority of rural population had extensive and convenient water supply due to the spread of shallow tube-wells. Rural consumers themselves installed and maintained these tube wells.

This success was countered by a setback with the discovery of arsenic contamination of groundwater at the depth of 200-250 metres across large parts of the country. By late 90s, water from 20 percent tube-wells was no longer safe for domestic use.

Other than rural piped water scheme, the BWSP project is also helping expand and rehabilitate water supply system in 24 selected municipalities as well as facilitating to set up deep tube-wells in different parts of the country, including the cyclone Sidr/Aila-affected districts.

Besides, the project is piloting arsenic mitigation activities through modified institutional arrangement involving communities and local government institutions to respond to the arsenic crisis through awareness building, training and management of arsenic mitigation activities in hot-spot unions of three upazilas of Munshiganj district.

Under this pilot component, Ward Arsenic Mitigation Water User Group (WAMWUG) was formed to identify and plan low-cost options to provide sustainable supplies of arsenic-free water.

The Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural development and Cooperatives is implementing the BWSP.

While visiting the project site of Nalta Sharif rural piped water supply scheme at Kaliganj in Satkhira, the correspondent found that some 367 household connections were already given and the rural people have expressed satisfaction over the supply of piped water.

Sponsored by Dhaka Ahsania Mission, the Nalta Sharif rural piped water supply scheme has fulfilled the required criteria under the BWSP project. The Nalta Sharif rural piped water supply scheme was officially inaugurated on December 26 last year.

"We had to collect drinking water from places some 4 or 5 kilometres away before the launch of supply of piped water. Now we are getting the piped water at our doorsteps," a middle-aged woman at Nalta Shaif village said.

## Training on health issues for journalists concludes

METRO DESK

A three-day training for journalists from the print and electronic media on more effective reporting of health issues concluded in Savar recently, says a press release.

Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) organised the training in partnership with ICF Macro, supported by USAID.

A total of 19 journalists took part in the training.

John Donnelly, former reporter of Boston Globe, USA, specialising in health and development issues led the training along with senior local journalists, academics and researchers. Farid Hossain, AP bureau chief, was the course facilitator and also a resource person.

"The reason why we convened this training was to help journalists use the Demographic Health Survey (DHS) data more often in their stories, and to acquaint them with all the information about Bangladesh in the survey," said Laurie Liskin, senior adviser for Communication at ICF Macro, who gave several presentations on the DHS survey at the training session.

## IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

# Regional cooperation stressed

BSS, Dhaka

Experts and high officials yesterday underscored the need for forging greater regional cooperation between Bangladesh, Nepal and India to face adverse impacts of climate change.

They were addressing a briefing session at Department of Environment (DoE) in the city yesterday.

Chaired by DoE Director General Abdus Sobhan, the keynote presentations were made by CEGIS Executive Director Geasuddin Ahmed and DoE Deputy

Director Solaiman Haider.

Visiting leader of delegation from Nepal Sankar Prasad Koirala, Pravin Aryal, Gayendra Karki, WWF Secretary General and FEJB Chairman Quamrul Islam Chowdhury, DoE directors M Shahjahan, Fazle Rabbi and Deputy Director Ziaul Haq, CEGIS expert Ahmadul Hasan took part in the discussion.

The 11-member of Nepal National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) delegation consisted of high officials and experts shared their experience of field visits to The Sundarbans and Aila-hit

Gabura of Satkhira during their week-long stay in Bangladesh. They described their visit as very productive and eye-opening exercise and said it would enormously help formulation of Nepal NAPA following Bangladesh model since Dhaka had already prepared it 2005 and also prepared Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, 2010.

Earlier, they also took part at a session on "Bangladesh-Nepal National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) Experience Sharing" at National Press Club on March 23.

## Adequate safe water for city dwellers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Different left leaning organisations yesterday demanded adequate supply of safe water to mitigate the suffering of the city dwellers in the summer.

Sammilito Samajik Andolon formed a human chain and launched a mass signature campaign in front of the National Museum to press home the demand, said a press release.

Its President Ajoy Roy, vice-presidents Pankaj Bhattacharjee and Ziauddin Tarek Ali and Joint General Secretary Saleh Ahmed spoke at the human chain programme.

They said if the water crisis could not be addressed immediately, Dhaka would certainly be turned into an abandoned city.

If the government fails to resolve the crisis immediately, the people will take to the streets for the drinking water, they said.

The leaders announced that they would stage rallies at every neighbourhood across the capital to press home the demand.

Meanwhile, Ganasanghati Andolon held a protest rally at Muktagon in the city, demanding immediate solution to the prevailing water and power crises, and price control of basic commodities.

Coordinator of the organisation Jonayed Saki presided over the rally addressed by Firoz Ahmed, Taslima Akhter and Belayet Sikder, among others.

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## Missions abroad celebrate Independence Day

BSS, Dhaka

The 40th Independence and National Day was celebrated in Bangladesh missions abroad with due respect and festivity on Friday.

According to messages received here, Bangladesh Permanent Mission to the United Nations, Bangladesh embassy in South Korea and Bangladesh high commission in Pakistan organised various programmes to celebrate the day.

The missions also published supplements on the day in local newspapers in the respective countries.

The programme at the permanent mission to the UN had begun with hoisting the national flag by Permanent Representative Dr AK Abdul Momen on the mission premises in the morning.

Later, he presided over a discussion where the messages of President M Zillur Rahman, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Foreign Minister Dipu Moni were read out.

During the discussion, the permanent representative called upon all to work together to make the country's independence meaningful.

The discussion was followed by a special

munajat, which was attended by all members of the mission.

In the evening, the permanent representative hosted a reception marking the day. Envoys of different UN member countries, senior UN officials, expatriate Bangladeshis and journalists attended the reception.

The Bangladesh mission in South Korean began the Independence Day programme with hoisting of the national flag and recitation from the holy Quran.

The mission organised a discussion 'doa mahfil' for salvation of the souls of Liberation War martyrs and peace and prosperity of the country.

The mission organised a reception in the evening at a local hotel where South Korean environment minister was present as the chief guest.

Bangladesh envoy Shahidul Islam welcomed the guests.

The Bangladesh mission in Islamabad began the day's programme through hoisting of the national flag, recitation from the holy Quran and munajat.

A discussion was also held with Acting High Commissioner MM Mahfuzur Rahman in the chair.

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