



PHOTO: STAR

From right, Syngenta Bangladesh Managing Director Sarwar Ahmed, Brac Executive Director Dr Mahabub Hossain, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, journalist Kawser Rahman, Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council Executive Chairman Dr Wais Kabir and IIRI Representative in Bangladesh Dr Mohammed Zainul Abedin hold copies of a book titled 'Journalists' Views - State of Agriculture in Bangladesh: Secured Food, Secured Future' at its publication ceremony at the National Press Club in the city yesterday.

Focus on Aman production to save groundwater: Matia

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Agriculture Minister Matia Chowdhury yesterday called on all concerned to concentrate on increasing the productivity of Aman, which is produced during monsoon and which requires less extraction of underground water.

Over the decades, Aman was neglected and rice production by underground water was considered a success, but the underground water depleted alarmingly, she said, adding that neither policy makers nor scientists have cared for the issue.

Considering these facts, the government now wants return of care for Aman, Matia said at the publication ceremony of a book titled 'Journalists' Views - State of Agriculture in Bangladesh: Secured Food, Secured Future' edited by journalists Kawser Rahman and Reaz Ahmad.

Palok Publishers has brought out the book under the Forum for Information Dissemination on Agriculture (FIDA) -

Syngenta Fellowship Programme 2009.

"We have taken a policy to provide subsidy in supplementary irrigation for Aman, if needed," the minister said at the programme at the National Press Club in the city.

The provision for supplementary irrigation will be kept in the budget, she observed.

Stating that scientists over the decades also did not care for better varieties of rice for Aman, Matia said, adding that so far everybody had a mindset that Aman did not require any extra care for its good yield. This has to be changed to help save groundwater.

She hoped that this year Boro would have a bumper yield, as farmers got all sorts of fertilisers in subsidised rates and in time despite the fact that flash floods in Sunamganj and Kishoreganj damaged rice recently.

Turning to the journalists, she said they have to consider all aspects before reporting on yields, because negative

reporting, which does not reflect the whole scenario of the facts, can cause increasing food prices.

Lauding journalists' role in reporting on agriculture, Brac Executive Director Dr Mahabub Hossain said they [reporters] are helping farmers and policy makers by their reporting. However, they have to be balanced in reporting on issues, which are negative.

Bangladesh Agriculture Research Council Executive Chairman Dr Wais Kabir said farming in today's globalised world has become quite complex. Analytical reporting, therefore, could greatly help scientists and policy makers.

Dr Zainul Abedin, representative of International Rice Research Institute in Bangladesh, Syngenta Bangladesh Managing Director Sarwar Ahmed and Forkan Ahmed of Palok Publishers also spoke.

Journalist Reaz Ahmad moderated the programme, which was chaired by journalist Kawser Rahman.

Taskforce soon to stop polythene production

State minister says 21 more environment directorates to be set up at district level

UNB, Dhaka

The government will immediately form a taskforce, which will work to stop the production of polythene in a bid to protect the environment.

State Minister for Environment Hasan Mahmud said this at a press briefing at his office yesterday when he also revealed various government decisions concerning the environment.

He said 21 more Environment Directorates will be set up in the district level and additional 468 people will be recruited to different posts of the directorates.

Presently, Directorate of Environment

remains at divisional headquarter only, he said.

The minister mentioned the amended Environment Court Act was approved in the cabinet and waiting for placement in the parliament.

More Environment court will be set up in 21 districts where planned Environment Directorates will be set up. Presently, there are six Environment courts in the country, he told the reporters.

The government will also take steps for checking emission of black smoke, which is harmful for environment, he said.

Mahmud said manufacturing of bricks in the brickfields would be brought under specific law. Ahead of the next season of

brick burning, the brickfield owners will be informed about production of bricks by jig-jag process through holding workshop.

He informed that an agreement of cooperation in the field of environment would be signed during the incoming Saarc Summit in Bhutan. As a result, Bangladesh will get cooperation from the Saarc countries in this regard, he added.

On reserved forests, the minister said four more reserved forests would be built up in Chittagong and Chittagong Hill Tracts areas apart from the present 19 reserved forests in the country.

A new safari park naming Bangabandhu Safari Park will be set up in Gazipur forest area, he added.

ATTACK ON PROF AZAD CID asked to submit probe report by May 30

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court yesterday asked the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit the probe report of a case filed for bomb attack on late Prof Humayun Azad by May 30.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Mohammad Ali Hossain passed the order as the CID failed to submit its probe report yesterday.

The same court had directed the CID on March 22 to complete the reinvestigation by April 25 into the attack on Azad on February 27 in 2004.

The same court had ordered a further investigation into the attack on Prof Azad on October 20 last year and directed the CID to submit the probe report by December 20 the same year. But the investigation officer failed to complete the probe.

Later, the same court directed the CID to complete the probe by March 22 this year.

Following the fresh investigation, CID appealed to the court to take two Jama'atul Mujaheddin Bangladesh (JMB) members -- Salauddin alias Salehin and Minnaz -- on remand for interrogation.

A gang of criminals stabbed eminent writer Prof Humayun Azad with machetes in front of the Bangla Academy in the city on February 27 in 2004, leaving him critically injured. After his recovery, Prof Azad went to Germany where he died on the night of August 11 the same year.

3rd Hajj and Umrah Fair begins Apr 29

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The 3rd Hajj and Umrah Fair will begin at the Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city on April 29.

The fair will work as a bridge between the Hajj pilgrims and the Hajj agencies.

Hajj Agencies Association of Bangladesh (HAAB) and E3 Solutions Ltd are jointly organising the fair.

The fair will remain open to the public from 10:00am to 8:00pm everyday till May 1.

About 120 Hajj agencies and six banks will exhibit their services at the fair.

Create job opportunities for young generation

President tells East West University convocation

UNB, Dhaka

President Zillur Rahman yesterday emphasised initiatives to create new job opportunities for the young generation with a view to flourishing their talents, thoughts and creativity.

"Graduates should be built up in such a way that they can take their position both in national and international arena showing their own talents," he said while presiding over the 9th convocation of East West University at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre.

Education Minister Nurul Islam Nahid spoke on the occasion as the special guest while Professor (emeritus) Dr AF Serajul Islam Chowdhury of Dhaka University was the Convocation Speaker.

Addressing the function, the president hoped that the country's universities would continue their highest efforts to provide pragmatic, standard and quality education for the greater interest of the nation.

Mentioning that a huge number of students come out every year acquiring degrees from government and private universities, Zillur said



PHOTO: PID

President Zillur Rahman gives away a gold medal to a successful graduate at the 9th convocation of East West University at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre in the city yesterday.

although the graduates are not deficient in terms of talent and qualification, many of them remain unemployed as the job market is not expanding in the same proportion.

A total of 956 students have been conferred with degrees at the convocation while six students were awarded the gold medals by

the chancellor for their outstanding results.

Vice Chancellor of East West University Prof Dr Mohammad Sharif delivered the welcome address while former education minister Dr Osman Farook, former army chief Moeen U Ahmed and UGC Chairman Prof Nazrul Islam attended the convocation.

Reforms in Saarc convention on trafficking underscored

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The definition of trafficking in the upcoming Saarc Convention needs to be amended for addressing the problem in the region efficiently, said speakers at a press conference yesterday.

ATSEC Bangladesh organised the press conference at the National Press Club in the city advocating for the requirements of reforming the SAARC convention on Trafficking.

While presenting the keynote, Advocate Salma Ali, chairperson of ATSEC, placed some recommendation on changing the definition of trafficking and bringing some changes to the current convention.

"The definition of trafficking requires to be broadened beyond 'trafficking for prostitution' to address other forms of trafficking in persons," said Salma Ali.

The convention needs to clarify the responsibilities of the origin, transit, and recipient countries with respect to extradition and prosecution of traffickers as well as rescue, recovery, protection, repatriation and social integration of the victims and prevention of trafficking, she added.

She also said the convention needs to make provision of a permanent and systematic monitoring body and National and Regional Focal Points on Trafficking to ensure that Member States are held accountable to the requirements imposed by the Convention.

"Again, the Convention needs to have directives on shared database of state-parties on victims and traffickers with access of the authorities concerned and civil society," she added.

ATSEC Vice Chairperson AKM Masud Ali, Executive Committee members Emranul Haque Chowdhury, Binoy Krishna Mollik and Fazlul Haque Chowdhury were also present.



UNFPA executive due today

METRO DESK

Purnima Mane, deputy executive director (programme) of UNFPA, arrives in the city today on a six-day official visit to Bangladesh.

During her stay here, Mane will attend a board meeting of Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), says a press release.

She is expected to meet the health and family welfare minister, high-level government officials and other UN as well as development partners.

During her meetings, the UNFPA executive will discuss the country's population programme in general and UNFPA's assistance in particular. She will also visit some UNFPA project sites.

WASHINGTON MEET ON SANITATION ENDS Action to ensure access to safe water stressed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first annual high-level meeting for Sanitation and Water for All ended in Washington DC yesterday with an aim to find out ways to stimulate urgent action towards ensuring access to sanitation and safe drinking water in different countries.

Sanitation and Water for All convened the meeting on Friday to boost the programmes to meet the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of halving the proportion of people living without access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, says a Unicef release.

"Safe drinking water, basic sanitation and hygiene are essential for health and welfare of individuals as well as nations. Countries cannot make progress if millions of working days and school days are lost due to diseases caused by contaminated water, inadequate sanitation and poor hygiene, and if children are still dying from preventable causes such as diarrhoea," said Clarissa Brocklehurst, Unicef chief of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Experts said at least 2.5 billion cases of diarrhoea occur in children under five years of age every year globally, and an estimated 1.5 million children die from it annually. Huge savings in health care costs and gains in productive days can be realised by improving access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene -- amounting to some 2 percent to over 7 percent

of gross domestic product, depending on the region.

Hosted by Unicef, the high-level meeting was participated by 35 ministers from developing countries, donors and development agencies.

A high-level delegation, including Finance Minister AMA Muhith and Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives Minister Syed Ashrafur Islam represented Bangladesh in the meeting.

Although Bangladesh is on track to achieve the MDG target for access to safe drinking water, arsenic contamination, increased salinity in groundwater in coastal belt, declining groundwater levels and susceptibility to the impact of natural disasters pose significant risks to the availability of safe drinking water. Today, 20 million people are still drinking arsenic contaminated water here.

The practice of open defecation has been significantly reduced to seven percent from 33 percent in 1990. However, only 53 percent of population has access to improved sanitation facilities.

Local Government Division Secretary Monzur Hossain said, "Bangladesh has to deal with the particular challenges undermining safe water and sanitation for all. However, the government is committed to providing safe water to all citizens by 2011. A special fund of \$200 million will be created to provide arsenic safe water."

বিস্মিত্বাহির রাহমানির রাহিম

অপার সম্ভাবনায় ...

বাজার মূল্যের অর্ধেক মূল্যে

উত্তরা থার্ড ফেইজের সাথেই প্লট

প্লট সাইজ: ২.৫, ৩, ৩.৫, ৪, ৫ কাঠা

৬০ কিস্তিতে প্লট কেনার মহাসুযোগ

এ সুযোগ ৩০ এপ্রিল ২০১০ পর্যন্ত

পরিবেশ বান্ধব সেবা আবাসন নির্মাণে নিবেদিত

আমিন মোহাম্মদ গ্রুপ

বিস্তারিত জানুন

কর্পোরেট অফিস: ৭৫২, সাতমসজিদ রোড, ধানমন্ডি, ঢাকা।

মতিঝিল অফিস: ২৯ রাজউক এডিনিউ, (২য় তলা) মতিঝিল, বা/এ ঢাকা।

উত্তরা অফিস: গ্রীন এ্যারোমা (২য় তলা), বাজী-১৭ রোড-৭, সেগুন-৪, উত্তরা, ঢাকা।

গুলশান অফিস: বাজী-৫ (৩য় তলা) রোড নং-৩৪, গুলশান, ঢাকা-১২১২।

সিটেট অফিস: রহিম টাওয়ার, (৩য় তলা), সোবহানী ঘাট সিটেট।

সাইট অফিস (আবদুল্লাহ): ০১৭১৩৩০৫৮৩

সাইট অফিস (আবদুল্লাহ): ০১৭১৩৩০৬৮৩৭

সাইট অফিস (গ্রীন): ০১৭১৩৩০৬৮৩৯, ০১৭৩০২৭৮২৭।