Housing sites to be built by major rivers

Says Ramesh

BSS, *Rajshahi*

Water Resources Minister Ramesh Chandra Sen said housing area to be built on both the sides of major rivers after dredging and training those to increase water flow in the rivers side by side with creating more residential areas.

He said this while talking to journalists during visit to the ongoing work on the Secondary Town Infrastructure and Flood Protection Project (2nd Phases) on the Padma riverbank at Shyampur here on Friday.

Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) has been implementing the 1.66-kilometer bank revetment work at a cost of Tk 29 crore.

He said the river points widening over five- kilometer in the country would be brought under the dredging activities on a priority basis.

Simultaneously, both the sides of the rivers would be dumped after reducing the existing width for creating residential and industrial area.

To this end, he said necessary process for purchasing dredger has been completed and on arrival of the dredger the Jamuna would be dredged first to be followed by the others in phases.

Replying to a query, Ramesh said water of the Padma river would be conserved after constructing Ganges Barrage at Pangsha in Rajbari.

Similarly, he said need-based steps would be taken to conserve the irrigation water after re- excavating the tributaries of the mighty Padma river.

For easing the irrigation activities in the high Barind tract, he assured that the proposed North Rajshahi Irrigation Project would be executed during the tenure of the present government.

BWDB Northwest Chief Engineer Sazedul Karim Chowdhury and Superintending Engineer Mahtab Uddin and Executive Engineer Nizamul Haque Bhuiyan and Sub-divisional Engineer Abul Kashem accompanied the minister during his visit.

Later, he held a view exchange meeting with local administration, BWDB officials, public representatives and political leaders at the Circuit House.

Fazley Hossain Badsha MP, Ziaur Rahman MP, Commissioner of Rajshahi Division Hafizur Rahman Bhuiyan and Deputy Commissioner Shefaul Karim were present at the meeting.

Local lawmakers and others called for proper re-excavation of the canals and rivers for sustainable improvement of the surface water resources side by side with halting the lowering trend of the ground-water table to protect the vast Barind tract from desertification.

Ramesh also visited the project for protecting Chapainawabganj Sadar and Shibganj from the erosion of the river Padma and the river bank protection embankment at Lalpur.

PHOTO: STAR

Family members, relatives and well-wishers of slain police officer Gautam Roy form a human chain in front of the Jatiya Press Club in the city yesterday demanding proper investigation into the murder and trial of the killers. (Story on Page 2)

PHOTO: STAR

Khetmajur Samity stages a demonstration in front of the National Press Club in the city yesterday demanding reforms in land system and 40 percent budgetary allocation for the poor.

'Include child injury prevention education in formal curriculum'

BSS, *Dhaka*

Curriculum specialists and academicians yesterday underscored the need for inclusion of textbooks materials on children injury prevention in formal education at the primary and secondary level to bring down infant mortality rate in the country.

Referring to the child death caused by various injuries, they said nearly 30,000 children aged below 18 years die while 13,000 are being crippled every year due to injuries like drowning, road accident, burning, attack from animals and electrocution.

They were addressing an experience-sharing meeting on "Incorporation of the text materials in formal education curriculum from grade 1 to 8", at Spectra Convention Centre in the city.

Center for Injury Prevention and Research, Bangladesh (CIPRB) organised the meeting in cooperation with The Alliance for the Safe Children (TASC) and Unicef, Bangladesh.

Executive Director of Centre for Mass Education and Science (CMES) Prof Dr Muhammad Ibrahim spoke addressed the meeting as the chief guest while CIPRB Executive Director Dr AKM Fazlur Rahman also spoke.

CIPRB Director Dr Aminur Rahman gave an overview of the organisation on how it is working for prevention of child injuries by devising multifarious methods.

Lecturer of Institute of Education and Research (IER) of Dhaka University Sumera Ahsan and specialist of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) M Shahjahan presented keynote papers on the occasion.

Prof Mohammad Ibrahim said children should not be given extra burden by providing them with extra supplementary books.

Poor performance of textbooks curriculum leads to increase in high dropout in a country, he said, adding that curriculum should be shortened so that it does not create pressure on their brain.

Dr Shahjahan Tapan, a techer of Department of Physics of Dhaka University, said primary school children should be given supplementary reading materials but they must be scientific way of learning.

Prof Dr Gazi Ahsanul Kabir, a former executive director of National Academy for Education and Management (NAEM), described drowning as the number one factor of child death and said awareness against the death should be created among mothers also.

RURAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECT

Over 24,000 poor women benefit

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

About three years ago, Chandra, a 35-year-old woman from Satkhira, had been struggling with two children after her husband left for another woman.

"There was barely enough food in the plate," she recalls. "My children also dropped out of school."

However, her fate has now changed, thanks to a project titled 'Rural Employment Opportunity of Public Assets (REOPA)'.

The government is implementing the project, funded by the European Commission, in cooperation with the UNDP and partner NGOs.

Chandra got an opportunity to work under the project, which had been employing destitute women to repair roads in her village.

Under the project, she learned how to restore earthen roads, received training on how to raise poultry along with education on health and human rights.

Most importantly, she learned to save her money as 30 percent of her daily Tk100 wages goes directly to a bank account, which gave her a savings of Tk 22,000 in two years.

Chandra now has a cow, three goats and 40 chickens and ducks.

Like Chandra, about 24,440 women in Narsingdi, Habiganj, Feni, Barguna, Satkhira and Sirajganj districts were benefited from the project, said Project Director Akmol Hossain at a seminar at Biam Auditorium in the city yesterday.

"Basic idea of the project is to empower ultra-poor women with confidence, provide them with a sustainable livelihood and give them a chance to create savings, which they can invest efficiently," he said.

Addressing the seminar, experts stressed the need for developing sustainable safety net programmes in the country, which would assist the ultra-poor in generating steady livelihoods.

Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, chairman of Palli Karmo Sahayok Foundation (PKSF), said, "The country now has 73 short-term safety net programmes. It is not a sustainable solution, as with the end of each project, the ultra-poor goes back to their original status."

Shamsul Alam, member of the Planning Commission, Goran Johnson, international team leader of REOPA project, Gobinda Chakravarty, REOPA project coordinator for Uttaran, also spoke.

Channel 1 closure protested

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The journalists and employees of the Channel 1 staged a token sit-in protesting the closure of the private television station.

The government on April 27 stopped transmission of the channel on charge of using rented broadcasting equipment in violation of the law, which its authority denied.

The protestors said the action threw around 450 journalists, officials and employees into insecurity as they have lost their jobs due to the closure.

Eminent citizens expressed solidarity with the journalists and the employees at the protest programme at the Central Shaheed Minar in the city yesterday morning.

Eminent lawyer Barrister Rafique-Ul Haq said the problems of the Channel 1 should have been solved through legal process.

"Making these 450 people jobless was not fair," he said while addressing the sit-in programme.

Columnist Syed Abul Maksud said the closure of the channel is a blow to the country and its democracy. Any democratic government cannot do such a thing and the channel was shut down in an autocratic way.

Robbers loot Tk 25 lakh from filling station

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A gang of robbers looted Tk 25 lakh from a filling station at Khilkhet in the city in the early morning yesterday.

The police said a gang of six armed robbers posing as customers entered the Nikunja Model Filling Station at Nikunja and held all the four employees of the station hostage at around 4:30am.

Sub-Inspector Abdul Motaleb of Khilkhet Police Station said the robbers beat up the employees, broke open the cash box and looted Tk 25.43 lakh.

The robbers also confined the employees to a room and locked it before leaving the scene. Later, locals freed the employees and informed the police.

Manager Zahidur Rahman of the filling station filed a case with the police station.

PHOTO:COURTESY

Artist Nisar Hossain speaks at a children's art competition at the Concord Real Estate's satellite township project, Lake City Concord, at Khilkhet in the city on Friday. Concord Real Estate organised the event as part of its corporate social responsibility. Renowned artist Mustafa Monwar was present as the chief guest. Chief Operation Officer of Real Estate Division of Concord Group M Hossain inaugurated the programme.

Call for integrated healthcare system

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Doctors at a seminar stressed the need for integrated healthcare system in the 21st century.

Allopathic medicines have some side-effects, but the indigenous herbal medicines are free from any side-effects, they said in the seminar organised by Hamdard Laboratories Bangladesh at a city hotel on Friday.

Prime Minister's Adviser for Health and Family Welfare Dr Syed Modasser Ali attended the seminar as the chief guest. National Professor Dr Nurul Islam chaired the first session of the seminar and Hamdard Vice Chairman Dr Humayun KMA Hai presided over the second session.

At the seminar, Prof AK Azad Khan and Prof Pran Gopal Dutta were awarded Dr Ibrahim Gold Medal in recognition of their contribution to healthcare.

Hamdard Director (Marketing) Dr Rafiqul Islam presented the keynote paper in the seminar.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Participants at a seminar on 'Herbal medicine of 21st century and Hamdard' held at Sheraton Hotel in the city on Friday. Hamdard Laboratories Bangladesh organised the event.