



Chairman of Muslim Aid Sir Iqbal Sacranie calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at her office yesterday. PHOTO: PMO

## Alternative livelihoods can cut climate risks

Speakers tell workshop

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Food security with alternative livelihoods is vital to reduce the risk of the people vulnerable to climate change disasters, speakers told a national workshop yesterday.

The UK-based Practical Action, Bangladesh organised the workshop on disaster resilience and risk reduction through livelihood-oriented approach at Brac Centre Inn in the city.

A discussion was also held about the lessons learnt from a five-year programme under Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) project.

Food security with diversification of livelihood options and strategies with new technologies are key to building resilience to climate change disasters, said Pieter van den Ende, team leader of Reducing Vulnerability and Natural Resource Management project of Practical Action.

Community-based activities and involvement of the local government bodies and service providers are important to make the approach successful, he said.

Experience shows, according to Pieter, that the DRR programmes contribute to poverty reduction.

The DRR, climate change adaptation and combating poverty are all interrelated, said Hilary Warburton, head of vulnerability reduc-

tion programme of Practical Action.

Farhana Sharmin, programme manager of the five-year project, said the project was implemented among 6,000 poor households of five unions in three Upazilas including Gaibandha Sadar, Sariakandi (Bogra) and Kazipur (Sirajganj) located in the flood plain of mighty Jamuna.

The prime goal of the project, which comes to an end in December, is to reduce disaster risks creating livelihood opportunities and lower poverty, she said.

Under the project, 106 families were provided with flood-proof (raised-plinth) houses and 16.5 percent of the targeted households were provided with flood-proof tube-wells and latrines, she added.

Veena Khaleque, country director of Practical Action, Bangladesh; Dr Haseeb Md Irfanullah, team leader, Reducing Vulnerability and Natural Resource Management of Practical Action; and AHM Abdullah, director of government's Disaster Management Bureau; among others, also spoke.

The project was implemented simultaneously in five countries including Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Peru and Zimbabwe, which was funded by the Department for International Development, UK.

## Hearing on charge framing against Hashem deferred

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The hearing on charge framing against former BNP lawmaker and Partex Group Chairman MA Hashem in a tax evasion case was not held as the conducting Judge Mohammad Zohurul Hoque was on leave yesterday.

Judge (In charge) Mohammad Ismail Hossain of the Senior Special Judge's Court fixed November 22 for next hearing of the case.

Hashem, now on bail from the High Court (HC), was present during yesterday's hearing.

The National Board of Revenue (NBR) filed the case with the Sessions Judge Court against Hashem, also chairman of United Commercial Bank Ltd, for evading tax on August 23.

Following the case, the court issued arrest warrant against Hashem and directed the officer-in-charge of Gulshan Police Station to submit a report on execution of the arrest warrant by September 19.

But Hashem had got anticipatory bail from the HC.

In the case statement, Kabir Uddin Mollah, deputy tax commissioner, alleged that Hashem evaded Tk 4,76 crore income tax from 1977-1978 fiscal year to 2005-2006.

He was also arrested in a case filed on May 28, 2007, for his alleged involvement with syndicates behind price hikes of essentials in 2008. He was released on bail from the HC on August 4, 2008.

## Quality potato seeds for farmers demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two non-government organisations yesterday urged the government to provide farmers with quality potato seeds.

They also demanded of the government to stop the tendency of making extra profit of the cold storage owners.

The demands came from a rally jointly organised by Nagorik Shanghaty and Campaign for Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday.

Speakers at the rally said potato harvest was bumper this year but the interest of the potato farmer was not ensured, as the farmers did not get actual price.

Farmers' production cost for per kg potato was Tk 10 to 12 but they had to sell one kg of potato at Tk 3 to 4, they said.

The speakers also said the farmers are suffering due to shortage of government cold storages.

They said the government should collect potato from the farmers at a reasonable price like the way they collect rice and wheat.

The rally was presided over by Sharifuzzaman Sharif, general secretary of Nagorik Shanghaty, Anwarul Islam Babu, general secretary of Bangladesh Krishak Jote, SMA Sabur of Krishak Samity spoke at the rally.

## Govt to give one-stop service in all upazilas

BSS, Dhaka

Under the A2I programme of the government, one-stop service will be in place in all upazilas to reach various services to the doorsteps of the people through information technology (IT).

Establishment Secretary Iqbal Mahmud told a workshop for upazila nirbahi officers (UNO) on A2I programme at the Prime Minister Office (PMO) here yesterday, said official sources.

He said UNOs would act as the focal point of Digital Bangladesh at the upazila level. So, they must have adequate knowledge on information technology.

Twenty-three UNOs were given training in the second phase on the Access to Information (A2I) programme being implemented with the financial support of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Fifty UNOs were given training on A2I on October 6, 2010.

During the workshop, the UNOs were given training on efficient use of email and internet services. Demonstration was also given on various case studies: online hajj service, automation of Chittagong Customs House, Bangladesh Bank, National Data Bank Project and public e-health services.

With National Project Director of the A2I programme M Nazrul Islam Khan in the chair, the function was also attended by Deputy Secretary of Cabinet Division Prashanta Kumar Roy and Policy Adviser of A2I programme Anir Chowdhury.

Nazrul Islam Khan while narrating the A2I programme, said, "So far the people used to come to the government to get public services, but from now on, the government will go to the people with its services."

# Schoolchildren vow to wash hands

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Thousands of school children from different parts of the country yesterday pledged to wash their hands before taking foods and after defecation.

Local Government Division under the LGRD and Cooperatives Ministry with the support of Unicef and other partner organisations arranged the assembly of students on Residential

Model School and College playground.

Some 46,712 students from different schools in the city gathered the ground to mark the third annual Global Handwashing Day, according to the organisers.

About 86,268 students across the country simultaneously washed their hands at 12:05pm yesterday, they said.

The students at the event were also

taught how to wash hands hygienically.

"I have learned how to wash hands. Now, I will follow the method and suggest my family members to wash hands in the way," said Monir Hossain, a student of class three of Manik High School of Konapara in Demra, Dhaka.

Terming the programme an "unprecedented event," State Minister

for LGRD Jahangir Kabir Nanok said the regular practice of hand washing in proper way helps reduce the spread of jaundice, diarrhoea, cholera and other diseases.

He hoped that the children will follow the method of washing hands.

Unicef Representative Carel de Rooy and representatives from other partner organisations were present at the programme.

## Bridge to be named after Dr Wazed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Government has decided to name a bridge over Korotoa River after eminent nuclear scientist Dr M A Wazed Mia.

The under construction bridge will be known as

Wazed Mia Setu (Wazed Mia Bridge), says a communication ministry's press release.

Roads and Highways Department is constructing the 279-metre long bridge at Kachdaho Ghat of Pirganj upazila in Rangpur.



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