



‘Mamotar Tori’ Launched for Safe Transportation of Pregnant Women



Md. Oliur Rahman, DC, Gaibandha is speaking at the Launching Ceremony of ‘Mamotar Tori’.

For urgent, quick, and safe transportation of critical pregnant women & babies from *char* to secondary healthcare services on the mainland, SKS Foundation, Save the Children, Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), and the Department of Health & Family Planning have jointly launched a special boat named ‘Mamotar Tori’ at Fulchari, Gaibandha. The ‘Mamotar Tori’ equipped with basic & primary healthcare services including the provision of a bed, washroom, and drinking water is set out for a 24/7 waterway crossing service for pregnant women & newborn babies.

Md. Oliur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner, inaugurated the ‘Mamotar Tori’ on 20 June 2022 at the BIWTA Conference Hall, Balashi Ghat, Fulchari upazila, Gaibandha as the Chief Guest with GM Selim Parvez, Chairman, Fulchari Upazila, in the chair. Appreciating the initiative the Chief Guest said, “Communication problem makes it difficult for *char* community to avail of improved healthcare services. This special boat will play a special role in lessening maternal and child mortality in the *char*. We want to create an example and build opportunities for the LNOB community. In the aspect of SDG Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being, we want to achieve this SDG similarly with the support of all stakeholders.”(see page 3)

Raised Plinths Handed Over

To help the flood-prone poor individual household and communities to cope with disasters, SKS Foundation raised 153 individual household plinths and 8 community grounds and handed over those to the respective households & community. The raised plinths were handed over under the *Northern Bangladesh Disaster Preparedness (NOBADIP)* Project implemented by SKS Foundation in partnership with Care Bangladesh, funded by USAID. Ken Hassain, Deputy Office Director, USAID handed over the raised plinths as Guest of Honor at a ceremony took place on 23 March 2022 at Ujan Teora village, in Haripur union under Sundarganj, Gaibandha.

Ken Hassain said the gathering, “The households have been raised with a greater aim to assist upgrading the living & livelihood of the vulnerable households. These raised plinths will not only protect you from submerging by the flood but also it will give you a living source for planting trees, growing vegetables, and rearing poultry that will meet your nutrition.”

Md. Mizanur Rahman, Project Manager, shared, “In 4 most flood vulnerable unions namely Haripur, Kapasia of Sundarganj upazila, and Fulchari & Erendabari union of Fulchari upazila, 153 individual poor households, and 8 educational institutes have been raised under this Project. This Project has also prepared 328 volunteers, 82 in each union, who will help community people in any emergency.”

SKS-NRBC Bank Partnership Organized An Eye Camp

SKS Foundation, in partnership with NRBC Bank, organized an Eye Camp on 30 April 2022 at Sadullapur Multipurpose Pilot Model High School, Gaibandha. SM Parvez, Tamal, Chairman, NRBC Bank, flanked by Rasel Ahmed Liton, Chief Executive, SKS Foundation, inaugurated the Eye Camp.

Inaugurating the Eye Camp, SM Parvez Tamal said, “NRBC Bank, as a bank, provides more than only financial services. Alongside banking, it focuses on social works. Relating to this, NRBC Bank has joined SKS Foundation for organizing this Camp targeting to support the poor segments.”

Rasel Ahmed Liton said, “This Eye Camp is to help the poor & extreme poor who are suffering from eye-related problems, including cataracts, and cannot afford treatment. The Camp is covering everything i.e. eye screening, surgery, medicine, glasses free of cost and also accommodation & food support for those who will be referred to the specialized hospital.”



SM Parvez Tamal (Left), flanked by Rasel Ahmed Liton, is speaking on the objective of the Eye Camp and the Eye Consultant is taking care of a patient (Inset).

Dr. SM Barat-ul-Islam, Senior Eye Consultant, and Director (in-charge), SKS Eye Hospital, led the Camp. More than 200 patients from Sadullapur upazila screened their eyes and received doctor prescriptions.



Ken Hassain is handing over the Letter of Commitment to a house owner for ensuring maintenance of the raised plinth.

World Environment Day 2022 Observed



A community woman is receiving sapling from Sardar Mostafa Shahin (White shirt) UNO, Saghata upazila.

Centering the theme of the World Environment Day 2022 “Only One World: Living Sustainably in Harmony with Nature”, SKS Foundation celebrated the Day with due significance organizing rally, discussion forum, and distribution of saplings on 5 June 2022. To highlight the significance of the Day to the community people, SKS conducted rallies and discussion forums at 4 unions namely Bharatkhalai, Saghata, Kamalerpara of Saghata upazila, and Boali union of Sadar upazila of Gaibandha.

The UP Chairmen led the rallies and spoke in the discussion forums at their respective unions along with other professionals. SKS’ program participants including community youth, women, elders and other stakeholders attended the rallies and discussion forums. The program was organized under the *ENRICH* program supported by *PKSF*.

On 6 June 2022, SKS Foundation distributed saplings of fruit, forest, and medicinal plants among the poor families living alongside the river for tree plantation and homestead reforestation. Under its *ELIR* Project, supported by Andheri Hilfe, Bonn, Germany, SKS distributed saplings at SKS Resource Center, Saghata, Gaibandha. Sardar Mostafa Shahin, UNO, distributed the Saplings as the Chief Guest. Each family was given 10 saplings.

Underling the importance of tree plantation, the Chief Guest said, “We need to plant trees not only to protect ourselves from disasters but also to meet our food, nutrition, medicine, and financial needs. One of the reasons behind the rise in global temperature is deforestation. That’s why we have to plant more plants and take care of the those.”

Mithun Kundu, PIO, Saghata upazila, said, “Trees supply us oxygen and we need oxygen to live. So, we need to plant trees more as we can. As the Sundarbans is protecting the coastal areas from disasters, in the same way, our localities will be saved if we can cover our locality with trees.”

Special Health Camp Held

SKS Foundation, under its *ENRICH* project in partnership with *PKSF*, organized a Special Health Camp for the Health Card Holder Families of Boali union of Sadar upazila, Gaibandha. The Special Health Camp on ear, nose, and throat (ENT) was held on 27 June 2022 at the Union Health and Family Welfare Center (UHFWC).

Led by Dr. Minhaj Ibn Soumik, Medical Officer, and ENT specialist, Gaibandha Sadar Hospital, in collaboration with Dr. Md. Shimul, Medical Officer, SKS Hospital, screened the patients and prescribed medicines while 19 Health Inspectors, 2 Health Officers, and *ENRICH*–Boali Project Officials facilitated the Health Camp. Around 250 ear, nose & throat (ENT) patients including men, women & children from 2,500 Health Card holding families in Boali union received health services.



Dr. Minhaj Ibn Soumik is taking care of a patient at the Health Camp.

PRODRIPTA Project Launched

(from page 4) Md. Bayezid Bostami, Technical Coordinator, *PRODRIPTA* Project, made a presentation and upheld that the speciality of this Project is the interventions to be taken by the community. The 3-year Project will work with 22,248 participants covering Mollarchar and Kamarjani unions of Sadar upazila and Belka and Kanchipara unions of Sundarganj upazila of Gaibandha focusing on disaster preparedness and adaptation activities including sustainable agriculture and safe water management.

WASH Budget Not Enough

(from page 4) An analysis by the Power and Participation Research Center (PPRC), in collaboration with WaterAid, found that the WASH ADP allocation increased by 5.44% compared to an overall ADP increase of 7.5%. The total WASH Budget in the ADP budget in the proposed budget is Tk. 11,820 crore of Tk. 24,6066 crore of ADP allocation. Though there have been some positive steps to address spatial inequities, there is little consistency across the sector. *Haor* and hilly areas have received positive attention, but not *chars* and coastal areas. Meanwhile, intra-urban inequities persist. The speakers recommended bringing more consistency to the spatial allocation of WASH ADP. The decline in FSM allocation will hinder the aim to increase sanitation coverage across the country.

Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Eminent Economist, Executive Chairman, PPRC and Hossain Ishrath Adib, Acting Country Director of WaterAid, and representatives from WASH networks spoke at the Conference among other WASH specialists, including journalists and development workers.

World Menstrual Hygiene Day Observed

Centering the theme 'Making menstruation a normal fact of life by 2030', SKS Foundation observed the World Menstrual Hygiene Day on 28 May 2022 under its WASH 4 Urban Poor Project. The Day was observed organizing discussion forum and quiz competition covering 2 educational institutes namely Saidpur Adarshaw Girls School & College and Tulshiram Govt. Girls' High School, Saidpur, Nilphamari. Rehana Yasmin, Upazila Secondary Education Officer, graced the event as Chief Guest with Most. Afroza Yasmin, Counselor, and Kazi Monowar Haidar, Ward Counselor as Special Guests with Habibur Rahman, Headmaster, Saidpur Adarshaw Girls School & College in the chair.

The Chief Guest said, "Menstruation natural. There's nothing for shy feeling in it. The matter now needs to be discussed openly & broadly. More importantly, putting menstruation-related questions in the examinations will compel students to study on the matter that matters to them too."

Underlining the proper healthcare during menstruation, Most. Afroza Yasmin said, "It's much needed to keep yourselves hygienic & healthy during menstruation period. You need to take nutritious food also. Because healthy people are a healthy nation too." The Headmaster concluded by saying "Alongside having menstrual hygiene management facilities, we have to teach our students on menstruation management written in their textbooks without hesitation or overlooking the topic."

A quiz competition was organized and sanitary pads were distributed among the winners at the end of the discussion forum.



Rehana Yasmin, Upazila Secondary Education Officer is speaking in the Discussion Forum.

Climate Change-induced Calamities

(from page 4) Numeri Zaman, Joint-Secretary, LGD, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development & Cooperatives graced the Meeting as the Guest of Honor while Tushar Mohan Shadu Khan, Additional Chief Engineer (Planning) Department of Public Health Engineering was in the chair.

Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, Professor of Civil Engineering, BUET & Director, ITN-BUET, presented the Keynote. Dr. Tanvir upheld, "There was a significant achievement relating to the MDGs in 1990 to 2000, but the achievement has been decelerated in 2000 and later on the standard of SDG-6 has been difficult to fulfill combating the climate change-induced calamities." He added, "Man-made water pollution also has added extra challenge on ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation. To achieve the SDG-6, we need to work more constantly and holistically."

The Guest of Honor said, "The WASH budget is given in whole that needs to be split and given to sector-wise i.e. water, sanitation & hygiene. This specific budget allocation can help to improve the implementation of WASH facilities and achieve SDG-6. So, policy dialogue and advocacy are much needed to make the policy-makers sensitized on the issue."

A Panel of sector experts emphasized on increased budget allocation for promoting context-based and resilient WASH promotion covering the hard-to-reach areas and disadvantaged groups. They also emphasized on the engagement of the public sector and mass awareness in water & sanitation.

In his concluding remark, the chair of the Meeting said, "Government has taken many initiatives to have a holistic improvement of WASH. Meanwhile, all the upazilas have water points and one laboratory has been set at each district to test water quality. However, we all need to work collaboratively with our limited resources to achieve the SDG-6 in time."

'Mamotar Tori' Launched

(from page 1) Mohammad Towhidul Islam, SP- Gaibandha, said, "I believe 'Mamotar Tori' will show its significance to the *char* community carrying labor-pain-women with love & affection. While traveling far distances and having long times crossing the river, this boat will ensure the basic health service for pregnant women and in cases of newborn babies. The educated *char* youths can circulate about the services of this special boat."

Mohammad Alauddin, UNO, Fulchari, said, "I often hear the incidents of maternal and child mortality in *chars*. Launching of this special boat will be a great relief in safe transportation of critical pregnant women. I am sure, this boat will bring confidence among the *char* dwellers."

Onno Van Manen, Country Director, Save the Children Bangladesh, said, "Executing this initiative in Gaibandha has been possible based on support of all stakeholders including LGIs, SKS Foundation, KOICA, and Save the Children in Bangladesh & Korea. I hope this initiative will ensure the safe delivery of women & safe birth of newborn in *char* land."

Hyun Suh Kang, Deputy Country Director, Korea International Cooperation Agency Bangladesh, said, "We need to look forward to sustaining the initiative and scaling-up the learning ensuring the participation of all relevant for sustainable development."

The chair of the Event GM Selim Parvez said, "I'm happy and grateful to have this service for the people of Fulchari. I, being a representative of my people would also do my part from Upazila Parishad to sustain the initiative."

Dr. Imrul Kayes Muniruzzaman said, "The *chars* of Gaibandha are one of the most vulnerable areas in terms of maternal and child healthcare. With services of 'Mamotar Tori', SKS Foundation would primarily focus on the most far-flung Uria and Erendabari unions of Fulchari upazila, and Haldia union of Saghata upazila, Gaibandha."

WASH Budget Not Enough to Achieve SDG-6



Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman along with representatives of the WASH Network of Networks is reflecting on WASH allocation in the National Budget 2022- '23.

Bangladesh is unlikely to hit the water, sanitation and hygiene-related targets set in the SDG-6 as the proposed budgetary allocation to the sector is inadequate. The experts expressed this concern at a press conference held on 28 June, 2022 centering the allocation in WASH under the proposed national budget 2022-'23. The WASH sector experts said the proposed budget of FY2022-'23 finds an upward trend in allocation in *haor* and hilly regions. However, the speakers stressed proper attention in selecting ADPs and the need to reduce the WASH allocation gap across rural and hard-to-reach areas. The Conference was jointly organized by WaterAid along with, PPRC, FANSA-BD, FSM Network, BaWin, SWA, End Water Poverty, MHM Platform, Unicef and WASH Alliance International at National Press Club, Dhaka. (see page 2)

Climate Change-induced Calamities Barring SDG-6 Progress

The Achievement of SDG-6 “Ensuring Availability & Sustainable Management of Water and Sanitation for All” may be prolonged or delayed, and in some cases, the achievement may be downgraded as the Climate Change is hitting harder, making the vulnerable people more vulnerable to getting safe drinking water and safe sanitation facilities. The speakers upheld this in a Policy Influencing Meeting for Achieving the SDG-6 organized by FANSA–Bangladesh on 26 May, 2022. Sector professionals across the country joined the Meeting and shared the WASH progress & challenges of different agro-ecological zones.(see page 3)

PRODRIPTA Project Launched

To promote community adaptation to disaster, SKS Foundation has launched the *Promoting Disaster Ready Inclusive Preparedness towards Adaptation (PRODRIPTA)* project in Gaibandha. Md. Oliur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner, launched the Project as the Chief Guest in an Inception Workshop on 13 June 2022. The District Disaster Management Committee members, District *SHOUHARDO III* Coordination Committee members, project officials from Care Bangladesh and SKS Foundation, and other relevant stakeholders took part in the Workshop held at the DC Conference Hall, Gaibandha. SKS Foundation is the implementing partner of this consortium project with Care Bangladesh, funded by Margaret A Cargil Foundation (USAID).

Appreciating the GO-NGO partnership in development, the Chief Guest said, “GO and NGOs had worked together to achieve the MDGs; similarly, we’ve been working to achieve the SDGs. We need to focus on people’s demand-based interventions. And we, the duty bearers and service providers, need to remind ourselves that people are the rights holders, and we need to ensure quality services for them. We cannot prevent disaster, but well preparedness towards adaptation can boost the capacity of the local community against disaster.”



Md. Oliur Rahman, DC, Gaibandha, is speaking in the Inception Workshop.

Md. Rabiul Hasan, Additional District Magistrate, and DD– LG said, “Gaibandha is a flood-prone and an agro-based district. To increase the disaster preparedness of the people here, emphasis should be laid on flood-tolerant agriculture and the marketing system.”

Md. Saiful Islam, DD- Family Planning, said, “I hope this Project will also help to make the people aware of family healthcare while implementing disaster preparedness and adaptation initiatives. Because healthcare gets worse when a disaster occurs.”

KM Rezaul Haque, President, Gaibandha Press Club, said, “We need to take care of nature to minimize the brunt of disasters. So, man-made actions against nature should be stopped because man-made actions are apparently behind all disasters.” (see page 2)



Speakers & participants are taking part virtually in the Policy Influencing Meeting for Achieving the SDG-6