



SKS Offered a Reception to the *Joyeeta*



Mahabub Ara Begum Gini, MP, and Whip of the National Parliament is addressing the audience and a *Joyeeta* is receiving a cheque from her. (Inset).

“There is no life without struggle, and without struggle, there is no win. So, as a process of winning, we all must go through the struggle of which we should not be afraid; fear must be overcome.” Mahabub Ara Begum Gini, MP, and Whip of the National Parliament said this while she graced a reception to the *Joyeetas* as the Chief Guest. SKS Foundation offered the reception to its 27 *Joyeetas* recognizing their exemplary roles in their personal and social lives. The reception took place at SKS Inn, Gaibandha on 15 May 2023.

Nargis Jahan, Deputy Director, Department of Women Affairs, and Md. Fazlul Haque, Deputy Director, Department of Social Service were the Special Guests with Rasel Ahmed Liton, Chief Executive, SKS Foundation in the chair. The reception was cherished by more than 100 dignitaries including government officials, LGI representatives, development professionals, local allies, and the media people. (see page 3)

SKS Gold Cup Football Tournament 2023 Held



Mahmud Hasan Ripon, MP, flanked by other guests, is handing over the Champion Trophy to the winning team.

SKS Gold Cup Football Tournament 2023 held while Gaibandha district became champion defeating Lalmonirhat by 1-0 in the final match. Launched on 24 February 2023, the 16- team inter-district Tournament ended successfully on 30 June 2023 with the grand finale held at Bharatkhal High School ground in Saghata upazila, Gaibandha. (see page 3)

Special Fund Demanded for *Char* Development

The delegates in a seminar emphasized the need to allocate special funds within the national budget and implement effective initiatives to improve the lives of *char* dwellers. Organized jointly by National *Char* Alliance, Swisscontact, and the Rural Development Academy Bogura, the Seminar focused on addressing the challenges faced by impoverished residents living in the *char* areas of Bangladesh. The seminar titled The Development and Potential of the *Chars: In the Context of National Budget* was held on 16 May 2023 at the CIRDP Auditorium, Dhaka. (see page 3)



Dr. Shamsul Alam, State Minister, Ministry of Planning is addressing as the Chief Guest while Swapan Bhattacharjee, MP, State Minister, Ministry of LGRD&C is presiding.

Swedish First Secretary Visited SKS' Program

Nayoka Martinez-Backstrom, Deputy Head of Development Section and First Secretary, Environment & Climate Change of Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka visited SKS' Program in Nilphamari and Gaibandha on 25-26 June 2023. The visit covered Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) plant at Saidpur Municipality, Nilphamari, and Upazila Health Complex of Fulchari upazila, Gaibandha. SKS Foundation, with technical support of WaterAid Bangladesh, has implemented WASH 4 Urban Poor, and WASH in Institution projects supported by Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) in these 2 fields. (see page 3)



The First Secretary is meeting the Fulchari Upazila Health Complex's Dr. Nafisa Akther.

SKS Gifted Musical Instruments & Costumes to *Adivasi* Community



Joseph Halder, Director- Advocacy & Communication, SKS Foundation is addressing the *Adivasi* gathering.

SKS Foundation gifted musical instruments and traditional costumes to help promote *Adivasi Santal* people's culture. Joseph Halder, Director- Advocacy & Communication, SKS Foundation, handed over the gifts to the *Adivasi* Cultural Center located at Bhutgari village, Kamdia union, Gobindaganj upazila, Gaibandha on 13 June 2023.

While handing over the instruments at a huge gathering, Joseph Halder said, "There is no alternative of retaining the elements of culture without regular practice. And for cultural practice, cultural instruments, equipment and arrangements are essential. And the cultural elements i.e. norms, values, language, and rituals, etc all are meant to understand and respect others." Mohan Murmu, the Headman, and Selina Hasda also spoke at the event on behalf of the *Santal* community.

There was a harmonium, a drum set, tambourines, cymbals, dancing costumes i.e. *Sarees*, *Dhoti*, *Genji*, towels, sitting equipment i.e. chairs and tables, etc for the *Adibasi Cultural Center* which was set by SKS Foundation in 2015 in partnership with Andheri Hilfe, Germany. Finally, the *Santal* people performed cultural performances.

SKS Hosted WaterAid East Africa

(from page 4) Facilitated by Dr. Khairul Islam, Regional Director, WaterAid South Asia, Hasin Jahan, Country Director of WaterAid Bangladesh, and Dr. Imrul Kayes Moniruzzaman, Deputy Chief Executive of SKS Foundation, the delegation observed the improved & inclusive WASH & FSM facilities implemented by SKS Foundation. They visited the 'Inclusive Sanitation Complex' at schools & *madrasas* in Sadar & Palashbari upazila, WASH & waste management facilities of the 'Upazila Health Complex at Fulchari upazila of Gaibandha, and the Fecal Sludge Management at Saidpur Municipality in Nilphamari district. During the visit, they talked to the students, teachers of the schools & *madrasas*, and committee members & technical persons at the FSM plant and the Health Complex.

"We are impressed to see the WASH & waste management facilities and their management system and to hear how community engagement in those has brought mutual benefits. We have gained a good insight into the visit," said Olutaya, the team leader expressed herself while speaking on the learning of the visit.

USAID Delegation Visited

(from page 4) Mahfuz Ashraf, Private Sector Advisor, *SHOUHARDO III* Program, Md. Rafiqul Islam, Program Coordinator, Manna Mazumder, Senior Team Leader on behalf of Care Bangladesh, and Khondaker Zahid Shorwar, Assistant Director, SKS Foundation accompanied the delegation.

World Environment Day Observed

SKS Foundation celebrated World Environment Day 2023 with due importance undertaking elaborate programs on creating awareness about environmental pollution. Aligning with this year's theme "*Solutions for Plastic Pollution*", and engaging local educational institutions and CBOs, SKS organized rally, discussion, drawing, debating, quiz, site visit and sapling planting at district, upazila and union level of Gaibandha.

On 5 June 2023, under the *Integrated Child Development Program (ICDP- Sishuder Jonno)* Project, SKS organized rally, discussion forum, quiz, and distributed medicinal, fruit and wood saplings in 22 government primary schools at Saghata upazila, Gaibandha with participation of students, teachers & guardians. On the same day, under the *Enhancing Resources and Increasing Capacities of Poor Households towards Elimination of their Poverty (ENRICH)* Project, SKS organized rally, discussion forum and sapling distribution in Boali union of Gaibandha Sadar upazila and Saghata, Bharatkhalai and Kamalerpara union of Saghata upazila.

Alongside, under the *Promoting Disaster Ready Inclusive Preparedness toward Adaptation (PRODRIPTA)*, SKS organized a drawing competition, discussion, and sapling planting at Belka M.C. High School in Sundarganj upazila on 6 June 2023. A.H.M Shariful Islam Mondal, District Forest Officer, addressed the students as Chief Guest.

On 14 June 2023, SKS Foundation, the FANSA- BD Secretariat, organized a Discussion Forum in partnership with Gaibandha Municipality under the banner of "*Rising for Rights for Strengthening Civil Society Networks in South Asia to Achieve SDG 6*" project.



Md. Matlubur Rahman, Mayor, Gaibandha Municipality, is addressing the meeting.

Presided by Md. Matlubur Rahman, the Mayor of the Municipality, the Discussion Forum was attended by Councilors, departmental heads, FANSA- BD members, WASH cluster representatives, Women leaders, CSO representatives, SKS representatives and local people. Earlier, in the morning, 2 separate teams including the respective participants visited 2 sanitation & garbage management sites in the city.

In the discussion session, the observers of the sites upheld that the sanitation and drainage system is completely at risk because of plastic pollution. This has almost collapsed the city's sanitation system. (see page 3)

World Environment Day Observed

(from page 2) In his speech, the Mayor told that Gaibandha is a small municipality in a flood-prone area and a huge number of floating people are living in the city. Lack of education & awareness, and the unethical use of plastic have turned the sanitation system vulnerable. He urged to stop plastic pollution and come forward for improving the sanitation system of the municipality by promoting Citywide Inclusive Sanitation facilities.

SKS Offered a Reception

(from page 1) Mahabub Ara Begum Gini, MP pointed out, "Behind all of the struggles of women, marriage & money-related issues i.e. early marriage, polygamy, and dowries are involved and it begins with child marriage. So, stopping child marriage is the prerequisite to stopping women's struggle. To ensure marriage at the matured stage, women's education has been a key priority of the government."

Defining the *Joyeeta* 'Icon' and urging all to come forward to foster these *Joyeetas*, DD, Department of Social Service said, "Other women will follow you, once your stories and accomplishments of becoming *Joyeeta* will get known. So, let us share these stories with others."

Dubbing all *Joyeetas* and asking for help to search the *Joyeeta* living around, DD, Department of Women Affairs said, "*Joyeeta* is a symbolic name given to the courageous women who face and overcome their struggles, and then help others to overcome their struggles. These women paid extra push and pull to change themselves and society and then have become examples to others."

Rasel Ahmed Liton said, "Half of the country's population is women, and leaving this group behind we cannot achieve SDGs. As a development organization, SKS will take any initiatives towards the development of this backward group."

In a welcome note, congratulating *Joyeeta*, Joseph Halder, Director, Advocacy & Communication, stated, "SKS Foundation feels dignified to avail such opportunity of honoring the people with whom it works." He upheld that out of the 27 *Joyeetas*, 3 were from Lalmonirhat, and the rest were from Gaibandha.

As a token gift from SKS Foundation, each *Joyeeta* received a booklet '*Amader Joyeetara*' written on their struggles & successes, and an honorarium of BDT 10,000 handed over by the Chief Guest.

Swedish First Secretary Visited

(from page 1) During the visit, Nayoka Martinez-Backstrom had meeting with Saidpur Municipal Authority led by Mayor, Rafika Akhtar Jahan and the management committee of Fulchari Upazila Health Complex led by Dr. Nafisa Akther, Residential Medical Officer. They informed her that with participation of the community people, their WASH facilities and waste management system & quality have improved a lot. The First Secretary also found the common people satisfied with the outcome of the programs.

Mostafizur Rahman, National Program Officer- Climate & Environment, Embassy of Sweden in Dhaka, Partha Hefaz Shaikh, Director, Policy & Advocacy, WaterAid Bangladesh, and Dr. Imrul Kayes Munirzaman, Deputy Chief Executive of SKS Foundation accompanied her during the visit.

Mini Marathon of Adolescents Held



One of the winners of the Mini Marathon is receiving a crest.

SKS Foundation organized a Mini Marathon for adolescents on 12 June 2023 at Gaibandha. Under the Adolescent Program supported by *Palli Karma Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)* the Mini Marathon started at Shah Abdul Hamid Stadium, and ended at Shadhinatar Rajat Joyanti Girls High School. Around 100 adolescents from adolescent clubs in 14 unions and Gaibandha Pourosova took part in the Marathon. Md. Abu Bakkar Siddique Sawpan, Councilor, and Md. Sultan Faruque Lipton, the Headmaster, handed over the crest to the winners.

Special Fund Demanded for Char

(from page 1) Dr. Shamsul Alam, State Minister, Ministry of Planning graced the event as the Chief Guest with Swapan Bhattacharjee, MP, State Minister, Ministry of LGRD & Co-operatives in the chair. The keynote was delivered by Dr. Atiur Rahman, the Founder Chairperson of the National *Char* Alliance while a presentation was made on "Making Market Work for the *Chars* (M4C)- 2nd phase" project.

Dr. Shamsul Alam highlighted the government's commitment to sustainable development and stressed the importance of ensuring that *char* area residents receive government benefits. Swapan Bhattacharjee mentioned the achievements in economic liberation and hunger eradication. They appreciated initiatives like the CLP, M4C, One House One Farm Equity Development Scheme and many other potential programs implemented by NCA partners. The Seminar emphasized a platform for collaboration among public & private sectors, and relevant stakeholders fostering efforts to uplift the *char* communities.

SKS Gold Cup Football

(from page 1) Mahmud Hasan Ripon, MP, graced the grand finale and distributed the Trophy as the Chief Guest while Sushato Kumar Mahato, ADC (General), Gaibandha, was the Special Guest. Rasel Ahmed Liton, Chief Executive of SKS Foundation, was present as the Patron-in-chief of the Tournament presided by Md. Farooq Hossain, Chairman of Bharatkhal Union Parishad.

Addressing the huge crowd before handing over the Trophy, the Chief Guest said, "I believe in development. I always extend my hands, especially for the well-being of my people living in flood and river erosion-raged areas. I appreciate organizing this Tournament which aims to keep away young from drug addiction and social degradation." Upholding the spirit of the sports, the Special Guest said, "Healthy body, healthy mind. Sports turn our body healthy & strong. So, there is no substitute for sports to keep the body and mind healthy."

Rasel Ahmed Liton said, "The country and the nation will benefit greatly if the youth can be involved in the development process. Because the nation's future is in their hands."

The Chief Guest handed over a trophy & BDT 2 lac to the Champion team while the runner-up team received a trophy & BDT 1 lac as prize money.

Urge for Reducing Spatial Inequality in WASH Budget Allocation

At a joint Press Conference held by WaterAid, PPRC, UNICEF, FANSA- BD, BAWIN, FSM Network, Sanitation and Water for All, and End Water Poverty, WASH Alliance International and MHM Platform, speakers shared the need for allocation of funds for WASH focusing on spatial inequalities in the national budget 2023-'24. The Press Conference was held on 23 May 2023 at the National Press Club, Dhaka.

Eminent economist and Chairman of PPRC, Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman in his keynote speech, on behalf of WASH sector stakeholders, highlighted, "Spatial inequality and community engagement should get priority in ADP Allocation in the WASH sector for the upcoming fiscal year." He stressed "Focusing 2 key dimensions—the underserved areas, including *chars*, climate-vulnerable areas, *haors* and hilly regions, and the intra-urban inequities. Emphasizing on the importance of allocating funds for Fecal Sludge Management (FSM) in secondary towns and urbanized villages, is key to adopting a multi-agency policy approach to achieve the national targets of 100% Safe Drinking Water and Safely Managed Sanitation— which is an SDG goals attainment mandate."



Representatives of WaterAid, PPRC, UNICEF, FANSA- BD, BAWIN, FSM Network, Sanitation and Water for All, and End Water Poverty, WASH Alliance International and MHM Platform are taking part in the Press Conference.

The WASH sector networks jointly put forward the following recommendations for the FY2023-'24 ADP Allocation for the sector:

1. Hard-to-reach areas (*chars*, coast, climate-vulnerable areas, *haors* and hilly regions), and intra-urban inequities require better attention.
2. An increased FSM allocation to address the emerging WASH challenges in secondary towns, growth centers & urbanized villages is strongly recommended.
3. Increased allocation including advocacy on hygiene sub-sector can be positive. However, a multi-agency policy approach should be adopted as a priority along with the roll-out of the Local Government Ministry's - *Hand Hygiene for All Roadmap* is needed.
4. To ensure higher policy prioritization on environment, climate change, and disaster hotspots in the WASH sector, should receive more focus for better allocations in these areas.
5. Projects/programs on climate change, disaster resilience including Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) on WASH, SMOSS, and FSM in Emergency should receive priority in the ADP allocations to combat new challenges in these complex areas.

SKS Hosted WaterAid East Africa Delegation for WASH Learning



Dr. Khairul Islam, Regional Director, WaterAid South Asia, leading the Delegation visiting an Inclusive Sanitation Complex in Gaibandha.

A 5-member delegation of WaterAid East Africa undertook a learning visit to SKS Foundation's WASH program on 18-19 June 2023. Led by Olutaya Adejoke Bankole-Bolawole, Regional Director, WaterAid East Africa, the delegation included Maurice Kwizera, Country Director of WaterAid Rwandan, Anna Tenga Mzinga, Country Director of WaterAid Tanzania, Yaekob Metena Megaro, Country Director of WaterAid Ethiopia, and Jane Mselle Sembuche, Country Director of WaterAid Uganda. (see page 2)

USAID Delegation Visited SKS' SHOUHARDO Program

A delegation of USAID visited the implementation of the *Strengthening Household Ability to Respond to Development Opportunities (SHOUHARDO) III Plus & DRR* program in Gaibandha on 13-14 June 2023. SKS Foundation is implementing the program with technical assistance from Care Bangladesh.

The delegation included Tofayel Alam, Project Management Specialist- Food, Disaster & Humanitarian Assistance; Mohammad Nazmul Hossain Bhuiyan, Project Management Specialist- Humanitarian Assistance; and Aklima Haque, Project Management Specialist- Private Sector Development.

The visit covered Gaibandha's *char* prevalent and river-scattered villages under Sundarganj and Fulchari upazila. The delegation looked into the shifting of the theme and modalities from *SHOUHARDO III Program* to "*SHOUHARDO III Plus* and DRR Program through facilitating approach for the sustainability of the achieved development and to capable the community to enhance their livelihoods status by learning from practices. They also inquired about the engagement of public and private sectors creating the demand from the target groups and communities. (see page 2)



The USAID delegation is holding a meeting with community people.