

'Indian river projects affecting BD'

Focus on open approach for water management

FE REPORT

Indian river inter-link projects and dams as well as adoption of dam-based water management (the cordon approach) for rivers here brought devastating consequences for Bangladesh's ecology and economy, speakers at a seminar observed.

The country's Delta Plan 2100 was also criticised by many speakers in the programme for adopting the cordon approach for water management as well as flood control.

The Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) organised the seminar on a book - "Water Development in Bangladesh: Past, Present and Future" - held at its conference room in the city on Thursday.

Dr S Nazrul Islam, Chief of Development Research of the UN Department of

.....
Continued to page 7 Col. 7

'Indian river projects

Continued from page 1 col. 2

Economic and Social Affairs, wrote the research-based book.

Speaking as the discussant, Dr Islam said the country's water development strategies were adopted more than 70 years back following the western agencies' cordon approach, which mainly focused on making dams. But the approach did not serve Bangladesh well.

Apart from this, the regional and global threats to Bangladeshi rivers made the condition worst.

He suggested that the way-out from this predicament is adoption of the open approach, based on natural solutions, following the recent strategies of the countries like USA.

The book also showed that the country's Delta Plan 2100 neglected the issue by adopting traditional methods for water management. For water security of Bangladesh, Dr Islam also urged the policy-makers to raise strong demand for dissolving the dams like Farakka or Gajoldoba, built by India at the upstream of the trans-boundary rivers.

Dr Shamsul Alam, state minister for planning, said the Delta Plan was initiated by taking into account the country's water security.

The plan was graphed in five years, involving a number of experts. But there is

option to adopt new and effective approaches in the plan. Dr Islam's research would be helpful for the Delta Plan, he noted.

Dr Zafrullah Chowdhury, founder of Ganashasthaya Kendra - who was present in the programme virtually, asked the government whether it has taken any initiative regarding the Gajoldoba dam and the ongoing dam in the upper Brahmaputra.

Dr Rehman Sobhan, chairman of the Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD), also participated in the conference online.

He opined that the book should be discussed further, and should be taken seriously by the policymakers.

Prof Sujit Kumar Bala, Institute of Water and Flood Management - Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), said water management methods should be scientific and people-friendly.

BIDS director general Dr Binayak Sen, while chairing the event, said dissent and debate in such a critical issue are always fruitful for people. Dr Islam's research has created a debate, which ultimately could help to adopt a time-befitting water management policy for the country, as it has been most vulnerable to natural disasters and climate change, he added.

tonmoy.wardad@gmail.com