

NGO-MFI Resourced Pooled Fund Launched

The 'NGO-Microfinance Institution (MFI) Resourced Pooled Fund' was launched in Bangladesh at a city hotel on 11 May 2026. SKS Foundation and 3 other partners of the Fund, namely Eco-Social Development Organization (ESDO), National Development Program (NDP), and People's Oriented Program Implementation (POPI), along with Start Hub Bangladesh, organized the event.



The Minister of LGRD&C and the Vice Chairman of MRA are unveiling the MoU.

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir, Minister, Ministry of LGRD&C, graced the launching ceremony as the Chief Guest. Md. Saidur Rahman Khan, Secretary, Ministry of Disaster Management & Relief; Professor Dr. Helal Uddin, Executive Vice Chairman of MRA; Dr. Mohammad Zakaria, Director General of NGO Affairs Bureau; and Zakir Ahmed Khan, Chairman of PKSf, attended the event as Special Guests. Dr. Md. Shahid Uz Zaman, Chairman of Start Hub Bangladesh, chaired the ceremony. Representatives from various development partners, international & national organizations, and officials from microfinance institutions attended the program.

Launching the Fund, the Minister said, "There is no alternative to public-private partnership in ensuring rapid and effective humanitarian assistance at the local level in disaster-prone Bangladesh. I hope the new fund will play an important role in enhancing the disaster-response capacity of marginalized communities and accelerating emergency assistance activities across the country." (See Page 3)

National Seminar on Water Rights in Bangladesh Held



The Chief Guest is addressing the audience, while a participant is taking part in the discussion (Inset).

FANSA Bangladesh and its secretariat, SKS Foundation, organized a National Seminar on Water Rights in Bangladesh jointly with CSIRS-UIU of United International University (UIU), and ITN-BUET. The Seminar was held on 25 April 2026 at United International University, Dhaka.

Farhad Hossain Azad, MP, the State Minister of the Ministry of Water Resources, was the Chief Guest. Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, a prominent economist and Executive Chairman of PPRC, was the Guest of Honor. Mohammad Saiful Islam Majumder, Joint Secretary, Policy Support Branch, was the Special Guest. Professor Dr. Md. Abul Kashem Mia, Vice Chancellor of United International University, presided over the Seminar. CSIRS-UIU Director Professor Dr. Md. Mujibur Rahman, and ITN-BUET Director Professor Dr. Rawshan Momtaz presented 2 keynotes in the Seminar.

The Chief Guest, in his speech, emphasized the importance of ensuring equitable & sustainable water distribution across the country. He called for strong collaboration between government institutions, academia, and civil society to ensure that water security is linked to national development and to support evidence-based policy.

The Guest of Honor emphasized the need to view the right to water not only as a resource issue, but also as a matter of social justice & good governance. The 7 panelists shed light on the need for a rights-based approach to water management in line with the theme of World Water Day 2026, 'Water and Gender: Where Water Flows, Equality Grows'. (See Page 3)

Job Seekers Connected with Employers

SKS Foundation connected trained young job seekers with employers through the 'Employment Fair 2026', organized under its *Recovery and Advancement of Informal Sector Employment (RAISE)* project with support from PKSf. The Fair was held on 9 May 2026 at Shadhinata Prangan in Gaibandha, bringing together job seekers, employers, trainers, and government officials.

Mohammad Masudur Rahman Molla, Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Gaibandha, inaugurated the Fair as the Chief Guest. Jadav Sarkar, ADC (General), was the Special Guest, with Joseph Halder, Director, Advocacy & Communication of SKS Foundation, in the chair. (See Page 3)



The Chief Guest is addressing the Fair, and job seekers are applying for jobs (Inset).

Public Gathering Against Child Marriage Held

SKS Foundation organized a public gathering against child marriage under its *Community-based Resilience, Women's Empowerment and Action (CREA)* project, supported by Manusher Jonno Foundation, on 16 April 2026 at Fulchari Government Pilot High School in Fulchari Upazila, Gaibandha.

Participants, including government officials, CBO representatives, community leaders & residents, and discussed the problem & highlighted the high prevalence of child marriage in remote *char* areas and identified the lack of accessible secondary schools as one of its major drivers. They explained that many adolescents, particularly girls, have limited opportunities to continue their education after completing primary school, increasing their vulnerability to early marriage.



The Chairperson is addressing the Gathering.

The speakers emphasized that enabling girls to continue their education is one of the most effective ways to

delay marriage and improve their future opportunities. They urged the authorities to establish more secondary schools in underserved *char* areas.

Md. Mostafizur Rahman, Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) of Fulchari, who attended the event as Chief Guest, said, "Although laws and penalties are already in place, stronger public awareness and active community participation are essential to making those measures effective."

FANSA-BD Supported the Open Budget

(From Page 4) The Open Budget Exercises were held in Fazlupur, Fulchari, and Muktinagar Unions of Gaibandha; Rowmari and Jatrapur Unions of Kurigram; Munshiganj Union of Satkhira; Bajua Union of Khulna; Kashipur Union of Barishal; and Bohuli Union of Sirajganj. The respective Union Parishads organized the Ward-Level Meetings and Open Budget Sessions in collaboration with local FANSA-BD members.

Conference on Women's Rights

(From Page 4) Discussions highlighted the challenges faced by women in Gaibandha, particularly those living in remote *char* areas, where social, economic, and environmental vulnerabilities contribute to higher rates of domestic and gender-based violence. Speakers emphasized the need for greater investment in women's rights initiatives, targeted support for marginalized women, and timely justice for survivors of violence. The Conference called for increased investment in women's rights and empowerment, targeted support for marginalized women, and stronger enforcement of the rule of law to address gender inequality and violence against women.

World Environment Day Observed

SKS Foundation observed World Environment Day 2026 through a series of awareness and environmental conservation activities. Held under this year's theme, "Inspired by Nature. For Climate. For Our Future.", SKS published a special supplement in a daily newspaper highlighting the significance of environmental conservation and climate action.



School children are receiving saplings at Ackha Govt. Primary School, Tanore, Rajshahi.

In Gaibandha, SKS organized discussion sessions and awareness rallies under the *School-led Community Resilience to Disaster and Climate Risks (SLCRDCR)* project. Held between 7 and 14 June 2026, the activities engaged students, teachers, parents, and members of Union Disaster Management Committees at 7 educational institutions across 5 unions of Sundarganj Upazila.

In Tanore Upazila of Rajshahi, SKS implemented a separate program under the *Extended Community Climate Change Project (ECCCP-Drought)*. Between 15 & 23 June 2026, the project distributed 5,000 tree saplings to 997 students and 53 teachers at 5 schools across 4 unions.

South Asia Grassroots Assembly Adopted

(From Page 4) Throughout the assembly, speakers emphasized that sustainable WASH services require community participation, inclusive governance and stronger partnerships among governments, civil society organizations and development partners. Discussions also highlighted the links between WASH, human rights, climate resilience, social justice and local leadership.

Sessions explored equitable and inclusive service delivery, community innovation and strategies for scaling locally developed solutions. Participants shared experiences on improving access to WASH services for marginalized groups living in informal settlements and climate-vulnerable communities.

The Assembly outlined the following 9 priority commitments:

- Institutionalizing community leadership in decision-making;
- Recognizing communities' lived experiences as credible evidence for policymaking;
- Making equity and inclusion central to WASH programming;
- Moving beyond consultation toward shared decision-making;
- Strengthening accountability to communities;
- Investing in people's capacities alongside infrastructure;
- Protecting the rights, dignity and safety of sanitation workers and frontline personnel;
- Recognizing and scaling community-generated knowledge and evidence; and
- Promoting local innovation while nurturing future community leaders.

Lessons-Learned Workshop on Rapid Response Held

SKS Foundation organized a lessons-learned workshop on the *Rapid Response for Storm-Affected Community* project. The Project provided emergency assistance to 300 storm-affected families in Rajahar Union of Gobindaganj Upazila, Gaibandha. Supported by Start Fund Bangladesh, the Workshop was held at SKS Inn, Gaibandha, on 7 May 2026.

Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO), was the Chief Guest. Rafiqul Islam, Chairman, Rajahar Union, was the Special Guest with Khondaker Zahid Shorwar, Deputy Director of SKS Foundation, in the chair.



District Relief & Rehabilitation Officer is speaking in the Workshop.

The participants pinpointed that timely damage assessment and accurate identification of affected households were fundamental to delivering rapid assistance. Alongside effective

coordination among government agencies, local representatives, community members, volunteers, and humanitarian organizations proved essential for ensuring a timely, transparent, and effective emergency response. Cash assistance with technical guidance worked for house repairing and psychosocial counselling helped affected families meet immediate needs, rebuild temporary shelters, and begin their recovery. The workshop recommended establishing emergency response and rapid damage assessment systems in all areas, regardless of whether they are traditionally considered disaster-prone.

The Chief Guest said, "Delivering assistance quickly after a disaster remains one of the biggest challenges, as emergency response demands rapid action and timely decision-making under pressure. Despite these challenges, SKS Foundation and Start Fund Bangladesh identified affected families and delivered assistance transparently and effectively within a very short time."

NGO-MFI Resourced Pooled Fund Launched

(From Page 1) The Minister said the joint fund, formed by leveraging the experience, institutional capacity, and grassroots engagement of local NGOs and microfinance institutions, would open a new horizon in humanitarian aid management, strengthening locally led humanitarian financing and making disaster response more effective, integrated & sustainable.

National Seminar on Water Rights

(From Page 1) The Chair emphasized that universities play a vital role in promoting research, innovation, and policy dialogue on water rights. He also expected this Seminar to make an important contribution to creating sustainable solutions for water management.

DRR & Adaptation Fair Held

SKS Foundation and CARE Bangladesh, with support from the District Administration, organized the Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Adaptation Fair 2026. The day-long fair was held at *Shadhinata Prangan* in Gaibandha on 19 May 2026 under



Deputy Commissioner of Gaibandha is addressing the audience.

SKS' *Promoting Disaster Ready Inclusive Preparedness towards Adaptation (PRODRIPTA)* project. The Fair featured information and photo exhibitions, discussion sessions, awareness dramas, exhibition stalls and quiz competitions.

Mohammad Masudur Rahman Molla, Deputy Commissioner (DC), inaugurated the Fair as the Chief Guest. Mohammad Shafiqul Islam, District Relief and Rehabilitation Officer (DRRO), and Md. Lokman Hossain, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Gaibandha Sadar, were present as Special Guests with Khondaker Zahid Shorwar, Deputy Director of SKS Foundation, in the chair. S. M. Jaglul Rajib, Program Manager of the PRODRIPTA and Humanitarian and Climate Action Program at CARE Bangladesh, delivered the welcome speech.

In his speech, the DC said, "Bangladesh has become a global role model in disaster management based on the close collaboration among government agencies, development organizations, and communities. However, DRR and adaptation measures remain essential to further strengthen the country's disaster preparedness." The Special Guests emphasized the importance of raising public awareness and strengthening links between disaster-affected communities and service providers.

Twenty GOs & NGOs participated in the Fair, setting up their exhibition stalls. The Fair strengthened disaster awareness and preparedness among community people.

Job Seekers Connected with Employers

(From Page 1) Addressing the audience, the DC encouraged young people to think beyond traditional employment. "You must think beyond finding jobs. You should think about creating opportunities not only for yourself but for others as well," he said.

The ADC (General) urged young people to prepare themselves for the future workplace, saying, "In today's highly competitive job market, continuous upskilling is the key to staying relevant and competitive."

Representatives from the employers and the trained entrepreneurs shared their inspiring experiences to encourage the job seekers to believe in themselves and pursue their dreams with determination.

The Employment Fair was organized for 865 young people having completed training in 12 different trades under SKS Foundation's RAISE project. Of them, 300 have already secured jobs, while 219 have become self-employed. The Employment Fair was targeted to connect the remaining trained job-seekers with potential employers. As many as 283 trained youth, including 180 males and 103 females, registered at the Fair, while 600 CVs were submitted. Fourteen, including national and local companies, participated in the Fair.

FANSA-BD Supported the Open Budget Exercise

Community members across different areas participated in a series of Ward-Level Meetings (pre-budget dialogues) and Open Budget Sessions aimed at promoting transparency, accountability, and citizens' participation in local government budget formulation for FY 2026-'27. SKS Foundation, the FANSA-BD Secretariat, supported the Open Budget Exercise under the *Rising for Rights* Project.

Nine Union Parishads conducted the Ward Level Meetings and the Open Budget Sessions in collaboration with FANSA Bangladesh network members between 7 and 30 June 2026. The Ward Level Meetings provided a platform for residents who placed their demand for water & sanitation facilities, plantation & plinth raising, road & embankment repairing, etc. The elected representatives, and CSO representatives, local allies, Women Forum, and Youth Forum members participated and discussed the local development priorities and recommended more inclusive and responsive public spending focusing on WASH & climate adaptation issues. (See Page 2)



An Open Budget Session is taking place at Bajua UP, Dakop, Khulna, and a Ward Meeting is taking place at 5 No. Ward of Muktinagar UP, Saghata, Gaibandha (Inset).

Conference on Women's Rights & Empowerment Held



Administrator of the Gaibandha Zila Parishad is addressing the audience.

SKS Foundation organized the Conference on Women's Rights & Empowerment under its *Supporting the Unity and Sustainability of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to Uphold Human Rights, National Integrity and Rule of Law in Bangladesh (SUSHIL)* project, supported by ActionAid Bangladesh on 15 June 2026, at A. Rahman Community Centre in Gaibandha. Around 200 participants, including government officials, development practitioners, civil society representatives, journalists, and women and youth leaders, participated.

Professor Dr. Syed Moinul Hasan Sadik, Administrator of the Gaibandha Zila Parishad, was the Chief Guest with Md. Murshidur Rahman Khan, President of the Gaibandha CSOs Hub and Executive Director of Chinnomul Mohila Samity in the chair. The Chief Guest said, "Women's contributions as caregivers, decision-makers, and educators are often undervalued. Ensuring women's safety requires coordinated efforts. Once the safety is secured, the benefits of ensuring women's safety extend beyond individuals, contributing to stronger families, resilient communities, and a safer society." (See Page 2)

South Asia Grassroots Assembly Adopted A 9-Point Kathmandu Declaration

South Asia Grassroots Assembly has adopted a 9-point declaration calling for stronger community leadership, inclusive governance and regional cooperation to improve WASH services across the region. The declaration was endorsed at the conclusion of the South Asia Grassroots Assembly, held in Kathmandu, Nepal, on 12-13 June 2026. The Regional Secretariat of the *Freshwater Action Network South Asia (FANSA)* organized the event.

Held under the theme "Be Seen. Be Heard. Lead Change," the Assembly brought together around 150 participants, including 100 community leaders from FANSA Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka Country Chapters, and Myanmar & Thailand to discuss community-led approaches to improving WASH services and promoting inclusive development. (See Page 2)



FANSA Regional Coordinator is announcing the Declaration of the Assembly.

