

February 2016

## MOEF Secretary Visited Southwest Region



The Honorable Secretary of Ministry of Environment and Forests of Bangladesh, Dr. Kamal Uddin Ahmed joined an orientation and material distribution ceremony for newly formed CPG groups under Satkhira range of Sundarbans held at the Kolagachia Forest Petrol Camp. Mr. Zahir Uddin Ahmed CF, Khulna Circle and other high officials of Forest Department of Khulna accompanied him.

The Honorable Secretary congratulated the CPG members for joining in the force. He noted that the cost of managing CPG was negligible in the real sense, because if CPG can successfully play their role, they will help to improve the Sundarbans beauty which in turn will help expand ecotourism and the subsequent income will be significant.

## DoF Hands over Jolmohals to RMO in Sreemongal

On 6 February 2016, 3 government-owned wetland areas (jolmohals) from Hail Haor in NE Bangladesh were handed over to local Resource Management Organizations (RMO) by the Department of Fisheries. This milestone is part of a larger effort by the USAID-funded Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) Project to entrust the stewardship of up to 30 jolmohals to similar community organizations in northeast Bangladesh, building on parallel wetland policy efforts. CREL supports previous USAID programs which have established effective community-level management processes for wetlands to achieve both biodiversity and livelihoods objectives. Ms. Parul Rani, elected Secretary of Khajura RMO, received the government document on behalf of her group. This group is part



of the 3 community RMOs first to receive jolmohals. Representatives of the DoF, Upazila, CNRS, Winrock and the communities were present at this ceremony. The community resource organization will manage jolmohals in a manner that will help ensure sustainable levels of fishing, conserve fish breeding stocks and preserve biodiversity of these wetlands.

## BPATC Considers Co-Management and NRM Curricula



USAID's CREL Project and the Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC) organized a "Main-streaming Climate Resilience of Ecosystems and Co-Management Approach in Development

Persuasion" workshop for 105 high government officers up to Joint Secretary level on January 21, 2016 at the BPATC to consider the inclusion of NRM and co-management in their current curricula.

Objective of this workshop was to reflect on the need and generate interest on incorporating these topics into their core course curricula. While BPATC already has climate change incorporated in their curricula, participants recommended NRM and Co-Management issues be incorporated into the course curricula and consider adding a separate short course on co-management.

## CREL Represented at Gobeshona Conference

The USAID's CREL Project hosted a session on Building Ecosystem Resilience to Climate Change at the annual Gobeshona Conference for Research on Climate Change in Bangladesh, held on 08-11 January 2016 at the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB). At the session, Md. Shams Uddin (Manager, Landscape Planning) and Ms. Shahzia Mohsin Khan (Manager, Improved Governance) jointly presented a keynote paper on Biodiversity and NRM. The presentation was based on CREL Project data that helps to better understand vulnerability in the Bangladesh context and the importance of ecosystems for building resilience.

Another paper on 'Local Adaptation Plans: Perspectives and Ownership of the Community' was also presented by Shekhar Kanti Ray (PRA & Local Planning Specialist) authored by Md. Shams Uddin, Shekhar Kanti Ray and Dr. Samarendra Karmakar (Vulnerability Assessment and Capacity Development Expert, CREL-BCAS). The paper was based on CREL experiences on the importance of local planning in climate change adaptation.

## Construction in the Southwest Region



they started a pond re-excitation work to support local fisheries of Purbo Kalinagar Village of Munshigonj Union to add a new source of drinking water and irrigation for the community where salinity is a major issue.

1.5 km road repair work has also started by Chandpai CMC in Chandpai site. Road repair and filling activities are in progress engaging 28 VCF members engaged as daily labours. This provides an alternative source of income for community members that further reduce pressure on forest resources.

The Co-management Committee (CMC) is responsible to coordinate environment and biodiversity related programs in their areas, including construction for such efforts. Recently

## Loss of a Conservation Hero

Baikka Beel, the wetlands sanctuary, lost a true hero, Mirash Mia, on November 15, 2015. Mirash, age 54, was an exceptional man. He grew up in poverty and physically challenged by polio. He devoted himself since his late 30's, to nature conservation activities in Baikka Beel. An active member of Borogangina Resource Management Organization, he spent most of his time in and around Baikka Beel sanctuary. Trained in bird watching and tourist management by USAID-funded MACH project, he served as an eco-guide in Baikka Beel for ten years during 2006-2015.

Whenever a visitor arrived at the Baikka Beel watchtower, he assisted them in spotting different bird species with a telescope and binoculars and provided a description of the key characteristic and behaviour of each species, demonstrating a level of expertise equal to a professional guide or experienced bird watcher. In this way, he has assisted thousands of local and foreign visitors at Baikka Beel Sanctuary over the past decade. He created a special bond between visitors, the wetland ecosystem and the local community through his strong commitment to the environmental and his personal journey of physical disability and poverty. Mirash's loss is irreplaceable. He has left behind a widow, two sons and a daughter of 11 years.



The Forest Department project director of CREL, Mr. Abdul Latif Mia, Conservator of Forests, Chittagong Circle, visited Hazarikhil and Nijhum Dweep to observe activities of CREL and CMC. He visited Hazarikhil CMC on 19 January and had a meeting with CMC members. The CMC president presented the activities of Hazarikhil CMC and their successes. Mr. Abdul Latif Mia appreciated the activities of CPGs in Hazarikhil Wildlife Sanctuary. He also visited horticulture demonstration plots maintained by CREL beneficiaries.

During his visit in Nijhum Dweep, he met Nijhum Dweep CMC members. He congratulated them as a new CMC and their quick interventions. The PD inspired the members of two CPGs in Nijhum Dweep to actively work to conserve the forest and biodiversity of Nijhum Dweep. He also expressed his expectations that the CMC would implement their activities in support of the Nijhum Dweep Annual Development Plan.

