The New Nation

~~The Bangladesh Times~~

NASA award for SPARRSO

New Nation Report

Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organisation (SPARRSO) yesterday became the first non-American space agency to receive the presitiutous Group Achievement Award from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

The SPARRSO was awarded a citation from the NASA on the successful implementation of its Agro-climatic Environmental Monitoring (ACEM) Project, launched last year with the help of NASA, national Oceanographic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA) and the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID).

Professor Erik 1. Mollo-Christiansen, chief of the laboratory for the oceans at NASA's Goddard Space Fight Centre (GSFC), handed the citation to SPARRSO's chairman Dr Faruq Aziz Khan at a simple ceremony at a local hotel yesterday.

The ceremony was addressed, among others, by Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed, DCMLA and Minister for Ports, shipping and IWTA, Lawrence B.Lesser, Charge d'Affaires, the United States Embassy in Dhaka, Anisuzzaman, defence Secretary, Ms Bonnie A.Pounds, acting chief, USAID, Bangladesh and Dr Faruq Aziz Khan, Chairman SPARRSO.

SPARRSO is playing a vital role with the imageries and data it receives from the NASA's LANDSAT satellite series and NOAA's geo-stationary weather satellites in tracking and monitoring of storms and a number of other agro-climatic fields.

The imageries from satelittes and the data from rivers and the Bay of Bengal-based platforms

Contd on page 8 col 4

Professor Erik L. Mollo-Christiansen, Chief of the Laboratory for Oceans at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) handing over the prestigious NASA/GSFC Group Achievement Award to Dr. Faruq Aziz Khan, Chairman, Bangladesh Space Research and Remote Sensing Organization (SPARRSO) yesterday at a local hotel. Also present on the occasion are: Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed DCMLA and Minister of Ports, Shipping and Inland Water Transport, chief guest at the award ceremony and Lawrence B. Lesser, Charge d'Affaires ad interim, US Embassy, Dhaka.

The New Nation

NASA award

Contd. from page 1

helps the SPARRSOS ACEM to provide a stream of information for determining rainfall, humidity advanced warning for flood, erosion in the rivers, pollution of water and management of water resources.

The most important role these informations are playing in Bangladesh is to manage and prepare inventory for its agriculture, plan land use and forestry. By analysing the muti spectrum imageries, the agronomists could determine how healthy the rice are growing, whether they need attention from pest attack or, irrigation and their approximate yield.

Everyday the SPORRSO receives twice such information and imageries' It passes on the weather information to the Meteriological Department.

A few days after the ACEM began functioning the imageries and pictures from satelilies helped SPARRSO and metriological department to correctly chart the course of the May 25 killer cyclone. The advance warning could be provided two days before the cyclone, whipping up tidal surge, hit the Bangladesh coast. Due to timely warning and measures taken by the government, thousands of people were evacuated to safety and the loss of life was limtted to remote 'offshore island and newly emerged lands along the Meghna estuary. Even the LANDSAT imageries and helpd track the development of the landmass that is slowly emerging from the Bay along the estuary.

Besides, the imageries are helping fishery projects and underlined the dangers of deforestation threatening desertification in the northern parts of the counyry coupled with decline in the flow of the Ganges Padma following commissioning of the Farakka Barrage.

Noting such varied performances and immense potentialities of benefits from the space-age technology and research Professor Christiansen gave a background of NASA's programme and said that it was aimed at benefitting the mankind.

recalling great traditions of Bangladeshi scientists down from Jagadish Chandra Bassu and Professor Satyen Bose of the Dhaka University, he also lauded SPARRSO scientists a number of whom had been trained in the United States by NASA to handle the space-age technology for the benefit of their countrymen.

Rear Admiral Sultan Ahmed thanked the USAID and the NASA for extending their helping hand to the ACEM project and said that it would further cement the existing strong ties of friendship and sincere feelings between the United States and Bangladesh

He said that by receiving the NASA award the first of its kind outside America the SPARRSO had not only made national impact but had also made signicant contributions towards international collaborative programmes. The Bangladesh grvernment attaches high priority to the progress and development of SPARRSO and look forward for its greater achievements in future, he said.

Rear Admiral Sultan furthre said that space techology had given Bangladesh a new field of commercial and scientific opportunity providing us with renewed confidence in the production potentials of our land.

He further said it is deeply satisfying that in this field the USAID has come forward to assist us in providing most sophisticated and modern facilities for monitoring analysing and archiving the satellite data on our environment. These data on agriculture, weather, flood, drought, marine and inland resources etc received at SPARROSO through the ACEMP facilities have amply proved their usefulness and potentiality.

Referring to benefits of US space technology down to the poor farmers in Bangladesh Lawrence B. Tesser said the origins of cooperation between the governments of the United States and Bangladesh go back to the earliest period since independence in 1971.

He reaffrmed that the US is committed to assisting the people of Bangladesh in fulfilling their plans for economic development. Sincr 1971 US bilateral support valued at more than two and a half billion dollars has gone to Bangladesh, beginning with the massive humanitarian relief programme right after Bangladesh gained its independence and continuing. with the development of projecs especially to increase agricultural production and the availability of food, reduce the population growth rate, and improve economic opportunity for the rural poor."

Mr Lesser further said, in addition the U.S. Government makes major contribution to multinational development institutions such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme).

Ms Bonnie, a pounds gave a resume of the US AID development assistance programme in Bangladesh which is the largest in Asia and one of the largest in the world helping implement a wide variety programmes in the areas of population, rural employment and agricultural production. Citing USAID help in acem project she said that sparrso's capabilities to receive and analyse data will be of value not only to Bangladesh, but also to other countries of the region.'

A documentary made by NASA on Setellites over Bangladesh was also shown on the occasion.