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Third phase of canal digging begins tomorrow

The third phase of canal digging programme to build a dry-season irrigation network on voluntary labour basis will begin throughout the country from November 1, reports BSS.

The Acting President, Mr. Justice Abdus Sattar will inaugurate the programme with a earth-cutting at Dhulori re-excavation projects near Kamalpur High School, six miles from the Faridpur town in the morning.

The third phase of the canal digging programme has been designed to bring 12 lakh acres of land under irrigation facilities to grow three crops a year. Repair and reconstruction of the projects executed in the first and the second phases would be the most important feature of the current phase.

According to Bangobhavan source, 589 schemes against a target of 600 schemes have so

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far been received from 19 districts. Schemes from Mymen singh and Patuakhali have yet to be received, the source added.

Two thousand maunds of wheat for each subdivision has already been released for the canal digging programme on the basis of 15 per cent of the total estimated cost for day labourers and landless peasants participating the programme.

Thousands of people particularly the members of Union Parishads, Swanirvar Gram Sarkars, Village Defence Parties, students and Social welfare workers will participate in the programme.

It may be recalled that late President Ziaur Rahman launched the special canal digging programme in 1979 to double food production as his first phase of "peaceful revolution."

The first and the second phases of the programme were executed under the direct leadership and supervision of the late President Ziaur Rahman which had already brought 21 lakh acres of land under irrigation facilities.

According to a conservative estimate if facilities from the already executed canals were utilised properly an additional 21 thousand tons of foodgrains are expected every year.

When the projects under the third phase would be completed another 12 lakh tons of additional production would add up from next year.

The voluntary canal digging programme which costs a minimum cash expenditure for developing a round-the-year irrigation system to double food production in the country has earned name and fame at home and abroad.

At home initially, the programme received criticism from the opposition political parties.

Besides providing necessary irrigation waters the canals would provide an easy waterway for carrying agricultural products from one place to another and drainout excess flood waters.

Pisciculture in the canal water, plantation on either side of the canals, poultry farming, duck keeping are the other facilities of the canal digging programme.

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