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## Country-wide canal digging opens today

The second chapter of canal digging programme under the first phase of peaceful revolution begins today (Friday) with the inauguration of earth works on 50 of the 581 approved schemes for the current year, reports BSS.

Tens of thousands of people will join President Ziaur Rahman in the dig-off on the first day of the programme in four districts-Dinajpur, Rangpur

Bogra and Tangail and millions more will continue off-again and on-again till the execution of these schemes.

Many more thousands will volunteer their labour for other 46 canals beginning on Saturday in other parts of the country.

The process continues till all these schemes are excavated.

Earth works for the remaining canals to make them deep and wide would start as soon as their physical conditions become favourable or muds in the project areas are dug-hened into workable clay.

Approximately one crore members of the Village Defence Party (VDP) will be among the several other crores of volunteers including landless peasants teachers students, ansars and officials who will participate in these schemes.

Government allocation on the basis of 15 per cent of the estimated cost for these projects is five lakh maunds of wheat. The cash grant for purchasing spades and baskets, and other incidental expenditure is Taka one and-a-half crore.

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Wheat at the rate of one thousand maunds for each sub-division have already been released from the godowns of the Food Department. This allocation is meant for landless peasant and day labourers participating in the projects.

The per-head allocation of wheat for the poor and the landless peasants is three seers for a 70 CFT earth work.

The earth work to be inaugurated by President Ziaur Rahman on the opening day will be at Chirir Nadi project at Dinajpur Rangpur-Kurigram roadside canal in Rangpur; Ghahai-Chandibar roadside canal in Bogra and Naera re-excavation project in Tangail.

The target of canal digging for the year under voluntary canal digging programme is 700; of which 581 canal had been already been approved by the experts from Bangladesh Water Development Board (BWDB) and Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) in consultation with the district and sub-divisional administrations.

The approved schemes are: 106 in Dacca; 147 in Chittagong; 107 in Rajshahi and 221 in Khulna divisions.

When completed, these 700 canals are expected to provide irrigation coverage to fifteen lakh acres of land to grow at least three crops including two paddy crops annually.

Under the first phase of the

peaceful revolution; 193 canals were dug in different parts of the country bringing six lakh acres of land under irrigation facilities last year.

The canals besides providing irrigation facilities have expanded drainage system and communication net work. Agriculture in the canal and plantation on the roads and embankments are the added benefit.