

# 9,325 Posts of Teachers Lying Vacant

Star Report

A total of 9,325 posts of teachers are now lying vacant in government schools and colleges of the country. 4533 and 2099 posts of teachers are lying vacant in primary and secondary schools and 2693 others in colleges.

Education Minister Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury stated this in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) during its first session which was concluded on May 15.

Replying to a question from Sheikh Harunur Rashid of Bangladesh Awami League he said that recruitments against vacant posts of lecturers will be made through the Public Service Commission. The Commission has taken steps in this regard. The vacant posts will be filled as and when a list

of selected candidates will be available.

In reply to a question from M Akbar Ali of BNP he said the vacant posts of assistant professors, associate professors and professors will be filled through promotion, he said.

Dr Chowdhury said steps were underway also to recruit teachers against the vacancies in primary and secondary schools.

Answering another question from Salahuddin Quader Chowdhury of National Democratic Party the Education Minister said the government has a plan to set up 4032 new primary schools all over the country during the Fourth Five Year Plan period.

Out of the total new schools to be set up, 1152 will be in Chittagong division. New schools will be set up in 'unschooled areas' on the basis of recommendations of the Schools Mapping Programme, he said.

The Education Minister said that there are 662 private colleges, 10,258 private secondary schools and 5773 private madrasahs in the country.

Replying to a question put by Md Abdus Sahid of Bangladesh Awami League he said that teachers of 597 private colleges, 9827 private secondary schools and 4767 private madrasahs are getting 70 per cent of their salary, and 20 per cent dearness al-

lowance from the government. Granting of similar benefits to teachers of the remaining privately managed schools, colleges and madrasahs are under consideration of the government, he said.

He informed the House that the government has no plan to nationalise private schools, colleges and madrasahs. At present there are 297 government secondary schools, 10 government higher secondary schools, and 196 government colleges.

Answering another question he informed the Parliament that between 1982 and 1990 1168 primary schools, 122 secondary schools and 105 colleges were nationalised.

The Education Minister told the Parliament that the government has started preparatory works for implementing the Compulsory Primary Education Act of 1990 from the current year. An implementation and monitoring cell has been opened under the Ministry of Education for the purpose.

Replying to a question from Principal Nazrul Islam of Awami League he said that steps have been taken to pay honorarium to four teachers each of 6426 registered primary schools from January to December 1991 at the rate of Taka 500 per teacher per month in keeping with the provisions of the Compulsory Primary Education Act.

## UNESCO Books on Communication

- O Methods of communication planning**  
edited by John Middleton and Dan J. Wedemeyer  
(Monographs on communication planning, 3)  
1985, 487 pp., figs., tables  
ISBN 92-3-102112-5  
100 FF  
This is a book for communication planners engaged in the process of creating, allocating and using communication resources to achieve social and economic goals. It defines 'communication planning' both from current real-world experience and from a conceptual point of view, and describes a wide range of planning methods that are useful for communication planners working with different types of communication systems. The book reviews five essential elements of planning identified as fundamental to all planning processes: analysis, strategy development, decision, action and learning.
- O Video world-wide**  
an international study edited by Manuel Alvarado  
1988, xiii+ 328 pp., tables  
ISBN 92-3-102521-X  
225 FF  
Co-publication: John Libbey, London/Unesco. John Libbey has exclusive sales rights in the UK.  
A study of the global distribution of video hardware and software which presents a unique body of data and should be of enormous use to those with a professional, commercial and academic interest in the future of video. Never before has so much information about video been brought together in a single volume.
- O The vigilant press: a collection of case studies**  
(Reports and papers on mass communication, 103)  
1989, 116 pp., tables  
ISBN 92-3-102623-2  
38 FF  
Covers a variety of areas relevant to the international debate on freedom of expression and information.
- O Violence and terror in the mass media**  
by George Gerbner  
(Reports and papers on mass communication, 102)  
1989, 45 pp., tables  
ISBN 92-3-102603-8  
20 FF  
A report which reviews research on policies that guide depictions of violence and terror in the media, their extent and nature. It also examines public exposure to such content and its consequences for thinking, action, and policy.
- O Women and media decision-making: the invisible barriers**  
1987, 121 pp., tables  
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38 FF  
Contains case studies on professional women in broadcasting in five countries: Canada, Egypt, Ecuador, India and Nigeria.
- O World communication report**  
1989, 576 pp.  
ISBN 92-3-102628-3  
345 FF  
World communication report, an initiative of Unesco's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC), is a global survey of communication development; a wide-ranging, factual report, it is designed as a reference tool for policy-makers, planners and practitioners.
- O Communication in the community**  
An international study on the role of the mass media in seven communities  
(Reports and papers on mass communication, special issue)  
1982, 85 pp., figs., tables  
ISBN 92-3-101679-2  
14 FF
- O Communication planning for development: an operational framework**  
by A. Hancock  
(Monographs on communication planning, 2)  
1980, 198 pp., illus.  
ISBN 92-3-101786-1  
40 FF
- O Community communications**  
The role of community media in development  
by Frances J. Berrigan, May 1979  
(Reports and papers on mass communication, 90)  
1981, 50 pp.  
ISBN 92-3-101771-3
- O The new international economic order: links between economics and communication**  
by Breda Pavlic and Cees J. Hamelink  
(Reports and papers on mass communication, 98)  
1985, 65 pp., tables  
ISBN 92-3-102311-X  
20 FF  
An analysis of the relationship between a new international economic order, the steps taken towards its implementation, the various shifts and deepening of perspective that have been observed, this book attempts to define more clearly the contribution that information and communication can make towards the establishment of a new economic order.
- O Sound production: technical notes for the non-technician**  
by Michael Roberts  
(Monographs on communication technology and utilization, 8)  
1986, xi+178 pp., figs., tables  
ISBN 92-3-102299-7  
46 FF  
The significance of the thickness of glass panes in a studio...the advantage of a three-head over a two-head tape-recorder...when rigid technical specifications can be relaxed without sacrificing programme quality...when expensive equipment is worth the investment. These are among the many problems faced by prospective studio planners. And these are some of the questions that this monograph seeks to answer in simple language, easily understood by the non-technician with only a minimal background in physics, mathematics or electronics.
- O Technology transfer and communication**  
edited by Alan Hancock  
(Monographs on communication planning, 4)  
1984, 385 pp.,  
ISBN 92-3-102176-1  
65 FF  
A collection of essays which deals not only with communication technologies, but models of programme development, offering as key case-studies: broadcasting in India and the Andean countries; the United Kingdom as a source of broadcasting technology; the transfer of Sesame Street to Latin America; radio programming in Thailand. Examining such factors as colonial influences, commercial manufacturers, external media corporations and transnational corporations; it tries to chart a course towards self-sufficiency, especially in the development of local technological forms.

## Khulna Varsity to Be Ready By 1995

Star Report

The Khulna University Project is expected to be completed by June 1995, according to the project document, Education Minister Dr Badruddoza Chowdhury has said.

A master plan and an architectural plan of buildings of the university have been approved. Construction of a second floor on the abandoned building of Radio Bangladesh is in progress.

The Education Minister informed the parliament during its recent session that the construction of an academic building and a hall (student dormitory) has also been undertaken. He was answering to a ques-

tion from AL member Salahuddin Yusuf.

**Shahjalal University**  
He said that the government has sanctioned an amount of Taka 96 crore for the Shahjalal University of Science and Technology since the 1986-87 fiscal year when construction works started.

Admission of students to the university was started from the current (1990-91) year. So far classes have been started in four disciplines: Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Statistics and Economics.

At the moment there is no plan to offer course in any new

discipline. However, seven schools of studies will be opened under the university in future, and under those schools many new courses will be offered.

The schools to be opened under the university will include: a School of Physical Sciences, School of Life Sciences, Agriculture and Technology; School of Social Sciences.

Management and Business Administration; and an Institute of Modern Languages, the minister said in reply to questions put by Ebadur Rahman Chowdhury and Nowab Abbas Ali Khan of Jatiya Party.



A Dhaka University student of Pharmacy attending a practical class. —Star Photo

## Microcomputers Support New Forms of Literacy

Kenneth Levine

In a century of almost continuous technological innovation affecting all the major media of human communication, the last decade has been particularly marked by rapid and striking developments in telecommunications and the power and cost-effectiveness of computers. Until recently, the inculcation of reading and writing skills has been the pre-eminent and unchallenged objective of almost all programmes of basic education the world over, but it is natural that sophisticated technical developments should prompt some reflection about the future significance of literacy, for both individuals and societies.

Among the many issues that arise, we can usefully concentrate our attention, in turn, on three. Do 'traditional' literacy and the medium of print retain their importance in the face of competition from new modes of transmitting information, and if so, how will they be altered? What degree of change is likely to take place in the level and spread of skills constituting literacy? Should the new media be seen as benign and potentially democratizing forces, or as sinister additions to the armouries of already powerful elites and bureaucracies? We can simplify our task somewhat by selecting the impact of the personal computer on literacy as the main example under scrutiny.

Before tackling these specific questions, there are two preliminary considerations of a general kind. The first is an obstacle to sound reasoning that must be removed. Many of the forecasts and scenarios that are being dispensed by contemporary commentators contain a debilitating flaw in their analysis. They assume that the new technologies usher in a set of predetermined social and economic consequences that are universal and irresistible—and assumption often referred to as 'technological determinism.'

Many of the scenarios, whether optimistic or pessimistic in tone, consist of the extrapolation and generalization of trends from a particular technical development in a particular society. In predicting what will happen when that technology emerges in, or is transferred to, other societies, little or no allowance is made for the mediation of local economic, political and social

processes.

The second consideration relates to literacy itself. Literacy is not a unified skill but a plurality of different capacities. A pedant would insist that we speak always of 'literacies' in an effort to accommodate the fact, for example, that people 'literate' by all of the conventional benchmarks may nevertheless not be able to read or write in 'foreign' languages, or even use many of the specialist applications of writing and print available in their own natural language (for example, notations for music or chemical compounds, phonetic alphabets, proof-reading marks, maps, timetables, engineering plans, meta-languages for logical, mathematical or computing purposes).

One of the indirect impacts of new technologies is that they alter prevailing social definitions of the skills (and the level of the skills) that constitute literacy. It is important clearly to distinguish improving or declining rates of literacy from shifts in the way in which it is being conceived and defined.

Let us now take up the question of the durability of traditional literacy. One reliable measure of its continued importance is the level of consumption of printed paper, which has shown steady increases in both developed and developing societies over the past decade. Partly through its close connection with technologies of bureaucratic organization and project management, the incorporation of reading and writing into all spheres of life and into a vast assortment of mundane transactions is at work on a global scale. The situation is broadly similar for 'serious' writing and publication. Despite the forecasts that have been repeatedly made over the last fifty years concerning the imminent eclipse of 'book cultures', the statistics show that the market for conventionally published works has held up in the face of the expansion of ostensibly 'rival' media such as recorded music, television and video.

**Drudgery of writing to go**  
There are several reasons for viewing the advent of micro-computers as an important support for the literacy/print combination. The potential of this kind of equipment as a literacy aid, mainly within the

framework of conventional schooling, has been recognized for some years. Unfortunately, the first generations of computer software for use in literacy training were, in general, pedestrian in conception, offering little more than drill exercises on a display screen rather than on paper. The greatest contribution to literacy studies so far has come from word processing software which has eliminated much of the drudgery associated in the past with the creation of finely-tuned and error-free texts, allowing the novice and the experienced author alike to concentrate on the creative process and to experiment freely.

Spelling checkers, now often integrated with word processing software, represent a useful half-way house on the road to high-level literacy: they allow the learner to eliminate errors (and mistypes) that would, if uncorrected, detract from the polish and authority of the resulting text. In future, grammar and style checkers will extend this kind of facility, although at present they are

generally crude and unreliable. As significantly more powerful hardware and software become available, the quality of such aids will improve drastically. Many creative possibilities are also opened up by the way in which the micro-computer can be used as the heart of a 'hypermedia' system—that is to say, as the device that controls the generation of a 'performance' involving text, graphics and sound that is structured interactively according to the responses of the learner to the programme.

**New ways of learning**  
The linking of micro-computers to telecommunications networks is another area of immense potential, particularly for the study of foreign languages. Pupils can send messages to their peers across continents quickly and relatively cheaply, adding spice and interest to language studies and frequently providing the contacts that lead to collaboration on projects and exchanges of personnel. This kind of 'electronic mail', which involves an amalgam of the characteristics of face to face interaction, telephone contact and letter writing, has the hallmarks of a distinctive medium of communication with a unique blend of intimacy, informality and distance.

One of the most important characteristics of these latter developments is that they promote a participative form of learning; they permit (and frequently require) the learner to have a pro-active role in decisions about how the pedagogic project is to be approached, and they are generally congruent with a philosophy of releasing the learning process, as far as possible, from the physical boundaries of any specific educational institution.

The next issue concerning possible changes in the constituent skills of literacy is an important one with two principal aspects. The first is that change in the print-bearing medium does directly alter the character of reading and writing skills, but in most cases, only at the margins. Thus, to the extent that micro-computers become standard class-

room teaching aids, some elements of 'computer literacy' such as familiarity with keyboards and basic knowledge of the capacities of word processing systems and their associated equipment will increasingly be incorporated into popular expectations of what literacy signifies, in much the same way as use of the electronic calculator is being assimilated into notions of numeracy.

The second aspect concerns the probability that, in many societies, 'inflation' will lead to a rise in the threshold of the minimum acceptable standard of reading and writing (a standard often referred to as 'functional literacy'). This inflation occurs because literacy is never a purely instrumental skill; possession or lack of it universally carries implications for the individual's social standing, so there is a tendency to seek the highest level of attainment possible, irrespective of the difficulty of the materials that will be written or read.

Literacy is also the means to gaining educational qualifications that can secure entry to remunerative and prestigious forms of employment. In the face of competition, some candidates for such posts will choose to invest in higher levels of literacy in order to acquire the advanced qualifications that give them an advantage over their rivals. Over time, others will copy their example, until everyone finishes up in their original relative positions. To achieve any advantage, an individual must now make a further investment in literacy and qualifications, fuelling an inflationary spiral of standards. The general implication of this spiral is that there will be a need to enhance the attainment targets in many programmes of basic education and also to offer more comprehensive provision for intermediate and advanced language studies.

Finally, are the new technologies essentially democratic and egalitarian, or threats to civil liberties and personal freedoms? It has been argued, for example, that tools such as desk-top publishing, which can greatly facilitate the production of low-cost documentation such as newsletters and teaching materials, will empower many marginal and scattered minority groups, giving them for the first time a collective voice and identity. It has equally been argued that the capacity of national governments to acquire the most powerful available means of information storage and processing leads to ever greater dangers of centralized control and cultural uniformity.

## Telephone Pagers Pose Problem to UAE Schools

**ABU DHABI (AFP)**: After absenteeism, glue sniffing and juvenile delinquency, schools in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are facing a new problem — buzzing telephone pagers.

The education ministry says the number of students carrying beepers in class has increased to such an alarming level that it is considering action. It is a dangerous trend which is creating havoc in the class, said Aisha Al-Jalama, head of the ministry's Social Services Department.

The use of pagers, portable devices that alert their owners to a telephone call, has spread dramatically in the UAE over the past two years.

High income brought about by the country's oil wealth has also enabled many UAE residents to install telephones in their cars, and there are plans to introduce screen telephones.

Apart from the noise, pagers are also forcing students to leave class. Many students have

been asking for permission to use their car phones to respond to the beep, Ms. Aisha said.

She said the problem would be discussed with parents.

But an Education Ministry official said they could not stop the students from carrying beepers because many of them come with good reasons for keeping the device.

**Second Rate Education in United States?**  
WASHINGTON (Reuters): A second rate educational system is the most serious long term problem facing the US economy President George Bush's top economic adviser said recently.

The Council of Economic Advisers annual report said US elementary and secondary school plagued by bureaucracy and mediocrity were producing graduates who could not compete with their counterparts in the rest of the world.

'Our kids are not doing as well on educational tests we all

know,' Michael Bosking, chairman of the council, told a news conference at which he presented the report.

If they do not continue to learn as much or more as their peers abroad, they won't be able to earn more than their peers abroad in the future, Bosking said.

He said education was the most important long run problem because a high quality workforce would be the single most important fact determining the health of the American economy on average two to three decades from now.

In their report, the White House economic advisers took the unusual step of devoting a separate chapter to education.

They said high school students were consistently performing far below their foreign counterparts especially in their knowledge of mathematics and science.

Even the best US students do not compare favourably with foreign students, the report said.