

DCC gyms unable to attract members

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The Dhaka City Corporation (DCC)'s gymnasiums are failing to attract people to come and do physical work out although they charge much less than privately owned gyms.

The DCC has 16 gymnasiums in the city which remain open for members in two shifts – from 6am to 9am in morning and 3pm to 8pm in the evening. However, membership at these facilities is decreasing gradually as they are unable to offer proper equipment and atmosphere.

"We had 81 members enrolled in this gymnasium. But at present hardly 15 to 20 people turn up for exercising," said Aminul Islam, a student who works out at the DCC

Mohammadpur Sharir Charcha Kendra.

"The gym I go to was inaugurated in 1985 and the exercise equipment have remained the same and no new apparatus added," said HM Zahed, a member of a DCC Sharir Charcha Kendra. "Some times we feel apprehensive about using aged instruments as they may cause accidents."

Instructors are also not available in DCC gyms. Only six among the 16 DCC gyms have designated instructors. Moreover, in some gyms they exist only on papers and the members hardly ever see them. Some members said they are unable to compete in bodybuilding competitions as there is no one to guide them.

"It is only because of the fees

that I continue to come here," said a member of a gym. "Private gyms charge very high amounts but members at DCC gyms have to pay only 50 Taka per month."

The shabby condition of most DCC gyms is another reason that prevents people from going there. "There is no electricity connection here. We have somehow managed an illegal connection," said one member of a gym. Unavailability of drinking water and lack of cleanliness add to the woes of members. "There are health conscious people in the locality who want to exercise regularly but do not show up here due to these disadvantages," said Kazi Fazlul Haque, member of a DCC gym.

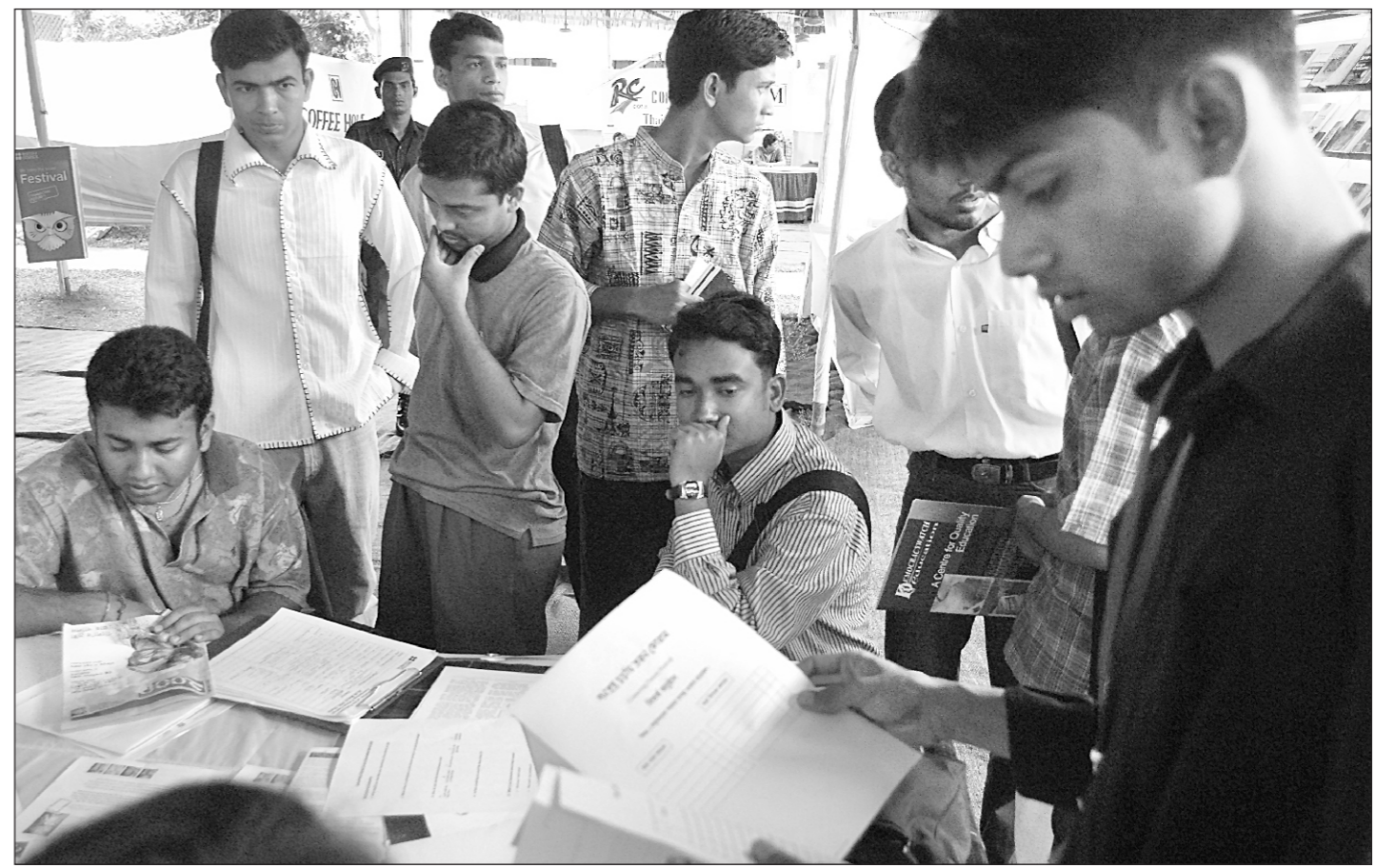
Three of the 16 DCC gyms are situated in Azimpur,

Mohammadpur and Jannatbagh. Rest of them are in the old part of Dhaka in Wari, Sadarghat, Moulvibazar, Farashganj, Sharafganj, Bahadurpur, Sutrapur, Lalbagh, Amligola, Katara, Nababganj, Lalkuti and Najirabazar. All the gyms are for men with the exception of the Lalkuthi Sharir Charcha Kendra at Farashganj which allows women to become members. Among the gyms, the ones at Najirabazar and Farashganj have modern equipment only.

"We can afford a very small amount for gyms in our annual budget due to financial constraints," said a high official of the DCC when asked about the struggling gymnasiums.



A few members continue to patronise the DCC Gymnasium in Mohammadpur, though in a shabby state.



A section of the local crowd that participated in the exchange programme ponder over documents on various issues.

'Connecting futures' boost global citizenship

CITY CORRESPONDENT

The five-day long two-way exchange programme 'Connecting futures', between UK and Bangladesh youth, which began on March 25, attracted many Bangladeshi youngsters.

The festival held at the Dhaka British Council (BC) premises concluded yesterday.

A few students were brought in from the UK to participate in the event and some Bangladeshi students will visit UK in May to participate in a counter 'exchange of views' programme.

Different UK participating organisations like the Scottish Youth Parliament, Student Council of the University of Bath, Changemakers UK and World Literature Centre in

London were joined by local partners like Working for Better Life, Democracywatch, Centre for Development Communication, Centre for Development and Policy Studies (CCDPS), Centre for Communication and Development, Tarunya and the 17 BC group.

Organised by the British Council the event aimed at creating a platform for young people of both nations to share and learn in the form of discussions, projects, workshops and mutual understanding and to appreciate cultural diversity, know about human rights, gender equity and democratic values. The whole idea was to therefore harvest on the broader term 'global citizenship'.

The event was divided to components like Adda (an informal social gathering) to create mutual

respect and understanding. Parliamentary debates for cultural appreciation, youth forum for democracy, developing life skills and leadership through dialogue and training, theatre in education for HIV/AIDS awareness among young people, photography, creative art and more.

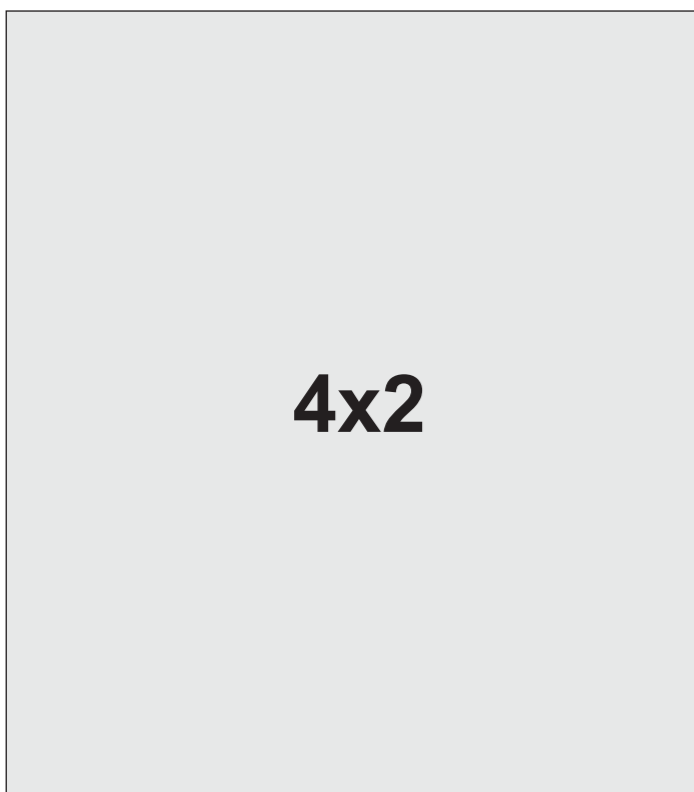
Beth Mander, a first year economics and international studies student from Bath University said: "The discussions here were interesting as we gained a lot of knowledge. Politics in education, political power to rid students of their accommodation and suppressing women were few of the alarming facts that we got to know from discussions. Knowledge of cultural differences was extremely interesting".

UK participants had painted

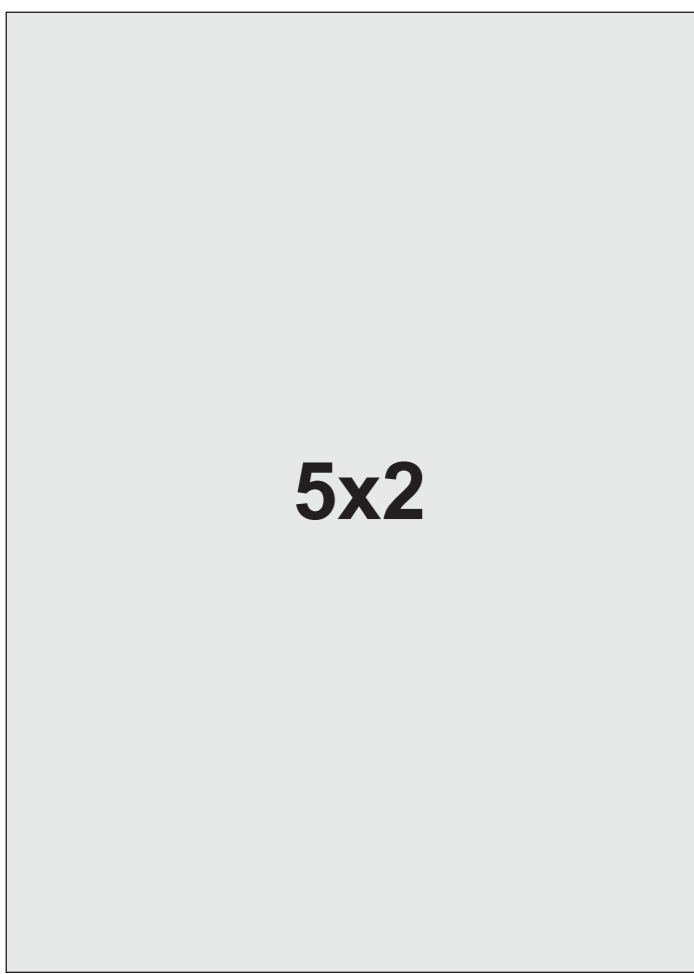
their faces with colourful emblems and Bangladesh's flag. This showed how friendly the atmosphere was, as they mingled with each other.

Syed Rabiush Shams, program executive of Center for Communication Development and Policy Studies (CCDPS) one of the organisers, and Natasha Ishrat Kabir, an international relations student of Jahangirnagar University said that events like these not only promoted international contacts and communication, it also created a platform for students out of Dhaka to exchange views.

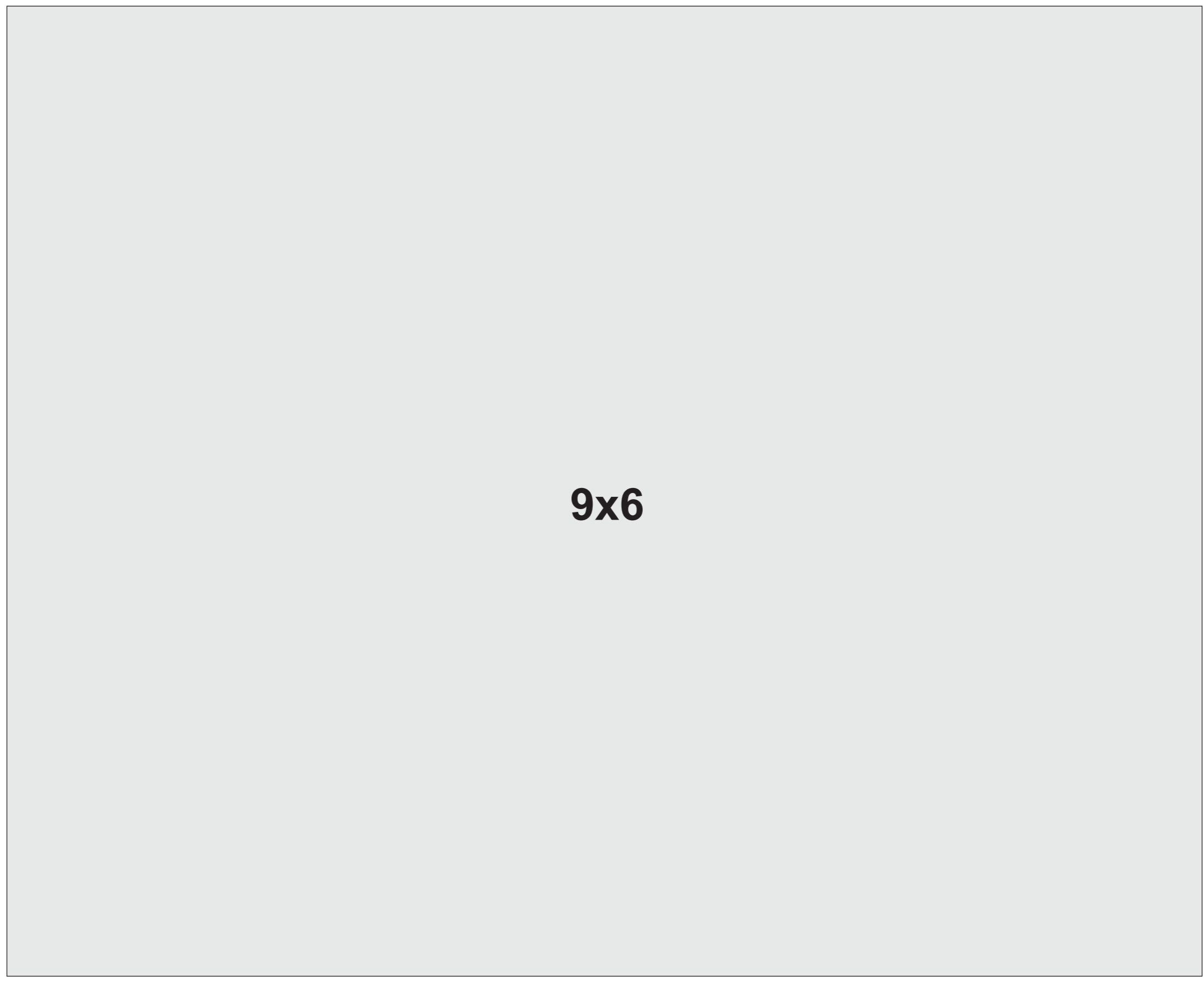
Most participating students from both nations felt and expressed that when the world is gaining on political violence, racial discriminations and others, these events are major boost in promoting global citizenship.



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