

KAJOLI EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING MODEL

An effective way to teach poorest children

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The method is innovative, low-cost, participatory and pro-poor. The Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB) has evolved it, aiming to bring the children of ultra-poor families across the country to one-year pre-school programme where they play, have fun, learn to read and write, and learn manners and about cleanliness.

The method is titled "Kajoli Early Childhood Learning Model" that the RIB identified as an effective way to teach the poorest children after a one-year research and practice for another one year in 2003.

Prof Bashir Ahmed of Langalbandhi Degree College conducted the research with the support of the RIB at village Kajoli in Sreepur Upazila, Magura and developed the model, which was put into practice in different parts of the country through establishment of Early Childhood Learning Centres.

Renowned educationists, organisers, teachers and the ambassador of the Netherlands lauded the model at a Children's Fair held on the RIB office premises in the city yesterday. About 100 children of the learning centres, their teachers and organisers gathered at the fair and demonstrated how the method works.

Under the model, each learning centre will have 26 five-year-old children, a teacher, a black board, a pocket board, pocket cards with pictures and letters, chalks and toys. The centre can be set up at any house -- in the living room or veranda -- or in the rooms or huts made by the community people or unused space at local public buildings.

The Kajoli model is totally different from the traditional



PHOTO: STAR
A teacher demonstrates how the children learn to read and write under the Kajoli Early Childhood Learning Model at a Children's Fair held on the premises of The Research Initiatives, Bangladesh (RIB) in the city yesterday.

system of memorising letters and learning to read and write. The teachers of the centres first show the children pictures of different objects and animals with their names in Bangla on them and then check if the children can identify those later. The teachers never treat them with harshness. Rather, they develop a warm relation with the children and tell them stories.

"As a result, the children become very fond of their teachers. They also complain to the teachers if they are maltreated by others, even by their parents," said Josna Ara, an organiser of a centre in Sakhira.

People like Josna who first take the initiatives of setting up of such schools are called 'champions'. They promote the importance of the

centres to the local community and mobilises support, which is the key to the success of the centres.

Sharing her experiences, Josna said that the men in her area do not work very much, rather the women of the poor families work outside. As a result, their children remain uncared for.

"When I first informed the local people of the Kajoli model, they did not accept the idea. But when I started the school with some children, they were happy. Other mothers also came forward with the proposals of including their children in the programme."

Ismat Jahan Lipi, a teacher of a centre at Abhaa office in Barisal, said the children first learn how to read and write and at the end of the

one-year programme they can tell and identify the letters and numbers.

As per the rules, the teacher should be a female and have the ability to read, write and count. They have to spend at least four hours with the children at the centre. The local community in consultation among themselves will collect a minimum of Tk 500 to pay the teacher as her monthly salary, explained RIB Chairman Shamsul Bari at the inaugural session of the Children's Fair.

Mothers of the children who usually suffer from malnourishment cook 'khichuri' (a popular and nutritious Bangla dish with rice, pulse and vegetable) once a month in turn and feed all the children.

"The involvement of mothers ensures that the mothers develop deep bonds with not only their own children but also other children. Through the social interactions, they learn to care for and bear the burden of others, which is a great human quality," Shamsul Bari said.

There are more than 100 such centres across the country and about 3,000 children are taking part in the programme. No financial support from RIB is given to the schools, except some start-up money, Bari said, adding that the total idea will be destroyed if these schools are funded like the NGOs.

Lauding the Kajoli model, noted educationist Muhammad Zafar Iqbal said the children after completing the one-year programme can also be entitled to government scholarships meant for 40 percent of the children of a primary school, who are poor and meritorious and maintaining regular attendance.

"Different primary and high schools for these disadvantaged children can also be considered," he told The Daily Star. Otherwise, there is a possibility of them dropping out of the track and entering hazardous child labour markets, he added.

Speaking as the chief guest, Ambassador of the Netherlands Kees Beemsterboer said, "This is a clear sign of the commitment to change the lives and do everything possible to give the children a better future. The RIB can contribute to poverty reduction through this programme."

RIB Director for Research and Programme Dr Korban Ali said that every year about 74 lakh children could not enrol in the primary schools. "The real development will not take place unless they are merged with the mainstream education."

Integrate human resources with economic, military strength: Khaleda

Bss, Chittagong

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia yesterday stressed proper integration of the country's huge human resources with its economic and military strength to attain a prestigious position on the world map.

"Economic and military strength is one of the yardsticks of a state's supremacy, she said in her address on the occasion of the President Parade, marking the commissioning of gentlemen and gentlewomen cadets of the 53rd BMA long course and 24th BMA special course at Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) parade ground at Bhatiari here.

Khaleda, who also holds the defence portfolio, termed "the army as the symbol of our independence and sovereignty" and said it came into being through the War of Liberation.

Referring to the current month of the historic victory, she recalled the contribution of the army to the War of Liberation and paid tributes to the soldiers, who sacrificed their lives for independence, and prayed for eternal peace of their souls.

The prime minister hoped that the young officers would get inspiration from the supreme sacrifices of the martyrs.

Members of the army are inseparable part of the people and partners of their sorrows and happiness, she

said and referred to the role of the army in maintaining the law and order, facing natural calamities and socio-economic progress of the country.

"The wind of peace and development is still blowing in the Chittagong Hill Tracts due to the sacrifice and courageous role of members of the army," she said.

Khaleda also noted the role of Bangladesh Army in UN peace

mission and said their success brightened the face of the country abroad.

Bangladesh is recognised as a liberal, development-desiring and peace-loving country in the present world, she said and added the country has earned a position of honour in different regional and international forums.

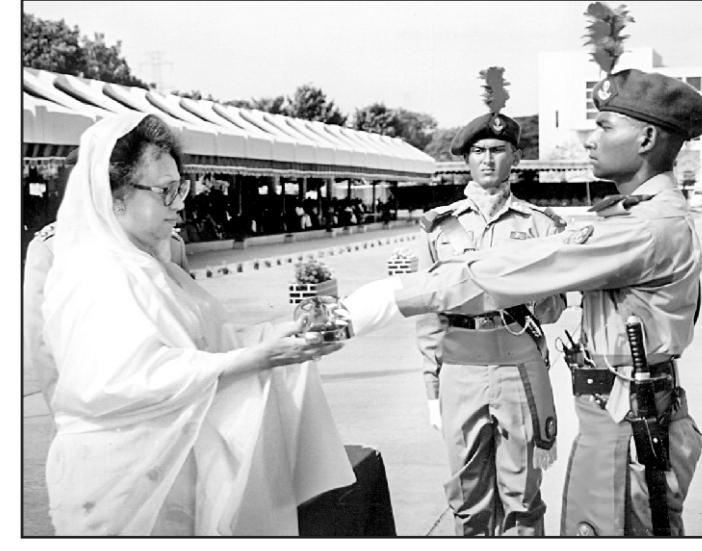


PHOTO: PID

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia presents 'Sword of Honour' to the best cadet Mohammad Farhan Haider at the President's Parade on the Bangladesh Military Academy parade ground in Chittagong yesterday.

New well starts gas production

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bbaria

Leaders of Islamic Constitution Movement (ICM) yesterday said it is now clear to all that Jamaat-e-Islami and its student front Islami Chhatra Shibir are linked to bomb blasts across the country.

Speaking at a discussion, the leaders said most of them who have been arrested as suspected bombers across the country, admitted their link with Jamaat and Shibir.

The discussion on 'Bomb terrorism: Our responsibilities' was organised by the ICM, an Islamic party, at its auditorium at Purana Paltan in the city.

Addressing the meeting ICM Secretary General Nurul Huda Fayzee said the people of the country is not safe under the rule of Bangladesh Nationalist Party or Awami League.

The present constitution is man-made and as such it cannot bring peace and progress for the people, he said, adding, "We will continue our struggle until we are able to establish Islamic rule in the country."

ICM Joint Secretary General ATM Hemayet Uddin said the Qaumi Madrasa students are not behind the bomb blasts, rather those who are making malicious propaganda against madrasa education are the enemy of Islam and godfather of terrorist activities.

"Jamaat is not an Islamic party, Party Assistant Secretary General Syed Mosaddek Billah said. "If it can prove itself as an Islamic party in the light of Quran and Hadith, we will join them, otherwise its members should join us," he added.

Party central leaders Gazi Ataur Rahman, Rashid Ahmed Ferdous, Ahmed Abdul Qaium, Shahidul Islam, Kabir, Shafqul Alim Khan, and HM Saiful Islam also spoke at the meeting.

The leading intellectuals and freedom fighters of the two organisations in a statement demanded immediate arrest of the leaders and activists of Khatme Nabuwat for spreading hatred against the Ahmadiyyas.

The threat is the part of a politically motivated programme of

International Khatme Nabuwat to attack mosques and residences of Ahmadiyyas which is patronised by Jamaat-e-Islami, it added.

The government has to take the

responsibilities if it shelters the

attackers, the leaders said, adding that such terrorist activities cannot be carried out without government's patronisation.

They urged people from all walks

own resources. The BGFCL sources said Brahmanbaria Titas gas field would now supply 446 million CFT of gas to the national grid with the new well operating.

In the inaugural ceremony, the energy adviser said the crisis of gas will end in June next year.

Earlier at Monohardi in Narsingdi, he inaugurated a 37-km-long pipeline from Monohardi to Ashuganj.

THREAT TO ATTACK AHMADIYYA MOSQUE Arrest of Khatme Nabuwat leaders demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

South Asian People's Union against Fundamentalism and Communalism, and Ekattur Ghatak Dal Nirmul Committee yesterday condemned the threat of the religious fanatics to attack Ahmadiyya mosque in the city on December 23.

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freedom fighters of the two organisations in a statement demanded immediate arrest of the leaders and activists of Khatme Nabuwat for spreading hatred against the Ahmadiyyas.

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They urged people from all walks

of life to unite to eradicate the fundamentalists from the soil and protect the country's sovereignty threatened by terrorism and repression in the name of Islam since the BNP-Jamaat government came to power.

The signatories to the statement included Prof Kabir Chowdhury, Prof Salahuddin Ahmed, Women leader Hena Das, Prof Mustafa Nur UI Islam, Justice KM Sobhan, Advocate Gaziul Haque, Singer Kalim Sharaf, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) AK Khandakar BU, Major General (Retd) KM Shaifullah BU, Major General (Retd) CR Dutta BU, Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam BU, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Journalist Wahidul Haque, Prof Mussharaf Hossain, Prof Anisuzzaman, Prof Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir, Prof Hasan Azizul Haq, Artist Qaium Chowdhury, Journalist Shahriar Kabir, Artist Rafiqunnabi, Asaduzzaman Nur MP and Prof Muntasir Mamun.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) has for the first time offered five fellowships for research on corruption and governance.

Dr Yeahia Akter of Department of Political Science of Chittagong University has been awarded a "Senior Research Fellowship" for a study on problems of governance in public universities. The four recipients of the younger category of "Research Fellowships" are: Hossainul Haque of SAP Bangladesh to study the delivery system of public pension; Zakir Hossain Raju of Independent University Bangladesh (IUB) for a study on media and governance; Akther Mahmud of Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Janhangirnagar University to study the planning and permission process in Rajuk; and Shakir Khondoker Shahriar, Advocate of Supreme Court, for a study on the judicial system.

Fellows are expected to produce

original research reports within 6-9

months for distribution among all the

stakeholders. Findings are expected to be used for advocacy.

The main objective of the TIB

Fellowships is to contribute to innovative and effective strategies and tools for combating corruption and promoting accountable governance. It is also expected to strengthen anti-corruption research capacity of interested professionals.

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Light to moderate fog may also occur over the river basins of the

country during early morning, Met Office said, predicting nearly unchanged night temperature.

Highest temperature 30.5 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Sitakunda and lowest 11.3 degree Celsius at Srimongal.

The sun sets in the capital at 5:16pm today and rises at

6:38am tomorrow.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some

major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	27.8	15.2	61	67
Chittagong	30.2	18.5	72	75
Rajshahi	26.7	14.3	76	73
Khulna	27.5	15.5	76	72
Barisal	27.0	16.4	86	86
Sylhet	29.0	16.3	61	62
Cox's Bazar	29.2	22.0	88	82

Dry weather likely

UNB, Dhaka

Weather is likely to remain mainly dry with partly cloudy sky over the country in the next 12 hours till 6:00pm today.

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