

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 Langelbandh 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 on 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 Sathkira.

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 Abhaoo 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.

25 injured as JCD factions clash at DU

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 25 people, including a journalist and activists of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal (JCD), Dhaka University (DU) unit, were injured following a clash between two rival groups of JCD on the campus yesterday.

Of the injured, Rashed Khokon, 22, Noman Khan Sagar, 20, Ruhul Amin, 22, of DU and Jibon Ameer, a photojournalist of Focus Bangla news agency, are now receiving treatment at Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Campus sources said the clash erupted over collection of admission forms between two rival groups loyal to Sayeed Iqbal Titu and the current JCD president and secretary at around 1:00pm.

The sources added that the incident apparently occurred on a

trifling issue of admission form but it was actually the outcome of long-term internal conflict within JCD.

Some JCD activists of Titu group told the Daily Star at DMCH that a large number of JCD activists loyal to the president and secretary swooped on them with hockey sticks, iron rods and cricket stamps while police were the accomplices of the attackers.

They added that their rooms at different dormitories were ransacked and now they are barred from entering the campus.

Referring to the cause of the clash, a JCD leader Ikhtiar Rahman Kabir said the incident was staged so that Titu along with his large followers cannot attend the grand rally of BNP scheduled for tomorrow.

General Secretary of JCD-DU unit Saiful Islam Firoz said they just

defended themselves when 20 to 25 activists loyal to Titu attacked the meeting of the JCD president and secretary at DUCSU.

When contacted, Ramna police declined to make any comment regarding their involvement in the clash but they picked four students up for their involvement in the incident.

JCD President Azizul Bari Helal said that the committee would take punitive measures against the persons involved in the occurrence.

Additional police forces were deployed on the campus to avoid further clash.

Meanwhile, three more JCD activists were injured in fresh clash at 7:30pm at Mohsin Hall. The clash ensued in a sequel to the previous incident.

Conspiracy on to foil Rajshahi grand rally

Say organisers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Leaders of the co-ordinating committee of the 14-party opposition combine yesterday said a conspiracy is going on to foil the tomorrow's 'largest-ever gathering' in the region.

Massive preparations have been taken to hold the Rajshahi divisional grand rally of the Awami League-led 14-party opposition combine, with AL President Sheikh Hasina as the chief guest.

Two top leaders of the alliance Dr Kamal Hossain and Rashed Khan Menon will also attend the rally.

At a press conference in the city,

the committee quoted Rajshahi Regional Motor Sramik Union leaders as saying that police have asked them to provide on requisition the buses that the 14-party leaders have already hired for the rally-goers.

"Police have given slips for at least 25 of their hired buses and trucks in exchange of Tk 100 and six litres of fuel for the day to support government designs to foil the rally," alleged Rajshahi city AL General Secretary AHM Khairuzzaman Liton.

AL Organising Secretary Akhtaruzzaman told that lakhs of people along with 14-party leaders and workers from eight districts Rajshahi, Natore, Chapaina-wabganj, Naogaon, Bogra, Pabna, Sirajganj and Joypurhat will join the rally.

He said people are frustrated with government's inaction to stop rise of militancy, price spiralling, politicisation and corruption.

Former minister Sarder Amjad Hossain, Workers' Party leaders Fazle Hossain Badsha, Liaquat Ali Liku, AL leader Maksudul Haque Dulu, JSD leader Abdullah Al Masud Shibli attended the press conference.

Meanwhile, campaign for the rally yesterday got a new dimension as AL workers started projecting documentary films on different important intersections calling upon all to join the rally while cultural workers holding street programmes to inform people of the rally.

BDR guns down drug-trafficker in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

A drug trafficker was killed early yesterday as Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) opened fire at the Hilli land port in Dinajpur.

BDR sources said that, 25-30 bordering drug traffickers were entering Bangladesh from the Indian territory at Atapara BOP near pillar no 284/9 under North Gopalpur village of Hilli land port with Indian goods including Phensidyle bottles.

As the on-duty BDR forces challenged them, the traffickers attacked them with sharp weapons. They also snatched away and damaged two rifles of the BDR.

As the situation went out of control, BDR fired at least three rounds of shots killing Rana, 28, of Churipara village of Hakimpur upazila on the spot and injuring another according to BDR sources. The injured remained unidentified as he managed to flee with his cohorts after the incident.

BDR found 20 bottles of Phensidyle with Rana. They also recovered two sacks containing 372 bottles of Phensidyle and large numbers of Indian goods.

Panic and tension are prevailing in the bordering villages after the incident as frequent killings by BDR continues.

At least four people were killed and five people injured in the last six days as patrolling BDR teams opened fire in the Hilli land port area. A huge amount of Indian goods and about 1,000 bottles of Phensidyle have also been recovered.

"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 lean 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."

Duta election today

DU CORRESPONDENT

Election of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) is being held today.

Polling will be held at the Duta Club from 10:00am to 2:00pm without any break with Prof Ahmed Kabir of Bangla department as election commissioner.

This year the candidates are contesting the election under two panels- White and Blue.

White panel candidates are backed by ruling BNP and Jamaat while Blue Panel candidates by opposition Awami League. Another panel Pink is contesting the poll with the Blue.

Prof Sharifullah Bhuiyan of History department and current Duta General Secretary Prof Mohammad Akhtaruzzaman of the Blue panel and Prof Sadrul Amin, dean of Arts Faculty and Prof Zahidul Islam, provost of Zahurul Huq Hall and chairman of Anthropology department of the White panel are contesting for the post of president and general secretary respectively.

Dr Mohammad Hossain Monsur, Dr Ashrafuddin Chowdhury and Dr Imran Kabir Chowdhury of Blue panel and Prof Tazmery SA Islam, ABM Shahidul Islam and Dr Mamun Ahmed of White panel are vying for the posts of vice-president, treasurer and joint- secretary respectively.

Blue panel candidates for executive members are Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, Prof RIM Aminur Rashid, Prof AZM Nousher Ali Khan, Prof M Nurul Islam, Prof Nazma Shahin, Dr Mohammad Kamaluddin, Prof Muntasir Mamun, Prof Rafiqunnabi, Prof Sadeka Halim and Prof Badrunnahar.

White panel candidates for executive members are Prof Abu Ahmed, Prof Jamaluddin Ahmed, Prof Muhammad Shahjahan Miah, Prof Muhammad Nurul Islam, Prof Mohammad Sirajul Islam, Prof Taslima Mansur, Prof Nurjahan Sarkar, Prof Syed Saleheen Qadri, Prof Shamsuddin Ahmed and Prof Shahnaj Huq Hussain.

White Panel leader and Dean of Biology Faculty Prof Syed Saleheen Qadri told The Daily Star that they are very hopeful to win the election this year.

If we could win the election we would try to solve the accommodation problems of the teachers and increase the number of foreign scholarships, said Prof Qadri.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique told The Daily Star that they had tried to uphold the image of the university.

"If we could do good in the election, we will try to bring back the accountability in the administration," he added.

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 gentwomen cadets of the 53rd BMA long course and 24th BMA special course at Bangladesh Military Academy (BMA) parade ground at Bhatiani 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

Jamaat-Shibir blamed for bomb blasts

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

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, Shafiqul Alim Khan, and HM Saiful Islam also spoke at the meeting.

TIB fellowships for research on corruption, governance

BDNEWS, Dhaka

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

Dr Yeahia Akhter 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; Akhter Mahmud of Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Jahangirnagar University to study the planning and permission process in Rajuk; and Shakir Khondoker Shahin, 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.

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, B'baria

Energy Adviser Mahmudur Rahman yesterday inaugurated a gas well at Brahmanbaria Titas Gas field, which will daily pump 20 million cubic feet (CFT) of gas to the national grid.

The newly drilled gas well is the 16th in Brahmanbaria Titas gas field.

Bangladesh Gas Field Company Ltd (BGFCL) sources said Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration Company (Bapex) had drilled the well in four and a half months with its

own resources.

The BGFCCL 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 37km-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 Ekkatturer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee yesterday condemned the threat of the religious fanatics to attack Ahmadiyya mosque at Bakhshibazar in the city on December 23.

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

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 Ul Islam, Justice KM Sobhan, Advocate Gaziul Haque, Singer Kalim Sharafi, Poet Shamsur Rahman, Air Vice Marshal (Retd) AK Khandokar BU, Major General (Retd) KM Shafiullah BU, Major General (Retd) CR Dutta BU, Major (Retd) Rafiqul Islam BU, Prof Zillur Rahman Siddiqui, Journalist Wahidul Haque, Prof Musharraf 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.

Govt seeks SC vacation of stay on Mig-29 case against Hasina

BDNEWS, Dhaka

The government yesterday filed a petition with the Supreme Court to vacate its earlier stay on proceedings of the Mig-29s purchase corruption case against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

The vacation bench of Justice Tafazzul Islam fixed January 22 for hearing of the petition by the SC full bench.

Earlier on December 14, Chamber Judge of the Appellate Division Justice Amirul Kabir Chowdhury stayed for two months the proceedings of the case.

The case was filed against Hasina, also Awami League chief, and others with Tejaon Police Station on December 11, 2001. It accused them of incurring a loss of Tk 720 crore in purchasing the fighter planes when in power.

Following a petition of Hasina, the High Court stayed the proceedings of the case pending with the trial court. The tenure of the stay expired on November 20.

Two separate HC benches vacated the stay order and dropped the case from the cause list on November 23 and 28.

Additional Attorney General (AAG) Abdur Razzak Khan and Deputy Attorney General (DAG) Helaluddin Mollah moved for the government, while Barrister Rakanuddin Mahmud for Hasina.

TAPOSH MURDER One gets death

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka court yesterday sentenced a youth to death for killing Taposh Poddar, a gold trader in Munshiganj in April last year.

Judge Mohammad Golam Mortuza Majumder of the Speedy Trial Tribunal-2 gave the sentence in absence of the convict Kajo.

The court acquitted four others -- Manik Sheikh, Shibu Sen, Krishna Dutt and Akhter Dhali -- as the charges brought against them were not proved.

Earlier, the prosecution and the defence completed their arguments and the court recorded statements of 16 prosecution witnesses.

According to the prosecution, over a previous enmity a gang of miscreants led by Kajo called Taposh out of his shop and took him to a park at about 9:30pm on April 29 last year. Later, the gang knifed the victim to death and dumped the body to a nearby place.

The victim's father Nani Gopal Biswas filed a murder case with Sirajdikhan Police Station against Kajo and four others the same day.