

Business-NGO cooperation a must to improve quality of pry edn

Speakers tell meeting

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Active cooperation between the business community and the NGOs is a must to ensure quality education at the primary level, said the speakers at a meeting yesterday.

They said the business community has to involve themselves in the quality education programme in order to build up a conscious consumers group and good human resources for their corporation.

The meeting on 'Business-NGO sharing: Improving basic education' was organised jointly by Advancing Public Interest Trust (APIT) and MRC-Mode Limited at the Brac Centre Inn in the capital.

APIT and MRC-Mode Ltd organised the meeting as part of their

project titled 'Building corporate constituency for improving basic education sub-sector in Bangladesh' with the support from the Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF).

Speaking at the meeting noted economist Prof Muzaffer Ahmad said, "It is very unfortunate for our children that they are getting primary education in 11 separate ways."

He said the present expenditure per primary student is under \$ 8, but for quality education it should be minimum \$20.

The business community can reduce this resource gap of about \$12 by engaging themselves in the education sector, he added.

He said after completing primary

education from Vigarunnsa Noon School, a student gains 67 percent competency rate of quality education. On the other hand, a student of a grassroots level school achieves only 1 percent of that rate.

Prof Muzaffer, who moderated the meeting said, "To meet this gap we have to allocate education resources in the reverse way, from grassroots level school to capital level school."

"For quality education, we need quality teachers, but if a teacher has to give a huge bribe in getting job, then how the teacher would give quality education to students," he raised the question.

Prof Muzaffer said the ownership of education is now in the hand of donor agencies, and if it is not

handed over from the donors to the government, the quality will not be ensured.

He said there is a huge gap between teacher-student ratio and if this gap is not removed, the quality of education will not be achieved.

Managing Director of Asiatic Marketing Communication Ltd Aly Zaker, said every corporate house has to maintain Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) along with their obligation to the society and earning profit as well.

The corporate houses and business community have to engage themselves to ensure quality education to create conscious consumers, he added.

He also stressed on broader cooperation among the civil society, corporate sector and NGOs.

Senior Awami League leader Nurul Islam Nahid said, "The donor agencies give a lot of fund for the education sector, if we can use the fund properly the quality of education will be ensured."

Chief Executive Officer of Citibank NA Mamun Rashid, Managing Director of Satarupa Textile JL Bhawmik, Managing Director of Araf Apparels Shahriar Alam, Head of Corporate Affairs of Standard Chartered Bank Shah Masud Imam, Programme Director of Save the Children UK David Humphrey, Executive Director of MRC-Mode Ltd Tawfique Ahmed, Programme Officer of CEF Saraana Muzaddid and Country Co-ordinator Mustakim Tanvir, Executive Director of Friendship Hospital Runa Khan and Executive Director of APIT Sabbir Bin Shams also spoke on the occasion.

Businessman robbed of Tk 8 lakh

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A real estate businessman was robbed of Tk 8 lakh while a hotel cook was critically injured in two separate incidents in the city yesterday.

Abdul Mannan Helal, 42, owner of National Construction Developer, was returning home along with one Milton, the buyer of his flat, after drawing Tk 8 lakh from Dhanmondi Branch of Standard Chartered Bank at around 2:00pm.

As soon as Mannan got off from Milton's car in which he was escorted to his Shahjadpur residence, an armed man fired shot at him and snatched away the money.

Police held Milton for quizzing.

In another incident, three masked criminals cut off the penis of Monsur Chowdhury, 40, a cook of Hotel Sonargaon, at around 2:00pm at his West Shewrapara house in Mirpur.

Police suspect the incident might occur as a sequel to family feud as nothing was stolen from the house.

Police said he had married three times and divorced the first two earlier.



PHOTO: STAR

Save the Environment Movement forms a human chain in front of the Institute of Fine Arts in the city yesterday demanding proper hospital waste management.

URDU-SPEAKING PEOPLE 'Dubious allegiance obstructs their rehabilitation'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Expressing total allegiance to Bangladesh and denouncing all types of loyalty to Pakistan is the first step towards rehabilitating the camp-based Urdu-speaking people often termed as stranded Pakistanis, said the speakers at a consultation programme yesterday.

They said dubious allegiance of Urdu-speaking people is obstructing their rehabilitation in Bangladesh.

The consultation programme titled 'Rehabilitation of the camp-based Urdu-speaking community in Bangladesh: The role of civil society' was organised by Refugee and Migratory Movement Research Unit (RMMRU) at the seminar room of Press Institute of Bangladesh in the city.

Prof C R Abrar, keynote speaker of the programme, said any kind of rehabilitation requires active participation of that particular community

in framing the rehabilitation policy.

Putting aside the legal issues, he stressed on multi-agency focus on their poverty alleviation, community empowerment and socio-physical services for proper rehabilitation.

Former Attorney General Hasan Arif said, before deciding whether to be repatriated to Pakistan or rehabilitated in Bangladesh, these people are to decide first "Who I am and what I want to be."

He said allegiance is the precondition for citizenship.

Justice Nayeemuddin Ahmed said there is no constitutional barrier for the children born in Bangladesh to become its citizens and enjoying constitutional rights as long as they show complete allegiance to this country as per the court's directives.

But in establishing their rights, they are to be vocal in their demands, the civil society can offer them some guidelines only, he added.

Taleya Rehman of Democracy

Watch said even the donor agencies are apathetic in initiating any independent rehabilitation programme for Urdu-speaking people due to ignorance about their legal status and their plight as well.

Journalist Kamal Lohani called for concerted efforts by like-minded organisations to create pressure on the government in undertaking appropriate steps regarding them.

Poet Asad Chowdhury, Executive Director of Al Falah Bangladesh Ahmed Ilias, Dr Quamruzzaman of Dhaka Community Hospital, and Muhammad Hasan and Khalid Hossain of the Association of Urdu-speaking Young Generation also spoke on the occasion.



PHOTO: STAR

Speakers at meeting on 'Business-NGO sharing: Improving basic education' organised by Advancing Public Interest Trust (APIT) and MRC-Mode Limited at the Brac Centre Inn in the city yesterday. Sitting from left are Aly Zaker, Prof Muzaffer Ahmad, Mamun Rashid and Shahriar Alam.

Bela demands expulsion of 'toxic' ship

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers' Association (Bela) has issued a legal notice to the authorities demanding immediate steps to expel MT Alpha Ship carrying toxic and harmful substances from the territorial waters of Bangladesh.

It also urged the authorities to take necessary steps so that the ship cannot be used for scrap in the country as it will have an adverse impact on the environment.

The notice was sent on April 27 to the secretaries to the ministries of environment and forest, shipping, industries, commerce and labour and employment, director general of Coast Guard, deputy commissioner of Chittagong, chairman of Chittagong Port Authority, president of Ship Breakers' Association and owner of National Steel.

Quoting a report of Greenpeace, an international environmental organisation, Bela said MT Alpha is one of the 50 contaminated ships in the world.

The ship has docked at the outer anchorage in Chittagong, said a Bela press release.

Dutch assistance for water, sanitation, hygiene programme

BSS, Dhaka

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Kees Beemsterboer and chairperson Brac Fazle Hasan Abed yesterday signed an agreement to launch a water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) programme aimed at attaining the MDG targets on water and sanitation in Bangladesh.

The programme is one of the largest ever funded by the Royal Netherlands government, Dutch Ambassador Kees told newsmen at the signing ceremony here. It amounts to 60 million euros, of which Brac contributes four million and local communities two million, he added.

Ambassador Kees said cooperation between Brac and the embassy of the Netherlands in Bangladesh has resulted in this five-year mega programme by sharing the vision of the government of Bangladesh, to address the challenges in achieving the MDG targets.

The programme, he said, will provide additional sustainable sanitation coverage for 17.6 million people spread over 150 upazilas, safe drinking water supply services to more than 8.5 million people in rural areas and hygiene promotion and education for 37.5 million men and women.

Gender and health issues are emphasised in the programme activities, he said and added that those are also privates of the Royal Dutch government.

Abed said the WASH programme plans to achieve its goal by participation and collaboration from national to village levels, where hygienic practices will be the backbone of the programme supported by improved sanitation and safe water supplies.

A micro-finance programme will be set up for extremely poor families, providing subsidies amounting to Tk 1000 to construct sanitary latrines, he said adding to ensure the quality of water supply, existing nonfunctioning water sources like ponds, borehels, pumps will be improved/renovated. Installation of

tube-wells at safe depth and rural piped-water schemes will be initiated with waters from boreholes and surface water. The combination of hygiene practices and safe drinking water is vital in smoothing the progress of the MDGs.

Brac Executive Director Abdul Mueyed Chowdhury said a unique feature of the programme is to apply separate methodologies of hygiene promotion for men and women. Toilet facilities exclusively for women will be installed in public usage areas, including schools.

As part of a strong gender orientation, WASH focuses on women in all situations to participate in the programme and to raise their voice in decision-making process, said BRAC Health Programme Director Faruque Ahmed.

Brac's experience of working with rural people since 1972 will be very useful for implementation and sustainability of this programme, he said adding the local government institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations, the donor community and related programmes/projects will be integrated into this programme.

The Dutch ambassador mentioned that Netherlands allocates about four billion euros (equivalent to 0.8% of GNP) worldwide each year to spend on sustainable poverty reduction and achieving other MDG targets.

He said the Netherlands government is committed to continue support to Bangladesh in this regard, like it has been supporting Bangladesh since its independence.

The Netherlands has so far contributed about 1.5 billion euros to development activities in Bangladesh, its current development cooperation programme focuses on water management and basic education and healthcare, he pointed out.

'Form permanent pay commission'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of Bangladesh Government Employees Coordination Council demanded implementation of their five-point demand including extension of the retirement age to 60 years.

They also demanded formation of a permanent pay and service commission, payment of dearness allowance by 30 per cent and continuation of recruitments in vacant posts.

Council leaders placed their demands at a press conference in the city yesterday.

Reading out a written statement, the Council General Secretary Salahuddin Selim said "These are no longer new demands rather recognised by the prime minister four years ago."

The leaders also demanded upgrade of diploma nurses, BTTB, Roads and Highways employees to a second-class status including technical status of health assistants.

Department of Nursing should be declared as directorate, they demanded.

Addressing the conference, Council President Abdul Mannan alleged that Abul Kalam Haolader, deputy secretary and Abdur Rab Haolader, joint secretary of the Ministry of Establishment are not carrying out their due responsibilities to make the contingency employees in development sector permanent even after the government order.

The leaders said they would go ahead with their fresh programmes in case their demands are not met by May 7.

They will hold rallies and submit memorandums to the deputy commissioners across the country on May 8 and stage demonstration at the upazila levels on May 9 and will eventually organise a grand rally in the capital on May 24.

Acting President Moazzem Hossain, Additional General Secretaries Shadat Hossain Shahid, MA Hannan, SM Ali Sheikh, Joint Secretaries MA Sattar, Selim Bhuiyan and other leaders of the Council were also present at the briefing.

Obituary



Moksed Ali, chairman of Bhaiya Group and Prabhati Insurance, passed away at LabAid Cardiac Hospital on Friday night at the age of 57, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, three sons and a number of grandchildren to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Duria Bishnupur in Laksam.

Siddiqur Rahman BSS, Dhaka

Siddiqur Rahman, a noted writer, passed away at Holy Family Red Crescent Hospital in the city on Friday night at the age of 66.

Siddiqur Rahman, a former zonal manager of Bangladesh House Building Corporation, wrote several books in Bangla and English.

He left behind two daughters, one son and a host of relatives and friends to mourn his death.

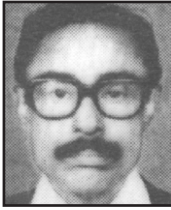
Kazi Shaziruddin Ahmed UNB, Dhaka

Kazi Shaziruddin Ahmed, former chief engineer of BADC, passed away at his Gulshan residence on Friday at the age of 82.

He left behind his wife, one son and a host of relatives and well-wishers to mourn his death.

He was buried at his family graveyard at Muradnagar in Comilla.

Death anniversary



Today is the first death anniversary of Advocate Dijasbar Dasgupta, father of senior reporter Pinky Dasgupta of the daily Jangantor, says a press releases.

Religious programmes will be held at his village home at Morolganj in Bagherhat on the occasion.

Relatives and well-wishers have been requested to attend the programme.

Qulkhwani



Qulkhwani of Nurbah Begum, mother of photojournalist Bulbul Ahmed, will be held at her home at Madhya Badda after Asr prayers today, says a press release.

She passed away at her home on April 27 at the age of 70.

Relatives and well-wishers are requested to attend the qulkhwani.

Khulna Divisional Press Club Federation formed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A new federation of press clubs styled 'Khulna Divisional Press Club Federation (KDPCF)' was formed at a meeting held here yesterday.

A 23-member ad hoc committee was also formed with Khulna Press Club President Alhaj Liaquat Ali as convener and General Secretary AK Hiru as its member secretary.

Earlier, a meeting was held at the VIP auditorium of the club in the morning.

Presided over by Liaquat Ali, the meeting was attended by all presidents and general secretaries of the press clubs in 10 districts of the division.

Speakers at the meeting stressed the unity of journalists sinking petty differences to fight against repression and criminal activities.



National University Vice-Chancellor Prof Wakil Ahmed distributes prizes among the winners of inter-university cultural competition held at Bangladesh Open University recently.

Congratulations



Ashok Chowdhury, a student of Govt. Jubilee High School in Sunamganj, has been selected as a finalist to participate in the Linking Individuals, Knowledge and Culture: Youth Exploration and Empowerment Programme conducted by Relief International-School Online, USA, says a press release.

The project is sponsored by the Educational and Cultural Affairs Bureau of the US Department of State. The three-week programme will be held at Los Angeles, California.

Relief International-School Online committee has selected Ashok through several interviews. He is the son of Prithwish Kumar Chowdhury.

Shibir threat forces JU students to cancel press confce

JU CORRESPONDENT

'Jahangirnagar against Jamaat-Shibir (JAJS)', a platform of general students against the activities of Jamaat-Shibir at JU, could not hold their scheduled press conference yesterday due to threat by unidentified Islami Chhatra Shibir (ICS) cadres.

The JAJS activists were forced to cancel the press conference, which was due to be held at Jahangirnagar University Journalists' Association (JUJA) office, as some unidentified ICS activists threatened them several times over cell phone yesterday afternoon.

"We have taken position everywhere on way to JUJA office and a terrible incident awaits all of you if you try to attend today's press conference," said an unidentified ICS activist.

JAJS had called the press conference to explain its programmes, which have already began and planned to be implemented soon against ICS activities on the campus.

Meanwhile, students of Meer Musharraf Hossain (MMH) hall and

Al-Beruni hall, instigated and led by the leaders of Chhatra Sangram Parishad (CSP), brought out separate processions on the campus yesterday chanting slogans against left leaning parties.

They also held a press conference at JUJA office claiming that they have no connection with ICS activities.

Mahbubul Alam Shaikat, convener of CSP, and Mona, an activist of CSP, in their speeches at a press conference blasted the JU correspondents of the daily Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, the daily Janakantha and the daily Bhorer Kagoj for reporting against the ICS activities on the campus.

CSP, a newly formed organisation by suspected ICS activists, was prevented by JAJS from staging a programme on information of ICS involvement on last Wednesday.

A joint raid by university authorities, hall authorities of MMH and AB and activists of Jatityatabadi Chhatra Dal and JAJS found evidences regarding CSP activists' involvement in ICS activities on campus.

'Alliance govt pushes country into crisis'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Left leaning Bangladesher Samyobadi Dal (BSD) said the four-party alliance government has pushed the country into a serious political crisis by nominating war criminal, anti-liberation war forces and patrons of militants in the committee to discuss the reform agenda.

The BSD, however, hoped that the BNP Chairperson and Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would take appropriate steps so that dialogue between the opposition Awami League and the government takes place for the greater interests of the country.

At a press conference at the Dhaka Reporters' Unity, the leaders of BSD, also a component of the 14-party opposition combine, said the government would be finally forced to keep war criminals and anti-liberation war force aloof from the committee to discuss the reform agenda to ensure a free, fair and neutral election in the country.

BSD General Secretary Dilip Barua said by nominating war criminals and anti-liberation war forces, BNP proves that it is not interested in dialogue.

Boy drowns in water tank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A five-year-old boy drowned in the water tank of a house at Demra in the city yesterday.

Safin drowned in the rooftop tank at around 12.00 noon while he was playing there.

He was rushed to Dhaka Medical College and Hospital where the on duty doctors declared him dead.

Housewife rescued from traffickers

UNB, Dinajpur

BDR jawans rescued a young housewife while she was being trafficked to India through Dainur border here on Friday.

The victim was identified as Achhia Khatun, 26, wife of Sarforaj Ali of Mirpur in Dhaka.

Acting on a tip-off, paramilitary BDR chased the traffickers, including gang leader Zahurul Islam of Kamalpur village, when they were taking Achhia across the border.

The BDR members rescued the victim, but the traffickers managed to escape. She told the BDR that the gang promised her a job in India.

WEATHER TODAY

No change in temperature

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Rajshahi, Dhaka, Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in the next 12 hours as of 6:00pm today.

Weather may remain mainly dry elsewhere over the country, Met Office said, adding that day temperature may remain nearly unchanged.

Yesterday's highest temperature of 38.6 degree Celsius was recorded at Jessore and the lowest of 20.6 degrees at Srimgangal.

The sun sets in the capital at 6:27pm today and rises at 5:25am tomorrow.

The 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	36.6	24.8	54	33
Chittagong	37.0	22.7	61	61
Rajshahi	37.0	23.2	54	34
Khulna	38.5	26.5	59	37
Barisal	36.6	24.5	69	57
Sylhet	35.5	23.0	47	37
Cox's Bazar	34.2	26.0	57	61