

Training on textile, tourism begins in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A three-day workshop and training programmes on 'Textile construction' and 'Hospitality and tourism' began at a city hotel yesterday with an aim to strengthen the national reforms in technical and vocational education and training.

British Council in association with three ministries -- education, textiles and jute ministry, and civil aviation and tourism ministries -- has organised the programme at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

A total of 40 officials and employees of different ministries, directorates and concerned bodies will be trained up today and tomorrow.

On the eve of the training programme, a workshop was held where secretaries of the ministries, Bangladesh Technical Education Board chairman and top officials of different directorates took part.

A total of 20 officials of education ministry, directorate of technical education, BTEB, ministry of textile and jute, dept of textile, Dhaka Polytechnic Institute and Tangail Textile Institute will be trained on textile construction.

Besides, another 20 top officials of the ministry of civil and tourism, Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation, National Hotel and Tourism Institute, several renowned hotels and tourism companies will also be trained up on hospitality and tourism.

Two leading training experts from the UK -- Stephan John and Anthony (Tony) Robin Batchelor will share their experience with the trainees.

25 shops, five houses gutted in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Around 25 commercial establishments and five residential buildings were gutted in a devastating fire at Peyadarhat Bazar at Muladi upazila in Barisal yesterday.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Mohammad Badrul Huq told The Daily Star that the fire was caused by a short circuit at around 1:15pm when most of the people were in the mosques for Juma prayers.

As there was no fire service station at Muladi, the flame rapidly spread in the Bazar and surrounding areas.

Fire fighters from Barisal city and local people brought the fire under control.

The local administration said properties worth around Tk 85 lakh have been damaged.

Oil prices

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Administration (EIA) downgraded its August estimate for US oil demand.

"Sentiment turned bearish as the government figures revealed that the US economy shrank," said analysts at the John Hall Associates consultancy in London.

"Weakening demand remains the key driver with the release of monthly data for August revealing that US demand ran well below year ago levels."

Official data showed Thursday that the US economy contracted at a 0.3 percent annualised pace in the third quarter as a global credit crunch saw consumers and businesses cut back on spending.

The decline, not so steep as the 0.5-percent annualised drop expected by private economists, comes amid mounting expectations of a sharp falloff in the US economy amid the worst banking and financial crisis in decades.

"Crude futures were lower (on Friday), under pressure from renewed demand concerns... after the EIA revised down its August US oil demand estimate by 8.4 percent year on year, showing its worse reading since 2001," added Sudeen analyst Nimit Khanna.

This week, crude oil fell as tumbling stock markets and recession fears darkened the outlook for energy demand.

Prices had plunged Monday to 59.02 dollars in London and 61.30 dollars in New York -- which were the lowest points for around 17 months.

Oil futures are down by more than 50 percent since July's record highs above 147 dollars per barrel.

The market briefly surged higher Wednesday after interest rate cuts in the United States and China boosted expectations of higher demand in the world's two leading energy consumers, analysts said.

The US Federal Reserve slashed interest rates by a half-point to 1.0 percent.

Prices found limited support after the Opec crude producers' cartel warned it could cut output further.

Opec Secretary General Abdalla Salem El-Badri said Tuesday it could slash output again if prices keep falling. Opec produces 40 percent of the world's crude oil.

At an emergency meeting in Vienna last week, Opec ministers agreed to reduce output by 1.5 million barrels a day to 27.3 million bpd from November 1 in an attempt to prevent prices falling further.



Students display their science projects at a science fair organised by Chittagong Grammar School in the port city yesterday.

MoU on MANPOWER EXPORT SIGNED

Libya to recruit large number of workers

UNB, Dhaka

Libya yesterday signed a MoU with Bangladesh to recruit a large number of workers as Tripoli launched a \$130 billion infrastructure development programme that will require over one million foreign workers.

Foreign Adviser Iftekhar Ahmed Chowdhury and visiting Libyan Labour Minister Maa'touq Mohammed Maa'touq signed the MoU after an hour-long official talk at the State Guest House Padma.

Iftekhar and Maa'touq termed the signing of the MoU as a historic occasion and a milestone in the development of bilateral relations between the two Muslim brotherly countries.

Under the five-year development programme that started this year, Libya will construct 300,000 housing units, 27 university complexes, over 10,000 kms roads and maintain 24,000 kms roads.

"We'll recruit workers not only from Bangladesh but naturally we prefer Bangladeshis as we have experience in recruiting skilled and

semi-skilled workers from the country in the past," Maa'touq told reporters at a joint press briefing.

He said, "We are here to expand and broaden the presence of Bangladeshis in Libya."

Presently, some 25,000 Bangladeshis are employed in oil-rich Libya.

The Libyan minister did not give the exact number of Bangladeshi workers they will recruit but said they issued 6,000 visas for Bangladeshi workers last month. "Now you can imagine the possible number of workers to be recruited from here," he said.

Maa'touq said they have also directed foreign companies from Germany, Japan and South Korea working in Libya as well as Libyan private sector to recruit workers from Bangladesh.

In reply to a question, the Libyan minister said he will ask Libyan investors to make investment in potential sectors of Bangladesh, particularly oil and gas sectors.

Iftekhar said they have discussed possible cooperation in oil and gas sectors and in strengthen-

ing Bapex (Bangladesh Petroleum Exploration and Production Company Ltd) as Libya has huge expertise in this sector.

The adviser said they talked about the possibility of refining Libyan crude oil in Bangladesh and exporting to neighboring countries.

Maa'touq visited some installations in pharmaceutical sectors as Bangladesh has great potential to export pharmaceutical products to Libya.

Besides, they also discussed cooperation in higher education as Libya is interested in taking professors, doctors and others to be absorbed in Libyan growing economy.

The adviser said the government has decided to designate Rear Admiral Mustafiz as ambassador to Libya and the Libyan government has also appointed a full-fledged ambassador in Bangladesh.

The meeting decided to sign some letter of exchanges on possible cooperation between the two countries for mutual benefit.

The Libyan minister will leave Dhaka today.

Nawhata municipality sacks 14 employees

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Rajshahi

Nawhata municipality sacked 14 employees on Thursday as they were recruited illegally during the last BNP-Jamaat alliance government.

Sources said the recruitment of the employees was not appropriate and it was unnecessary.

Nawhata Mayor Abdul Gafur told newsmen that his predecessor employed the staffs on political grounds.

"The step (dismissal) was taken considering the financial burden the municipality was suffering for those additional staffs", said the mayor.

The dismissed staffs are - Ataur Rahman, Mizanur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman, Abu Zafar Milon, Shahin Ali, Alauddin, Wahidul Islam, Arif Hossain, Ejaz Ali, Rubina Khatun, Bhutto Ali, Asadul Islam, Hasem Ali and Sultan Ahmed.

The sacked employees, however, claimed that their dismissals are illegal and they are likely to go for legal action.

Workshop on water supply, sanitation services held

METRO DESK

Local Government Division, Ministry of LGD and Cooperatives organised a daylong national dissemination workshop on 'Horizontal learning for strengthening capacities of local government institutions on improving water supply and sanitation services in Bangladesh' at Hotel Sheraton in the city on Thursday.

The Horizontal Learning is a peer-to-peer learning process that was initiated by the Local Government Institutions (LGIs) in Bangladesh in November 2007, says a press release.

The initiative is being facilitated by the local Government Division, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives (LGRD&C) and supported by the Water and Sanitation Programme South Asia (WSP-SA) of the World Bank.

Other partners include the Development Association for Self-Reliance, Communication and Health (DASCOH) with financial support from the Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation (SDC), Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA), WaterAid Bangladesh with assistance from its local NGOs- Shushilon, Green Hill and Mohideb Jubo Samaj Kalyan Samity (MJSKS), Plan Bangladesh, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and the NGO Forum.

Emphasising on people's participation in the process for sustainable development, the speakers said that it is a key for replicating good practices, carrying out an open budget meeting, dialoguing with people and transparently integrating the replication plan within the ADP is mandatory for LGIs to successfully introduce good practices.

Local level communication is important to share the information effectively. The replication of good practices is essential for scaling up, simultaneously it is also important to incorporate these learning at a policy level and translate them into practices.

The Horizontal learning programme has initiated a platform for scaling up of existing good practices while incorporating them into a broader policy dialogue.

Sheikh Khurshid Alam, secretary LGD, Ministry of LGRD&C, attended the programme as the chief guest while Md Lukman Hakim Talukdar, joint secretary (WS), LGD, Ministry of LGRD&C, chaired the inaugural session of the workshop.

Vinaya Swaroop, acting country director, The World Bank, and Glenn Pearce-Oroz, country team leader and senior WSS specialist, WSP-SA, of The World Bank, also spoke.



Army Chief General Moeen U Ahmed calls on Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of Korean armed forces General Kim Tae-Young in Seoul on Thursday.

Call to raise awareness about mental health

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The speakers at a workshop called on the government to take effective awareness programmes on mental health to wipe out the stigma among people as they are misguided due to lack of proper knowledge about the issue.

They said this at the inaugural ceremony of the two-day workshop began at the Teacher-Student Centre compound on the Dhaka University campus yesterday with a view to creating awareness of mental health among the general public.

Clinical psychology department of the university and Bangladesh Clinical Psychology Association (BCPA) have jointly organised the programme styled 'Making mental health a global priority: Scaling up services through

citizen advocacy and action'.

They placed a charter of demands, including forming a mental health policy by giving importance to prevention services, instead of curative services, recruiting clinical psychologists in the district and upazila health complexes to improve the mental health of people and government recognition to health professionals like psychotherapists, counsellors and other health professionals.

Citing a recent study where it has been found that 16.1 percent people are suffering from mental disorder, they said the government should allocate more funds in the national budget to improve mental health sector for increasing productivity by decreasing illness.

The speakers also stressed the

need for conducting a survey or research in order to find out the causal relationship between poverty and mental disorder, saying that it is not possible to eradicate poverty without improvement of mental health.

With Biological Sciences Faculty Dean Prof Abul Bashir in the chair, the workshop was addressed by psychiatrist Prof AKM Nazmuddin, Prof Kamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Prof Mahmudur Rahman and BCPA General Secretary Jahir Uddin.

Director General of Health Directorate Prof Md Abul Faiz, who attend the discussion as the chief guest, said by giving importance to mental health, the government is taking different initiatives to integrate clinical psychologists in medical services but it will take some time.



Speakers at a workshop on water supply and sanitation services at Hotel Sheraton in the city on Thursday. From left are Glenn Pearce-Oroz, Md Lukman Hakim Talukdar, Sheikh Khurshid Alam, Vinaya Swaroop and Shams Uddin Ahmed.

Remittance, exports to bear brunt

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Supachai said. He further predicted that the growth of development in USA will be minus 4 percent in 2009 and in Asian economy it will be hovering around plus 4-6 percent during the same period which he termed a "minor recession" for this region. Chinese development growth will decline to 8 percent from 11 percent in 2009, he added.

"This is the limit growth for Asia," Supachai said, adding that the slash in predicted growth for Asian region means that this region is not out of global financial recession.

He described the current year as a "year of crises" since almost all crises like surge in energy prices, food crisis, major natural calamities due to climate change and at last the man-made global financial crisis took place this year.

Termining the ongoing global crisis a "twist of fate", he said developing countries were able to increase their real income by 71 percent during 1996-2006 compared to 30 percent in the G7 countries.

He said the UN has already revised its growth projections for the world economy downwards, to about 2 percent in 2009, and this may still be optimistic. This is the times of change ushering the new generation of globalisation and new emergence of South, he added.

Supachai said the ongoing financial crisis should not be named as global, rather it should be called "American financial crisis" as such man-made financial crisis emerged from their bowl of soup or greed.

He advised more inclusive participation for the sustainability of the new emergency of the South. He also suggested a new form of protectionism to craft new financial architecture in the global financial forum.

He also suggested letting the private sector maintain capital mobilisation for being a part of inclusive globalisation and launching efficient market mechanism.

"The growth in next 15 years must include young and women. We must have growth in productivity capacity for meeting the internal and external demand. We must build up human capital for the growth in the next 15 years," Supachai said.

He urged leaders of this region to continue trade negotiation in light of the Doha Round to extract more benefits.

Supachai said migration of people might be a good measure for distribution of the global fund as migrant workers remitted currency worth \$250 billion globally in 2008.

During panel discussion on Supachai's paper, Finance Adviser Mirza Azizul Islam said Bangladesh follows more or less cautionary financial system and would be severely damaged due to global financial recession as the country is in advantageous place in terms of low labour cost, energetic and dynamic private sector, people of young generation, considerable scope for crop production.

Minister for Export Development from Sri Lanka GL Peiris said, "We should use the potentiality of hydro power of

Nepal and Bhutan to meet the regional growing demand of energy."

World Trade Organisation (WTO) Deputy Director General Harsha V Singh called for inclusive multilateralisation of trade for the growth in the next 15 years.

The emerging economy of this region will not only give opportunities to Bangladesh but also challenges, he said.

"We need to go forward with MODE-4 of the WTO for increasing the migration of people from LDCs to developed countries," he added.

Permanent representative of Bangladesh to the UN offices in Geneva Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya moderated the discussion.

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY, BANGLADESH FACULTY SEARCH

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