

## Vashkar makes their dream come true

*The person with disability sets a unique example*

EMRAN HOSSAIN

Vashkar Bhattacharya, a visually impaired, provided training to 20 persons with disabilities (PWD) in 2006 as they could not find the jobs despite having graduation from different public universities.

All the jobless PWDs, including eight female graduates, got jobs in last three years based on their merit applying information, communication and technology (ICT) skills gained by the training.

They are now working at different organisations, including a private university and some national and international NGOs working in Bangladesh.

This initiative has proved that PWDs can work like others if they are provided with necessary training, especially in technology, said Vashkar, a programme officer of local NGO Young Power in Social Action (YPSA).

"All the 20 were sitting idle after completing their study at different public universities due to lack of access to technology," he pointed out.

Provided with the facilities, the persons with disabilities have proved that providing education and imparting training to them are not worthless, he said adding, "But I feel sorry as no such training could be arranged later to change the lives of disabled people. Because, Tk 15-20 lakh is needed to arrange such a training."

Had government taken the initiative of arranging such training programme for PWDs in the country, the life of educated PWDs would be much more easier and dignified.

But this example as usually has failed to attract any attention either from the government or from non-government organisations. As a result, it is still a dream for PWDs to manage a job.

Vashkar now passes each moment of his life with the dream of making information technology available to the



Vashkar Bhattacharya delivers a speech in the opening session of a training programme.

PWDs and make them, specially blind and illiterates, resource people of the country.

"I have never even thought that I would be able to use computer in my life," Vashkar told The Daily Star in an interview while describing how he grew interest in ICT for helping his country's fellow friends.

He said he learned about ICT while studying under a scholarship programme in Japan from where he came to know about digital accessible information system (Daisy) concept.

It was not that easy for a blind to brave such an initiative when his classmates at the

scholarship programme laughed at him saying that blind people cannot come in any help in Bangladesh without begging.

On his return home Vashkar had continued working on ICT and issues related to it, keeping the authorities of Braille library and Daisy consortium in Japan informed about the development of his work.

In the meantime, Vashkar who was graduated in history from Chittagong University had organised various programmes like Braille essay competitions, discussions and seminars focusing on the blind people and their problems.

As a result, authorities of Braille library came in Bangladesh in 2004 while Daisy in 2005 for providing assistance to set up an ICT and resource centre in Chittagong for PWDs.

Vashkar did not stop his endeavour at that point and kept pursuing his study concerning Daisy and ICT and made digital talking books using short stories of Rabindranath Tagore and other forms.

Now both visually impaired and illiterate people have the chance to know what Tagore talked about life. Vashkar has also brought screen-reading software to make it possible to read any script on computer

screen and even read online edition of newspapers.

Vashkar, currently in charge of the first Daisy focal point in Bangladesh, hoped that a Braille library and a centre would be set up in Bangladesh one day for the blind people for providing them education, and hands-on training in computers as well as opportunity of learning Bangladeshi culture.

Bhattacharjee was also an active participant in the hunger strike programme observed in protest against the refusal of admission of PWDs to Dhaka University. This programme had forced the university to allow their admission.

AKM Mustaque Ali, an executive director of INCIDIN Bangladesh, read out a written speech at the press conference.

## Recruit more workers, invest in Bangladesh

*PM urges Libya*

UNB, Dhaka

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina yesterday urged Libya to recruit more manpower from Bangladesh and make investment in potential sectors of this country.

She also requested the Libyan government to ensure necessary facilities for the Bangladeshi expatriates living in the Middle-Eastern country for their professional betterment.

She made the call during a discussion when Libyan Ambassador in Bangladesh Ahmed A H Elimam paid a courtesy call on the prime

**Call to ensure rights of street children to primary edn**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a press conference yesterday called on the government to create a provision of unconditional enrolment procedures in the primary school for street children to ensure their primary education.

Around 66 percent of street children do not have access to any kind of education system, they said and urged the government to incorporate specific commitment into the national education policy to ensure their right to primary education.

INCIDIN Bangladesh organised the press conference at Dhaka Reporters' Unity auditorium in the city.

The speakers said that although some street children are getting the opportunity of primary education because of NGO initiatives, most of them cannot have access to school due to prerequisites and conditions applicable for the general children.

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minister at the PMO.

Hasina told the Libyan ambassador that the present government would provide professional training to Bangladeshi workers "to make them skilled enough to work abroad".

In the meeting, the envoy assured the PM of ensuring professional facilities for the Bangladeshi expatriates working in Libya.

During the meeting, they discussed various bilateral issues related to development and progress of the two countries.

The Libyan Ambassador highly praised the activities of the government in the last seven months and expressed the hope that under the wise and visionary leadership of Hasina, the government would be able to fulfill expectations of the people through building a modern, developed country.

Elimam described the devel-

opment projects and programmes of the government, including the Vision 2021 prescribed in Awami League's election manifesto, and the national budget as pro-people and said these would guide the nation properly in achieving the development targets.

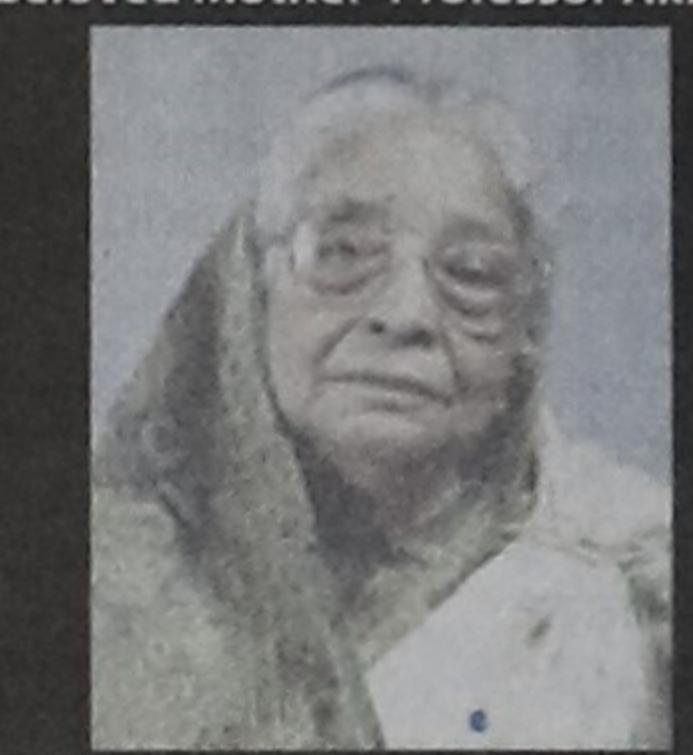
Calling for increased Libyan investment in various development sectors, Hasina said, "The government will maintain the congenial atmosphere in the investment sector."

The PM and the Libyan envoy hoped that the existing friendly relations between the two countries would be strengthened further in the days to come.

Secretary of the Prime Minister's office Mollah Waheeduzzaman, Press Secretary to the Prime Minister Abul Kalam Azad and Ambassador Ziauddin were present.

## CHEHLAM, 08th August 2009

On Saturday 8th August 2009, 12.00 noon, at the Officers Club (Ground Floor), 26 Bailey Road, Dhaka, of our beloved Mother Professor Akhtar Imam.



The Family Would Like to request all to Pray with them for the eternal Peace of Late Professor Akhtar Imam's Soul.

Dr. Nilufar Imam, Dr. Ferial Haque and Mrs. Shahwar Sadeque and their husbands



Grant recipients pose with Finance Minister AMA Muhith at a programme at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday.

## Bangladesh has high rate of undernourished children

*Reveals World Bank study*

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Finance Minister AMA Muhith handing over the awards to the winners at the programme organised by South Asia Regional DM in partnership with WB, Unicef, World Food Programme, PepsiCo, Micronutrient Initiative, GTZ and Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition.

The data also disclosed that child wasting rate has exceeded the emergency threshold level of 15 percent. In seven years between 2000 and 2007, the wasting level increased by more than 50 percent to 16 percent from 10 percent in 2000.

"Under-nutrition robs a child of a chance to succeed and live a healthy, productive life. And yet, an investment in nutrition is one of the social policy interventions which has the highest impact for each dollar spent, in improving the child's future," said Isabel M Guerrero, World Bank vice-president for South Asia region, at a programme in the city yesterday.

Styled '2009 Grant Competition South Asia Innovative for Nutrition', the programme was organised at Bangabandhu International Conference Centre where 21 organisations were awarded grants up to \$40,000 each for their innovative ideas on how to improve child nutrition situation in their respective countries in South Asia.

Government Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) at Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station said the ATI authorities closed the diploma institute in the afternoon after the students rampaged on the campus with a number of demands.

Officer-in-Charge Riyad Hossain of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station said the ATI authorities closed the diploma institute in the afternoon after the students rampaged on the campus till filing of this report at 9:00pm.

weight rates hover at about 46 percent since 2000.

The finance minister said, "Nutrition is not simply a challenge it is also a mystery."

To improve the situation, innovative ideas such as a proposal from the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Diseases Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR,B) to promote better infant and child feeding practices in the slums through performance-based payments would be considered.

Health and Family Welfare Minister AFM Ruhal Haque was present at the opening ceremony.

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স্থান অবস্থা: শ্রীন আরোমা (২য় তলা), বাড়ী-১৭, রোড-৭ সেক্টর-৮, ঢাকা, ঢাকা। ফোন: ৮৯২২২১০৫০, ৯১২৪৪০৫৮৪২, ৯১২৪৪০৫৮৪১১১, ৯১২৪৪০৫৮৪১১২, ৮১২৪৪০৫৮০, ৮১২৪৪০৫৮০০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০১৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১৯, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১২, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১৩, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১৪, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১৫, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১৬, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১৭, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১৮, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১১০, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১১১, ০১৮১৯২৬১৫৬৭৮০২৩১১১১১১২, ০১৮