

3,500 phones disconnected

BSS, Dhaka
About 3,500 telephone connections at Tejgaon, Niketon, East Nakhalpara and its adjacent area under the Ghulshan exchange have been disconnected on Friday due to disruption in underground cable, says a press release of Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL) here yesterday.

NRBs' social projects can cut dependency on foreign aid

Speakers tell book launching ceremony

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Philanthropic endeavours by non-resident Bangladeshis (NRB) has a great potential to fund social projects in Bangladesh, which might one day curtail the dependency on foreign aid, speakers said at a book launching ceremony yesterday.

They said very little information is available about philanthropic organisations and their activities as the area remains largely untapped and poorly documented.

The book titled "Diaspora Philanthropy in Bangladesh" edited by Rashida Ahmad, Safi Rahman Khan and Mazharul Islam attempts to address the

gap in knowledge in the area.

The book published by Bangladesh Freedom Foundation and Dristipat provides a database on 350 philanthropic originations run by NRBs, their profiles, origin, goals, activities and funding practices. The three-part book also presents selected case studies and success stories.

Speakers at the launching said the book can help motivate others to make philanthropic endeavours.

Economist Prof MM Akash said voluntarism or philanthropic activities once provided schools or hospitals for many Bangladeshi villages. It is now absent as people are more interested in commercial activities.

He underscored the need for accountability of the philanthropic organisations and to make sure the effort made by them is a sustainable one.

He said the educated NRBs can provide the country with valuable knowledge and technical support as part of philanthropic activities.

The NRBs sent about 10 billion US dollar in the country as remittance in 2009. The actual remittance, however, is likely to stand at around 17 billion US dollar as a large amount is sent through unofficial non-banking channels.

Dr Akbar Ali Khan, former adviser to a caretaker government, said migrant workers are the main force that is running the economy of Bangladesh for the last two decades.

Most of the remittances they send is actually directed towards the poorer relatives back in the villages, which is, in a way also philanthropic activities. He suggested recognising their philanthropic endeavours.

Dr Abdul Matin, General Secretary of Bangladesh Paribesh Andolon (BAPA), and Alamgir Kabir, executive director of Green Voice were also present at the function.

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