

Apply nanotech to up industrial, agri output

Scientists tell Daily Star roundtable

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Application of nanotechnology would enhance industrial and agricultural production at low-cost for the future development of Bangladesh, said noted scientists at a roundtable yesterday.

It can bring tremendous growth in industrial and agricultural production and help making low-cost solar energy generation, environment conservations, construction sector, precise cancer treatment, medical diagnosis, space travel and defence technology, they said.

The Daily Star organised the discussion on nanotechnology and its prospects in Bangladesh at The Daily Star Centre in the capital.

Nanotechnology (nanotech) is a technology to break a matter down to the smallest size of particles to increase its efficiency tremendously, said Prof M Afzal Hossain, vice-chancellor of Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science & Technology University. A nanometer is billionth of a metre and comparable to a marble vis-a-vis the size of the globe.

It is smarter, faster, cleaner and cheaper that helps enhance industrial production at a low cost, said Prof Ahmad Ismail Mustafa, chairman of Bangladesh Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (BCSIR).

An estimated 70 percent of the total fertiliser used in the country's agriculture is wasted due to inefficient absorption causing waste of money and environmental pollution, he said. But application of nanotech in fertiliser production can ensure a drastic reduction in fertiliser use thus reducing unnecessary chemical input in the land.

He said BCSIR is close to successful production of nanotech fertiliser, low-cost solar energy and waste water treatment.

Prof Lutful Hassan of Bangladesh Agricultural University said precise application of fertiliser can reduce its use and use of insecticide at a minimum level with nanotech will help save environment from pollution.

Dr Mobarak Ahmad Khan, director of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, said they would be able to produce nanotech solar energy by June this year.

Bangladesh as a small country with a huge population can cash in on the nanotech in agriculture, medical science, energy and water purification, said Prof Shamima K Choudhury of Dhaka University.

It may provide solutions to meet demand of safe water, energy, healthcare and food products



Participants at a roundtable on nanotechnology and its prospects in Bangladesh organised by The Daily Star at The Daily Star Centre in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

with less labour and limited land at low-cost, said Al-Nakib Chowdhury, a chemistry professor of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet), in his keynote presentation.

Nanotech is helpful for precise treatment of cancer and brain disorder, production of more effective cosmetics, energy systems and information technology, he said.

Low-cost nano-silica can replace the conventional expensive fuel cell of solar panel; nanoparticles can enhance food production while nano-medicine is precise, strong and many times more effective. Nanotech textile products are water and dust-proof, he said.

It makes products light and strong. Nano-filter protects environment against toxic contamination. It is going to bring about a new industrial revolution and create ten million jobs in manufacturing sector in the world by 2014, said Nakib.

Prof Zahid Hasan Mahmood of Dhaka University said they pursue some courses on nanotech at graduate and post-graduate levels at

the university.

He underscored the need for a national nanotech centre, a laboratory and a national forum of nano-scientists to advance researches on the areas of nanotech.

Prof Tajmeri SA Islam of Dhaka University said coordination among the nano-scientists and a friendly relationship between the scientists and industries are vital.

Prof Haseena Khan of Dhaka University said adequate financial incentive for research in the area of nano-science is imperative.

Bureaucrats due to their mindset often refuse to disburse the money allocated for research in the areas of science and technology, said Prof Muhibur Rahman, member of University Grants Commission.

Efficient management of toxic wastes by nanotech is critical to contain its possible hazards, said Prof Syed Md Akram Hossain, an oncologist at Lab Aid Specialised Hospital.

Laboratory work on nanotech must be connected with laymen's welfare, said AAMS Arefin

Siddique, vice-chancellor of Dhaka University, who moderated the discussion.

Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star, said the newspaper would dedicate an entire page every month to advance the issue of nanotech and remain with the efforts to launch a platform of nano-scientists.

Other discussants at the roundtable are: Dr AKM Asaduzzaman, additional secretary to the science and technology ministry, Prof Md Anwar Hossain of Dhaka University, Prof Imamul Huq of Dhaka University, Md Golam Rahman, chairman of Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC), Manzoor Ahmad Tarafdar, director of BCIC, Dr Mahbubul Karim, director of ICDDR,B, Mahbubul Karim, director of Incepta Pharmaceuticals, Prof M Kaykobad of Buet, Dr Abu Jafar Mahmood, supernumery professor of Dhaka University, Dr Farseem Mannan of Buet, Dr Dilip Kumar Saha, chief scientific officer of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, Prof M Yousuf A Mollah of Dhaka University, Dr Md Abu Bin Hasan Susan of Dhaka University, Dr Md

Mominul Islam of Dhaka University, Prof Tofazzal Islam of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Agricultural University, Prof Rafiqul Islam of Dhaka University, Prof Qazi Azizul Mowla of Buet, Dr Md Abul Kashem of Bangladesh Agricultural Research Council, Dr Mohammed Mizanur Rahman of Dhaka University, Dr Abu Bin Imran of Buet, Dr Shakhawat H Firoz of Buet, Dr Tanvir Manzur of Buet, Prof Raqib Ahsan of Buet, Md Riajul Hossain, lecturer of Dhaka University and ABM Khorsheed Alam, additional secretary to the industries ministry.

The USA has invested 3.7 billion dollars through its National Nanotechnology Institute followed by Japan with 750 million and the European Union 1.2 billion.

India introduced the technology four decades back in telecom, computing, aerospace and solar energy. While Malaysia launched strategic research on it in 2001, Thailand founded national nanotech centre two year later.

NEWS IN *brief*

Climate Change: Failure of rich nations worries Dipu Moni

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni has expressed her frustration over the failure of the developed nations in keeping up their commitments to funding for mitigation and adaptation programmes to cope with climate change.

Dipu Moni, who is now in UK, said that Bangladesh is creating \$300 million fund from its own resources to fight climate impacts.

She told this to a group of journalists of the Commonwealth Journalists Association (CJA) met her at the Bangladesh High Commission in London on Sunday, said a foreign ministry press release.

Foreign crew missing in Bay

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Ctg

A foreign crew of Stadt Hamburg ship of Germany, was missing in the Bay of Bengal from yesterday as he fell down from the ship.

The crew, identified as Ricardo Galen, is hailing from the Philippines.

Syed Farhad Uddin, secretary of Chittagong Port Authority (CPA), said the accident took place at outer anchorage of the port at around 3:30am. They could not find out the cause behind the accident.

Baishakhi Utshab at Jotey showrooms

METRO DESK

Jotey Bashakhi Utshab-1419 was held at all showrooms of Jotey Sharee in the city on Sunday.

On the occasion, the showrooms were decorated and visitors and valued customers were cordially welcomed with Bangali hospitality.

The opening ceremony of the Utshab took place at its showroom at Estern Molika Shopping Complex. Alhaz Md Sarwar Hossain, managing director of Jotey Sharee & Textile, and its Director Sheikh Kader Shuvo and Ariful Hasan Nipon inaugurated the festival, said a press release.

Alhaz Md Lokman Hossain Liton, chairman of Jotey Sharee, said they arranged the festival to give a real sense of Bangali culture.

Sangram editor apologises to ICT-1

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The editor and a reporter of the daily Sangram yesterday apologised unconditionally to the International Crimes Tribunal-1 for publishing a "contemptuous" report over one of its proceedings.

The daily's Editor and Publisher Abul Asad and its Feni correspondent AKM Abdur Rahim appeared before the tribunal as per its earlier summons.

On April 2, the daily ran the report with a title which roughly translates as "Feni lawyers have condemned and protested the receiving of statements given by police".

The report said 12 lawyers of Feni Bar Association, in a signed statement, protested the tribunal's decision to receive statements of 15 witnesses given to the investigation officer as evidence in a case against Jamaat-e-Islami leader Delawar Hossain Sayedee.

Sayedee has been detained for his alleged involvement in crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War.

Within hours, the tribunal issued a rule on the duo to explain why contempt of court charges should not be brought against them for publishing the report.

The duo's counsel, Zainul Abedin, yesterday told the court that publishing of the report was an "honest mistake" and the editor published a rejoinder in this regard on April 6.

The tribunal-1 fixed April 26 to deliver the verdict on the rule.

Rezaul Hayat passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Sayed Rezaul Hayat, former communications secretary and freedom fighter, passed away at a city hospital yesterday at the age of 67.

He left his wife, one son, one daughter and a host of relatives to mourn his death, says a press release.

He also worked as personal secretary to Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

No intimidation can hamper duties

Says HR body boss

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

National Human Rights Commission Chairman Mizanur Rahman yesterday said no intimidation would work in preventing the commission from discharging its duties.

"Some quarters have tried, but failed", he said, but did not mention which quarters were behind the intimidation.

Prof Mizanur made the comments at the launching ceremony of a book for rights activists on how to lodge complaints with NHRC.

Ain O Salish Kendra, a rights body, which has arranged the publication of the book, organised the ceremony at CBCB Centre in the capital's Asad Gate.

"There is limitation in the NHRC act, but we like to prove our worth by serving the

citizens with the capacity the commission enjoys under the act".

Thanking ASK for the book, he doubted how many deputy commissioners (DCs) and superintendents of police (SPs) in 64 districts had adequate knowledge of the act.

He also praised some parts of the book. Advocate Sultana Kamal, executive director of ASK, said the country should be governed by one principle--the principle of democracy, humanity, justice, economic and social rights.

Politicians will implement the principle, but the steering force would be in the hands of people, she added.

This book will not only help the rights activists at grassroots level learn how to file a complaint with NHRC but also help them develop their skills, she said.

20pc of budget for education urged

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The University Grants Commission (UGC) chairman yesterday urged the government to allocate 20 percent of the upcoming budget for the education sector and 0.8 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for higher education.

"Funding in education is a major problem. If we want to produce world class graduates, we have to increase the budgetary allocation," said UGC Chairman Prof Dr AK Azad Chowdhury at a press conference.

The press conference was jointly organised by UGC and British Council, Dhaka at Ruposhi Bangla Hotel to share the experience of "Going Global 2012 Conference", some international educational symposiums British Council hosted in London from March 13 to 15.

The education sector received 12 percent of the total budget in the current fiscal year while the allocation for higher education was only 0.23 percent of the GDP, said Azad.

Buet Vice-Chancellor (VC) Dr SM Nazrul Islam, Stamford University VC Dr Majibur Rahman, Exim Bank Director AKM Nurul Fazal Bulbul, American Chamber of Commerce in Bangladesh President Aftab ul Islam and Dhaka University sociology department Prof Zeenat Huda also spoke.

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DHAKA TODAY

Discussion
Jatiya Ganotantrik League will hold a discussion; Venue: Bir Uttam Khaja Nizam Uddin Auditorium; Time: 4:00pm.

Budget hearing
Unnayan Shamannay will arrange a budget hearing; Venue: Ruposhi Bangla Hotel; Time: 9:30am.

Roundtable
Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad will organise a roundtable; Venue: Bangladesh Authority Samity Auditorium, Eskaton Garden Road; Time: 10:00am.

Discussion
International Majlis-e Tahaffuz-e-Khatm-e-Nobuwat Bangladesh will hold a discussion; Venue: Jatiya Press Club; Time: 3:00pm.