



WORLD Teachers' Day is being observed globally today with the theme "A call for teachers."

In 1994, Unesco proclaimed October 5 as World Teachers' Day to celebrate the great step made for teachers on this day in 1966, when a special intergovernmental conference convened by Unesco in Paris put forward the "Recommendation Concerning the Status of Teachers," which the ILO adopted later.

The 145-para Recommendation sets forth the rights and responsibilities of teachers, and international standards for their initial preparation and further education, recruitment, employ-

ment, teaching and learning conditions. It also contains many recommendations for teachers' participation in educational decisions through consultation and negotiation with educational authorities.

Since its adoption, the Recommendation has been considered an important set of guidelines to promote teachers' status in the interest of quality education. However, as the recommendations did not cover the post-secondary teachers and education personal specifically, a special session of a joint ILO/Unesco committee of experts was held in Paris between September 15 and 18, 1997, which approved and adopted the recommendation concerning the status of higher education teaching personnel as well. The Recommendation is immensely important due to its wide-ranging significance and implications for educators in particular and education in general.

Four features of 1966 and 1997 Recommendations are: (i) "Since education is a service of fundamental importance it should be recognised as a responsibility of the state"; (ii) "Teachers' organisations should be recognised as a force which can contribute greatly to educational advance and, therefore, should be associated with the determination of education policy"; (iii) "Teachers' salaries should reflect the importance of the teaching function and hence the importance of teachers as well as the responsi-

bilities which fall upon them from the time of their entry"; and (iv) "Teaching in higher education requires expert knowledge and specialised skills acquired and maintained through rigorous and lifelong study and research."

Observance of the day highlights the shortage of teachers, shrinking allocation in education and the erosion in the standard of education and quality of teaching in both the developed and the developing countries. Bangladesh has particular problems like lack of congenial environment for students, especially girls, in and outside classrooms, and disparity between rural and urban and government and non-government institutions and teachers.

In his book, Future of Teaching Profession, Prof. John MacBeath of the University of Cambridge says: "Teaching is a profession that lies at the heart of both the learning of children and young people and their social and economic development. It is crucial to transmitting and implanting social values, such as democracy equality, tolerance cultural understanding and respect for each person's fundamental freedom."

The study explores research on education policies which turn teachers into "satisfiers" or "dissatisfiers." Teachers who experience more autonomy feel more satisfied in their work, are more motivated, and feel more competent, he says. Prof. MacBeath also refers to various research stud-

ies which show that, internationally, teachers have been leaving the profession in unprecedented numbers. The research team found that teachers who left did so within the first five years of teaching. Teaching is no longer a career for life. Bangladesh is also no exception to the situation.

Education International, the Brussels-based Federation of Unions of teachers and education workers, conducted an international study of teacher competences and standards in 2010. Some of the findings of the study: (i) A total of 10.3 million additional teachers will be needed worldwide by 2015; (ii) The problem is not just low teacher numbers, but also poor teacher morale and insufficient training.

Many trained teachers leave the profession because of low salaries and unfavourable conditions, such as large class size, lack of housing and even food security and lack of safety in schools, especially for women teachers. Developed countries are facing a similar problem of having to recruit, train and retrain large numbers of teachers after the existing ones retire. The worldwide declining status of teachers (partly because of cut-backs in salary) is also putting increased pressure on the profession, making it more difficult to attract new teachers.

In the face of the problems confronted not only by the educators but also the guardians and

particularly the students, a change for the better is inevitable. But as the maxim goes, there is easiness in saying but sometimes insurmountable impediments are there in performing. The provisions of the Recommendations of Unesco-ILO, 1966 and 1997 concerning the status of teachers provide strength and inspiration to the teachers, for which World Teachers Day becomes very relevant. To the teachers in Bangladesh these two instruments continue to remain as a source of hope and inspiration not only in dealing with the issues which confront them in discharging their professional obligations, but also influencing the authorities to adopt forward looking steps in education. The Education Policy 2010 and the education law under process, amply bear testimony to that along with the representation of the teaching community in the two stipulations

More than half a million teachers of Bangladesh earnestly crave for a change in line with their brothers and sisters in the teaching profession elsewhere in the world, which needs to be properly evaluated with appropriate socio-economic status and dignity. It is expected that all concerned with education will be imbued with the spirit of the theme of this year: 'A Call for Teachers'!

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WORLD TEACHERS' DAY 2013: 'A CALL FOR TEACHERS'

The urge for change

Conserve water, save life

BITTER TRUTH



MD. ASADULLAH KHAN

going lower and lower, the situation is set to deteriorate further. While the demand for fresh water in Dhaka city comes to about 2,100 million litres, Dhaka Wasa provides about 1,800 million litres through 550 deep tube wells and four treatment plants. But the shortfall, as it appears, seems to be bigger than what Wasa says.

With no visible effort to conserve surface water either in Dhaka city or around the country, about 85% of the requirement in Dhaka city has to be met from underground sources. In the villages, with shortage of water due to drying up of ponds and with no digging of fresh ponds during the last several decades, the situation is far more pathetic. Villagers there remain mired in their old practice of sinking tube wells deeper and deeper to reach the decreasing level of ground water.

In district towns and adjoining places, there is neither supply from the municipality nor are there freshwater ponds to meet the needs of the populace. With water demand becoming acute, most municipalities and city corporations focused on the immediate—tapping ground water resources in and around the cities. Pumps are being sunk 10 to 20 metres deeper every year. Worse, conservation has not figured in our scheme of things—neither directly through steps like water harvesting nor indirectly through restoration of canals, lakes and watersheds that have been encroached upon by land grabbers.

The pollution of city lakes has resulted from the network of sewer lines installed either by Wasa or DCC, keeping the lakes as the only discharge point through a vast array of drain outlets. The disaster is compounded by the criminal action of allowing industries to live cheek-by-jowl with residential quarters and large apartment blocks. Alarmed citizens do know that they are being slowly poisoned by hazardous wastes and toxic chemicals leaking out from tanneries, smelters, dyeing units and a host of industries and shanty units, large and small. Shockingly, the poisoned water of these lakes and rivers now symbolises not life but

death. Clearly, this hazardous waste problem has been ignored too long.

The immediate task of Rajuk, Wasa and DCC would be to boost water table in Dhaka city and its adjoining areas. These organisations, because of lack of coordination, cannot do it and each of them is trying to pass the buck on to the other. There should be an autonomous body for the protection, conservation, restoration, regeneration and integrated development of the lakes, watersheds, and rivers like Buriganga, Shitalakhya, Turag, Balu and many canals. The government has to restore these water bodies because they could be a supply source for Wasa in times of severe crisis that the city dwellers are now experiencing.

Access to adequate, unpolluted water is increasingly being viewed as a basic human right, something that the government must ensure. Dhaka Wasa has to find out ways and means to lay sewage pipes and link them to treatment plants to save city dwellers from the growing load of pollution and sewage that will increase at least five times by the

Hydrologists say that the world's total usable fresh water supply is finite—about 24 million cubic kilometers—which, according to the United Nations, is not sufficient for its population which is growing at the unsustainable rate of 110 million annually. The most worrisome report about the future availability of water comes from the development mandarins who say that by 2030, 47% of the world's population will be living in areas of high water stress. Undeniably true, water resource management impacts health, food production and security, domestic water supply, sanitation, energy, industry and environmental sustainability.

In the context of such terrifying prospects, Bangladesh has to take some aggressive measures to conserve its water resources. The greater tragedy is that Bangladesh has enough water to go around for its 160 million people but not enough people to handle the present critical situation.

Uttara lake, a vast water body that could be a source of fresh water has been reduced to a narrow creek of toxic and polluted water because of indiscriminate dumping of household garbage and wastes, effluents from industrial and dyeing units. Because of indifference, negligence and inaction, Uttara lake has shrunk to 3.5 km in length from 5 km and width 100m from 200m as a recent survey report by Rajuk indicates. All indications are there that the lake is destined to disappear in no time. Following a representation by citizens to the prime minister, a directive issued by the office of the prime minister in January, 2011 asked the Housing and Works Ministry to take effective steps for the recovery and conservation of Uttara lake.

Consequently, Rajuk prepared a Development Project Profile (DPP) costing about Tk 86 crore, keeping provision for acquisition of 2,433 acres of land on the last end of the lake. The proposal went to the Planning Commission in July 2012 for final approval. The Infrastructure Division of the Planning Commission, in its Project Evaluation Committee (PEC) meeting last December, questioned the justification of including some components in the DPP. It asked Rajuk to resubmit the DPP after adjusting cost escalation through a joint survey by the Housing and Works Ministry, Rajuk, IMED, and the Infrastructure Division of the Planning Commission with exclusion of some components that they deemed unnecessary. But Rajuk or the agencies concerned have made no effort to do so as yet.

It should be brought home to all involved in governance, planning and healthcare that air, land and water are precious natural resources, most needed for healthy living. Water, not oil, is the most precious liquid in our lives, and we must conserve surface water that will help recharge the aquifers.

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Legacy of history and Ramu incident

MD. SHAMSUDDOHA

"BENGAL'S Hindus, Bengal's Christians, Bengal's Buddhists, Bengal's Muslims -- we are all Bengalis." All classes of people of Bangladesh, irrespective of religion, fought in the Liberation War with this slogan. This highlighted a distinctive feature of our country, religious co-existence and communal harmony. Historically, there has been peaceful co-existence of all the religions in this country, though some groups of people have tried to tag it with a controversial identify only for the sake of their own interest.

Bangladesh has been an example of religious harmony for centuries. For instance, when Europe was struggling with confrontation of different religious dogmas which focused mainly on the dominance of the noble elite class, Gautama Buddha came up in South Asia with the ideology of fraternity, freedom and peace even though he belonged to the royal elite. As a result, people in ancient Bengal started to convert to Buddhism from *sanatan* religion without any pressure from the ruling class. During the 7th to 10th century, Buddhists held state power, but ensured peaceful co-existence of all religions. To some extent, they also patronised other religions along with their own. In the 11th and 12th centuries, although Hindus were in power they did not force the Buddhists to convert to Hinduism, which ensured religious harmony.

After the Muslim conquest, although Muslims were in power and Islam got royal patronisation, they never forced anyone to leave their religions. Rather, being influenced by the Sufis, saints, *pirs* and *dorbeshes*, a large number of people accepted the new religion Islam. In this way, people of all religions in Bangladesh always stayed side by side at least up to the end of the reign of Nawab Sirajuddoula, even to some



FOCUS BANGLA

extent up to the eve of the 20th century. This sort of religious harmony was there, except for a few scattered events. There was a very powerful bondage among different communities during various movements, e.g. Fakir-Sannyasi Movement, Indigo Movement, Sepoy Movement, Tebhaga Movement, and so on.

This communal harmony had been broken down by the 'Divide and Rule Policy' of the British government during the partition of Bengal in 1905, which provoked Muslims and Hindus to think differently about their interests. Most probably, this was the first use of religion as a means of manipulation and political motivation which really divided the Indians into two wings, Muslim and Hindu. Later, Muhammad Ali Jinnah took the advantage of this fragmentation by formulating the "Two Nation Theory."

We were not 'Muslim' or 'Pakistani Muslim,' rather we became 'Bengali Muslim' after the partition of India. During the Language Movement we moved one step forward towards our present identity, 'Bangali.' This identity led us to fight collectively, irrespective of religion, against the West Pakistanis, which proved that we were non-communal and traditionally diverse.

Bangladesh was never a communal country. That is why there never was any major communal clash or riot in the country over the last for decades, except the unexpected incident in Ramu.

Almost one year after the Ramu incident, we have the chance to wipe out the blot on our historical identity. The government has already taken some praiseworthy initiatives in this regard. It has rebuilt the broken temples and statues within only nine months. Nevertheless, we have to walk a long way to regain the faith of all the communities, to rebuild the everlasting, and to repay the legacy of history.

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By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- Wild guess
- Smoker's pipe
- Sagas
- Washer cycle
- Dwelling
- Caper
- Sine qua
- "Drat!"
- Makeshift book-mark
- Light metal
- Goblet part
- Leaf
- Radiator part
- Skilled
- Course number
- Harry Belafonte hit
- Peyton's bother
- Golf hole with a bend
- Sirius
- de France
- Banded rock
- Mosley along
- Sherbet flavor
- Entices
- Salon sounds

DOWN

- Position
- Forbidden
- By the side of
- Garden section
- Toot one's own horn
- Bout site
- All things considered
- Foolish
- New
- Drugged
- Vein contents
- Twisty turn
- Like some elections
- Light bulb
- All things considered
- Foolish
- New
- Drugged
- Vein contents
- Nabokov book
- Fall sign
- TV's De-Generes
- Gaggle group
- Organ part
- Addition column
- Piano parts
- Swamp stuff

Yesterday's answer

19 Twisty turn
22 Like some elections
24 Light bulb
25 Folding craft
27 Marshy area
28 Piano parts
30 Nabokov book
33 Fall sign
34 TV's De-Generes
35 Gaggle group
37 Organ part
38 Addition column
42 Swamp stuff

9-12

A XYDLBAAXR is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

9-12 CRYPTOQUOTE

DUH LTJ UHN VTFD ONTG

UHN OMJUN. UH'D M

K V M D J P B D S N L H T Z

L N T S B U T G M N Q

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: ERROR IS THE FORCE THAT WELDS MEN TOGETHER; TRUTH IS COMMUNICATED TO MEN ONLY BY DEEDS OF TRUTH.

- LEO TOLSTOY

BEETLE BAILY

by Mort Walker

THIS OUTLET SLOT IS HORIZONTAL. AREN'T THEY ALWAYS VERTICAL?

I'M NOT SURE

MY LAMP STILL ISN'T WORKING

I THINK THEY'RE WAITING FOR THE ELECTRICITY TO COME ON

HENRY

by Don Trachte

HENRIETTA LOVES HENRY

HEN

HENRY

HENRY ISN'T SURE

QUOTABLE Quotes

"The man who views the world at 50 the same as he did at 20 has wasted 30 years of his life."

Muhammad Ali