

NEWS FLASH

First ever visit to Bangladesh by top Russian bloggers

To project Bangladesh and its tourism potentials in Russia and to impart a new dimension in bilateral relations, four top Russian bloggers arrived in Dhaka on Monday, 25 September, 2018.

Their eight-day trip has been organised by ASE Group of Companies, an engineering division of Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation, responsible for the construction of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

The bloggers will travel around various tourist attractions and will get acquainted with the people and their traditional lifestyle, culture, heritage and share their first-hand experience in their respective blogs.

The programme includes visiting Tangail, Mahasthangarh, Paharpur, Bagerhat, Sundarban, Chattogram, Bandarban, among many other places. The blogger group will see for themselves the ongoing construction work of Rooppur plant, which has become a symbol of Bangladesh-Russia friendship.

"The visit by the top Russian bloggers is a testament of our commitment to friendly Bangladesh. We are happy to somehow be a part of country's rapid socio-economic development," said Alexander Khazin, Senior Vice President for International Project of ASE Group of Companies.

"While Bangladesh aims to become a developed country by 2041 demand for green and clean energy is estimated to rise. I firmly believe that Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant will play a significant role in meeting that demand."

He further informed that annually 392 GW of nuclear power is generated worldwide, saving 2 billion tons of carbon dioxide emissions every year. This is equivalent to the cleansing effect by all the forests on the Earth combined, which consume 2.5 billion tons of CO2 annually.

Welcoming the bloggers to Bangladesh Kazi Wahidul Alam, a leading aviation and tourism expert of Bangladesh said, "The Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant has created a unique opportunity for the emerging tourism sector of Bangladesh. I hope our friendly Russian guests will help create a positive image of the country, which will ultimately attract more foreign tourists."

"I think Rooppur plant has provided us a platform for cultural and other forms of exchanges and most importantly, a scope of direct contact among the people of Russia and Bangladesh," Kazi Wahidul Alam added.

The blogger group includes Oleg Cricket (Instagram: @olegcricket), Dmitry Lazykin (Instagram: @dimalazykin), Irina Goldman (Instagram: @veryire) and Nikita Teterev (Instagram: @nikita_teterev) together they have more than 16 lakh followers on the Instagram.

Irina Goldman, former editor of the global fashion magazine Cosmopolitan, is famous for her blog on Instagram and her pet dog- Space (Siberian Husky breed), with who she travels around the world. Irina and Space have recently climbed the Elbrus, the highest mountain in Europe (5642 m). She is also travelling Bangladesh with Space.

"I am so excited to visit Bangladesh, as it is the second country for me in Asia after Thailand. After my last vacation in Europe, I felt bored and looked for something new to explore. Bangladesh is like an unknown planet, and I am sure that the trip will become a source of inspiration for me. I would like to meet Bangladeshi people, to see how they live," said Irina.

Oleg Cricket has around one million followers on Instagram. According to some media sources, he is currently the most popular Russian travel blogger. Dmitry Lazykin is a fashion blogger, while Nikita Teterev is a professional videographer and European champion in Parkour.

For more updates on Rosatom and its activities in South Asia, visit <https://www.facebook.com/rosatomasia/>



REVIEW

Stepping Stone Learning Centre: a new approach to early childhood development

There is an important connection between preschools and future academic success. Studies also show that children who attend preschools prior to formal education are likely to be more socially adept. Stepping Stone Learning Centre takes early childhood development a step further by breaking the conventions of traditional teaching approaches. At Stepping Stone, all learning activities are done through play and interactive communication. It is a place where children are encouraged to explore what interests them, and basic numeracy and literacy is taught through what the children are excited by.

Stepping Stone Chairperson, Sharmin Farooq Rita, and Managing Director Shumida Rahman have extensive experience in education and early childhood development. The duo is extremely hands-on with their preschool in every aspect. They are the owners, teachers, coordinators, supervisors and administrators. To them, it is their contribution to our society, by investing time, effort and love for the children.

"It is our mission to help the children, catering to their individual and unique potential. We hope our students will be good and independent people," Sharmin Farooq says.

As educators, they merge fundamental teaching with a warm nurturing environment that encourages a holistic social, physical and cognitive growth for children.

Stepping Stone offers pre-school for children from 18 plus months to 3 plus years, and daycare for 18 plus months to 6 year olds. The pre-school is divided into two sections, Playgroup for children ages two and below, and Nursery for children ages three and above.

Sharmin Farooq and Shumida Rahman have devised a curriculum where directive teaching is left in the past, and associative teaching with materials and sensory stimulants is implemented to ignite creativity and curiosity in young minds.

The preschool premises are set up to look like an interactive wonderland for the children, and there are so many things children learn with every baby step they take. The place is filled with many thematic stations where everyday lessons are carried out. They have a literacy station, numeracy station, arts and crafts, reading station, a gym with a baby wall climber and a treehouse, a theme area that facilitates sand play and water play, and also a nap station and a

multimedia room with toddler-sized desks and computers. Every corner of the premises is stimulating. Children not only get to learn shapes and colours, but also get to play inside life-size circles and triangles in the free exploration zones.

All lesson activities are associative for both playgroup and nursery children. They learn to match shapes to their outlines. Numeracy is taught through dice games and they learn how to match alphabets with colour palettes. All five senses are constantly stimulated in their learning activities. Children are encouraged to match numbers, letters, colours and shapes using their own hands and minds.

Shumida Rahman believes that singing is really important in the learning process for early childhood development. She explains, "When it rains, they sing 'rain rain go away' and when thunder strikes, they sing 'I hear thunder, I hear thunder'. And within weeks of them attending Stepping Stone, they are able to associate these songs with the weather."

Over all, the lesson curriculum of Stepping Stone is designed to enhance emotional development that emphasises social skills and importance of independence and responsibility. They encourage motor skills, fine motor skills through using hand eye coordination to match letters, numbers, shapes and sizes, and gross motor skills are flourished in the toddler gym and themed play areas. Language development is enhanced through speaking, reading, writing, listening and singing and also role-playing.

Admissions are always open. Registration fees for both preschool and daycare is Tk 55,000.

For admissions please contact Stepping Stone Learning Centre at 01781613093 or -steppingstonebd1@gmail.com

Address: house 9A (NW-1) Road 53, 1ST FLOOR, Gulshan 2, Dhaka

Preschool
Timing: 8:30am to 11:30am
Monthly Fees: Tk 15,000

Day Care
Timing: 8:30 to 5pm
Monthly Fees: Tk 18,000

By Sanumkia Siddiqui
Photo courtesy: Stepping Stone