

BOU needs second TV channel: V-C

Varsity Correspondent

Bangladesh Open University (BOU), an alternative educational system designed to provide learners with access to an extensive area of academic and non-academic subjects, needs a second television channel for expanding its academic activities.

Talking to newsmen at its temporary office at Dhanmondi on Sunday, Dr. M. Shamsher Ali, Vice-Chancellor of BOU, said that the University will offer a wide range of formal and non-formal programmes and courses through telecommunication media, postal services and electro-mechanical devices like radio, television and audio and video cassettes.

He said TV and radio are the main media for the teaching activities of BOU and now TV and radio allow only 30 minutes each for broadcasting the courses.

"The time limit is too inadequate to deal with BOU courses, as a general lecture in other universities takes about one hour," he said.

There are educational channels in Pakistan, India, Australia, Britain and many other countries for telecasting academic activities, Dr Shamsher Ali pointed out.

He said the University has an ongoing project of Taka 187 crore of which 81 per cent came from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) loan and remaining 19 per cent from the Bangladesh government grant. The interest of the ADB loan is 1 per cent per annum.

The main campus of BOU will be located with its administrative unit at Gazipur where the infrastructure with the necessary physical facilities, equipment is being developed in phases, he informed.

He said that BOU has already started its function imparting B.Ed course for teachers and certificate in English, Language Proficiency (CELP) course.

Dr. Shamsher Ali said that the Open University will not only provide higher education but also impart many other educational and training requirements covering the whole spectrum of human resources development needs from basic education through secondary to higher education. It will also focus on non-formal education through short courses offering in such area of national needs as agriculture extension, community health and nursing, he said.

"Besides, BOU expects to make a significant contribution to informal education through the provision of courses and programmes of general value to the community at large in such areas as environment protection, health, hygiene, family planning, women-in-development and poverty alleviation," the V-C said.

There will be 10 well-equipped Regional Resources Centres (RRC) of the country, one each in Dhaka, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Bogra, Comilla, Rajshahi, Barisal, Sylhet, Kushtia and Jessore having liaison with the universities, colleges, schools, NGOs and private sector institutions, he said, adding that the BOU will also have Local Study Centres (ISC), the nerve centre of the University, where maximum interaction with the learners will take place.

In addition to the permanent study centres, Sponsored Study Centres (SSC) may be set up by the BOU at the request of employees, organisations and institutions who will bear the entire centres cost, he said.

While narrating the main objectives of the BOU, Dr. Shamsher Ali said the University is to create an educated and trained workforce by providing access to a wide range of educational programmes and vocational training for all levels of people, particularly for those disadvantaged rural youths including women and girls who are generally deprived of formal education and training so that they can find self-employment.

He informed newsmen that a total of 750 teachers, officers and employees are sanctioned for the University. But he will recruit less teachers because the best teachers would be hired for designing their courses, he added.

The news conference was attended, among others, by Mohsinuddin Ahmed, Dr. Inamul Haq, Prof. Anwar Ali, Giasuddin and M.N. Mustafa.