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SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The theme of the science week this year is "Science and Youth Community." Prime Minister Khaleda Zia who inaugurated the week in the metropolis Wednesday last rightly stressed the need for attaching greater importance to science and technology. It is for quite some years now that the observance of this week has become an annual ritual and an exhibition is also held on the occasion. The objectives of the week are essentially to help spread knowledge of current scientific research among the practitioners, increase interest among students for science education and develop scientific attitude among the people.

It is time now that an assessment is made about the achievement towards this objectives. This is particularly important because we have reached a critical stage of development. The century that begins only seven years from now would be dominated by those scientifically and technologically developed. Begum Zia urged the scientists and technologists of the country to play their due role in solving the problem of poverty, population explosion, economic backwardness and natural disasters so that the nation may keep pace with the developing world.

It would be wrong to assume that we lack talents to meet the challenges confronting us. Our scientists have already made their marks in the international arena and the exhibitions that go with the Science Week bear eloquent testimony of our innovativeness.

There should however be appreciation for the fact that it takes a long time to change the attitude of the people. In the western world the ground has been prepared through the scientific fictions, toys and all that the history of which spreads over centuries. We are still in elementary stages in these spheres.

Nevertheless as many as 68 participants from different districts and science clubs in the senior group have projects on display in the exhibition this year while almost a similar number of young scientists in the younger group have put up their innovations.

The account of the exhibits is encouraging. The equipment called "Prkythim" on display can be used simultaneously for electric flash, heat and magnetic effects to kill rheumatic and arthritic pains. It cost only about Taka 1000 in procuring materials and fabricating the equipment. The private practitioners from Jessore who innovated the equipment claims he got good results in treating patients. A Naogaon enthusiast has developed low-cost environmentally safe fuel, 'fire-ball' using rice husk and waste water of cooked rice, while another from Chittagong has developed environmentally friendly mosquito coils from indigenous herbs. Members of Rajshahi Udbhabani Chakro developed a safe floating hand tubewell which can be mounted on vela, a floating device contrived with banana plants. Among other devices are low-cost housing, low-cost prawn production, use of blue-green algae cyanophyceae as fertilizer for increased paddy production, different uses of water hyacinth and low-cost dish antenna, wireless receiver sets and television appliances.

The list is indeed impressive and is expected to get due attention of the appropriate authorities. The records of the government actuate the hope and Begum Zia has further assured her government attached importance to proper coordination of research and application in science and technology and referred to different steps already taken and those in the offing. We thus hope the nation would be well prepared in the course of the coming years to enter 'the century of science and technology' with confidence.