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US not closing doors for int'l students: Mary

Staff Correspondent

US Ambassador in Dhaka Mary Ann Peters on Thursday said students were being offered admission at American universities and colleges and the Consular Section continued to issue visas.

Peters termed the allegations "greatly exaggerated" that the United States was closing the doors and putting up barriers for international students. She was addressing a conference of Fulbright scholars at US Embassy in the city.

During the year following September 11, a higher percentage of Bangladeshi students received visas than the years beforehand, she claimed.

Pointing to a new academic exchange programme, the US Ambassador said seven Bangladeshi graduates would join seven other undergraduates from India and Pakistan in the USA in late June to take part in a programme on values of democracy and civil

society.

She informed the gathering that the USAID mission was supporting three university linkages, each involving a two-year funding commitment.

UNB adds: "The student advising office of our Embassy continues to do in-house counseling and outreach to Bangladesh universities and secondary schools," she said adding, "So the naysayers and the critics with their dire predictions about a 'fortress America' are being proved wrong".

In June, she said, seven Bangladeshi undergraduate students selected through a very rigorous selection process will join seven undergraduates from India and seven from Pakistan to take part in a programme that will showcase the values of democracy and civil society as we understand them in the US.

The programme will be carried
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US closes

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Middle East about the threat and ordered information passed on to Norwegian companies in the region.

Norway is the world's third largest oil exporter, and apart from the vast oil fields off its coast, some Norwegian oil companies have interests in the Middle East and other predominantly Islamic countries. State-owned Statoil ASA is active in Iran, Nigeria and Singapore, while Norsk Hydro ASA has offices in Iran. Paint manufacturer Jotun operates plants in the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Egypt.

Justice Minister Odd Einar Dørum said the national police intelligence service and other agencies were reviewing the threat risk.

"Norwegian authorities are doing a running evaluation of the situation in close cooperation with friendly countries," he said.

"We will come back with information should additional steps be necessary."

Norwegians were puzzled by the threat, partly because the nation did not join the war in Iraq.