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Equip grads with right skills: expert

Star Business Report

Young graduates should be given opportunities so they can learn from skilled foreigners working in Bangladesh and help retain the \$6 billion that goes out of the country as experts' salaries, said an economist yesterday.

Mirza Azizul Islam, a professor of Brac Business School, said no two industries are the same.

So, instead of formulating industry-specific courses, universities should encourage inquisitiveness and generate interest among students, he said.

The economist made the comments while making the concluding speech at the “Bridging the Gap-Panel Discussion” on marketing, finance and entrepreneurship.

He also dispelled the idea that grades were not of that importance, saying it was a reflector of a student's aptitude.

Brac Business School organised the discussion at Brac University in Mohakhali. Nine senior executives were invited to share their insights about industry placement, students' skills and ways to build stronger partnership with industries.

Prof Syed Saad Andaleeb, vice-chancellor of Brac University, chaired the session. He urged industries to invest on universities to prepare the young generation either for entrepreneurial activities or serving in industries, both of which ultimately contribute to the economy.

On whether to go for corporate jobs or become an entrepreneur, Frontier Technology Managing Director Humaira Chowdhury suggested giving a couple of years in the former to get the vibe before going for realising one's ideas.

She questioned the benefits of competitions on entrepreneurship ideas, saying she had seen would-be graduates win such contests just for glory before going for corporate jobs.

Rashed Hasan, chief investment officer of asset management company LR Global Bangladesh, said students focus on grades, but it was the attitude that mattered.

Rezwan Ali, director of Omega Exim Ltd, said graduates need to demonstrate that they have the knowledge as only then an industry would help them gather the necessary experience.

Md Mizanur Rahman Khan, general manager of Palmal Group of Industries, asked youths to engage themselves in innovative ideas to stop foreign firms from taking away foreign currency from the country through businesses.

Openness is very important and students need to develop this habit while in graduate schools, said Nazmul Chowdhury, senior vice president of City Bank Ltd.

According to the discussants, one should go for startups only when adequate confidence to think out of the box exists.

Prof Iftekhar Ghani Chowdhury, dean of Brac Business School, delivered the welcome speech while Mahreen Mamoon, assistant professor of the school, moderated the event.

Mushtaq Ahmed, CEO of ChhobiChai, Kaushik De, creative head of Magnito Digital, Abdullah Chowdhury Robin, of Wellbeing Foundation, and Meer Sajed-Ul-Basher, CEO of Impress Capital Ltd, were also present.