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Media key building block in democratic dev

Says US envoy

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US Ambassador James F Moriarty yesterday said the media in Bangladesh has become a key building block in the democratic development.

"The media in Bangladesh -- be it print, electronic or online -- is dynamic and vibrant," he said, adding that another important building block fell into place with the recent passage of the Right to Information Act 2009.

He hoped that the citizens and institutions of Bangladesh, especially the media, will make good use of this important act to further enrich democracy in this country.

The US ambassador said this while speaking as the chief guest at the opening ceremony of the first in-house training programme on 'Ethics and

Standards in Journalism.

Journalism Research and Training Initiative (JATRI) with the assistance of USAID arranged the three-day long training programme for the journalists of print and electronic media at TK Bhaban in the city.

Moriarty said the credibility of a journalist or media outlet depends on reporting the truth.

It is easy to report a rumour or gossip, but it takes real investigative skills to prove and report the truth, he said.

"Professional and accurate journalism provides a powerful instrument for checks and balances in democracies around the world," he said, adding that responsible news media give voice to the public and serve as a 'watchdog' against corruption and abuse of

power in all sectors.

"To be a true watchdog, journalist must promote the public interest by providing objective and accurate information."

Responsible journalism, in turn, helps citizens, policymakers and institutions make responsible and informed choices and decisions, he added.

Emphasising the need for such training programme, Moriarty said this training would help the participants establish the lifelong approaches required for responsible journalism.

Senior journalist and columnist Jaglul Ahmed Chowdhury, Brac University Pro-Vice Chancellor Dr Salauddin Ahmed and Barrister Manzoor Hasan also spoke.

About 20 journalists are taking part in the training programme.