

Create scope for Dalits to change economic condition

Speakers tell discussion

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a panel programme yesterday underscored the importance of creating scope for Dalits to bring a change to their existing marginalised socio-economic condition in the country.

They put light on the history of lives and livelihoods of Dalits, the oppressed people in society.

The speakers said this at the panel discussion organised as part of the concluding ceremony of Jatiya Dalit Sammilani at Public Library auditorium in the city.

Bangladesh Dalit Forum and ActionAid Bangladesh in association with Dharitri Foundation, Bhumija

Foundation and Research and Development Collective (RDC) organised the programme.

Noted sculptor Ferdousi Priyabhashini said Dalits should gain their rights by themselves, as the rights are not served to anybody so easily.

Drawing example from her own life, she said the existing social set-up has effortlessly made some segments of people untouchable, but it is the obligation of those people to come out of the prejudice and empower themselves.

Dr Qazi Kholiquzzaman, president of Bangladesh Economic Association, spoke at the event as the chief guest. He briefed the audience on

the history of Dalits, the social structure to exclude them from the mainstream, their movements and the consciousness of the litterateurs regarding Dalits in different times through their writings.

Scopes should be made for Dalits to help them go ahead as the new liberalisation of economy, which makes the poor to stick to poverty and the rich to expand their power and properties, will never include Dalits' rights to be empowered, he added.

Dr Kholiquzzaman said a reformed economic system, which includes every segment of the society by means of production, could facilitate to establish the rights of Dalits in

education, health, training and access to resources.

The concluding ceremony were divided into three panel discussions -- Socio-economic position and dignity of Dalits, Dalit's Life: The experience of South Asia and Dalit women.

Michael Hossain, executive director, Gonojagaran Sangstha, Narail, said if there are political commitments for providing health, education and other rights to Dalits, they will have to suffer no longer.

Prof Sudeshna Chatterjee of English department of Kolkata University, Bangladesh Dalit Forum Chief Adviser Prof Mesbah Kamal and Adviser Jannat E Ferdousi also spoke at the programme.



Adviser to the Prime Minister HT Imam unveils the cover of a book titled 'Muktijuddhey Shaheed Chikitsak Jibonkosh' at Bangabandhu International Conference centre in the city yesterday.

BOOK ON MARTYRED DOCTORS LAUNCHED

'Bring war criminals to book'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Family members of martyred doctors during the liberation war yesterday reiterated their pledge to bring war criminals to justice, saying that the nation wants an end to the fight for justice that started 38 years ago.

They took the vow at the launching ceremony of the book titled 'Muktijuddhey Shaheed Chikitsak Jibonkosh' by Dr Baizid Khorshid Riaz.

Sponsored by Grameenphone and published by Sahitya Prakash, the 440-page book portrays the lives and dedication of 81 doctors and 10 talented medical students who braved guns of the Pakistani soldiers and their collaborators.

The author of the book said article 4 of the 4th Geneva Convention states that doctors, nurses and

other medical personnel are protected during the war.

But in 1971, the hyenas and their collaborators did not show mercy to the doctors. They even killed doctors inside the operation theatres. Their contribution often remains unknown to many.

The number of doctors massacred in 1971 is overwhelmingly high, he said, adding that they deserve special tributes for their contribution.

Families of the martyred doctors were honoured at the programme. They shared their traumatic experiences during the liberation war.

Demanding trial of the war criminals, Shyamoli Nasrin Chowdhury, wife of Shaheed Dr AFM Abdul Alim Chowdhury, said the nation still eagerly awaits justice.

The families of freedom

fighters and martyrs are still struggling in a free country, she said, urging the government to lend a hand to these families.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni said they [Pakistani occupation forces] massacred all the gifted sons of the soil to intellectually impair Bangladesh. Even after the independence, the nation experienced many setbacks and the history of the nation was being constantly altered with misinformation.

She said the present government is keen on bringing the war criminals to justice and also revealing the true history of the country.

Health Minister AFM Ruhul Haque as the chief guest said it is a shame that the war criminals are still roaming scot-free in the country and they also shared power with the government.

Along with revealing con-

tribution of the brave sons, it is also important to expose the identities of the persons responsible for the heinous crime against humanity in 1971, he stressed.

Establishment and Administration Affairs Adviser to Prime Minister HT Imam unveiled the cover of the book at the event.

He said the nation is indebted to the martyrs for their contribution, adding that the war criminals would be brought to justice at any cost.

Chief Executive Officer of Grameenphone Oddvar Hesjedal, State Minister for Liberation War Affairs AB Tajul Islam, State Minister for Health and Family Welfare Mojibur Rahman Fakir, cultural activist Nasiruddin Yusuf Bacchu, Director of Shahitya Prakash Mofidul Islam and Health Secretary Sheikh Altaf Ali also spoke.



Foreign Minister Dipu Moni inaugurates the Concord-Prothom Alo 3rd Buet Debating Club Debate Championship by lighting lamps at the Buet auditorium in the city yesterday.

ANTI-GRAFT CARTOON EXHIBITION BEGINS

'Cartoon highlights social injustices'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Cartoon is a powerful medium as it highlights social injustices and attacks the wrongdoers in a satirical tone, speakers at the inaugural ceremony of a cartoon exhibition said yesterday.

Cartoon speaks of the pains and protests of the people in a society and the practice of using cartoons indicates a healthy society, they said.

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) organised the exhibition and the forth anti-corruption cartoon competition and prize giving ceremony at the Institute of Fine Arts, marking the International Anti-Corruption Day.

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, vice chancellor of Dhaka University, inaugurated the six-day long exhibition at Zainul Gallery of the institute.

The cartoons, which received awards and special mentions, were put on display. The competition received a total of 472 entries under two age groups.

In the 13-18 age group, Ashim Chandra Roy, Syed Nafis Sadik and Khan Abdullah Taiyum received the first, second and third prizes

respectively while Mehedi Haq, ASM Shahidullah Faruk and Nasrin Sultana Mitu became the first, second and third respectively in the 19-35 age group.

The award carries money, a crest and a certificate. Besides, 31 cartoonists from both the groups were awarded received special mentions. Prof Arefin handed over the awards.

Speaking as the chief guest, Prof Arefin said, "We make rules but don't follow them, which ultimately leads to corruption."

Proper education is the key to curbing corruption, he said, adding that the rate of corruption is comparatively low in those countries where the learners receive proper education.

"Cartoon is a medium of education and we have to use it to curb corruption," he said.

Noted educationist Prof Abdullah Abu Sayeed said cartoon is not an easy subject; it resulted from extreme helplessness of the people.

He said cartoon is a medium of expressing pains and protest. It is also a form of attack against wrongdoers in a humorous way.

Prof Sayeed underscored

the need to use cartoons more as a tool to combat corruption, saying that corruption is widespread in our society and that many people who are vocal against corruption are also resorting to corruption.

Eminent artist Prof Rafiqun Nabi said cartoonists are playing an active role in curbing corruption.

Cartoon is also a risky medium, as a little mistake can mislead the people as well as ruin the career of the cartoonist, he said.

"Saying 'no' to corruption or drawing anti-corruption cartoons is not enough to curb corruption. We have to be careful that we will not resort to corruption and will not allow others to do so," he said.

Talking to reporters, TIB Chairman M Hafizuddin Khan stressed the need for political will to curb corruption.

TIB Executive Director Iftekharuzzaman said they have been trying to combat corruption through using the language of cartoons for the last four years.

The anti-corruption cartoon exhibition will remain open from 12:00 noon to 8:00pm daily up to December 16.

Debate makes people enlightened

Says Dipu Moni

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni yesterday said the country's future depends on enlightened people and debate is a tool to make people enlightened.

She said this while inaugurating the Concord - Prothom Alo 3rd Buet Debating Club Debate Championship at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet) auditorium.

The minister said, "If we can move on towards our future unitedly we will be able to fulfil our dream of creating a 'Digital Bangladesh'."

Debate makes people enlightened as they need to know a lot for debating and they always try to think logically, she said.

A total of 105 teams of 12 schools, 16 colleges and 32 universities are participating in the debate competition that will end on December 21.

Buet Vice Chancellor Prof AMM Shafiqullah, Mahbul Haque Shakil, deputy press secretary to the prime minister, and Abdul Quayyum, deputy editor, the daily Prothom Alo, spoke at the inaugural ceremony as special guests while Prof Kabirul Islam, moderator of Buet Debating Club, presided over the programme.

Old man found dead in Fatulla

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Narayanganj Sadar police recovered body of an unidentified old man aged about 62 from Paschim Deobhog Keitta Bridge in Fatulla.

Police sent the body to Narayanganj general hospital for postmortem.

The man was wearing a red check shirt.



PHOTO: STAR

Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB) forms a human chain in front of the fine art faculty of Dhaka University yesterday to mark the International Anti-Corruption Day.

South Asian students' meet begins in city

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A two-day gathering of the students of economics of South Asian countries began in the city yesterday with an aim to enable young learners to acquire knowledge on contemporary economic development-related issues.

"The idea of students' meet came from the expectations to enable students to know about the development of the region," said Deb Kusum Das, a student of Ramjas College, University of Delhi, India.

"Our students know very little about South Asia, although they know about what is happening in Brazil, the United States and other regions. But they should know about the development of the region," said Deb, also a mastermind of such meets.

Inaugurated by Finance Minister AMA Muhiht, more than 50 students of economics from Bangladesh, India,

Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan attended the '6th South Asian Economics Students' Meet 2009' at Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Economics department of Dhaka University organised the event where attendees would exchange ideas on eight themes -- multilateral and regional integration, food security, agrarian, land and aquarian reform, global economic crisis, human development and poverty, environment, SME and informal sector.

The finance minister said the topics selected for discussions have relevance from the context of economic development in South Asia.

He suggested the organisers developing a website of the South Asian economics students to share their ideas easily.

Prof Abul Barakat, chairman of Economics department presided over the inaugural function.

'Improve quality of edn to achieve MDGs'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is not possible without improving the quality of education and health services, status of which still remains very poor due to bad governance, said speakers at a discussion yesterday.

They, therefore, emphasised increasing allocation for these sectors and checking leakages by improving good governance.

They were addressing a discussion to review the progress of the MDGs organised by the Shushashoner Jonny Procharavijan (Supro) at the National Press Club in the city.

According to the government report, the rate of poverty alleviation is 3.6 percent and if this rate continues, poverty in 2015 will stand at 30 percent, while the MDG is to cut the rate to 29 percent.

The UN targeted 100 percent completion of primary education, which is now only 52 percent because of around 50 percent dropout, while it targeted reducing maternal mortality rate to 144 per lakh, which is now 351, according to

a Supro presentation.

"There is the pledge of 100 percent enrolment in primary schools, but what benefit does it bring if large drop outs are there," said Bangladesh Red Crescent Society Chairman and lawmaker Dr MS Akbar, adding that partisanship in the school management committees is a blockade to improvement of education.

Lawmaker Abdul Mannan said there is huge corruption in school stipend programme. If corruption cannot be checked and teachers are not provided with training to improve their quality, it is difficult to improve the standard of education, he noted.

"And, whatever achievements we make, we cannot improve unless we control population," he said.

Development expert Monowar Mustafa said the government considers GDP growth as development indicator, but while efforts are made to increase GDP, it liberalises trade, making the poor section more vulnerable.

Supro Chairperson Abdul Awal and Prof Tarik Ahsan and Sanjida Akhter Nira also spoke.



27th LANCER CUP GOLF TOURNAMENT

Date : 10th & 11th of December 2009
Venue : Kurmitola Golf Club, Dhaka

All golfers are invited to participate



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