

The Medium of Knowledge Exchange

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Arunava Sinha a well known literary translator from India 'says, 'When I seek permission for translating the works of established and renowned writers they allow me with rather reluctant voice saying, 'well, if you want you can translate it but I am not sure whether it will be very good.' This offers me a big challenge and learning session. Again young writers are very enthusiastic. They are a source of great encouragement for me."

When Kate points out the present condition of literary translation in Bangladesh, comments from Kaiser Haq and Shaheen Akhtar reveals the real challenges of translation of Bengali literature into English. Kaiser Haq says, "One of the challenges of



From left: Arunava Sinha, Shaheen Akhtar, Kaiser Haq and Kate Griffin discussing literary translation at the Hay Festival, Dhaka.

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Translation is one of the most significant sources of any country's literature and knowledge. Bangladesh has been translating global literature into Bengali from long since. One of the pioneers of literary translation is Syed Shamsul Haque who has translated Shakespeare and Henrik Ibsen. But translation of Bengali literature into English and other languages is a task which has been practiced rarely in Bangladesh. Dhaka Translation Centre has come forward in this regard and with notable successes it has also faced a lot of challenges.

At the Hay Festival, Dhaka 2014, Kate Griffin of the British Centre for Literary Translation moderated a session with renowned poet Kaiser Haq, authors Shaheen Akhtar and Arunava Sinha on literary translation. Translation of literature is no less challenging than creating something new. The translator is largely responsible for inhaling the essence of original literature and for transmitting it to its readers of other languages.

translating Bengali literature into English is that in Bangladesh we have no tradition of editing. The manuscript goes to the press straight from the writer's desk. In these cases, translator's collaboration with the writer is essential. Lack of resource persons is also a big challenge in this regard."

However, civilization owes a lot to translation of literature and academic books. Much of western civilizations have developed themselves by translating the literary jewels of eastern nations. We find in Kate Griffin's comment that they have been continuing this process. She says, "In the UK we mostly translate foreign literature into English as we know that most of our writers have been translated into different languages around the world already."

Translation is the process through which we can present our literature to the world. It is also the process which will enrich us by being updated with global trends and tradition. Investment in this sector is now a crying need. ■



AMUSINGLY SCIENTIFIC

PHOTO: PROBIR DAS

From left: Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, Hossain Zillur Rahman, Lucy Hawking and Marcus du Sautoy discussing how to make science popular for the children and youth.

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The most stereotypical image of a scientist in films is of a person with a big head doing bizarre experiments in his mysterious, underground laboratory. However, it is the very mystery associated with science that fascinates the young mind. When the three celebrated figures of science and science fiction Muhammed Zafar Iqbal, Lucy Hawking and Marcus du Sautoy came to the dais there was hardly any vacant seat in the huge auditorium of Bangla Academy. For an hour, the Hay Festival premises turned into a festival of science enthusiastic youngsters.

Hossain Zillur Rahman, moderator of the programme gave an apt introduction: "Science education in our school is a matter of great concern. But the overwhelming presence in the 'Science Matters' session should be an example of our youth's interest in science." Then it was the celebrated panellists who started to decode how they engage the young children's mind to catch the difficult scientific realities such as Big Bang, the beginning of time etc. Lucy Hawking, the author of highly popular George's Secret Key to the Universe series says, "When I write sci-fi for children, I try to make it entertaining and accessible. But without breaking any rules of physics which my father (Stephen Hawking) ensures when I work with him on my

books!"

Muhammed Zafar Iqbal is the legendary figure of writing science fiction in Bengali. Thanks to his writings and contributions to science education, hundreds and thousands of Bangladeshi youngsters now say that their favourite subject is mathematics and physics. But as Zafar Iqbal says writing science fiction in Bengali is rather a tricky business. He says, "Bengali is a very different and poetic language. In English if you want to say I love you, you have to place these three words in order. But in Bengali you can permute the words *ami tomake bhalobashi* (I love you) in different ways and every way will be correct. So writing science fiction in this language brings a very different challenge to the writer."

But this impressive group of panellists faced the real challenge during the question answer session. Besides a lot of lively queries there were tricky questions such as "Are religion and science related". Some students asks what happened during the Big Bang and one of them says, "Isn't it only faith which explains what exists before the Big Bang?"

The question-answer session turned into a lively debate. But before the young scientists in the audience came to a conclusion about the beginning of time, the time limit of the session came to an end. However inquisitive minds are seldom satisfied. As Marcus du Sautoy says, "Inquisitive mind and imagination are the most important to learn science. We will discover our future Einstein and Ramanujan. ■