

# WHEN TOMORROW'S LEADERS GET TOGETHER



Annisul Huq, Mayor, Dhaka North City Corporation shared stories from his youth with the guests.



Nazmul Ahmed, Founder and CEO, Ennovision, spoke to the audience about finding one's true identity.



Tajdin Hassan, Head of Marketing, The Daily Star took a session on career in digital and social media.



Shariful Islam, Founder, Bangladesh Brand Forum.

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The campus of North South University was abuzz last weekend as it hosted the Gala Round of "DCCI presents Bangladesh YouthFest", an initiative of Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) on May 13-14, 2016. The purpose of the event was to inspire university students around the country to make their mark on the global market and propel the economic growth of the country forward through the exchange of innovative ideas. The programme was powered by Symphony. North South University was its Learning Partner.

The Grand Finale of a journey that officially started on February 10, 2016 saw the 42 winning teams from seven previously held divisional rounds compete in order to secure one of the seven spots to join the Spikes Asia 2016 festival in Singapore, considered to be the biggest get-together of creative minds in Asia. The topics were divided into seven categories, namely Social Issue, Technology: New Product, Technology: Fresh Idea, Any Entrepreneurship Idea, Tech-based Entrepreneurship Idea, Paper Presentation on Prediction of the Regional Economy for 2025, and Women Entrepreneurship Idea. From each category one team was to be chosen.

The enthusiastic participants wrapped up the presentations on the first day while the winner announcement was put off till the second. However, the competition was only one of the major segments of the event, the other three being the Lecture Series, Innovation Hub and Career Talk.

The Lecture Series brought together around 40 motivational speakers – from CEOs of different companies to media personalities – who shared their experiences and provided insights into the current conditions of the local and global markets. This segment intended to educate students on the hurdles they would be facing on their journey to leadership, and advised them on how to overcome those obstacles.

Representatives from around 15 renowned companies including Grameenphone, Nestle, Standard Chartered Bangladesh, The Daily Star and more hosted the segment titled Career Talk, where they enlightened students about the sort of skills they expect from

recruits and shared tips on how the future applicants could harness these skills. Innovation Hub showcased some fascinating examples of advertising in the global market and successful start-up ideas in an attempt to inspire the youths who joined the programme. A number of stalls by sponsors and partners were set up around the campus in order to promote their latest products and services while a gaming corner was arranged by Grameenphone to further entertain the attendees.

Day 1 kicked off with an inspiring speech by Dr. Abdun Noor Tushar, CEO, Nagorik TV who reflected on his journey to his position today. Using numerous anecdotes and examples that had his audience at NSU's Recreation Hall engaged throughout the whole speech, he conveyed the message on how important it was to seize every opportunity that comes one's way and make the best of it. He said, "You have to take a few uncertain leaps before you find what your true passion is but it's important that you find it in the end and work on it."

The event gave the youths an opportunity to share their ideas and gain knowledge from the speakers in return. But how does one find out about these opportunities? With the intention of finding an answer to this question, Osama Bin Noor co-founded Youth Opportunities, a platform which allows young people to discover opportunities in the form of competitions, workshops, internships, etc. to showcase their talents across the globe. Addressing the students, he said, "I found information about an opportunity on a social media website and rather than keeping it to myself, I wanted to share it with everyone. This got me the idea for youthop.com."

The path to leadership is not a paved one but the journey could be made much smoother if one has a mentor guiding them through. Saif Kamal, founder of Toru, shed light on the importance of having a mentor in every aspect of life. He said, "It's a two way street – you learn from your mentors and they learn from you." He then went on to talk about the positive impacts of surrounding yourself with people who believe in making a difference and who believe in others.

While all these motivational speeches echoed within

the walls of NSU, Nazia Andaleeb Preema, visual artist, President of Women in Leadership (WIL) and Director of BBF, had taken over the Gallery where she, along with a bunch of students, had been painting a mural since morning. With her contagious enthusiasm, she spoke to the crowd which had gathered on the rainy Friday afternoon about how absolutely essential it is for the youth to be inclusive and said, "You have to learn to be accepting. You have to learn how to make people your own."

G. Sumdany Don, Chief Inspirational Officer at Don Sumdany Facilitation & Consultancy, and Solaiman Sukhon, Head of Marketing, amra Networks Limited, made their contribution to the Lecture Series followed by Ayman Sadiq, Founder and CEO of 10 Minute School and Salman Mohammad Muqtadir, YouTuber who successfully ignited the zeal of the crowd even more at the 1 Metre Plaza.

Day 1 ended with more talks from eminent figures, a musical performance by Rezaul Karim Leemon, and a dance skit by BUET Dance Club.

After a night's rest, the students were back on Saturday morning for the second day of the event which commenced with a talk by Geetiara Safiya Choudhury, Chairperson, Adcomm Ltd. at 1 Metre Plaza which left the crowd in awe. She spoke of the struggles she faced as a woman trying to secure her spot in the advertising arena and said, "The first problem I faced in establishing this agency was that I was a woman. In those days, a woman in charge of a business was an inconceivable idea." The audience listened with pin drop silence as she told the stories of how bravely she fought her battles and ended her speech, saying, "The youths of today are invincible. Never give up the desire to learn, and take a stand. It may be dangerous but if it's not you, then who is it going to be?"

Tajdin Hassan, Head of Marketing, The Daily Star spoke as a part of Career Talk about the sort of skills and competency levels required to sustain in this digital world and took a statistical approach in explaining how much our lives depend on technology now. In his words, "The future is digital, and as tech companies are growing fast, you need to be updated about the latest



The Grameenphone panel at the Lecture Series.

innovations and come up with your own as you go forward."

Among other speakers was singer Mehreen Mahmud, who, after an encouraging speech about how one should always follow their passions without worrying about success or money, took the crowd on a musical journey and even shared the spotlight with a fellow student in the audience who beatboxed along with her song. Mehreen's performance was followed by inspiring speeches by distinguished speakers including Annisul Huq, Mayor, Dhaka North City Corporation, singer and composer Tahsan Rahman Khan, musician Shafin Ahmed and many more.

As the hours rolled by and the programme almost reached its end, the winners of the competition were announced. Teams Aqua Maize CK from IBA-DU under the category of Social Issue, EDRU Masterminds from Rajshahi University under Technology: New Product, Green Power from University of Barisal under Technology: Fresh Idea, Steady Future from Rajshahi University under Tech-based Entrepreneurship Idea, Servicing Campus from Begum Rokeya University under Any Entrepreneurship Idea, Sopno from Begum Rokeya University under Women Entrepreneurship Idea and last but not the least, The Natives from Bangladesh



Singer Mehreen Mahmud answered queries about following one's passion in life.

University of Professionals under Paper Presentation on Prediction of the Regional Economy for 2025 received the coveted opportunity of attending the Spikes Asia 2016 festival and were awarded with crests. The success of the entire event reflected on the results, as 5 out of the 7 winning teams emerged from institutions outside Dhaka, speaking volumes about the untapped talents in the country.

Team Sopno from Begum Rokeya University commented on how pleased they were to have been a part of this event. One of the team members said, "We do not always get the chance to share our ideas and YouthFest gave us the platform to do so. I had a great time and hope the ideas we presented will be considered and implemented soon."

The event culminated with a powerful speech by the State Minister for Power, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources of Bangladesh, Nasrul Hamid, who congratulated the winners and encouraged the youths in the audience to actively participate and make their contributions in the progress of Bangladesh.

SHOUT was the Youth Partner of the Bangladesh YouthFest Gala Round.

PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA



Visual artist Nazia Andaleeb Preema and students painted a mural celebrating women in leadership.

