

DUNMUN 2016

A LESSON IN DIPLOMACY

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With 500 delegates, Dhaka University National Model United Nations (DUNMUN) held its fifth edition, from December 19-22, 2016. This year the theme of the MUN was the timely topic of “Embarking Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Implementation for Peaceful Coexistence”.

DUNMUN, first held in 2012, is the pioneer in the country's MUN circuit. To further stretch its innovation and influence, this year's session comprised of 10 specialised committees as well as an International Press (IP) delegation.

The inauguration ceremony was held on December 19, and was opened by Professor Dr. Delwar Hossain, Department of International Relations, and Moderator of Dhaka University Model United Nations Association (DUMUNA). In his speech, Dr. Hossain referred to the impact DUNMUN has had since its inception, saying, “We were the first to initiate MUN in Bangladesh and now we see how much that has broadened; there are so many MUNs taking place here in schools and universities. From that perspective, we have achieved success.”

Following him, chief guest of the opening ceremony, Vice Chancellor of the University of Dhaka, Professor Dr. AAMS Arefin Siddique, spoke to the audience. The VC articulated his vast knowledge of the UN and urged the delegates to understand the significance of their roles. In conclusion, he said, “Let us spread the culture of peace. Let us explore our collective wisdom.”

Md. Mamun Miah, President of United Nations Youth and Student Association of Bangladesh (UNYSAB), and Kazi Ali Reza, Director of Ahsania Mission Dhaka, took the stage afterwards. In their speeches, the recurring aspects were the need to conduct multilateral discussions and to hone the art of negotiation through practice in such events. Moreover, the timeliness of discussion of SDGs was stressed. Dr. Nasreen Ahmad, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic), was



the final guest to give a speech, in which she said, “There is no alternative to diplomacy and negotiation.”

With hope to conduct a successful MUN, where success is measured in learning the responsibilities of world leaders and not awards, Secretary General of DUNMUN 2016, Ashabul Mahmud officially declared the session open.

On December 20, the enthusiastic delegates dove into discussion in their respective committees. The commit-

tees had based their agendas on the impending crises and major issues that our world currently faces.

One committee that is unique to our country and inaugurated by DUNMUN in 2012 is the Special Committee of Bangladesh Affairs (SCBA). Ijaz Mahmud, who was the chairperson of this committee, where all sessions were held in Bangla, said, “For my first MUN in 2013, I was part of SCBA. It was hard work. However, at the end of it, when I received the award for best position



paper, I realised all the challenges I faced were worth it. I feel that the best delegate in SCBA is as good as any of the best delegates of different committees.”

After much heated discussion and debate on pressing issues with only snacks and lunch for breaks, the first day of the MUN concluded with a social event dubbed “Global Village”. The event featured some of the many talented musicians and dancers of Dhaka University and those involved with DUNMUN.

The delegates jumped straight back into business again the next day to exercise their skills in lobbying and bringing out the best possible solutions to a variety of issues. To aid in this process, a “Meet the Dignitaries” session was held where personalities skilled in MUNs talked with the delegates.

Habibur Rahman, Programme and Administrative Assistant, Adolescent and Youth Unit, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), was the dignitary who took time to talk to those in the UNICEF committee. He talked about how he grew up as an MUN leader to inspire those in the audience. Delving into the proposed agendas, he made sure the participants understood the role their committee plays in the UN.

Following the rigorous day was another social event to refresh the minds of the hardworking participants. The event started out with performances from delegates and then progressed to concerts by the bands Ganpoka and Abrovirus that had everyone in the TSC Auditorium on their feet.

On the final day, December 22, the delegates worked together to produce draft resolutions. This, of course, was possible after multiple moderated and un-moderated caucus sessions on the previous days.

What made these days of DUNMUN a cut above many other MUNs in the country was how the IP members had the opportunity to get their articles published online in a microsite hosted by The Daily Star. It gave the delegates working for IP a taste of real journalism – strict deadlines and attention to detail all included.

“As an Editor-in-Chief of the committee of IP, I got to know the pros and cons of each committee; this is where it got interesting. I got some enthusiastic souls in my committee as correspondents who worked tremendously hard for the final-day newsletter and their articles,” said Sabiha Mili.

All the effort that each committee put in was set to the test in the plenary session at Nabab Nawab Ali Chowdhury Senate Bhaban where the draft resolutions

were read out and voted on. The excellent skills of the delegates became apparent as all the resolutions were passed.

Syed Shadab Tajwar, delegate of the Russian Federation of UNICEF, who later went on to win the Best Delegate award, said, “I have attended a lot of MUNs at both school and university levels. So far, I have found DUNMUN to be the best. I would like to thank everyone in my committee because I have seen how we went from conflict to merging to coming up with one of the best resolution papers I have been a part of.”

The closing ceremony followed the plenary session. The chief guest of the ceremony was Md. Shahriar Alam, MP, State Minister for Foreign Affairs. He motivated the audience to think, saying, “Effective accountability of justice and inclusivity directly affect human development and ensure the attainment of human well-being, and thereby ensure peaceful coexistence.”

The other distinguished guests were Md. Humayun Kabir, Former Ambassador; Sudipto Mukerjee, Country Director, United Nations Development Programme, Bangladesh; and Dr. Akhtaruzzaman, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Administration). After their inspiring speeches, the Secretary General declared the closing of DUNMUN 2016.

The awards ceremony afterward was a difficult time for the executive board members as they struggled to choose the top delegates from their committees. It was evident from the speeches of the chairpersons that all the performances were superlative. Thus, DUNMUN accomplished its goals in having the delegated activity participating in the educational simulation.

The Daily Star was the Youth Engagement Partner. Strategic partners were UNIC Dhaka and The East Asia Study Centre, DU. Premium sponsor was Vorer Pata Group of Companies. Media partners included SHOUT, The Daily Ittefaq, Shomoy and Radio Dhol.

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