



MY MONEY, MY RESPONSIBILITY

RASMIA RAHMAN AMREEN

On December 13, 2017, the Finale of "Budget Olympiad 2017" took place at Muzaffar Ahmed Chowdhury Auditorium, University of Dhaka. Democratic Budget Movement (DBM) in collaboration with ActionAid Bangladesh (AAB) and United Nations Youth and Students Association of Bangladesh (UNYSAB), organised the first olympiad of its kind in Bangladesh. The initiative aims to start a chain of conversation amongst the youth of our country about budget, the mechanics related to it and how it reflects the financial planning and development of our country.

The judging panel included Professor Dr Kazi Maruful Islam, Department of Development Studies, Dhaka University; Dr Nazrul Islam, Associate Professor, Dhaka School of Economics; Ashiq Iqbal, Deputy Director, Save the Children; Asgar Ali Sabri, Assistant Chief, DBM; Nuzhat Jabeen, Manager, Just and Democratic Governance, AAB; and Layla Tasmia, Associate Programme Officer, Campaign, AAB. The



PHOTOS: LEO SAMOY

Chief Guest of the Finale was M A Mannan MP, Honourable State Minister, Ministry of Finance, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Dr Pratima Pal Majumder, President, Democratic Budget Movement; and Farah Kabir, Country Director, ActionAid Bangladesh, were present as special guests.

Budget Olympiad 2017 successfully encouraged 3,000 students to participate from 35 different universities and colleges all across the country. The syllabus included details on National Budget, its structure, budget management, rules and regulations

pertaining to budget, tax, VAT, etc. A booklet was provided to help the participants with preparation.

After registration, the participants had to qualify through preliminary and regional stage olympiads held in Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna and Dhaka. 62 youths qualified to take part in the Finale, who were then evaluated based on their performances on a written test and a group presentation.

Mishuk Rai from Chittagong University was declared as the Champion, while Ehsun Newaj and Al Mumin Khan (both from Khulna University) became the First Runner-

Up and Second Runner-Up respectively. The winner was awarded with BDT 15,000 and the runners-up with BDT 10,000 as one-year fellowships, to carry out campaigns on budgetary issues. They also received crests and certificates.

"Budget is an important financial document of a country. So, it is important for the citizen to know in details about it. The youths should be aware of how budget can help eliminate poverty, how people take part in its formulation and how it can protect or hamper our interest. We want the young generation to know, understand and speak about budget," says Professor Dr M M Akash, prominent economist and President of the Budget Olympiad Organising Committee.

Democratic Budget Movement hopes to erase the indifference that prevails amongst our youths about budget. The initiative deserves appreciation, as it strives to create "young budget debaters" in Bangladesh. When one has adequate knowledge about budget, he or she can contribute in making a difference to the society.

COFFEE WITH MENTOR Coffee, Conversations and Career Goals



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Youth Opportunities



PHOTO: SOHAN HAIDAR

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

Engaging in conversations can be a great source of learning. It is even more impactful if the interaction is with a mentor who can give actual insights of the corporate world.

Gloria Jean's Coffees and The Daily Star have taken the initiative to give 8 young individuals, aged between 18 to 32, the opportunity to sit with top corporate professionals and discuss their career goals and future, over a mug of coffee.

The 8 winners had to submit their reasoning of wanting to meet a mentor, based on which they were selected. The mentor of the first session was Shehzad Munim, President, Foreign Investors Chamber of

Commerce and Industry. It took place in Gloria Jean's Coffees on December 18, 2017.

In the beginning of the session, Shehzad Munim speaks about his journey of reaching to where he is today from a humble background. He also talks about the importance of serving one's own country and be reminded of one's root. He suggests the participants to go out of Dhaka and see the diversity of the country.

He further adds, "Learn to play as a team, not as an individual." According to the mentor, team play is as important as grit. The young minds of this country need to figure out how much they can sustain in a long time.

Students from different universities and back-

ground were part of the conversation. They shared their problems and confusions regarding choosing a path they were passionate about. In this competitive world, when one needs to choose between economics and passion, Shehzad Munim thinks passion should always come first. Also, instead of working on the weakness, he thinks individuals should recognise their strength and try to make it world class.

It was indeed a great opportunity for the participants to have a perceptive conversation with an esteemed mentor. More than 400 applicants were interested, among which only 8 were selected. There will be more sessions like this with mentors from different fields, to help the youths reach effective solutions to their problems.

Commonwealth Youth Forum 2018 in London



This programme is hosted by the UK Government. The Forum is part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM), which will see leaders from all 52 member states convene in London to discuss issues related to peace, prosperity, inclusion and security.

Deadline: January 2, 2018 | Conference

Girl Up Leadership Summit 2018 in USA [Fully Funded]

Through mentorship by Girl Up experts, celebrity champions, women trailblazers and gender equality experts, Summit participants will gain core leadership skills, training in community-building, advocacy and experience interacting with members of Congress on Capitol Hill. The Summit strives to empower, educate and embolden the potential of every youth leader there.



Deadline: January 10, 2018 | Miscellaneous

SilvaCarbon-NASA Fellowship Programme 2018



In order to build the technical capacity in remote sensing for Bangladesh, the SilvaCarbon Bangladesh Programme is sponsoring the 'SilvaCarbon-NASA Fellowship Programme 2018'. The programme will place a highly qualified Bangladeshi national as a 'Visiting Fellow' at NASA for approximately two to three months. This will be followed by a six to eight week internship in a technical placement at the Bangladesh Forest Department.

Deadline: January 7, 2018 | Miscellaneous

"DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH" AT DIGITAL WORLD 2017

MOHIMENUN HOQUE MAHIM

Youth Opportunities partnered with the ICT Division of the Government of Bangladesh to organise a session on "Digital Opportunities for Youth" at the Digital World 2017, which took place at Bangabandhu International Conference Center (BICC) on December 9, 2017.

The session began with introductions from the co-founders of "Youth Opportunities", Osama Bin Noor and Makshud Manik. They presented a thought provoking question to the audience - "Why are we here? Is it just to take a selfie, or, have a good time, or, is it because we all crave for opportunities to be better?" They asked the audience if they knew about various scholarship

programmes, such as Fulbright, DAAD, Chevening, etc. Both the co-founders went on explaining that

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even though almost everyone has access to smartphones and the internet, not many know about programmes that might actually help them. The speakers emphasised on

how their organisation "Youth Opportunities" is working hard to inform people about different opportunities.

The session was later joined by Andrew Newton from the British Council; Tamara Kabir from the German Embassy; Asitima Bhadra from AIESEC; and Kelly Ryan from the US Embassy. They took questions from the audience and advised them on the vast amount of opportunities that is open and waiting for them in different sectors, not just around the country, but also, around the globe.

One of the attendees of the session, Fahim Quader, tells Star Youth, "It is an amazing initiative taken up by Youth Opportunities to help us. We can now pave way for the country and its people to reach a better future."



PHOTO: SHANTO LAWRENCE COSTA