

BRITISH COUNCIL AND DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES LAUNCH YEAR-LONG CAMPAIGN

RABITA SALEH

On March 19, 2019 the formal inauguration programme of the year-long Public Library Campaign “Cholo Gronthagare Cholo, Dekhi Somvabonar Alo” by British Council’s Libraries Unlimited Programme and the Department of Public Libraries was held at the conference room of the Sufia Kamal National Public Library, Dhaka.

Under this new campaign they aim to educate the people in 25 districts of Bangladesh regarding the location of and the services available at government libraries. They plan to create an interactive relationship between the locals of the districts and the library staff, generate demand among locals for services provided by the libraries and get them invested in the process of the development of the libraries. They aim to achieve this by conducting two-day-long gala events at each district. Event dates and other details will be available on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/publiclibrarycampaign

At the inauguration, Ashish Kumar Sarker, Director General of the Department of Public Libraries and Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs was present as the chief guest; Barbara Wickham, Country Director, British Council Bangladesh and



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Abdullah Harun Pasha, Director, Department of Public Libraries and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs were present as guests of honour. A.J.M. Abdullahil Baki, Director, Department of Public Libraries and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Cultural Affairs conducted the event. Among others, Kirsty Crawford, Programme Director of British Council’s Libraries Unlimited Programme and other staff members of British Council were also present.

Barbara Wickham in her speech invited

locals to join the campaign saying, “This is an open invitation for the people of these 25 campaign districts. I would like for them to come and join us in the campaign to explore libraries in a new light.”

Chief guest Ashish Kumar Sarker mentioned that the campaign will inform people about the new products and services available in government public libraries such as free computer and internet facilities for the users, arrangements for learning computer

coding and programming for students and facilities to learn and play with toy bricks for the cognitive development of children. He claims that “this campaign will generate at least 5 lakh new library users in just one year”.

Kirsty Crawford shared that they are “introducing customer Wi-Fi in all 64 government public libraries, and have donated almost one hundred computers for public use”.

Regarding their public relations strategy, Zinat Ara Afroze, Development Communications Specialist of the British Council’s Libraries Unlimited Programme stated, “To engage the population of these 25 campaign districts we have developed this very special campaign mnemonic.” Their short audio visual on this campaign is also expected to inspire people to use the government public libraries.

Alongside their other efforts, a social media campaign is being conducted to generate widespread engagement.

The event concluded with a speech by A.J.M Abdullahil Baki in which, wishing every success to the campaign, he stated, “Everyone will go to class to study, however we need them to learn things outside of class. Libraries work to make people gain that extra knowledge, and make us humane.” He hopes that over the years to come they will be able to expand their campaign over all 64 districts.

JDC Eloquence 2019: Celebrating the magic of debate

MOHUA MOULI

Josephite Debating Club (JDC) hosted their second inter-school debating tournament titled “JDC Eloquence 2019” from March 21-23, 2019 at the St. Joseph Higher Secondary School campus in Asad Gate, Dhaka.

The event aimed to help school students engage more in debating and help them to familiarise themselves with English debating.

Sixty-two teams of three members each took part in this year’s tournament who had come from 35 different schools from all over Dhaka. The competition itself took place in two separate categories: Open and Novice. Any member who had participated in less than five debating tournaments were considered for the Novice category while teams with members having debated in five or more tournaments competed in the Open category. The competition allowed students from Classes 3 to 10 to compete for the championship title in each category.

The event kicked off at 4 PM on March 21, with Nazrul Sangeet singer and Ekushey Padak winner Khalid Hossain as chief guest. Other guests included Abdun Noor Tushar, CEO, Nagorik TV; Md. Jehad Uddin, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Finance; Jyoti F. Gomes, Director of St. Joseph International School; and Brother

Chandon Benedict Gomes CSC, Vice Principal, St. Joseph International School among others.

The participants went through two rounds of debating on the first day. On the second day, all the teams made it to the premises early in the morning to



compete in four more rounds. By the evening of March 22, names of 16 teams in the Open category and 8 teams in the novice category were announced who would go on to compete in the quarter finals.

On March 23, the final day of the

tournament, Ramisa Shakira, Inqiyad Patwary and Ajwad Hossain from Mastermind and Gungoon Mathieera, Tawfiqul Wahid and Iftekhar Hossain from the same institution reached the finals in the open category after beating 14 other teams in the quarters and semifi-

nals. Gungoon, Tawfiq and Iftekhar took home the championship trophy with Ejeta Eshrat Baarsa from Maple Leaf International School winning the Best Speaker title in this category.

In the Novice category, Jahin Afsan, Rahib Mabsur Chowdhury and Abid Bin

Ahmad from Chittagong Cantonment Public School and Azmayeen Abdullah, Areez Binte Hossain and Tauqir Anwar from Mastermind reached the finals. The team from Mastermind took home the winner’s title, while Ahmad Tousif Jami from Dhaka College won the Best Speaker title in this category.

The tournament consisted of 49 senior and ex-debaters who participated in the tournament as adjudicators, with an adjudication core consisting of 10 of the best debaters of Bangladesh. The event also welcomed three internationally renowned debaters: Patrick Cheang, Sher May Nar and Sheikh Rifayet Daiyan Srijon, who had flown to Bangladesh from Malaysia, Singapore and America, respectively, to adjudicate in the tournament.

When asked about the prospects of Bangladeshi debaters in the international school debating circuit, Sher May Nar from National University of Singapore said, “I think what the kids here have is a lot of drive for debating. That is something I believe will give them an edge over other debaters in international tournaments.”

Both the champion teams, the best speakers of the tournament as well as the top scoring adjudicators received cash prizes during the tournament. 10 Minute School was the education partner of the event.