

Promoting mental wellbeing

A round-table discussion at BRAC University

The Counselling Unit of BRAC University had organised a round-table discussion on 12 October, 2019, at the conference room, of BRAC University, Mohakhali.

The discussion, "Promoting mental health of young adults: Role of mental health professionals and academic institutions," was attended by selected mental health professionals, faculty members, and other stakeholders of different academic and health institutions.

The session was moderated by renowned psychologist and advisor of the Counselling Unit of BRAC University, Dr Mehtab Khanam. Twelve invited speakers, including psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, and professors spoke on the occasion.

Professor Afsan Chowdhury, columnist and journalist, expressed his grave concern and sorrow that mental health issues are often not even recognised as a health problem nowadays.

"When I stand in front of a bunch of students, I find 50 percent of them are mentally traumatised, of which, even 5 percent do not seek for a treatment. Mental health issues could be treated through peer counselling, and it should be socialised," he added.

"People these days can barely be seen laughing on the streets. They seem kind of aggrieved. Their smiles are fading away, just like cracking nuts in parks are," said Kamal Uddin Ahmed Chowdhury, Associate Professor of Department of Clinical Psychology, University of Dhaka.

It is evident that Bangladesh have seen some significant progress in providing different forms of mental health

challenges, conditions, and services in various social institutions in the last few years. However, it is highly disturbing to see how brutality and oppression is winning over empathy and cooperation in academic institutions.

Dr Ashique Selim, Lead Consultant Psychiatrist and Managing Director of PHWC, stated, "Academic institutions should be open in talking about gender problems and drugs." Speaking on how university counsellors can help students recover from their psychological issues, Shahrin Islam, a student of BRAC University, shared her experiences.

Shahrin was suffering from a severe form of depression, and her CGPA was poor. The therapy session helped her overcome her suicidal tendencies and other mental health issues.

"It is possible to get out of mental depressions of even the worst kind," she added.

The panellists shared their observation that in recent times, a large number of young adults are going through mild to severe level of mental health crises, ranging from fits of rage, anxiety, depression to post traumatic stress disorder. The initiative of round-table discussion is to promote and spread mental health wellness.

Dr Mehtab Khanam, along with the other notable speakers, emphasised on collaboration of counsellors and lead a new platform for further collaborative initiatives to promote health and wellness in our society.

By Tahmid Azad Sohan



Jamdani Festival 2019 ends on a high note

The month-long Jamdani Festival, which was organised by Bangladesh Jatiya Karushilpa Parishad - National Crafts Council of Bangladesh (NCCB), in collaboration with the Bengal Foundation, and held at Bengal Shilpalay, Dhanmondi, Dhaka, ended on 12 October, 2019.

The final day was highlighted with the awarding of certificates to the participating weavers in recognition of their unparalleled skills at the closing ceremony. The Minister for Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Golam Dastagir Gazi (Bir Pratik), MP, was present as Chief Guest at the closing ceremony to distribute the certificates. Also present during the ceremony were Mohammad Belayet Hossain, Secretary-in-Charge of the Ministry of Textiles and Jute; Rafiqul Islam, President of the National Crafts Council of Bangladesh; Ruby Ghuznavi, Executive Member of NCCB; Chandra Shekhar Shaha, designer, curator and Executive Member, NCCB; Abul Khair, Chairman of Bengal Foundation; and Luva Nahid Choudhury, Director General of Bengal Foundation.

The event was hosted by Sheikh Saifur Rahman.

The most anticipated part of this ceremony was the announcement of Sonargaon as a World Crafts City. This accreditation from the World Craft Council means that for the first time ever, a city from Bangladesh has been awarded this honour.

This will also solidify the path for 'Creative Tourism' in the region with an enhanced scope for local creativity, talent, and experience. Bangladesh's Sonargaon is now on the same platform of regional and international skills exchange as Mahabalipuram (stone carving) and Jaipur (ornaments) in India, Bornholm (ceramics) in Denmark, Sakon Nakhon (indigo dye) in Thailand, and numerous other craft cities around the world.

The festival marked the initiative in restoring the quality and exquisite design content of Jamdanis which sets it apart from all other textiles of the world.

Catch all the main highlights of the event at www.facebook.com/jamdanimfest



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