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Manifesto for a better Bangladesh Youth Leadership Summit 2018 ends on high note



Youth leaders promise to work together for the development of the country at the Youth Leadership Summit, which concluded at BICC auditorium yesterday. Prof Mizanur Rahman, left, moderated the event. Second from left, Dr Manisha Chakraborty, Shama Obaed, Waseqa Ayesha Khan, Shah Ali Farhad, and Tabitha M Awal. Photo: Star

Participants of Youth Leadership Summit have prepared a manifesto highlighting four key areas -- revamping the country's education system, creating new jobs, increasing their engagement in public spheres and actions against corruption.

Following the three-day summit, they presented the proposals before politicians of different parties during a panel discussion at the capital's Bangabandhu International Conference Center yesterday.

Lack of proper education, skills development scopes and employment opportunities are some of the most important challenges for the youths, they said.

Corruption in public and private institutions is also another important challenge, which is a hindrance to development, they said and demanded scopes for greater youth engagement in

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matters related to policy issues.

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) organised the programme with the theme “Desh Amar, Dayitto Amar” (my country, my responsibility), attended by some 400 university students and young professionals from across the country.

The manifesto, a declaration of priorities and aspirations that included 40 policy recommendations, will be used as an advocacy tool to drive youth development on a national level, said a BYLC statement.

BYLC said it will form a youth advisory council over the next few months to make progress on the manifesto by engaging with government bodies and policymakers.

Politicians of different parties promised to incorporate the proposals in the manifestos they are preparing ahead of the national polls.

“As a representative of the youth, I will work towards including your demands in our party manifesto,” said Barrister Shah Ali Farhad, a member of Awami League's central international affairs sub-committee.

Tabith M Awal, national executive committee member of BNP, said issues like education, employment and social inclusion are vital. “We will surely incorporate those in our manifesto. We think voice of youths should be stronger,” he said during a panel discussion.

He said youths are always told that they are too young to make a difference, but politics needs to be more inclusive.

Waseqa Ayesha Khan, MP, vice president of Mohila Awami League, and Dr Manisha Chakraborty, member secretary of Bangladesher Samajtantrik Dal, Barishal, were also present at the panel, moderated by Prof Dr Mizanur Rahman, former chairman of Bangladesh Human Rights Commission.

Waseqa Ayesha said there is a negative perception about politics among youths. “But they also have an important responsibility to get involved in politics to make a long-term systematic change,” she told a packed audience.

Shama Obaed of BNP said the recent protests for safe roads and reforming quota system in public services proved that young people are politically conscious.

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Manisha Chakraborty said youths may not be directly involved in politics, but they can surely debate over the issues of governance and utilisation of the country's resources to hold the authorities accountable -- something very important in a democracy.

BYLC President Ejaj Ahmad called upon youths to mobilise themselves and engage with authorities to solve public issues. "That's the way we can make change happen," he said.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam in his concluding keynote speech said youth is the most beautiful phase of one's life and urged them (the youth) to make the best use of it for their own sake and society.

The title sponsors of the summit were British High Commission, UKAid and The Asia Foundation. Silver sponsors were New Asia Group and Aamra.

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