

The Daily Star

Published on: September 7, 2008

Leaders of the future

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Community service is the practical aspect of BYLC's third and final goal, through which they hope to encourage BYLC students to utilise all they have learnt, bringing it forth within themselves into a real life situations, aimed at improving social conditions in Bangladesh.

IT would seem that our cry for informed and powerful future leaders of Bangladesh might finally have been answered. In fact, Ejaj Ahmad, the founder of the Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) would like to reassure you that this is indeed the case.

Ejaj, a recent recipient of an MPP from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and second-year MIT student Shammi Shawkat Quddus both won the Davis Peace Prize from MIT in January 2008. With this initial fund from their prize money of \$10,000, Ejaj was able to realise a past dream and start his quest by encouraging promising young men and women from the younger generations to receive training in leadership and decision making for the future development of our country.

BYLC conducted its inaugural program in Chittagong, selecting qualified students from English and Bengali medium schools as well as madrassas. Along with the cooperation of YPSA, a local non-profit in Chittagong, this first batch of BYLC students took part in the very first leadership training for high school students under the direct guidance of both Ejaj and Shammi.

BYLC has three main goals, according to its founders. Both Ejaj and Shammi spoke of the huge gap in comradeship between English medium, Bengali medium, and madrasa students that they themselves felt during their own school years in Bangladesh. Thus, not surprisingly, one of the first goals of BYLC is to build bridges between the three distinct schooling systems in Bangladesh and provide a common ground for students of different backgrounds.

Ejaj himself strongly believes that such a division in our society, cultivated from a young age in our lives, is a very definite threat to the economic, social and political progress of Bangladesh. "If future leaders, in whatever field, cannot understand where the other half of the population is coming from, then how will they exercise correct judgment and leadership?" asks the founder of BYLC.

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The organisation's second goal is "leadership training", as the name itself indicates. BYLC aims to encourage youngsters to realise and focus on their own goals, whether large or small. Goals that they themselves have set, and through leadership training, is able to build the courage required to accomplish such aspirations in life.

Community service is the practical aspect of BYLC's third and final goal, through which they hope to encourage BYLC students to utilise all they have learnt, bringing it forth within themselves into a real life situations, aimed at improving social conditions in Bangladesh.

Ejaj explains their third goal by saying: "We believe that leadership as a position of authority alone is of no use unless it delivers positive results for others."

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