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All-women debate at BRAC University

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Debaters at BRAC Bank Women's Open held on March 8 at BRACU. — Emad Hassan

This year, BRAC University Debating Club celebrated women's day through organising an all women debate tournament titled 'BRAC Bank Women's Open'. The idea of the tournament was conceived by Aaqib Farhan Hossain, former World University Debating champion and a graduate of BRAC University. It began on March 6 and its finale was held on March 8, marking the International Women's Day.

The female debaters debated on motions regarding the problems women face in the social fabrics. The tournament aimed to enhance participation of women in Bangladesh debating circuit by encouraging female orators from different schools and universities in the country. The tournament saw participants from schools like Viqarunnisa Noon School, Maple Leaf International School as well as from universities like IBA, Dhaka University, Asian University for Women, North South University and many more.

The three-day event started with 12 teams fighting it out. Some of the teams were formed with students from different academic institutes. Eventually, the team of Wasifa Noshin, from IBA DU, and Iffat Sumaiya, from Sunnysdale School became victorious. The other finalists were the team of Tasnuva Raidah and Masrura Oishee, from NSU; Samia Aboni and Nowshin Saiyara from BUET and Viqarunnissa Noon School respectively, and Mastura Tasnim and Farhanaz Farheen, from IBA, DU and Viqarunnissa Noon School.

The winners received a cheque of Taka 10,000 as prize money while the other finalists received cheques of taka 2,000 and trophies from the chief guest and guest of honour.

The President of the BRAC University Debating Club Sanjid Rahman anticipates that the tournament will set standards in organising public and social discourse for women in the country. He said, 'This tournament can be the start of many other events like this to come in the future, which encourage women to speak their minds and to envision a greater future for women. Indeed, this is a good platform'.

Mastura Tasnim, one of the runners-up shared her views about the tournament, 'I loved it because of the thought that went with it. Someone bothered to notice the gender gaps in the debating community and didn't just choose to brush it under the rug by quoting the number of awesome female debaters we have or the fact that the top speaker score in of Bangladesh in WUDC currently resides with the fairer half. Someone decided to do something about it, to motivate female speakers to show up in their numbers and to do it on International Women's day.'

The participants were also entertained by some good music performed by Aloonies, BRAC University student band and during the finale a video was shown, which was compiled by Tasawar Zaman, containing the happenings over the three days.