

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

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TRY NOT TO
BREATHE

PG 3

WHAT WE NEED FROM
OB/GYNS

PG 4



INVISIBLE WOMAN

How Women Are Being Excluded at the Workplace




ILLUSTRATION: NOOR US SAFA ANIK

EDITORIAL

This Sunday is International Women's Day all across the globe, and while it ranges from being a public holiday in some countries to a more active approach in others, this week's issue of SHOUT is focusing in on just the tip of the iceberg of issues women face in our country on a day-to-day basis. For socially just and gender equal responses to these challenges, solidarity among people from all walks of life in Bangladesh is essential. Hopefully this issue will shed light on some of the obstacle courses women - young and old - must deal with everyday in the country to prove that they deserve proper healthcare, personal space, and privacy, just to name a few.

- Talat Ahmed, Sub-editor, SHOUT

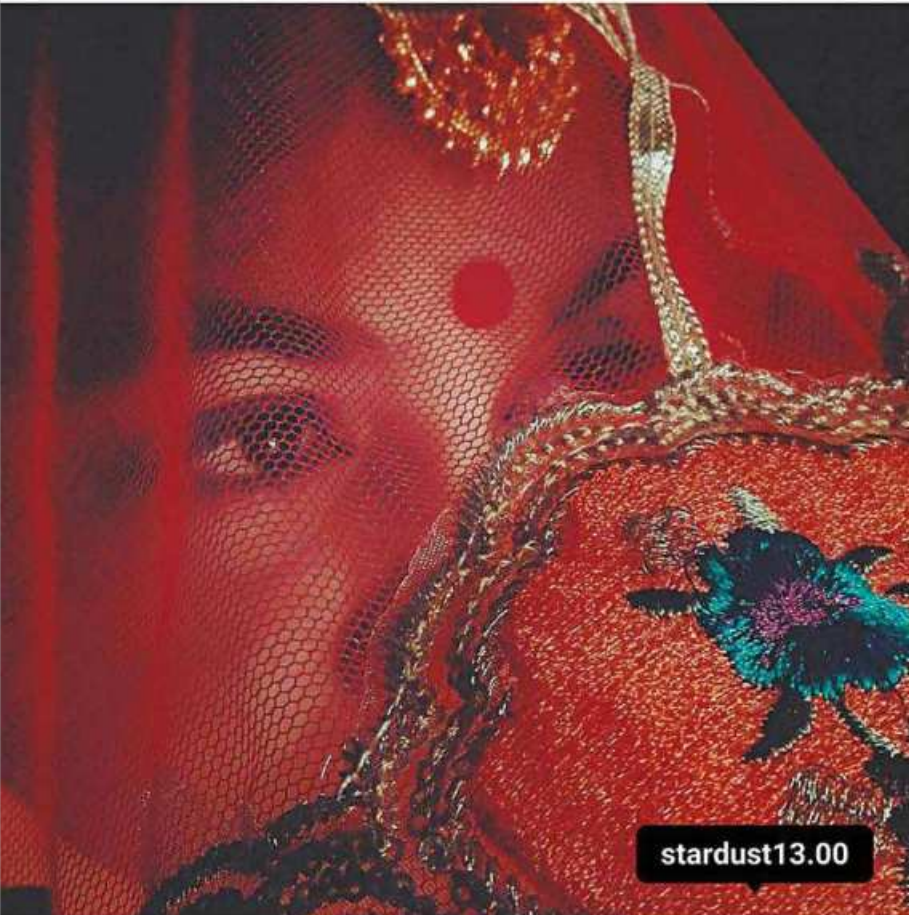




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PLAYWATCH
 MOVIE REVIEW



SHOUNAK REZA

Disclaimer: Contains spoilers. But then again why haven't you watched it already?

Parasite, the South Korean film that won four Oscars this year—including the awards for Best Picture and Best Director—is probably one of the most talked about cinematic works from the 2010s. As I watched the film, I realised how universal the theme is, how believable and realistic it would be even if it were set in Bangladesh, the country I was born and brought up in.

At the centre of the film are two families: four members of a family barely managing to make their ends meet successfully pretend to be unrelated, efficient people and, thanks to their luck and the tricks they use, get employed in the household of a wealthy family. There are unpredictable twists and turns, culminating in unexpected revelations and shocking outcomes.

While the storyline is very intriguing and the themes of social inequality and its catastrophic effects are extremely thought provoking, I spent a lot of time pondering over something else after I finished watching the film: the *title*.

Who are the titular parasites? Some people might choose to not focus on

things that do not meet the eye and come to the conclusion that the four working class people faking their identities and blatantly lying to be employed by a well-off family are the parasites; that they are leeching off the rich. But why should the REASONS they choose to lie be ignored?

How much equality is being established by the economic development taking place all over the world? Why should there be so much income, wealth and social inequalities in countries being constantly considered the models of economic development? How flawed should social structures be to compel people to lie, fake their identities and risk legal repercussions just to make their ends meet?

The thing that compelled the family in question to risk everything is the structural flaw that allows the rich to get richer and live off the sweat of the working class who risk being drowned in floods caused by downpours that the rich enjoy sitting in their mansions and air-conditioned cars. The relationship between the privileged and the underprivileged, contrary to what many people might suggest, is not symbiotic by any means. It is deeply parasitic, with the rich being the parasites, the exploiters, the oppressors—and not the other way around.

Try not to breathe

What air pollution is doing to the youth

AZMIN AZRAN

“By the time I return home, I am barely breathing. It actually feels like my windpipe is contracting and not letting any air pass through.”

Dinash Ferdous Rabbir, 24, is not describing a one-off incident. This isn't an accident, or an assault where he was attacked by an unforeseen threat. This is his daily grind. “I mainly travel around in a rickshaw or car to class. But for my internship I use ridesharing motorcycles. Honestly, the air I breathe in when we are at a standstill in traffic jams is horrendous. It literally feels like I'm inhaling gas fumes,” he adds.

The air we breathe has been in the news a lot lately, and entirely for the wrong reasons. According to the 2019 World Air Quality Report by IQAir, Bangladesh had the worst air in the world last year; Dhaka was the 21st most polluted city. While these numbers give us confirmation of what many already suspected, upon closer inspection, the real implications of breathing polluted air are bound to raise alarm.

“Continually breathing polluted air can have permanent health effects such as accelerated ageing of the lungs, loss of lung capacity, and decreased lung function. It could even lead to development of diseases such as asthma, bronchitis, emphysema, and possibly cancer,” says Dr. Rawshan Arra Khanam, Consultant, Respiratory Medicine, United Hospital Ltd., when asked about what risks are posed to young people when exposed to polluted air for prolonged periods. Young individuals we've talked to attest to this notion as well.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



Syeda Afrin Taranum, now 21, got diagnosed with asthma back in 2015.

She used to play volleyball outdoors at her school, and also used rickshaws for her short commutes.

While it is difficult to pin down exactly why a person could develop conditions such as asthma, air polluted with dust and other foreign particles is a major contributor.

Dr. Khanam adds, “While particles with a diameter of 10 microns or less (PM10) can penetrate and lodge deep inside the lungs, particles with a diameter less than 2.5 microns (PM2.5) can penetrate the lung barrier and enter into the blood stream. This can increase the risk of heart

and respiratory diseases, as well as lung cancer.”

World Health Organization's “Air quality guidelines” stipulates that daily average of PM2.5 should not exceed 25 micrograms per cubic metre. According to IQAir Air-Visual website, Dhaka's air reached 103.3 micrograms on March 1, 2020. At the time of writing this article, PM2.5 in Dhaka was at 139 and rising.

It's difficult, or even unwise, to attribute trends in health complications to certain environmental factors based on empirical evidence, but it is clear that suffering has increased among those who are vulnerable to air pollution.

Anupoma Joyeeta Joyee, 23, has suffered from asthma for as long as she can remember. But her breathing problems have definitely taken a turn for the worse in recent years. She says, “It feels more suffocating than ever before. Recently I have had to increase my usage of inhaler. I

have also suffered from mild scratchy/sore throat. These days asthma is affecting my sleep a lot, which definitely has an adverse effect on the rest of my day.”

Dinash Ferdous Rabbir is a fourth-year student at IBA, DU, and this is how he describes his suffering: “I only used to suffer from severe asthma during the seasons when the weather changed. This was the case even two years ago. However, since then it has become more frequent. Nowadays I have to take emergency inhaler puffs almost every day and I miss about two classes a month on average due to breathing difficulties.”

Dr. Khanam's own experiences can shed some light on proceedings as well. “We get patients with asthma or respiratory problems mostly in winter, but this year still we are getting lots of patients with cough. A portion of these patients are young, and they're here probably as a result of poor air quality in Dhaka,” she comments.

Because pollution is a problem that experts have a way to quantify, the real problems often get buried under numbers. The fact of the matter remains that more and more people are suffering from the terrible repercussions of human-manufactured air pollution, and a public health crisis is just around the corner, assuming it is not already here.

Young people are repeatedly told how they are the future, about how they are going to be in the frontline to tackle challenges such as climate change and economic unpredictability. What gets lost in the conversation is the fact that the younger generation are being forced into a handicap they can ill afford if these challenges are to be successfully combated. Air pollution is a sword at the back of an entire generation, and how they can be expected to march forward in this state is a question no one wants to answer.

Azmin Azran is a sub-editor at SHOUT. Reach him at azminazran@gmail.com



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What we need from OB/GYNs

FARIHA S. KHAN

When my gynaecologist diagnosed me with Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) at the age of 18—a syndrome that affects almost seven out of every ten women—her first worry was that I would be unable to bear children, instead of addressing the fact that I would probably be gaining weight excessively. She told me that the worst thing about the weight gain was that a boy would deem me undesirable for marriage and how devastating that would be for my parents; not that it would lead to cardiac problems for me.

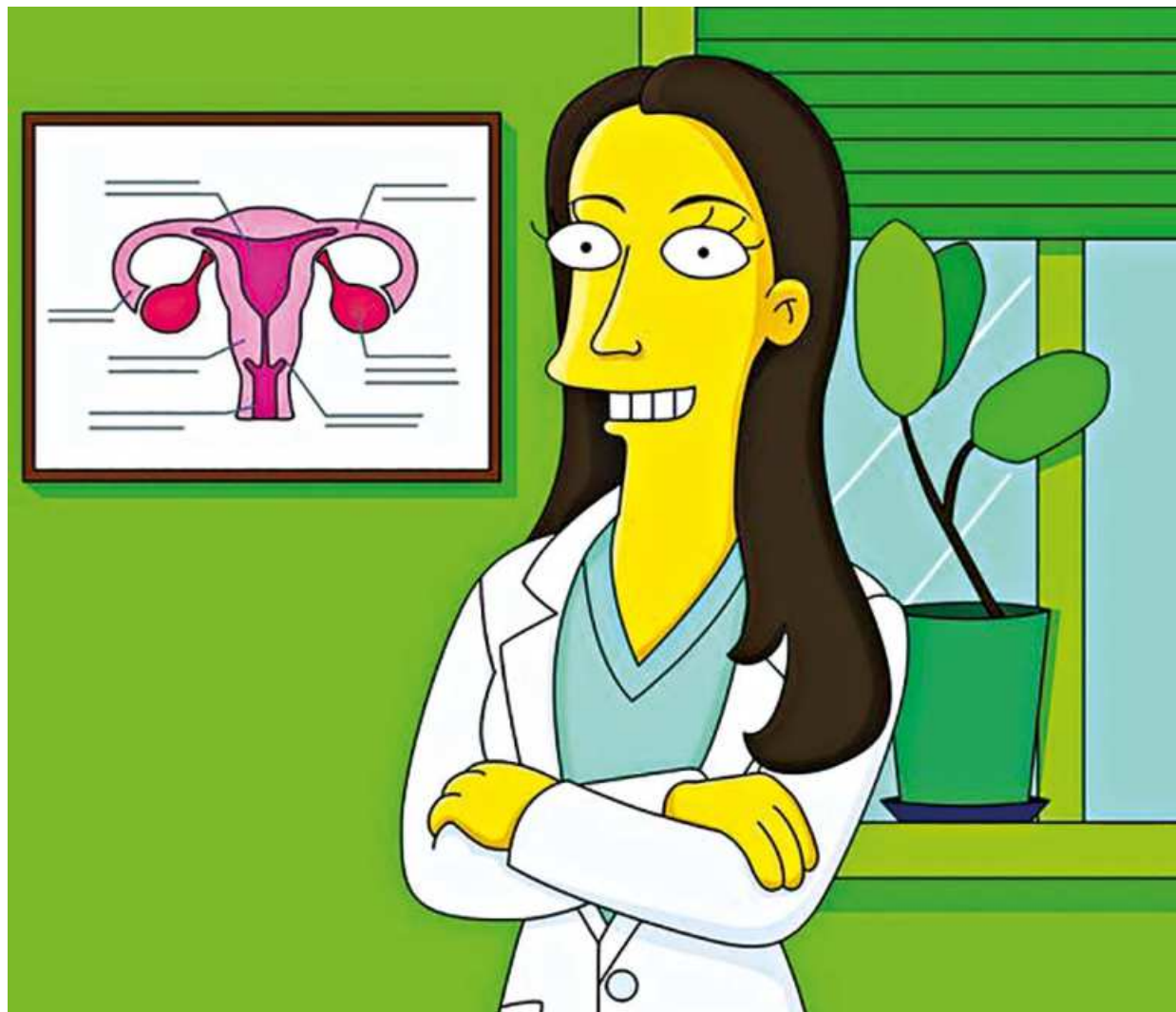
Sitting in front of her, I realised that I was one of many girls who had to sit and listen to doctors tell them that in the face of infertility, their lives were not valuable. When asked, girls as young as 15 responded to how they were subject to subtle sexist comments when they were diagnosed with diseases that would make them “undesirable” brides.

Anila Rahman*, 19, talks about how her doctor advised her to get married instead of assigning a healthy regimen that could help her deal with PCOS. She recalls, “When I was gaining a lot of weight because of the syndrome, the gynaecologist told my mother that if I were her daughter, she would be taking marriage into consideration. I was merely 16.”

Meanwhile, Tinath Zaeba, 17, recounts her experience with endometriosis, “My doctor told me that the extreme pain I had to live through was nothing to worry about because I had to think about the fact that the possibility of infertility would mean that I would have trouble getting married and that was a bigger problem for me.”

Other times, women have had to deal with doctors who refuse to perform procedures if they feel that it would hamper their ability to have children. Jannatul Ferdows, 17, remembers her experience, “I get very severe period cramps and irregularity and my mom and I were considering getting an endometrial ablation but the doctor refused to do it because I was an unmarried girl with no kids.”

While infertility is a significant downside of having to live with PCOS, we often find our gynaecologists deeming it the most significant aspect because women’s inability to bear children would make them unattractive. While tending to their patients, doctors often seem to forget that there are other downsides of falling sick, downsides which



can often be fatal to the life of the patient or have more serious consequences than infertility.

In a time of rising misogyny, we need our doctors to remind us that we are more than just child-bearing machines and that our lives matter just as much, even if we aren’t able to reproduce. We need them to tell us about the consequences of living with a disease and to assign us

with regimens that could potentially help us instead of putting us down for being “less of a woman.”

*Name has been changed.

Fariha is a junkie for Brooklyn Nine-Nine. Send her memes at fariha.safa@gmail.com

Ask for clear details about your diagnosis. Talk about possible regimens for your progress, regardless of their opinions.



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INVISIBLE WOMAN

How Women Are Being Excluded at the Workplace

RABITA SALEH

“Everyone should be given the opportunity to make bonds and express themselves in the workplace regardless of gender or any other demographic. Whether they are able to make use of the opportunity is up to them,” says Samira Yunus, EVP and Head of Actuarial Department, Fareast Islami Life Insurance Company Ltd.

Workplace relationships have never been known for their simplicity. The supportive yet competitive camaraderie between peers combined with the power dynamics between employers and employees have always resulted in intricately balanced relationships that can be complex and confusing to manoeuvre. With so many players to consider, any behaviour at the office may have unexpected consequences if not well thought through. Some practices at the workplace may seem harmless at first glance, but they can be exclusionary in ways people don’t immediately realise. In a society such as ours, women are particularly susceptible to such practices because of how our norms are constructed.

Activities such as smoking in office premises can seem like a personal choice. Yet they can be exclusionary to non-smokers when they become unofficial bonding sessions. Women here are statistically less likely to be smokers, making them more likely to be excluded of bonding sessions conducted around

these activities. Other examples of such practices may be going out together after office hours, or unofficial gatherings at a co-worker’s house.

“I belong to a conservative family and can’t stay out late at night. It definitely hinders me from building better inter-office relationships” expresses Tahmina Badhon, Administrative Executive at PIE International Education. Women in our society generally have tougher restrictions, and a greater variety of other commitments, on top of their crucial concerns regarding safety and public image, which result in them being hindered from participating in these activities.

Sometimes these concerns are exacerbated, not by males in the office, but through the actions of other female co-workers, as Nooha Sabanta Maula, Project Officer at Swisscontact, explains, “In the field, I once hung out in the guy’s room but other women suggested it’s not something they would do. Their comments made me feel more uncomfortable than the guys, who were welcoming. The women weren’t actually against being friendly with the boys, but society has conditioned them to think there are boundaries and conduct to be maintained. The workplace doesn’t have anything in place that helps men or women unlearn such things.”

Exclusion at the workplace may be either active or passive i.e. conducted without intent. There may be instances

where the employees at a firm deliberately exclude an individual of their dislike. There may also be instances of exclusion where the participants have no realisation that their actions may be excluding others. The latter is rarely talked about, and often highly misunderstood.

Peer-to-peer exclusion, which involves people working at the same tier in a firm has its hazards. However, it is more likely to be of the first kind, that of active exclusion, and it may be tackled through company policy, or the intervention of a supervisor. However, often supervisors themselves may be the perpetrators of the unintentional passive form of exclusion, and therefore it may go unnoticed for much longer, sometimes until the excluded group explicitly brings attention to it. Furthermore, when the exclusion involves a supervisor, its consequences may be farther reaching than peer-to-peer exclusion.

For instance, consider a situation when a supervisor and his or her supervisees hang out late after hours, or smoke together. They are providing those select employees with more of an opportunity to bond with them, while excluding those that may not want to or be able to participate in these activities. These select employees now have an unfair advantage that may translate to furthering their careers over those of the excluded group.

When asked whether she was ever worried about being passed by for a promotion, in favour of another colleague who had more unofficial bonding time with the supervisor, Yunus states that this has been a massive concern for her. “I have always felt this pressure. Since I’m a single mom, it has been even more difficult. Our society still has misogynistic views and they sadly often make awful comments about a person’s character when women try to make healthy bonds in the workplace.”

The problem of exclusion towards women may be more pronounced here, but it is by no means only limited to conservative societies. Survey results of over 240,000 men and women across the globe in *Work With Me: The 8 Blind Spots Between Men and Women In Business* by Barbara Annis and John Gray reveals that “eighty-one percent of women say they feel some form of exclusion at work, while ninety-two percent of men don’t believe that they’re excluding women.”

Just this January in the UK, the opinion of Chartered Management Institute head Ann Francke made headlines. She mentioned how conversations regarding football at the office might make women feel excluded. While her proposal for

banning “football banter” was met with valid criticism, the underlying problems of exclusion and unfair advantages remain. Banning topics of conversation at the office may not be the way to go when tackling exclusion, as it has the high probability of becoming an alienating policy dividing the workplace even further, while also perpetuating inaccurate stereotypes. However, a more nuanced approach where the people in charge are made aware of what may be an exclusionary situation and how to discourage or dissolve it, may be the key.

Looking back to the survey by Annis and Gray, it is clear that there exists some discrepancy in the opinions regarding exclusion between different demographics in a workplace. Those participating in exclusionary activities are barely aware of what they may even look like. Supervisors and bosses clearly have a large role to play in these situations, especially by being aware of biases they may form through interoffice relationships, or the selective bonding opportunities they may be providing their employees. However, awareness among the workforce regarding such issues is only the first step to addressing them. Entire societal constructs need to be redefined before workplaces can alleviate these problems.

Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com



THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE SHOUT

AIUB hosts seminar titled "Hunting for Consumer Psychologist"

Department of Marketing, American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB), arranged a seminar "Hunting for Consumer Psychologist" at Multipurpose Hall where students of Consumer Behavior, Global Trade, Marketing Management, Sales and Airlines Reservation and Ticketing acquired real life experiences from guest speaker Dr. Syed Alamgir, Managing Director of ACI Salt Ltd.

Dr. Charles Villanueva, VP of Academic & Dean of FBA was present at the event. The distinguished speaker shared pertinent facts from his life experiences and success stories, innovation, eagerness and tactics in his valuable speech. In the post-seminar session, students said the most important words that they were inspired and would remember for rest of their life.

Dr. Alamgir was the first mover to pour toothpaste in the tube made by Premiaflex plastic in Bangladesh. Moreover, the respected speaker tried to fill the specific gap between competitors to achieve customer satisfaction. In addition, he explained about aggressive marketing approach to grab market shares for ACI Aerosol. Dr. Nisar Ahmed, director of MBA programme appreciated the guest and our respected faculty members Dr. Partha P. Chowdhury, Stanley Rodrick, Hamidul Islam and Mahmudul Hasan in his vote of thanks.



CGS organises Annual Athletics 2020

The Annual Athletics of Chittagong Grammar School (National Curriculum) was held on February 28, 2020 at Dampara Police Line field. The chief guest was Md. Abdul Awal, Director of Bangladesh Ansar 16th Battalion and special guests were ASM Azim Uddin, Commanding Officer, Bangladesh Ansar 15th Battalion and Alamgir Shobul, Bureau Chief of Desh TV, Chattogram Branch.

Inauguration speech was given by Tohsin Khan, Headmaster Of CGSNC. Sadia Nizam, Academic Coordinator; Raheel Jamal School, Co-ordinator; Assistant Heads Ishrat Jahan and Jamila Akter; Arjun Nahar, Senior Admin; and Sabrina Azam, Event Manager were present. The field was joyful with the presence of enthusiastic students and guardians.

DIU hosts seminar on education philosophy and thinking of Bangabandhu

To mark the Mujib Birth Centenary, Daffodil International University (DIU) in collaboration with the monthly education magazine Education Watch organised a seminar titled "Education Philosophy and Education Thinking of Bangabandhu: Today's Education System, Expectation and Challenge" on March 1, 2020 at 71 Milonayoton of DIU.

National Professor and President, Mujib Birth Centenary implementation committee Professor Dr. Rafiqul Islam was present as the chief guest. Prof. Dr. Mezbauddin Ahmed, Chairman, Bangladesh Accreditation Council inaugurated the seminar. Prof. Dr. Wahiduzzaman (Chan), former VC, Noakhali University of Science and Technology; and Prof. Dr. Yousuf Mahbubul Islam, VC of DIU were present as guest speakers. Dr. Mahbub Litu, Chairman, Department of Special Education, University of Dhaka presented keynote speech in the seminar. Presided over by Dr. Augustin Cruz, Advisor of Education Watch, the seminar was also addressed by former Secretary Serajuddin Ahmed, Prof. Dr. Habiba Khatun, and Md. Khalilur Rahman, Editor of Education Watch.

PUPROA arranges Family Day 2020

Private University Public Relations Officers Association (PUPROA) held Family Day 2020 on February 28, 2020 at Chandpur estuary. A large number of members and their family attended the daylong programme.

The programmes included visiting Meghna-Dakatia estuary, mini Cox's Bazar, music and drama performances, etc. The programme was addressed by President of PUPROA and former PR Director of AIUB Lutfar Rahman, and General Secretary of PUPROA and PR Director of European University Monirul Islam Rintu. Moniruzzaman Tipu,

General Secretary of Bangladesh Public Relations Association and Head of PR of Social Islam Bank Bangladesh Ltd. was present as guest of honour.

The event was conducted by Md. Anowar Habib Kazal, Senior Assistant Director (PR) of Daffodil International University; Abu Sadat, Director (PR) of United International University; Imtiaj Ahmed, Director (PR) of South East University; Nahid Hossain Public Relations Officer of Sonargaon University; Asif Khan, Public Relations Officer of Canadian University of Bangladesh and many more.

North Korean envoy visits EDU

Ambassador of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) to Bangladesh Pak Song Yop visited East Delta University (EDU) in the port city on February 23, 2020. VC Prof. M. Sekandar Khan welcomed him to the campus.

The Ambassador during the visit said the Liberation War of the Bangladesh is an inspiration for neglected and repressed people around the world. "The prestigious history of Bangladesh motivates the people of the North Korea," he said. He also expressed his satisfaction over cordial hospitality of Bangladeshi people and admired the

beauty of the EDU campus.

EDU VC Prof. Khan said Bangladeshi private universities have greatly contributed to higher education along with public universities. "We are also playing an important role to produce skilled and modern human resources for the country," he said.

EDU Founder Vice Chairman Sayeed Al Noman said they are working to produce excellent students from the university. "We are taking our students to developed cities of the world to enrich their experiences under International Graduate Leadership course," he said.



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OUT ON THE STREETS

Our streets aren't safe for women. Every day, millions of women go about their day with fear in the back of their minds. While society strives to change this, it's important for those without perspective to understand the dangers women face every step of the way. For this week's Fable Factory, four of our writers at SHOUT share their experiences of being made to feel unsafe out on the streets.

HIYA ISLAM

Every time she steps out, she takes two things with her – the pepper spray and a sense of insecurity. She tries to blend in with the crowd, sticking to the pack rather than being the lone wolf. Lone wolves are likely to make it to sorry headlines. And so, her safety comes at the price of personal space. Lusty eyes, cat calls and unwelcome touches accompany her home. Every day. Every night. She dreams of safe streets in her sleep. But then she wakes up.

ALIZA RAHMAN

The day was sunny and Anika decided to eat at a place outside the campus. Exams were over, and she was in a celebratory mood. As she walked on the part of the street sectioned off by a rope to separate pedestrians from the continuous stream of cars passing by, she found her way blocked by a man standing smack in the middle, giving her a suggestive look. She asked him to move; he didn't. Exhausted and sensing danger, she went back. The mood had changed.

SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

Just three more roads, and then I'll be in a place public enough. I quickened my pace, and so did the man following me. He seemed to be mirroring my movements. I pulled my *orna* up to my head and covered my face. I wanted to be invisible. There were now three of them. I couldn't walk any faster and they seemed to be catching on. Suddenly, a bright light shone behind me as I crossed the last street and I realised a car had taken a turn, right before they could cross the street. *Safe, but for how long?*





OBLIVION

My father passed away right after I was born, and so my mother started working. I was raised by my grandmother. My family is settled in Dhaka but my 90-year-old grandmother lives in my hometown. Sometimes I feel that I should spend time with her; whenever I photographed her, it made her happy.

Growing up in a noisy, populous city, I hardly encountered nature. However, my grandmother is someone for whom her own backyard, the village alleys, and the river are synonymous to a sense of belonging.

My grandmother comes from a generation where people lived in joint families. Now times have changed to accommodate fast-paced lives. My grandmother witnessed this transition. Her situation, however lonely, is more acute in her own experience.

PHOTO & TEXT: **FARHANA SATU**

