

# THE Multitalented Architect

NAZIBA BASHER

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed is a man of many interests. Excelling in everything he came across, he finally made up his mind and studied architecture. Even there, he excelled and went on to becoming one of the well-known architects of the country.

Owner of the Architecture firm called Basha Bari Ltd, Nizamuddin also founded GeraMera- a global education research awareness motivation for empowering rural architecture. He is the first and only Baden-Powell Fellow from World Scout Foundation, and is also a Paul Harris Fellow. He has written numerous books -- Kishore Bishsho Sthapotto published by Bangla Academy, Architectural Acoustics published by BUET, and a booklet titled Ognikande Nirapotta- for fire safety, which was published in 2014.

Some of the well known structures in Dhaka have been designed by Dr Nizamuddin, namely the auditoriums of Chhayanaut Institute and

Shenakunjo, the Art Gallery and Natyashala of Shilpakala Academy and many more.

Nizamuddin has been an avid writer and still continues to write. He worked as a full-time writer in Bangladesh Times and was the sports editor of The Daily Star. He is also the famous 'Chintito' in The Star.

As a young high school student at Jhenaidah Cadet College, the Liberation War had begun and he decided to join and fight. However, due to parental pressure he was able to train but not fight in the war. "Not being able to fight left me with a lot of regret. So I started writing about the war in papers and columns. I guess it was a way for me to compensate for not fighting," says Nizamuddin.

The former head of the architecture department at the Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology (BUET), Dr Nizamuddin's reasons for pursuing studies in this subject were "weird," he says. "I thought I wouldn't have to do mathematics! Of course, I

was wrong. But because I was interested in design, I stuck to it."

While teaching at BUET, he had won the Commonwealth Scholarship to the University of Sheffield, where eventually he completed his PhD. "My PhD thesis was also published as a book from New Vikas Publishing House in 1991." He returned to BUET and became a professor, after which he received his second Commonwealth Scholarship for his Post Doctorate research, in the same university in 1997. He finished his post-doc in a year and in 2001 became the Dean, and then went on to become the Head of the Department in 2006.

"I still wanted to do something for my country, for my people, after not getting the opportunity to fight in the war," he says. "I got a small opportunity during the 15th anniversary of The Daily Star," he shares. "The Daily Star published a book, of which I was one of the editors. I had three hundred copies, which I sold and raised a lot of money. I later donated the money to the Mosabber Cancer Care Center."

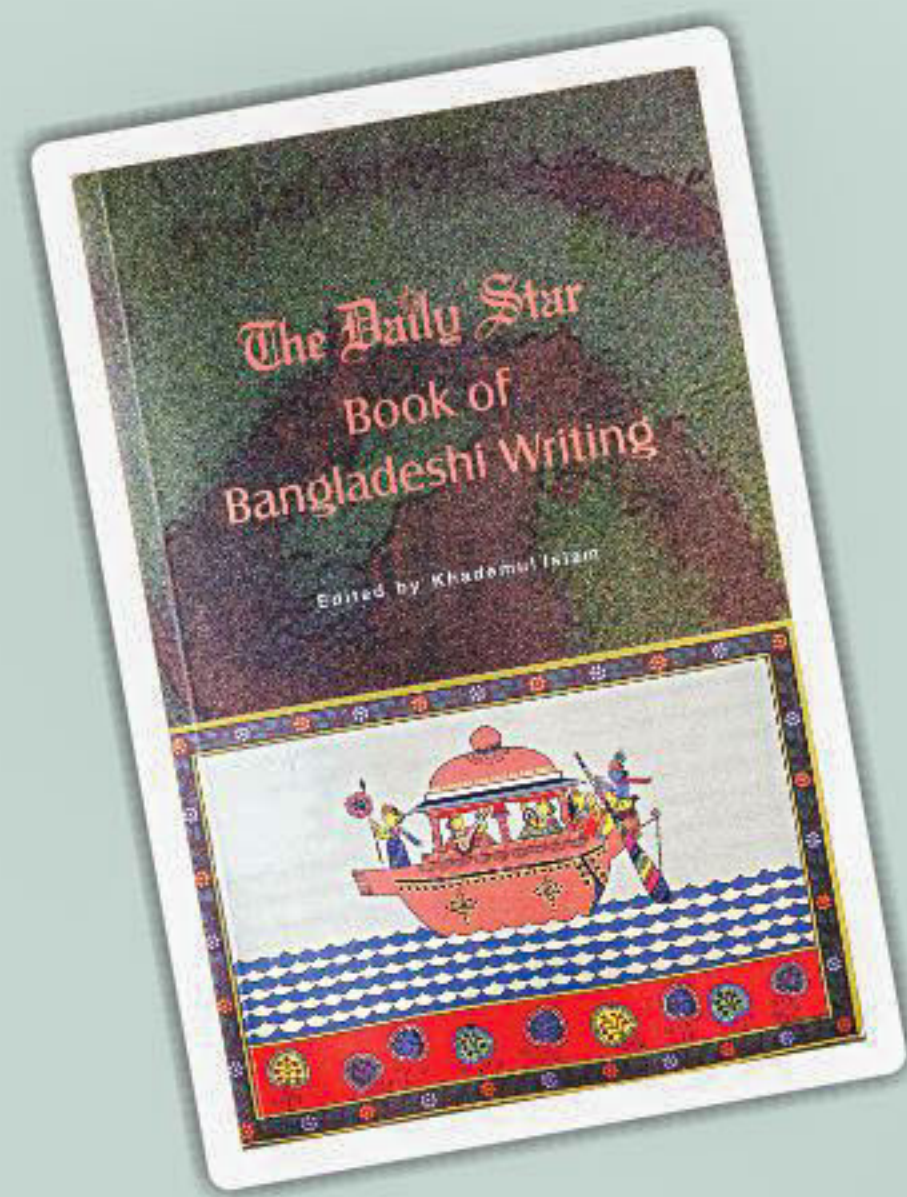


PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

## Business for CHANGE



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

APURBA JAHANGIR

Habibur Rahman, the first man to start a social business in Shatriyipur, Khulna, established a dairy farm more than a year ago. Not only does the farm run a successful business of supplying dairy products to the villagers, but it also provides jobs and training to the residents. Thereby, Habib's Dairy Farm has solved two social problems in his village. Last year, he attended the One Young World summit in Dublin, Ireland as a member of the Bangladesh delegation team.

Born in a farming family, Habib endured the struggle of life from a very early age. "Now that I think about it, our situation was heart breaking," he says. "Some nights, we didn't even know if we could afford dinner. But as a child I thought this was the norm for everyone."

Though Habib was a decent student, getting a chance to major in Political Science at Dhaka University in 2003, was a dream come true. He achieved first class, in his Bachelor's and Master's degree examinations.

"In the 90s, my mother became a borrower of Grameen Bank which introduced me to Dr Muhammad Yunus and his work," he says. "I remember, a friend of mine, living in Paris, had called me for some information about Yunus's work for which I joined the social business design lab."

Habib's Dairy Farm received international acclaim at the One Young World summit which was a cherry on top for his life as a Nabin Uddokta--the children of Grameen Bank borrowers. "I was the flag bearer in the opening ceremony," he says. "I experienced an adrenaline rush, when people from all over the world cheered for the Bangladeshi flag. The best part of the summit was when Dr Muhammad Yunus, during his session, introduced me to the audience as a social business entrepreneur."

“  
I experienced an adrenaline rush, when people from all over the world cheered for the Bangladeshi flag. The best part of the summit was when Dr Muhammad Yunus, during his session, introduced me to the audience as a social business entrepreneur.”

## Closing the Gaps

ANIKA HOSSAIN

Syeda Shagufe Hossain is a shining example of how the youth of Bangladesh can contribute to the social welfare and development of our country in innovative ways. A graduate from the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies at York University of Canada, she started thinking of working in development early on in life.

As the founder of Leaping Boundaries, she had initially established the programme to fill in the gaps created between madrasa students and the mainstream education and employment system.

In 2012, while doing short term consultancies at the International Finance Corporation (IFC), Shagufe read an article in The Daily Star titled 'Slates, Smiles and Ambitions,' which highlighted the issues faced by madrasa students who are excluded from a mainstream education and employment opportunities. "That's when I started my programme -- Leaping Boundaries," she explains. "I got in touch with Professor Haroon Rashid Khan, the chair of the English Department at South East University. We discussed ideas and that got me started," she says. "I got in touch with the House of Volunteers and ROTERACT, two student clubs at BRAC

University, about teaching at madrasas. They were already teaching at Korail Bosti around that time. I told them it wouldn't cost a lot and if they are looking for viable projects, this was something they could look into."

Initially, Shagufe believed that the main problem for these students was that they did not speak English. "If these children could be taught to communicate in English, they could get access and acceptance to the so called mainstream society and eventually learn to think outside the box," she explains. However, after working with them she realised it was their visibility in the mainstream that was the issue. "So, I remodelled the programme and identified two platforms- the Spelling Bee and BYLC's training programme, which already include Madrasa students, but not a very high percentage of them," she says.

Leaping Boundaries is currently running in the Nibras International Madrasa in Rampura and the Madinatul Uloom Model International Womens' Kamil Madrasa. Apart from language skills Shagufe and her volunteers provide academic counselling. In the future she plans to include training in Information and Communication Technology, as well as various Soft Skills in the programme.



PHOTO: PRABER DAS