



WOMEN OF THE WORLD

ELITA KARIM

A challenge that a woman faces in Bangladesh today is the lack of creative space-- a space which will allow her to think, a platform where she will plan her actions and where she will make decisions of her own. Despite the growing popularity of women as authority figures, and also the established idea of the country being led by a woman, there is still a lot left to be desired for. As

Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury
PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Virginia Woolf mentions in 'A Room of her own,' referring to a female author, "Give her a room of her own and five hundred a year, let her speak her mind and leave out half that she now puts in, and she will write a better book one of these days."

Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury has definitely broken barriers, worked hard to reach heights and is still moving forward and establishing her dreams. Chaudhury made headlines back in 2013 when she became the first female Speaker in the Bangladesh parliament. "Of course, a speaker is a speaker, whether he or she is male or female. It is a great honour. However, being a female speaker is a huge breakthrough because even globally, there are not many countries that have a woman in this role, in their national parliaments. So I think it's a big leap forward for women empowerment. And it is an exciting feeling!"

According to Chaudhury, women are good leaders, especially when it comes to corporate houses and creative teams. "Women naturally do an exceptional job when it comes to leading political parties," she says. "This is because women are much more sensitive and can make changes for the better."

Despite all this, in many areas of society, educated women are still expected to justify their thoughts, discouraged to voice opinions and excluded while taking decisions for the family. One of the major challenges for young girls even today would be early marriage, if not child marriage. High schools, universities and even work places experience female drop-outs, as students or young employees get married and move into new families with a new set of rules.

An inspiration for many in the country, Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury is a household name today. For young women trying to reach their goals, Chaudhury is outstanding example. Women all over the country are proud of her and seeing her, believe that Bangladesh has finally come of age.

Today, to honour women like Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury and others who have excelled in their fields of expertise, we have dedicated our cover story to highlighting the achievements of some remarkably talented Bangladeshi women, as a celebration of the International Women's Day.

Editor's Note

For 18 years, *the Star* Magazine has been an integral part of your family. The magazine has successfully initiated drawing room discussions, brought about stimulating opinions and thought provoking ideas. Starting from politics, governance, policy making to building relationships, music, humour – the magazine has definitely grabbed a place in your hearts.

However, thanks to changing times, *the Star* is now ready for a re-vamp. The success of the magazine has inspired us to bring in new bits and columns to the new format. As someone who has been a regular reader and critic of the *Star*, I am optimistic about the changes and also look forward to the line of young and new writers and contributors joining the team.

As *The Daily Star* becomes the ambassador for 'hope' this year, I definitely hope that we will continue to be a part of your Friday morning ritual as we embark on this new journey.

Mahfuz Anam
Editor, The Daily Star

Enjoy 25% off
your night out at
Watercress Restaurant

HSBCSelect

Offer valid until 31 July 2016. Offer applicable on both cash and card payments.
Issued by The HongKong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited in Bangladesh

25% off | Watercress restaurant

For more details on this benefit,
Visit www.hsbc.com.bd/weekly-offer
Call +880 29660547



Scan this code
with your phone

HSBC