

STAR WEEKEND

in other news...

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PHOTO COURTESY: BRAC

PIONEER IN CHANGE

ELITA KARIM

One of the few radical change makers that began a journey right after independence to transform the country for the better is BRAC. Established in 1972, the largest NGO in the world has dedicated itself to alleviating poverty, and helping the underprivileged to bring about positive changes in their lives by creating opportunities for them. "In the 43 years since BRAC's inception as a small relief organisation, the poor of Bangladesh have been examples, for the whole world, of

strength and resilience. They are a shining example of what is possible when people struggling with poverty have the tools they need to take control of their lives," says Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, KCMG, the founder and chairperson of BRAC. Last year, Sir Fazle was ranked 32 in the list of The World's 50 Greatest Leaders by Fortune.

Celebrating 43 years this month, BRAC has successfully created landmarks in various areas in society. Ensuring social and financial empowerment of women, advocating community empowerment,

delivering legal services to the doorstep of the poor, empowering farmers providing healthcare and education to millions and so much more. BRAC also runs the world's largest private, secular education system, with 44,909 schools worldwide. "I don't like to say what BRAC has done for Bangladesh. Instead, I point to what the poor have done for themselves and for this country – especially women. It is their hard work and resilience that has lifted us up since liberation," he tells us.

"There is still much to be done," he adds. "As people who support the struggles of the poor, our job is to listen and learn from them, and to offer solidarity on this journey. BRAC is a learning organisation, and the journey from poverty is one we all must take together, men and women, rich and poor. I see a Bangladesh in which people strive with dignity to reach their fullest potential."

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