

# BACK TO THE DARK AGES

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PHOTOS: STAR FILE

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

In the last few weeks, there seemed to form a large divide between people, both offline and online. While one group essentially blames women for being sexually harassed and physically attacked on streets, criticises their 'free' expressions and their apparels, another group, comprising mostly of females of all ages, spend their time defending their gender, the choices they make in their daily lives and of course look to authorities for justice.

It has been exactly one month since the horrifying Pahela Baishakh incident, and not one culprit has been arrested, let alone identified. On April 14, 2015, the Dhaka University area was crowded with thousands of people celebrating Pahela Baishakh or the first day of the Bengali New Year. The TSC area was abuzz, as always, with families, students and friends. All of a sudden, a mob of men began to corner women, molest them, strip them off their sarees and physically assault them. Moreover, the men trying to protect the women were attacked and beaten up as well. TV Channels, newspapers and Social Media groups showcased the faces of the assaulters for a whole week or so. Some were also reportedly taken in by the law enforcers. However, the men arrested were let go the same day. In fact, the authorities went through a

whirlwind of decision making for the week afterwards— was there any sign of sexual harassment at all on the footage? Finally, they came up with a 'No.'

The aftershocks of the Pahela Baishakh incident left scars in other areas of the city as well.

"Haven't you learnt your lesson yet? Why are you wearing that?" screamed two young men to a female colleague on the foot over bridge on way to work. Clad in a shawl kameez and orna, the ferocious colleague was stopped by a policeman when she tried to run after the men.

Posts on Facebook by men of all ages were creeping up as well, in defence of manhood, warding off the witches trying to cast spells on them. "If it were up to me, I would have raped those 'prostitutes'," referring to the Pahela Baishakh incident, posted by a random facebook user. In fact, many such posts by men were celebrated and supported by other men for weeks.

Last week, law enforcers swooped down on protestors, speaking out against sexual harassment. It was sudden and atrocious. Protestors, mostly young students, political and youth leaders, were beaten to the pulp. One young woman was beaten up and dragged on the footpaths by the law enforcers. Reason? The activist had hurled a

flower pot at one of the police armoured vehicles. The flower pot had, of course, shattered beyond recognition. The same, however, cannot be said about the police armoured vehicle.

Why do certain groups in the country suddenly feel that it is all right to attack a woman, be it in the streets or on social network? Where is this pent up rage coming from? In a country with a female for a prime minister for decades together, where women have been encouraged to step forward and to lead a team, why does it suddenly feel like we are all moving back to the dark ages?

### ThinkKre@ive

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contact: 0177666677, 01733235733

## EVENT

# LEARNING ABOUT THALASSEMIA

AVINNO PARAM SATTA

They say Ignorance is bliss. But if the outcome of that ignorance is seeing your child suffer from a lifelong disease, then that ignorance is a punishable crime. The disease in question is thalassemia—a word unheard by the masses but if people knew the devouring rate at which their future generation is exposed to the risk of having the disease, they would blissfully forget the bliss.

Bangladesh, one out of 10 people is a thalassemia carrier and most of them don't even know about the fact, as a carrier doesn't possess any abnormal symptoms.

'Prevent It Before your child suffers'—with this slogan, Society for Thalassemia Awareness (STA) in association with its student wing TAG DU (Thalassemia Awareness Group, Dhaka University)

The programme started with a seminar about thalassemia awareness where the chief guest Professor Shibli Rubayat Ul Islam, Dean, Faculty of Business Studies emphasised on the significance of spreading consciousness among the young people as they are vulnerable to make an uninformed or unaware decision before marriage. Md Raquibul Islam Russeau, Founder and Chairman of STA

several programmes since 2010, aimed to spread awareness among the young generation about the prevention of this disease." The special guest at the seminar, Professor Dr Salma Afroze, Department of Hematology, DMCH said that only bone marrow transplants can cure the disease which is out of reach for the common people. While discussing the severity of thalassemia in Bangladesh, Dr Md Abdur



PHOTOS: STAR FILE

Thalassemia is a genetic blood disease, which results in mild to severe anemia. Thalassemia patient's life depends on regular blood transfusion and expensive medications; otherwise the loss of hemoglobin in blood and iron overload in vital organs will lead the thalassemia patient to death within the first decade of his/her life. Although thalassemia cannot be cured by conventional treatment, it can be effectively prevented by stopping marriage between two thalassemia carriers. Because, if both the parents are thalassemia carriers only then their children can be thalassemia patients. In

“OUR VISION IS TO SAVE THE FUTURE GENERATION FROM HAVING THIS DISEASE AND REDUCE THE SUFFERINGS OF THALASSEMIA PATIENTS IN BANGLADESH.”

arranged a two-day-long awareness campaign about thalassemia at the Faculty of Business Studies and TSC Premises of University of Dhaka on May 7 and 8 respectively, marking the International Thalassemia Day on May 8.

was also present to share his opinion. "Our vision is to save the future generation from having this disease and reduce the sufferings of thalassemia patients in Bangladesh," he said. "With this vision, we have been organising

Rahim, Secretary General, Bangladesh Thalassemia Foundation stated that every year around 15,000 new babies are born with this dreaded disease which is increasing in an alarming rate, much more than HIV AIDS.

The two-day-long awareness campaign included Hb. Electrophoresis Test for carrier detection and a blood donation programme for the thalassemia patients, conducted by Bangladesh Thalassemia Samity. A photography exhibition by Mr Noor Alam, along with interactive games and quizzes were also arranged to create awareness among the students. ■

## WHAT'S EID WITHOUT COLOURS?

What makes Eid such a vibrant and colourful festival? You do, of course! How you look plays an integral role in defining Eid. To make sure you don't miss out on making the most of this Eid, look out for your copy of Star Eid Fashion Magazine, the most comprehensive guide to all things fashionable. Also, don't miss this opportunity to show how your brand celebrates Eid in style by showcasing your products in the **"STAR EID FASHION MAGAZINE"**

Participants nationwide are requested to send their selected outfits and accessories for the album.

### Criteria for Participation:

1. Materials used should be produced locally.
2. All submissions must be accompanied by, name of designer, address, contact no, price and a short description of the product. [either in English or Bangla]
3. Designs should be original and suitable for the weather conditions.
4. The attires and accessories sent for the album will be returned.
5. Entry fee per submission is Tk. 500 [minimum 6 entries for each participating house]

Last Date of Submission 19 May, 2015

For submission of products and advertisement please Contact: Sayeed Ahmed Chowdhury: 01711623905, Kamal Hossain: 01681014920



DS\_CREATIVE/TDS'15

## NUMBERS

# 50,000



PHOTO: .....

Tens of thousands of Bangladeshis live in 51 enclaves in India, while Indians live in 100 areas within Bangladesh. These enclaves are a legacy of colonial times and have been a contentious issue between the two nations for decades. People living in Indian enclaves inside Bangladesh

are officially Indian citizens and those living in Bangladeshi areas inside India are Bangladeshis. Under the new agreement, more than 50,000 villagers from both sides will be given the option to choose where they want to live and which nationality they would prefer.