

| AN APPLE A DAY |

PREPARING FOR THE BLESSED MONTH

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Ramadan is a blessed month. It is a month in which, according to our religion, we get the chance to start anew and wash away our sins and bad habits. It also gives us an opportunity to detoxify ourselves and take better care of our body and health. To be truly prepared for 30 days of fasting, one needs ready the body, mind and soul. There are lots of rules and regulations to follow for us fasters, which we need to keep in mind throughout the month, since they apply for each day during Ramadan. First and foremost, we need to prepare our bodies for fasting. In many cases, the lack of preparation can take a toll on your body when actually fasting, and may make you ill enough to not be able to fast for the rest of the month.

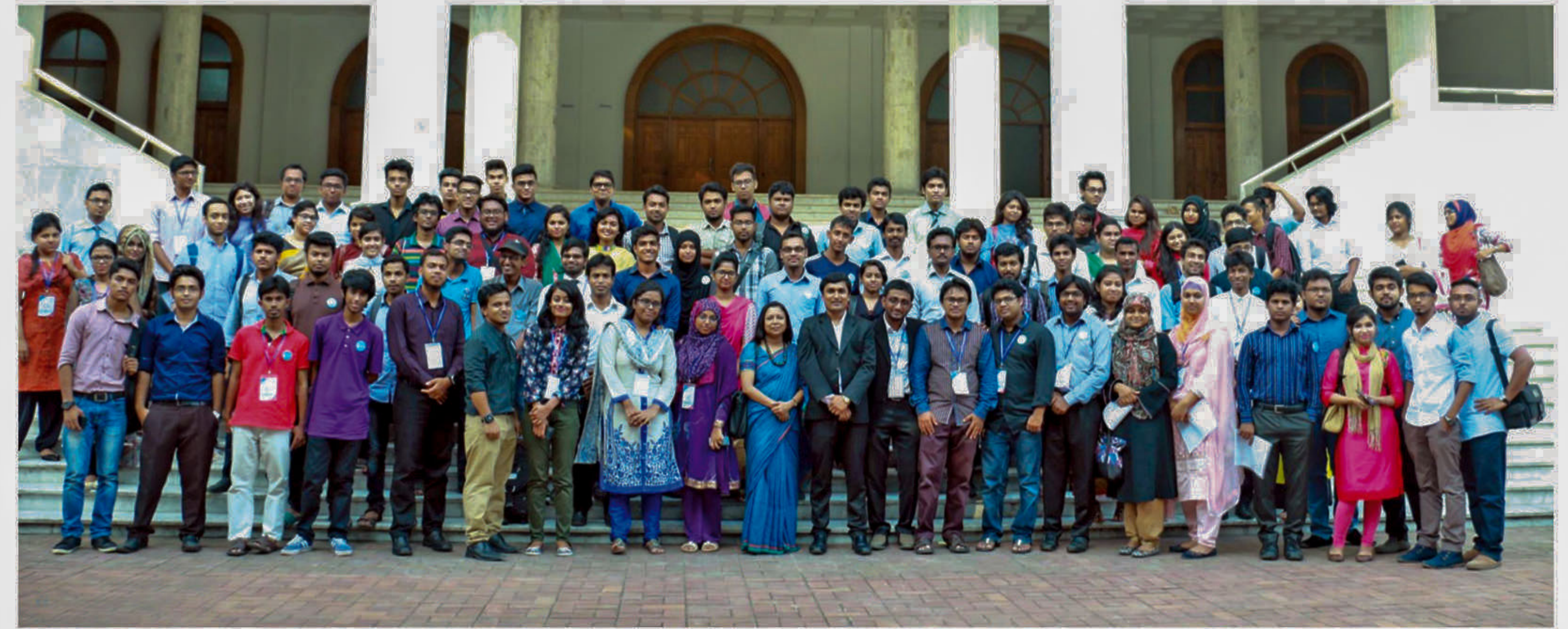
If you have a caffeine addiction (tea or coffee) which you know will affect your mood and health during Ramadan days, it's best to start weaning yourself off early. Try reducing your intake per day, and most importantly get into the practice of staying away from caffeine during the day time- before Maghrib. Starting a habit to drink more water is also very helpful. Getting used to drinking a lot of water can help you consume larger amounts during iftaar or suhoor, which can help you stay hydrated during the whole month. You can also start making a habit of eating nutritious, slow-releasing foods. These include things such as oats and whole grains. During our fast, our bodies rely on the nutrition of the food we eat, instead of the amount of food. Especially for working people, and also those who have to spend their day in scorching heat on the roads, we need our brains to function- and thus, slow-releasing foods will help. You can ease your

stomach by trying fast from a week before Ramadan begins, as a trial period. You can also start a liquid diet for yourself during the day before Ramadan, but it is better to consult a nutritionist before doing so.

Ramadan also teaches us the values of life. To get into the spirit of Ramadan, just fasting is not enough. We have to also prepare our minds for the blessed month. One of the best ways to celebrate Ramadan is by committing to yourself. You can start by refraining from cursing or using provocative or aggressive language. You can also commit to doing one good act per day. Recitation of the Qur'an before the holy month can also help you get in good spirits. Prioritise your work, organise your day, practice your daily prayers, and always remember the purpose of this Holy month- to give us the ability and time to change ourselves for the better. And that is exactly what we shall do. Happy Ramadan, everyone!



| EVENT |



PHOTOS COURTESY: PDF

STEPS TOWARDS CHANGE

ZARRIN TASNIM

The Placement is a part of the Summer Challenges programme held every year by PDF, organised to serve a community through an effective platform. This year the day long event took place in The Senate Bhaban in the University of Dhaka.

The program began with a welcoming speech from the Vice President of PDF, Shehrin Salam Oishee. Next up was an effective period of open discussion, by Shagufta Sultana, Sr. Program Manager, BRAC and Sk. Mojibul Huq, Program Manager, BRAC, regarding scopes to work on the areas of road safety, health and

education. Then, Mizanur Rahman Kiron's, president of the PDF, speech persuaded the participants to believe that they could bring out the best in them and that the entire Summer Challenge was rather a journey to be enjoyed and worked on, and not the destination or an end.

Ronnie Mirza, Communication Lead, BRAC, had an interactive group session regarding youth opportunities and BRAC. The most vital part of the day had begun after a 15-minute break when the participants began the presentations of their project designs which would later



determine the final selection to compete in the Summer Challenge, 2015.

The excitement and the hope to succeed had already begun to sparkle in the eyes of the teams and they didn't hesitate to capture them in their countless photographs. The last session of the day included a closing speech and the distribution of logistics by M Mamunur Rashid, the acting General Secretary of PDF.

The Summer Challenge is not only a successful platform for the youth who want to be leaders in our society, but it also allows us to find new members to add in our team. After all, we believe what Mahatma Gandhi had said that if we want to see change, we should be the change we wish to see. The Placement of the Summer Challenge 2015 was one of our many steps towards that change.

The writer is a PDF Team Leader, and a student of BRAC University.

| NUMBERS |

600,000,000



Senegalese-American singer Akon launched 'Akon Lighting Africa' a year ago, an initiative designed to bring electricity to millions of Africans using solar energy. Thus far, they've installed solar

street lamps and domestic solar panels in over a million households in 14 African countries. Last month, the company announced a new phase of its initiative: Akon Lighting Africa is going to be

building a "Solar Academy" in Bamako, Mali's capital, in order to teach the skills to build and to maintain solar systems to African engineers. Africa's future may be about to get a lot brighter.

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