

Teach For Bangladesh (TFB) is a non-profit organisation that is focused on reducing educational disparity in Bangladesh through building a generation of highly-effective, principle-oriented leaders. TFB offers a unique Fellowship for high-achieving graduates and young professionals. Maimuna Ahmad, a teacher-turned-entrepreneur, is the founder of TFB. Born and brought up in Washington D.C., she moved to Dhaka in 2011 and set up Teach For Bangladesh in 2012. The Fellowship is a full-time, paid, two-year programme that takes exceptionally talented graduates and places them as teachers in disadvantaged Dhaka schools, and develops their capacity as long-term leaders for change. The TFB model addresses two of the crucial root causes of growing inequity in Bangladesh: the disenfranchisement of those who suffer from the status quo and the disengagement of those who have the power to change it. Maimuna herself taught mathematics at Teach For America. She speaks to the Star Weekend about her experience.

What difficulties did you face while setting up TFB in Bangladesh?

A. All of my immediate and most of my extended family settled in the United States decades ago. On a personal level, moving to Bangladesh was an adventure, but as a young, (at the time) unmarried woman, it wasn't always easy. On a professional level, the challenges were a bit different. The work that we are doing has never been done before in Bangladesh. This means some amount of risk, but a great amount of learning and excitement. My team is mostly crews of talented adventurers, who come from

FOR THE YOUTH, BY THE YOUTH

ELITA KARIM



PHOTO: COURTESY

many different academic backgrounds, such as Law, or Medical Bioscience, and different professional backgrounds, including both the corporate and development sectors. I myself am a former

teacher and a first-time entrepreneur, who started this organisation three years ago with no previous management experience.

How many teachers do you have at the moment?

At the moment, we have more than 30 Fellows working across 12 under-resourced schools, daily impacting around 3000 students from some of Dhaka's poorest communities. We are currently recruiting for the third Fellowship batch, and will be accepting applications via our website

(www.teachforbangladesh.org/register) until August 17. To be eligible for the Fellowship, applicants must complete their undergraduate degree on or before October 31, 2015.

What is the TFB programme like? Do you have your own school or do you go to existing schools and teach?

Successfully admitted candidates who join the Teach For Bangladesh Fellowship commit two years to working as full-time teachers embedded in a low-income school. TFB partners with local government and non-government primary schools that serve low-income communities across Dhaka city. TFB teachers run their own classrooms within these partner schools. This immersive design enables Fellows to build deep relationships within their school community, and gain first-hand perspective of the challenges and joys of being a teacher in that community.

What does a programme like the Teach For Bangladesh Fellowship offer participants?

The training and support that our Fellows receive consists of four components: 1) Intensive training at Winter Academy for six weeks in November, prior to the beginning of the Fellowship. 2) Individualised support delivered by our trained leadership coaches throughout the two years. 3) Monthly skills workshops, leadership seminars and networking events. 4) A Post-Graduate Diploma in Educational Leadership, delivered through our partner, the Institute of Educational Development at BRAC University. Fellows near the end of their second year also receive career counseling and guidance to help connect them with opportunities to accelerate their leadership and its impact beyond the Fellowship. ■

| ENDEAVOUR |

| HERITAGE |

OH, THE FLYING SWINGS!

APURBA JAHANGIR

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Over the years we have seen many amusement parks open and even close down in Dhaka. The first 3D cinema hall at Wonderland or the biggest arcade booth at Shishu Mela gives us nostalgia. Our conversation about Prince Ashu and Princess Lia never seem to end and the first ever roller coaster at the famous Fantasy Kingdom is still a huge deal for many of us. But in Bangladesh, it all started at the Shishu Park.

With only 11 rides, Dhaka Shishu Park started its journey in 1979 as the first amusement park in the country. The park was a venture of Bangladesh Parjatan Cooperation as a tourist attraction for a war torn country. During that period, the park used to charge an entry fee tk 2 tk 1 for each ride. "When I came here to work in 1981, the park would always be full of people and the weekends used to be very



| OUTRAGE |

#JusticeforRajon

The darkness of a grievous tragedy fell over the nation as a young boy of only thirteen years was beaten to death by a gang of men on July 8, 2015. The incident outraged everyone around the country and struck the hearts of people all across the country, as we all came together and said a prayer for Samiul Alam Rajon's young departed soul. Accused of stealing, Rajon was attacked by a group of 3-4 men who tied him to a pole and beat him mercilessly. Rajon eventually succumbed to brain haemorrhage, which resulted from the intense torture. The nation mourns as we pray for Rajon's place in heaven. We seek severe punishment for the perpetrators who know nothing of humanity. We seek #JusticeforRajon.



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

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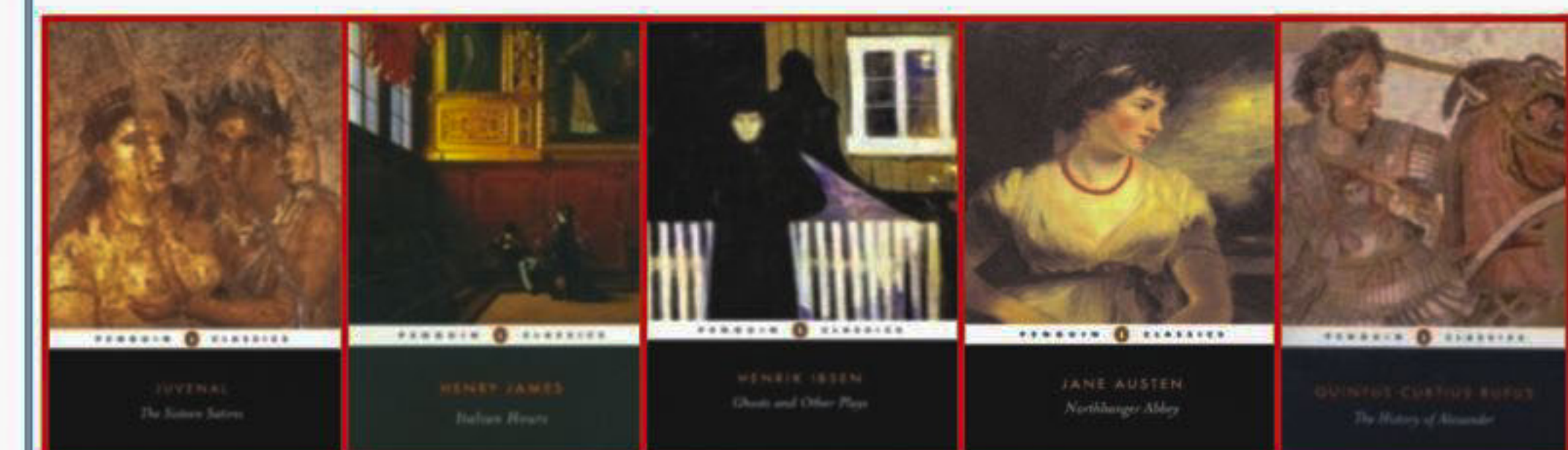
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crowded," say Gafurullah, one of the oldest employees and a maintenance worker at Shishu Park. "People would line up till Dhaka Club and beyond! Back then, the queue of people waiting to enter Shishu Park was one of the main reasons for traffic jams in Shahbagh."

The park now consists of 14 rides including an F17 fighter plane which the Bangladesh Air Force donated in 1992. People of all ages are still seen lining up in front of the aircraft, just to see the inside. "Now we see a lot of people riding roller skates on the road, but Shishu Park was the first to introduce this in our country, back in the early 80s," says Gafurullah. The park also includes a merry-go-round, a toy train, an arcade booth, a plane ride and also a swing ride merry-go-round – much to the delight of children! Shishu Park also owns the largest Ferris Wheel in the city.

Though things have not changed since

it was established, Shishu Park still generates around 200 million takas annually. It may not attract many children today, but back in the day the park was considered to be one of the most attractive places for Dhakaites. Many complain about the park's lack of maintenance, but the sub assistant engineer, Md Zakir Hossain, says that there is nothing to worry about. "We can assure everyone that this is the most well-maintained and safest amusement park in the country." He also adds, "If there are technical difficulties, we deal with them as fast as we can with our engineers."

At the moment, the park consists of 45 staff members, including engineers. According to the information office of Shishu Park, the authorities are planning on bringing more rides in the coming future which will hopefully attract more visitors. ■