

Entrepreneurship was a pretty alien word in Bangladesh even 10 years ago. No one would take an entrepreneur seriously if he would talk about doing something on his own and building a Business. Women would not even dare to think along those lines because it is "too risky". But today, with the rise of Silicon Valley startups like Facebook, Dropbox, WhatsApp and even Google, are taking the power of entrepreneurship and new ideas pretty seriously as these are the ideas changing the landscape of the world at large, that too in a pretty fast pace.

Looking at this change, the 6th Global Entrepreneurship Summit held in Nairobi, Kenya was all about young and women entrepreneurs. It was the sixth annual gathering of entrepreneurs from all stages of business development; business leaders, mentors, and high-level government officials, for demonstrating continued commitment to fostering entrepreneurship around the world by the US Government. And I was lucky enough to be nominated to attend the summit by the US Embassy in Bangladesh and to be selected as a delegate by the US Department of State.

The summit brought together about 1,000, mostly young entrepreneurs and investors from across the world for dynamic, outcome-oriented sessions, mentoring, and opportunities to present and pitch their work. With its own purpose intact, it was also a very glamorous event since the President of the United States was present for the first time in the history of GES. President Barack Obama and President Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya opened the 6th annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit and announced new commitments to promote entrepreneurship as a driver for economic growth, social inclusion, and secure communities. While speaking, President Obama called on leaders to embrace women and young

## GLOBAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT 2015 AND THE YOUTH

AFSANA ZARIN



PHOTOS: COURTESY



entrepreneurs, and asked the US investors to reward those efforts, as he announced more than \$1 billion in new private and the US government commitments for startups. He said, women are the powerhouse entrepreneurs. President Kenyatta also discussed the importance of young people stating that "the youthful sons and daughters of Africa are our incredible resource; they are reaching for a new future in which their innovation and curiosity will transform the world". Both President's speeches provided new confidence for the women and young entrepreneurs in the audience.

The event was full of mentoring workshops by the finest entrepreneurs and business leaders around the world. Akon was there and discussed the music label that he created after spending time in jail. Engineer Nermine F Saad who is considered one of the power women in the Arab world now told us about her struggle as an engineer in Saudi Arabia. Jean Case, the CEO of case foundation told us to be fearless and not give up. Over the last weekend, many prominent people inspired us. They told us to be entrepreneurial, to create a better world, to have dreams. We must find our deepest passions and then find a way for it to be universally relevant. We must translate our dreams into reality, which comes down to being able to visualize it and focusing on the problem that has that universal relevance.

The entrepreneurial era has begun in Bangladesh too. Many of our startups are getting discussed in the world forum now, which is a big achievement for the startup community in Bangladesh. Let's infect people with our vision and dreams. Let's keep failing, doing the same thing until it is just the way we wanted it to be. Let's create a new identity of Bangladesh as the land of new ideas.

*The writer is Co-founder, SevenSages.*



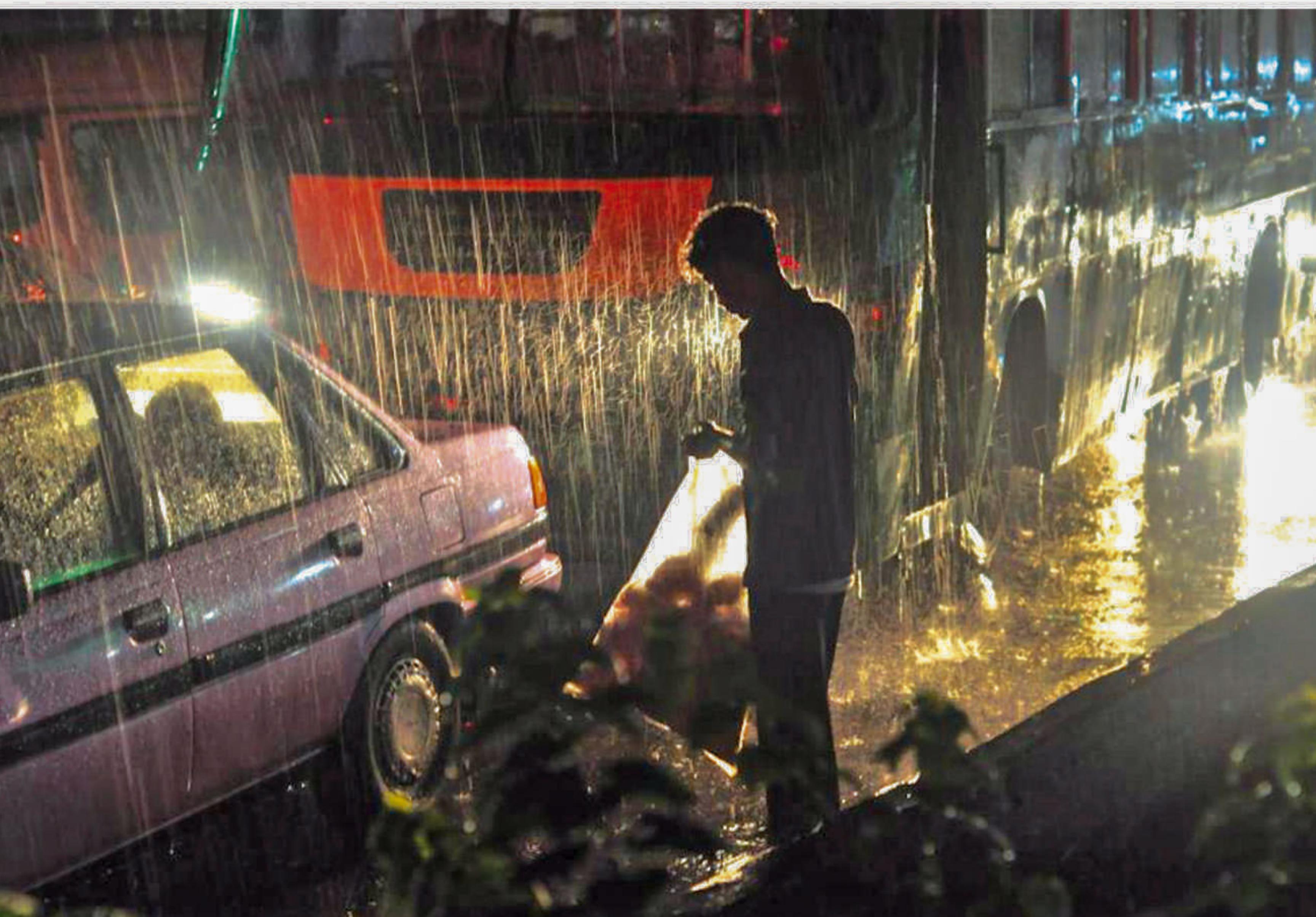
### NUMBERS

131

It is the number of rare photographs of Bangabandhu displayed in a three-day photo exhibition titled Chitrogathai at Sangsad. To mark the 40th national mourning day, the death anniversary of Bangabandhu, the Dhaka North City Corporation organized the event which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and chaired by Mayor Annisul Huq. Besides, the exhibition also displayed a good range of letters and newspaper clippings.

### YOUTH

### SHUTTERSTORIES



"Again and again I've taken quick glances and then for some reason I've got to sit before a picture waiting and it's opened up like one of those Japanese flowers that you put into water and something I thought wasn't worth more than a casual, respectful glance begins to open up depth after depth of meaning."

— SISTER WENDY BECKETT

PHOTOS: KAISAR AHAMED

