

# A HUMANITARIAN APPEAL

BANGLADESHI YOUTH COME FORWARD WITH AN APPEAL TO SAVE MILLIONS OF LIVES THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA.

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

Shamim (not his real name) was searching frantically for a donor with O negative blood. Without a donor, his mother's life would be at risk after a major surgical operation in her stomach. After an exhaustive search, Shamim finally got a donor from Dhaka University's voluntary blood donor group called *Badhon*.

It is a blood donating organisation run by university students all over the country. In most of the public universities in Bangladesh, there are units of *Badhon* and you get army of voluntary blood donors who are all university students. The organisation has achieved a reputation for saving lives of millions of people all over the country since its inception in 1997.

However, last week, students from Dhaka University's Muktijoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall unit of *Badhon* came up with an activity which created a stir amongst the youth. On September 4, 2015 *Badhon's* volunteers arranged a grand rally in Dhaka University premises with a very positive petition. Their appeal is to Mark Zuckerberg, one of the founders of Facebook, to make blood group a requirement for opening account in this social media website which is one of the most popular of its kind.

Facebook has become a very popular medium of connectivity. A large part of the world's population especially the

young generation are its users and remain connected through Facebook. To make use of this connectivity for saving human lives, our youths have proposed that Facebook should require its users to enter their blood group and provide information about the date of their last donation, if they have donated or are eligible to donate blood.

Facebook will show the blood donation status that is the users' blood group and last date of donation as it shows birthday alert of its users in the user timeline. Saspas Kareem, secretary of *Badhon's* Muktijoddha Ziaur Rahman Hall unit says, "Finding blood donors of a particular blood group is a very challenging task. If you cannot manage a donor, your dear one's life may be at stake."

"As Facebook has created a huge platform of connectivity, it can contribute a lot to save human lives by sharing information on their user's blood group and donation status," he adds

During the rally where hundreds of youth and teachers gathered to raise the petition, Professor Dr A A M S Arefin Siddique, Vice Chancellor of Dhaka University says, "Human blood has no alternative. Your donation of small amount of blood can save a human life. Not only on Facebook, but also blood group should be mentioned in all types of identity card."

"I hope the facebook authority will take



PHOTOS: COURTESY

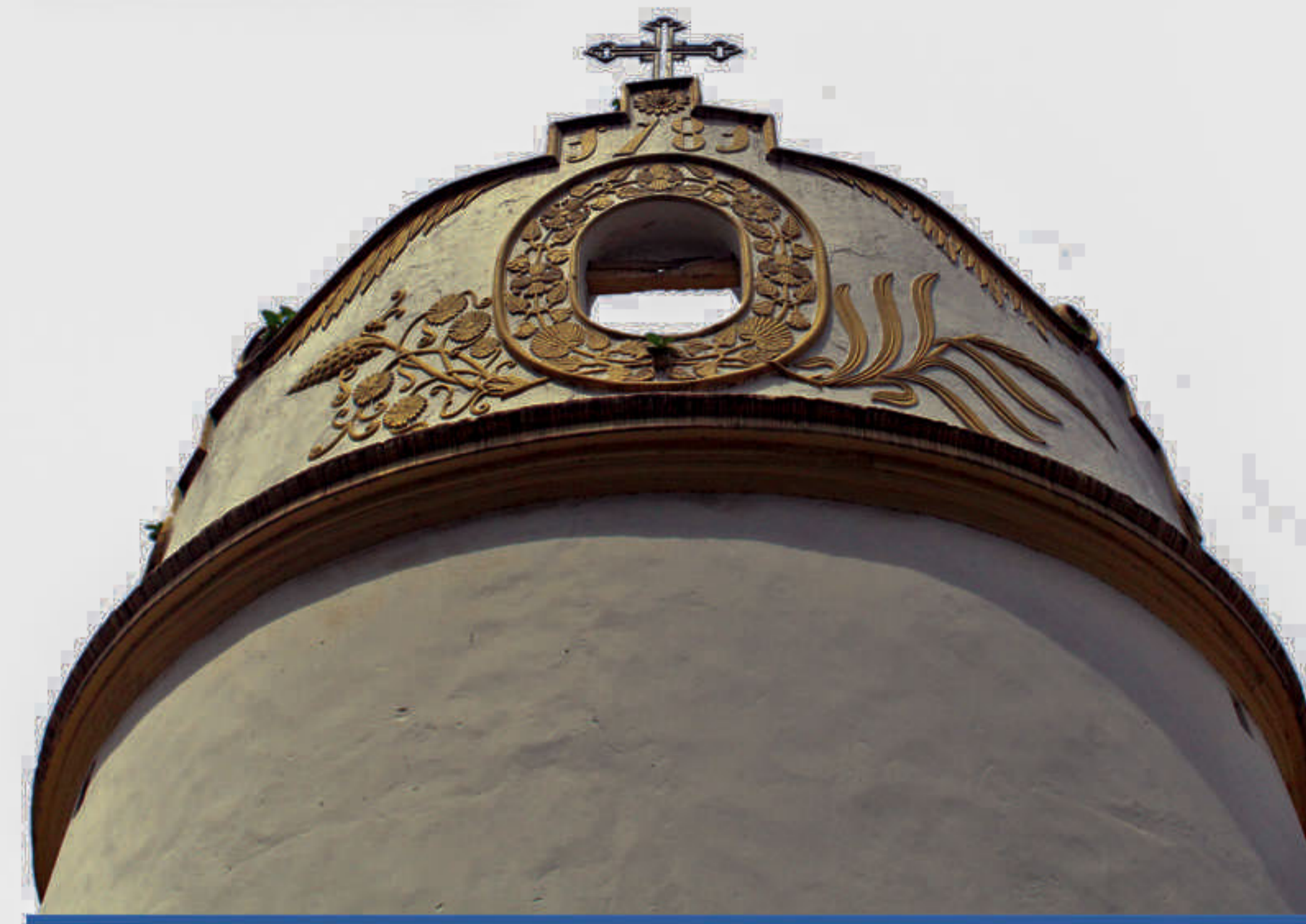


note of this very justifiable and humanitarian appeal of our students, he adds."

A couple of months ago, Bangladeshi Facebook users were criticised at home and abroad for posting irrelevant comments on a post made by its founder Mark Zuckerberg. Now it's the

Bangladeshi youths who have come forward with a proposal for Facebook which can save millions of human lives all over the world. We hope that Facebook will respond to this humanitarian appeal by creating option to know its users' blood donation status and contribute to save millions of human lives. ■

## HERITAGE



## THE TALE OF THE CHURCH

APURBA JAHANGIR  
PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

Built in 1781, the Armenian Church is considered Dhaka's most significant historical land marks. It is located in Armanitola of old Dhaka which was once the Armenian colony back in early 18th Century. The church's ground was used as an Armenian graveyard. Agaminus Catachik, an Armenian businessman used to own the grounds around the graveyard. After his wife, Sofy died in 1768, he donated his land to the authorities. The church was built a

couple of years later in the memory of Catachik's wife. Since then, it has been a silent witness to a thousand years of history.

The big wooden door of the church portrays Orthodox churches built in that period. If one opens the door, they will see square box like carvings all around the premises. They were once the graves of Armenians. From the balcony of the church, one can see nothing but old tombstones. Engraved in either Armenian



Buy Any Six Titles & Get 30% OFF

Oxford Books

ENTIRE RANGE AVAILABLE



Only at

Pathak Shamabesh Center  
Pathak Shamabesh Ltd.

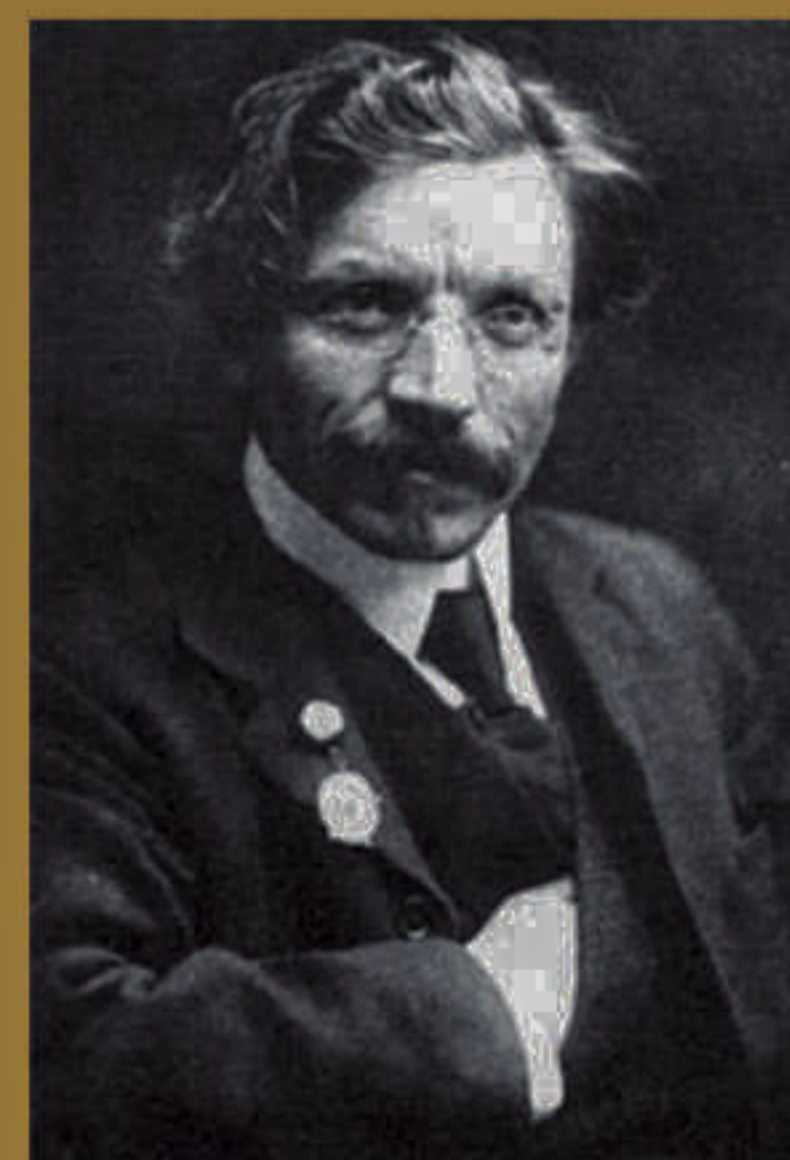
Building 4, First Floor, Bangladesh National Museum (Opposite to Aziz Market), Shahbag, Dhaka 1000  
9669555, 01841234612, 01841234609 | pathak@bol-online.com | www.pathakshamabesh.com

## PEARLS OF WISDOM



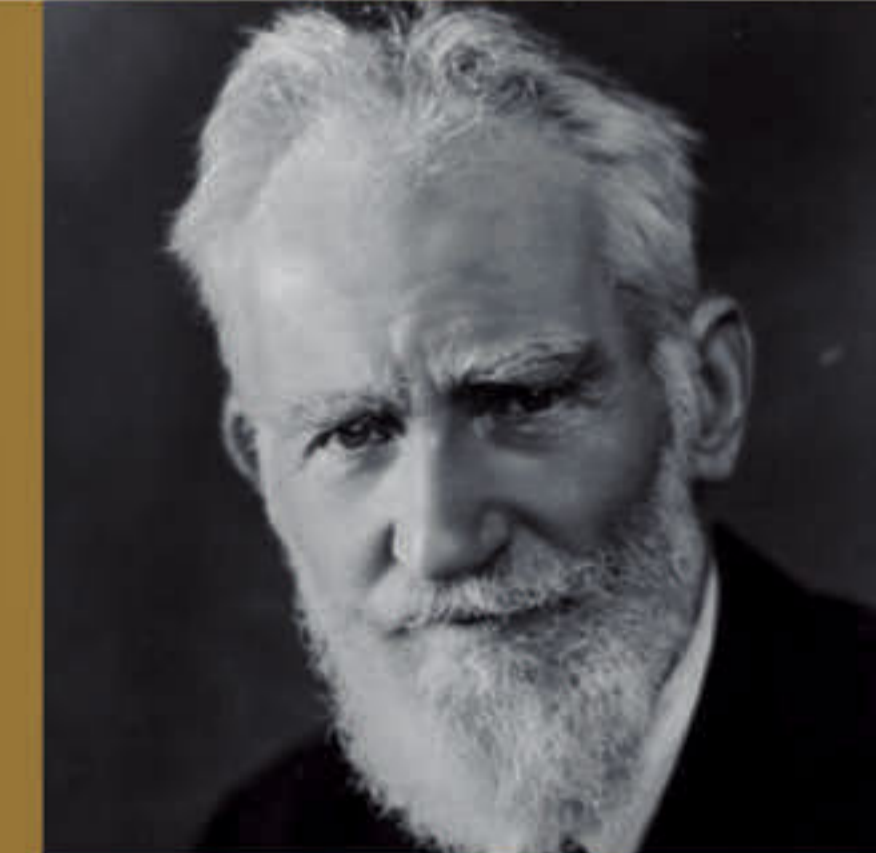
"LIFE IS NOT A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED, BUT A REALITY TO BE EXPERIENCED."

SOREN KIERKEGAARD  
Danish philosopher and poet



"LIFE IS A DREAM FOR THE WISE, A GAME FOR THE FOOL, A COMEDY FOR THE RICH, A TRAGEDY FOR THE POOR."

SHOLEM ALEICHEM  
Yiddish author and playwright



"LIFE IS NOT ABOUT FINDING YOURSELF. LIFE IS ABOUT CREATING YOURSELF."

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW  
Irish playwright and philosopher

or English language, the tombstones say a lot for the Armenian culture which once dominated this area. It is said that there are more than 350 graves in the church's ground. One of the graves that stand out from the others is the grave of Catchik. A statue stands on his grave, portraying his wife. The grave is inscribed with words, "Best of Husband."

After fifty years, a clock tower was built along the west side of the church. Some say, the clock's bell could be heard from miles away and people use to synchronise their watches from this clock tower. The clock stopped in 1880 due to lack of maintenance and an earthquake in 1897 destroyed the whole tower.

Inside of the church is filled with beautiful paintings done by Charles Port. The main floor is divided into three parts. A stage covered by railings, a middle section with two folding doors, and an area separated by a wooden barrier for seating. A spiral staircase goes up from the main hall to the second floor of the church. There is also a 3 feet marble front behind the stage. It was used for Baptism. In 1996, Mother Teresa stayed in the church's compound during her visit.

Though, today the church is closed for visitors most of the time, it has been quite a famous subject for people. BBC and AFP have made documentaries surrounding this church. ■