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PHOTO: KAMOL DAS

**"If you cannot find peace within yourself,
you will never find it anywhere else."**
— Marvin Gaye

SNAPSHOT

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A New School in the Block

Thanks to the Star Weekend for publishing an interesting spotlight article titled "A New School on the Block" on October 30, 2015. It's really a school of learning with fun. Generally a typical school aims at producing students with good results. However, this type of school nurtures the hidden talent of the students. The syllabus followed by the school has been designed creatively so that students can learn their lessons practically. The effort made by the young volunteers and instructors of Mojaar School is really praiseworthy. After such frustrating harassment by the law enforcers, we should come forward to aid them and to encourage them so that they can run their initiative successfully.
Md. Shariful Islam
Demra, Dhaka

PHOTO: TOUSIF FARHAD



The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Star Weekend.

A Trip of a Lifetime

Every year our neighbouring country Indian government invites a team of 100 students from Bangladesh to visit the historic and renowned places of India. Through this trip Bangladeshi youth get a deep insight about the rich and diversified cultural heritage of India. After reading the article titled "A Trip of a Lifetime" (published on October 30, 2015) I came to know that Indian President also meets with the invited Bangladeshi students and exchanges his thoughts with them. This is really a great gesture of friendship from our neighbouring country. Bangladesh should also offer this kind of cultural and youth exchange programme to India. India and Bangladesh are tied with historic, cultural and geographical bonds which we should enhance with this kind of friendly programmes.
Masum Khan
Faridabad, Dhaka

Recognising True Compassion

The practice of killing street dogs by the municipality workers is still quite common in many Bangladeshi cities. I wonder how this kind of barbaric act can still be practiced in our country. How can people think that God has made this world only for human beings not for those helpless souls? Who are we to seize their right to live in this world? I would like to thank the writer for her amazing article on Dog Lovers Day (published on October 30, 2015). She has rightly pointed out how Islam as a religion recognises and respects the rights of all animals. We may have poverty, terrorism and many other problems but that does not mean that we cannot love these poor, helpless inhabitants of our city.
Armin Sultana
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

EXPERIENCE



I am Shakibul Hasan Bappi from Gaibandha. My father is a landless farmer. He works in the rice field of rich land owners. However, he never prohibited us from attending school regularly. I wanted to work with my father to help him in the field but he used to prevent me from doing so. He has always been encouraging me to continue my study with his hard earned money and he has taught me to depend on my own abilities, hard work and determination. I believe this personal strength and quality



SHARING THE DIGNITY

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN
PHOTOS: COURTESY

is dignity. I will work hard and will be satisfied with my hard earned awards that is what I have learned about dignity," says Shakib, one of the thousands of youth who have learned about the concept of dignity and their right to lead a dignified life in the schools operated by Friendship, a renowned value-based non government organisation of Bangladesh.

Friendship has been running many welfare projects including floating hospitals, schools for impoverished children and health care centres in some of the remotest and least addressed areas of Bangladesh. At first, through its 143

learning centres all over Bangladesh, the organisation first introduced an elaborate and well designed course on dignity, ethics and child rights. "Besides normal classes, our students learn about values and principles to build their characters. We teach them about ethics and how to respect his/her own self while respecting the opinions of others," says Sharmin Huq, the instructor of one of the learning centres of Friendship.

Like Shakib, more than 6000 students in four districts of Bangladesh have been participating in interactive learning sessions about the core values of human life. "Through mainstream education system we are creating the generation of youth who are competing with each other for good results, for a better job and for earning more money. Values are almost absent here. Through our lessons we try to



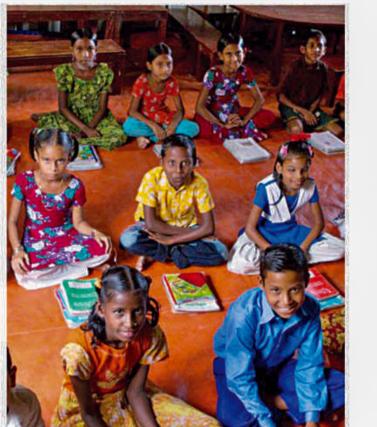
Runa Khan delivering her speech on Global Dignity Day.

instil the values among the youth so that besides securing their careers they can also develop themselves as better human beings," adds Sharmin.

When we see unpleasant news of gender violence, corruption and juvenile delinquency every day, we can surely feel

the absolute and dire necessity of this kind of initiative for our people. Already 21 government schools have requested Friendship to run the course on dignity and ethics in the schools. Runa Khan, the founder of Friendship and country chair for Global Dignity in Bangladesh says, "We have been developing an army of instructors, trainers and experts so that we can spread the message of dignity and human values not only to the students but also to the people from all walks of life."

Founded by three persons HRH Prince Haakon of Norway, Pekka Himanen and John Hope Bryant of Operation HOPE (US), the Global Dignity is an autonomous, non-criticism and non-partisan organisation that has been



working throughout the world aiming to encourage a sense of community in a conflicted world through the unifying cause of dignity. Runa Khan has been working for this humanitarian initiative since 2002. This year on 26 th October, along with more than 60 countries, Bangladesh observed the Global Dignity Day. With the initiative of Friendship in Bangladesh, thousands of students from different schools and colleges, activists and development workers observed the day with a wide range of activism.

However, it is a reality that a large part of our population does not have any idea about what dignity is. Not only poverty, but also the absence of human values, lack of self respect and intensifying intolerance have been creating a suffocating situation where leading an honest life with dignity is becoming the ultimate challenge. In such situation, this initiative by Friendship, which has been creating a generation of virtuous youths like Shakib, can certainly give us a glimmer of hope.

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