



ECHOES BY
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Being a Part of the Journey



PHOTOS: STAR



During the Silver Jubilee of The Daily Star, I realised, my first write-up was published in the paper in August 1993, almost 23 years ago. It happened by accident. My friend, Shamsad Mortuza, was Star's Jahangirnagar University correspondent. He told me that this new English daily is searching for writers. He advised me to write something students would read. Music has always been the centre of my universe. I wrote a piece on the Beatles. The Beatles piece became the cover story of the Weekly Magazine.

Daily Star in those days was located on Road 3 of Dhanmondi, very near my house. I decided to visit. I met Madan Da, who I had heard gave the nod to the Beatles piece. My discussion with him gave me the impression that Star was here to stay. A few weeks later, I found myself writing regularly for Teens and Tweens and especially its Editor Raffat Binte Rashid. I noticed in Raffat and a few more who are still associated with the Star, creative writing requires giving the writer time and space. Otherwise, write-ups end up becoming manufactured or a waste of talent.

Writing for Teens and Tweens trained me to stay within a word limit. Knowing your limits helps you identify your strengths. Then and still now, when writing, I try to make myself one of the readers. How would I respond if I was reading this piece myself with my morning tea? What I didn't realise at the time, but do now, writing for the young is more challenging than writing for an older population. I now realise, one of the best ways to communicate with young people is to follow Aesop through storytelling. A period of intermission started. Life

took me to many new places.

In November 2007, I called Shahnoor Bhai, Editor of what was then the Star Campus. I wondered if Star Campus would be interested in pieces from me. In 1993, The Daily Star may have needed writers to write for them. By 2007, it had become an established daily. To my joy, the ethos had remained unchanged. "Sure. Do drop by for a cup of tea" was Shahnoor Bhai's response. That was the first of many cups of tea I fondly recall.

My profession is teaching. Through teaching, I've realised, getting a stage to spend time with the next generation is a privilege. I took Shahnoor Bhai's offer to write for young people. This saw two stints of writing for Star Campus. First: irregularly for Shahnoor Bhai. Second: through the column "Post Campus" for Elita Karim, who took the helm of Star Campus after Shahnoor Wahid.

Star Campus saw its day. Then SHOUT made a call. When Karim Waheed, Editor of SHOUT, asked me to contribute for the new publication, this time I took it as a command. When the young generation looks into your eyes asking for something, you have to oblige. I remember listening to a BBC documentary on Syd Barrett and Pink Floyd. In an 'interstellar overdrive', the word Echoes started to echo and echo. Thus "Echoes" was born.

To me The Daily Star has been special. It's been my 'Wonderland': a place where I can escape to and speak with are tomorrow's world; and then return 'back to the future'. This is a privilege. This is the resonance that echoes from my heart on the silver jubilee of The Daily Star.

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