

# Where the heck is Matt? IN DHAKA!

MYAT MOE KHAING

When I reached the Crescent Lake Bridge at 2pm on April 9, I wasn't expecting many people to show up. In a distance, I saw a foreigner directing a crowd of around 35 people to gather in the middle of the bridge. They were going to be a part of the next "Where the heck is Matt?" video.

Matt Harding, who claims to be the worst professional dancer, is an American traveller and video game designer. He is also known as "Dancing Matt" for his viral videos where he dances in front of various international locations and landmarks.

In front of the crowd stood Elan Lee, the cameraman with an iPhone on a tripod, the only gear required. They



preferred it over a DSLR which is heavy to carry. Once the video is recorded, it is sent to their co-ordinator, the third team member in Seattle, Washington.

There was no music and you could see a group of young people swaying both arms while imitating a jogging movement. Under the scorching sun, Matt divided the crowd into groups. Each of them danced separately with him in new steps they came up with. They kept rehearsing "1, 2, 3, 4, front, front, back, back" while counting the steps. "Don't worry about how you look. Keep smiling because it's more important than the steps" – Matt made his priorities clear to them.

"It was easy to get a visa for Bangladesh. Hence we chose your country. We looked only for enough space to

fit in people, and the National Parliament was perfect for us. Luckily, we got the permission for the shoot," they explained how they ended up here.

To 39 year old Matt, human beings tend to focus on scary, violent things. Anywhere you go, most people are



PHOTOS: DARSHANCHAKMA

peaceful, and the purpose of the videos is to remind us of that. The videos are for everyone. Even if one never leaves his/her town, they can still get the idea that the world is not dangerous.

Matt and Elan, who started travelling ten years ago, are always approached by sponsors impressed by their videos. Used to travelling light, they don't have much to worry. "I just get on an airplane. It's the plane's duty to take me somewhere," Matt's quips made everyone laugh.

Elan, the founder of "Exploding Kittens", narrated the story of how they learned how to play cricket from kids in India. They try street food in every country despite hygiene concerns. As we chatted, they told us the story of getting arrested at the Parthenon where dancing was illegal.

Though they believe that telling people what to do stops them from doing it, they have a simple message: there are risks and dangers, but you can choose to not live a life governed by fear.

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## Encouraging Youth Activism and Social Development

MOBASHIR MONIM

Much like the sudden increase in Earth's temperature due to global warming over the past few decades, so have increased the amount of study and ambition of today's youth. However, this ambition has led to one of the vital keys to societal progression to take a big hit, that being the youth involvement in the social development processes. Therefore to enhance the current youth's contribution to society and to consequently accelerate progression of society, YES Alumni Bangladesh conducted a workshop on April 7, 2016, titled "Youth Activism and Social Development" (YASD).

The workshop was funded by the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs of the United States Department of State and sponsored by International Education and Resource Network - Bangladesh

(iEARN-BD) and BRAC University Computer Club (BUCC). The workshop trained students from several reputed schools in Dhaka on how to take active part in the social development processes and how to be a youth activist using current technology. Facilitators from several different fields, including Mozilla and Google Development Group Dhaka, came in to motivate with their respective expertise and to train the participants on how to develop the community through fun-filled activities. One of the Cultural Affairs Officer from the US Embassy was also present to help inspire the participants by talking about ways develop the community.

Throughout the workshop, the participants were shown on how to properly identify and find a solution to a societal issue on a case by case basis over the duration of six hours. The participants

were also made to develop ideas of their own to solve a given problem and to present as groups as the workshop activity.

At the end of the workshop, the participating teams from different schools were given a task for the next round of the event where they will have to make a

video identifying a social issue and finding a solution to the problem. The team which makes the best solution to their found problem will be given a chance to implement their solution in the real world with a grant from the American Center.



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