

| SHUTTERSTORIES |



# THE (UN)SAFER WAY HOME

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS

TEXT: ELITA KARIM

The photos documented this week in the 'Shutterstories' section shows the every day risks that motorists and pedestrians take while crossing the train signal. Rather than waiting for the train to go by, they prefer to 'speed up loves' and risk it out instead -- breaking the signal and hurrying across the railway tracks. This is simply a dangerous act and needs to be monitored and stopped immediately.

Not only do motorists take risks with their lives with moving trains, but so do individuals of all ages, who sadly have no other choice but to get on the roof top of the trains and make the long journey home during annual holidays. Fascinating as it may look, crowding up on top of a train is an activity that must be put to a stop as well. If the government wants people to observe a peaceful holiday season, more compartments must be added to the existing trains or other safer means of transport need to be introduced.



| STRIKING A CHORD |

# THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER

ELITA KARIM

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

There used to be a tradition in every Bangali family with children going to school, in Bangladesh, not too long ago -- to write down experiences. A trip to the market, buying vegetables with choto chacha, going to the gorur-haat days before Eid with cousins or just taking a road trip to the nearest picnic spot with family -- elders would always encourage the children to write down their experiences -- in Bangla and in English.

For youngsters today, this age-old practice might sound like updating a Facebook status in short form. However, this essay writing practice was one of the many family rules that children had to follow (for which many thanked their parents later on in life), which helped them read more, perfect their sentence construction, become bilingual in the true sense, and of course have flawless handwriting.

Yet another tradition in these old Bangali families was the memorising of poetry. Even today in many families, there are a few poems that are usually drilled inside your head while growing up. Being a Bangali, studying and memorising Tagore's 'While the mind is without fear', Frost's 'Stopping by Woods' and Emily Dickinson's 'Success is Counted Sweetest' were part of the tradition, strangely enough. Accompanied by Tagore's 'Amader choto nodi chole bake bake,' children were bribed with sweets and extra TV hours if they could also recite the English nursery rhymes.

Humayun Ahmed had also mentioned in 'Amar Chotobela' how his father would



Oh there were books, papers to write on and beautiful fountain pens -- elements that children today will never have a taste of! A phrase that stuck with me till now goes something like reading books surrounded by bowls of apples and oranges -- I believe it was from 'Little Women.'



bribe him and his siblings with coins, candies and other attractions if they could memorise and deliver equally well, the masterpieces by Nazrul and Tagore. And the children did just that!

It is not that children are not smart today. They sure are; they are just taught in different ways. Traditions have changed, but values stayed. Many a child will recite a Sukumar Ray poem along with the 'The wheels of the bus go round and round' -- thanks to Youtube and all the other media

they have access to. The other day, I found myself watching the animation versions of Antara Chowdhury's songs that I had memorised as a child from cassette tapes. My 3-year-old niece, who I was watching the animations with, was singing along with me.

These little Bengali traditions will definitely stay, and in no way shall we let any other civilisation take over this beautiful culture of music, poetry and love. ■

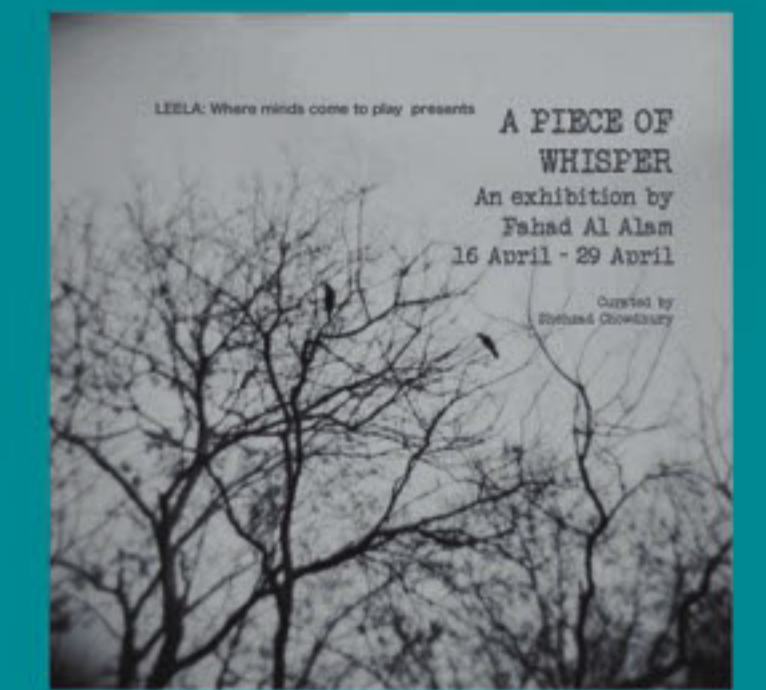
ABOUT TOWN



NATIONAL YOUTH SUMMIT 2016  
April 29, at 8 am  
Senate Bhaban, University of Dhaka  
Hosted by- United Nations Youth and Students Association of Bangladesh  
For Query and Tickets, visit-  
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SHOKHER CHOBIYAL PHOTO FESTIVAL 2016  
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Drik Gallery, Dhanmondi  
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A PIECE OF WHISPER  
AN EXHIBITION BY FAHAD AL ALAM  
April 16-29, 5-8pm  
Curated by: Shehzad Chowdhury  
Leela: Where Minds Come to Play, Banani  
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