

**INCIDENT**

# DON'T BE A BYSTANDER

**NAZIBA BASHER**

A few days ago, I was near the diplomatic zone in the city looking for a particular building, and I had to move from street to street. Upon reaching one particular street, I saw some rapid movement amongst two people. As I moved closer, I noticed a man pulling a woman's hair and throwing her to the ground. My heart froze. He kicked at her mercilessly and beat her with his sandals. I jumped out of my car and screamed! At that moment, the vile man shifted his look towards me, while the woman got some time to get back up. I threatened to call the police, the woman begged me to. I ran to the police I had noticed on the previous street.

When I came back with a responsive policeman, I realised that there were people around the whole time. I was so panicked at what was happening; I missed the worst part of the situation- the bystanders- watching what was happening, hypnotised by what they feel is entertaining, not moving a muscle to save the woman, not straining their vocal chords to speak out against injustice.

Diffusion of responsibility can manifest itself in such situations, which leads to a group of people who, through action or inaction, allow events to occur which they would never allow if they were alone. This is referred to as 'groupshift.'

Their faces disgusted me to my very gut. I shouted at them all- around five to six men and one woman. I called them all criminals as I left the place exasperated, shocked, scared. What have my people become?

Still shaking with some form of anxiety, I came to the office and had to find out why it was that people just stand and just watch injustice take place, why sights of violence and crime paralyses our souls along with our bodies.

The internet introduced me to the bystander effect. Also known as the bystander apathy, or the Genovese syndrome, is a social psychological phenomenon that

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Manan Morshed, *Inception 6*, acrylic on paper, 2001.



PHOTO: MD. FIROZ AL SABAH

But your solitude will be a support and a home for you, even in the midst of very unfamiliar circumstances, and from it you will find all your paths. Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a young poet

**SNAPSHOT**

## MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com



### The Manmade Deluge

Our generation is very familiar with the flood of 1988. So much, that we often calculate our age by this epic disaster. We say, 'I was born during the flood of 1988 or after the flood or before the flood.' As for the flood of 1998, many of us can remember it clearly. Since our childhood, we have been seeing floods, major or minor, each and every year in Bangladesh. At one point, we took it as our fate, thinking we could do nothing. However, I would like to thank Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan because through his timely article, I learned that floods were not always our fate. Many of these devastating floods were manmade and not natural at all. Although we know who are responsible for this devastating deluge, it is of no avail because they are beyond our reach and out of our border. The only solution for this problem is that regardless of border and nation, we should be kind and considerate to every human being.

Junaid Hasan  
Madabdi, Narsingdi

### A Note of Gratitude

As a member of Dhaka's Nawab family, I am extremely grateful to you for mentioning one of the very important leaders not only of Bengal but of the entire Indian Sub-continent, Khawaja Nazimuddin, who hailed from this part of the world. No doubt he, and many like him, have played an important role in the freedom of India amongst whom the name of Sir Nawabzada Salimullah from Dhaka's Nawab family also is mentionable. Khawaja Nazimuddin's close family members are following his footsteps in leading the nation and guiding the maximum of the youth to prosperity. A fine living example of which is Yasmeen Murshed, founder of the English medium Scholastica School. Syed Raiyan Great Grandson Khawaja Nawabzada Atiqullah



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

### In Memory of the Three Leaders

The article titled "In memory of the Three Leaders" dated, 12 August, 2016, caught my attention. The three leaders, namely A.K. Fazlul Huq, Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy and Khawaja Nazimuddin, were the heart of the nation during the struggle against the British rule. They played an important role in achieving the rights of our people. Their dedication towards our country was unimaginable. It is high time to remind our younger generations about the spirit and sacrifice of the great leaders. They never compromised with injustice. If the spirit of the leaders can spread in society; especially among youths, they will not become extremists or radicals. Rather they will be patriotic citizens of the country.

Arif Billah  
Department of Law, University of Dhaka

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



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Buildings Do! Build Safe!**

