

# THE JOY OF EATING WELL

NILIMA JAHAN  
PHOTO: COURTESY



Ever experienced the sight of a street child after having a proper meal? Such scenes you may come across at the Airport Railway Station or sometimes at Gabtali Bus Terminal, in the capital, where hundreds of underprivileged children have lunch every day. But they are not begging or stealing food from anywhere. Rather, they are buying their own food, maintaining a good order. And, the price of the lunch box is 1 taka!

This '1 taka meal' food service is provided by a non-government organisation named 'Bidyanondo (Learn for Fun)'. Since its inception on December 22, 2013, 'Bidyanondo has been working relentlessly to bring a sustainable transformation in our society, especially by helping underprivileged children with basic education in urban areas. Starting with only four members, today, Bidyanondo is a big family of 300 dedicated young personalities from different colleges, universities and other professional sectors, with the same mindset - set to do something for the underprivileged children as well as for the deprived society. At present, Bidyanondo has five branches in Dhaka, Chittagong, Narayanganj, Cox's Bazar and Rajbari.

Along with the many initiatives of Bidyanondo regarding basic education and confidence building programmes for underprivileged children, 1 taka meal is a newer project that began on the 15th of May this year. While working on basic education for the street children, the team observed that these children cannot concentrate on their studies as they are deprived of their first basic need—food.

Every afternoon, the team provides 300 lunch boxes in Dhaka and Chittagong. "We fixed the price as 1 taka, so that the children never feel like they are begging for it", says 31-year-old Faruque Ahmed, volunteer at Bidyanondo. "Rather they feel very proud having bought lunch for themselves", he adds.

## INITIATIVE

Volunteers go to the market every day, and help in cooking. The chef tastes first, and if everything is okay, the team distribute the boxes with a van and sell them to the children at 1 taka. Recently, they have added the elder underprivileged members of society in their project.

"We started this project to educate them, and push the ideology of basic hygiene and common morality", says 35-year-old Kishor Kumar Das, the founder of Bidyanondo. Kishor founded the organisation as he faced lot of financial troubles in his childhood, which prompted him to do something of this sort. At present, Kishor works as a commercial director at a private company in Peru.

The team is now trying to include milk on the menu, so that the children get food with proper nutritious values. "Also, we will make a systematic way of giving food, with a token, with different categories, based on maintaining basic hygiene and maintaining good morals", says Kishor.

Bidyanondo, the foundation never followed any specific or orthodox structural methods. From the very beginning, even today, the team worked on numerous projects for educating underprivileged children. The large library in their branches, containing more than eight thousands books, is open for all. Also, they have been creating many educational video tutorials for children studying in high schools, by a brilliant team of students from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) and University of Dhaka.

Though primarily, Kishor bears most of the expenses of the project, now-a-days, many donors are coming forward to make this initiative a successful one. But Kishor knows one organisation alone cannot change the fate of these children in the long run. And for this, he wants to create a model so that others can follow. However, he believes that if the government or any other organisation takes the responsibilities and adopt such models, it will be for the betterment of the whole country. ■

## MAD GENIUS

### STING

(born 2 October 1951)

"Everyday is a brand new day," believes this week's mad genius. Gordon Matthew Thomas Sumner CBE known professionally by his stage name Sting, is an English musician, singer-songwriter, and actor. Before starting his solo career, he was the principal songwriter, lead singer, and bassist for the new wave rock band The Police from 1977 to 1984.



SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

"Humans make the mistake of believing that it is their right to survive. Species die out on this planet all the time without anyone noticing. The planet will still be there, and we must lose this attitude of divine right, that something will save us..."

"a gentleman will walk but never run.. it takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile.. be yourself no matter what they say.."

"You have to be yourself. Stay true to who and what you are. And if people still like you, that's great! If they don't, that's their problem."

"In my quest to become unique, I've become a statistic."



## STARDIARY

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### BEING PUSHY

Passing through a crowd in our national stadium seems to be an aggressive kind of movement- it's like getting into a war as people push and shove their way through. My friends and I went to see the match the other day in Mirpur Stadium. In the chaos, to our shock, a middle aged man put his hands on my friend and molested her. It was not an accident; the man did it on purpose. We screamed at him, but no one around us was really bothered as they tried desperately to hold onto their place in the queue. As my friend charged the man and was about to slap him, someone from the crowd tried justifying his action saying that it is almost impossible to get into the stadium without being pushy. This also made me wonder how safe a woman is in a public space. Also, I believe we have very poor crowd management skills. If we had more highly efficient and effective volunteers to do the crowd management there, such incidents can be avoided.

Parvin Jahan  
Shyamoli, Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR FILE

## HILSA MISERY

As I was stuck in traffic a few days ago, I got to know through a private radio channel about the present unfortunate situation regarding the hilsa misery. This year huge shoals of hilsa fish are being netted by the fishermen and this year's catch is considered to be the best catch so far within four years' time. But this hilsa success is turning into a complete disaster as different fish mongers around the country are throwing away 800 grams of hilsa due to lack of cold storage and other means of preservation methods. This news on the wastage of our national fish, one of the most costly fish that we consume here in Bangladesh, makes me very upset. I urge the concerned authorities to take necessary steps such as Buffer schemes so that supply can remain stable throughout the year, and also prices are within the reach of commoners.

Rafid Alam  
Mohammadpur, Dhaka