



PHOTO: SAKIB IMAM

"Some beautiful paths can't be discovered without getting lost."
— Erol Ozan, writer and scientist

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The Joy of Eating Well

I really appreciate the *Star Weekend* for its article titled 'The Joy of Eating Well' published on 14 October, 2016. It made me recall a sweet memory of mine. During last Pahela Baishakh, my friends and I were returning from an event by a rickshaw. On the way, I came across a little girl scavenging for food from a dustbin. It shocked and saddened me immensely. Stopping the rickshaw I called the girl and offered her 100 taka. However, to my surprise, she refused to take the money. When her father told her to take the money, she finally agreed. I feel very upset when I see starving children on the streets. Many of them do not beg. They work as hawkers or porters but their meagre income cannot even provide them with a meal. From the article when I learned about 'Bidyandanda Foundation' and its initiative '1 taka meal', I felt proud that the youth of my country have come forward to remove this discrimination. I would like to thank Kishore, the founder of the organisation, for this praiseworthy and exemplary initiative. Like this initiative, if we can work from our own capacity to feed these under privileged children, I think it is possible to eradicate hunger from our society.

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Tragedies never to be repeated

I would like to thank Md Shahnawaz Khan Chandan for his excellent and informative article titled 'Tragedies never to be repeated' published in the *Star Weekend* on October 7, 2016. Reading his article I learned that most of the industrial disasters that have been occurring in our country repeatedly are not natural disasters at all. Most of these happened due to irregularities, negligence and exploitative attitude towards poor labourers. Due to available cheap labour, the factory owners often treat their workers like slaves. When I learned about the workers of Tazreen Fashions who were locked from the outside when the factory was burning, I was shocked and could not even imagine their fate. I therefore totally agree with the writer that if we do not ensure workers' rights and safety, our garment products will lose their acceptability in the international market.

Enam Hasan
Madaninagar, Narayanganj

Not another Hashtag

I was very shocked to see the news of the 23-year-old college girl Khadiza Begum Nargis being brutally hacked by Badrul Alam with a machete on the campus of MC College in Sylhet in broad daylight. I could not believe how such brutality took place. The repeated incidents of violence against women reveal the alarming disorderly situation in our society. Deterioration of law enforcement has spread such fear and confusion amongst people that they feel unsafe to save a woman even if she is being killed in front of them by a psychotic criminal. We demand exemplary punishment for Badrul Alam and this is the only way to save our society from utter destruction of its moral foundation.

Masum Khan
Halishahar, Chittagong



PHOTO: COURTESY

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

| SOCIETY |

Here in Bangladesh, in terms of employment, women face great inequality, both in urban and rural areas. Breaking all barriers though, they are now stepping out of their cocoons and working side by side with men.

One such example that our girls have recently created is selling bus tickets to passengers. Basically, what we are used to in Bangladesh is girls are not usually engaging themselves in such jobs and it happens mostly due to our conservative work environment. However, to our surprise, to make a change in our systems, eight girls have embarked on the journey of employment and have been selling tickets of tourist buses run by HR Transport Agency at the Hatirjheel Project area.

Take the example of Bristi Mankin. This 24-year-old hails from Haluaghat, Mymensingh, and is a third year student of Marketing at Uttara Anwara Model University College. She joined the HR Transport Agency in January, this year. Prior to that, Bristi worked at the sales department of Prince Food Products Ltd. But the long working hours interfered with her education for which, at one point, she had to quit. After that, she landed the job at HR Transport Agency with the help of one of her well-wishers. Now, Bristi sells ticket from 7 in the morning to 3 pm.

Lihina Majhi, 23-year-old, from Madhupur, Tangail spends a very busy time selling tickets. When the number of passengers rises, Lihina doesn't get any respite to talk to people. Like Bristi and Lihina, Helana Chisim, Priyanka Rani, Mousumi Thigidi, Nupur, Nusrat and Bobita Sarker sell tickets to passengers, while continuing their studies, getting leaves during exams. Though they have dared to work in such environments, they face a number of challenges

"The most acute problem is the washroom crisis. In Hatirjheel, there is no public restroom facilities", says Bristi. "Whenever we feel the necessity of washrooms, we call our supervisor to send us transports and then go to our office in Niketan to use the washroom", she adds.

Apart from these, the tin-built counters become unbearably hot at noon and there are no such arrangements for cooling it. Sometimes, passengers get angry, pass bad comments and scold them for the delay of services. "Most of the times, we don't get any proper time for lunch, and passengers do not want to understand our problems", says Lihina.

"We have consulted the Hatirjheel

A WIND OF CHANGE

NILIMA JAHAN

PHOTOS: PRABIR DAS



Project committee about the toilet issue and the solution is almost ready", says, Abdul Halim, the Managing Director of HR Transport Agency. "Hopefully, we will inaugurate the service very soon", he adds. The company is also trying to import new counters with cooling facilities for ticket sellers.

By empowering our women, engaging them into mainstream economic activities and ensuring equal opportunity for them in workplaces, we can ensure meeting our Millennium Development Goals (MDG) further. And bringing out our girls from their traditional roles, if we can drive them accordingly, going beyond our goals will be just a matter of time! ■



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