



Clockwise from top left, 22 editors of different local dailies and online news portals with Chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd Rokia Afzal Rahman and The Daily Star Editor and Publisher Mahfuz Anam. Twenty-five editors have been honoured for their contribution to flourishing journalism in their respective areas. Dignitaries and family members of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, who died a hero's death during the July 1 terror attack at the Holy Artisan Bakery, observe a minute's silence in memory of Faraaz. Guests gather at the anniversary celebrations. Elita Karim and her troupe mesmerise the audience. Visitors at a photo exhibition. Eminent personalities, political leaders and policymakers at the ceremony at the International Convention City Bashundhara in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO STAR

Guardian of nature rewarded

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International Convention City Bashundhara.

He was also given a check of Tk 1 lakh to help build his house. Samad, locally known as "Tree Samad", now lives in two huts on government land with five members of his family.

"How much can I alone do? You all should plant trees," an overwhelmed Samad said, after receiving the award.

But even before the programme began, he went up to The Daily Star Editor Mahfuz Anam and complained: "I could not plant a tree today because of this programme."

Later, a coconut tree was brought for Samad, who then planted it by the hall room of the convention city.

Several thousand people, who made up the evening's audience, all took home a profound inspiration.

"It takes almost nothing to do something good," many thought, as they shook their heads in disbelief.

Readers, patrons, advertisers, well-wishers, politicians, academics, businessmen, diplomats, journalists and development workers from home and abroad were present at the event titled "26 Years of Journalism without Fear or Favour".

Nine other change-makers were also honoured by this paper for their contribution to various fields.

The Daily Star has created a platform for change-makers, who are trying to bring positive changes in the society, a month back. It started this Star change-maker circle with 30 people. Nine of them were recognised yesterday for their direct impact on people's lives in different ways. The objective of this recognition is to present their work to the people and provide them media support.

The programme began shortly after 6:30pm with the screening of a documentary on the brief history of the birth of Bangladesh, its struggles

throughout the journey and achievements in the economic and social sectors, followed by the National Anthem.

The audience stood in solemn silence for a minute in memory of Faraaz Ayaaz Hossain, who sacrificed his life in a rare display of courage and friendship during the Gulshan cafe attack in July last year.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of The Daily Star, said that in upholding fundamental rights and rules-based society, The Daily Star was second to none.

"In promoting private sector-based economic growth, we have tried to promote global best practices," she said.

But the task was not easy, she said, adding that the most formidable obstacle was the non-acceptance by the political leadership both in power and those outside to accept a critical voice.

"We are still struggling on that front," she added.

On issues of social and economic development, The Daily Star has been an example of positive journalism in which it highlighted every success the country achieved and tried to point out the shortcomings with constructive suggestions about the way forward, she added.

"Generally, ours is a journalism based on genuine love for the people, especially the downtrodden, and very strong faith in our own ability to transform Bangladesh into a middle income country."

About the journey ahead, Rokia Afzal said the newspaper had a global vision in the Sustainable Development Goals, which was a great guide to follow.

The Daily Star Editor and Publisher, Mahfuz Anam, said, "We depend on advertisement and business to sustain ourselves, yet we have never moved

away from ethical journalism. Our founders gave us such spirit."

He said print journalism was facing a two-pronged challenge -- one technological and the other-- a more insidious one -- ideological.

"The technological challenge we will adapt to and overcome. But the ideological challenge we must fight with every bit of strength we are capable of mustering," he said.

For the challenge is not only to journalism but to our freedom and to all the fundamental rights that we have learned to take as given, he added.

About Abdul Samad Sheikh, he said many of us cannot sleep at night for so many reasons.

"But today we have the honour to present before you a man who could not sleep if he did not plant a tree every day. He is a man whose love for fellow human beings, love for nature, and an intuitive sense of environment make us all feel small, selfish and blind," he said.

"What this rickshaw puller from Faridpur knew without any modern education, most of us, with far better education, seem not to know -- that tree gives life and that human beings need trees to survive," he added.

Samad's action is supremely beautiful in its simplicity and awesome in its consistency, Mahfuz said.

"Can any of you imagine doing something every day of your life for 48 years, let alone plant a tree a day? But Abdul Samad Sheikh, a poor rickshaw puller did so sometimes spending his own money but more often getting free saplings from the local government office.

Samad has been planting a tree a day since he was 12 years old. A normal year has 365 days. In 48 years, with an extra 12 days added to account for leap years, there will be 17,532 days. At a minimum, that's how many trees Samad has nurtured.

Talking to The Daily Star earlier, Samad said, "From rickshaw pulling I

earn around 100 taka per day. With that I buy necessities for my family and at least one plant from the Faridpur Horticulture Centre."

Speaking about Faraaz, Mahfuz Anam said, "In his decision not to leave without his friends he touched us all with his love for fellow human beings and filled our hearts with pride by his exemplary courage. He has left so much for us to learn from."

Latifur Rahman, chairman of Transcom Group and a member of the board of directors of Mediaworld Ltd, was also present.

Among the distinguished guests were Professor Rehman Sobhan, Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain, Information Minister Hasanul Haq Inu, former CEC ATM Shamsul Huda, former election commissioner Brig Gen (ret'd) M Shakhawat Hussain, Centre for Policy Dialogue's Distinguished Fellows Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya and Professor Mustafizur Rahman, rights activist Hamida Hossain, political scientist Professor Raunaq Jahan, former diplomats Farooq Sobhan and Shamsheer Mobin Chowdhury, BNP leaders Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, Moudud Ahmed, Amir Khasru Mahmud Chowdhury, Abdul Moeen Khan, Abdullah Al Noman, Gonoshasthaya Kendra founder Zafrullah Chowdhury, former Chief Information Commissioner Muhammad Zamir, Editor of daily Samakal Gohar Sarwar, media personalities Shykh Seraj, Muhammad Jahangir and Mozammel Babu, Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist Christian Unity Council general secretary Rana Dasgupta, ISPR Director Lt Col Rashidul Hassan, renowned magician Jewel Aich, prominent classic dance exponent Shamim Ara Nipa, actor and supermodel Adil Hossain Noble, film director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, and television and film actress Nusrat Imrose Tisha.

Convention City Bashundhara in the capital in the evening.

Rokia Afzal Rahman, chairperson of Mediaworld Ltd, the owning company of The Daily Star, handed over crests to each of them.

On behalf of the editors, MA Malek, editor of Dainik Azadi, expressed his gratitude to The Daily Star for honouring them.

Although Azadi is older than The Daily Star, he said, they try to follow this newspaper.

"The Daily Star will remain as a glittering star," Malek added.

Dishari Chakma, editor of Hillbd24.com, also appreciated this newspaper for the honour.

Star honours 25 editors

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threats and risks -- sometimes of life -- to inform people about the events and development taking place in their respective localities and at national and international levels.

They are: MA Malek, editor of Dainik Azadi, Chittagong; Md Mozammel Haque, editor and publisher of Daily Karatoa, Bogra; Kyaw Thein Aung, editor of Daily Samudra Barta, Cox's Bazar; Dishari Chakma, editor of Hillbd24.com, Rangamati; Hasina Begum, editor of Daily Rupashi Bangla, Comilla; Pankaj Kanti Dey, editor and publisher of Sunamganjer Khobor, Sunamganj; SM Sanalal Bakshi, editor of Daily Kurigram

Khobor, Kurigram; Aminul Haque, editor of Weekly Alapon, Saidpur, Nilphamari; Liaquat Ali, editor of Dainik Sonali Sangbad, Rajshahi; Akbarul Hasan Millat, acting editor of Dainik Sonar Desh, Rajshahi; Mostafa Satez, editor of Daily Ichhamati, Pabna; Abdul Matin Khan, editor and publisher of Daily Jorebangla, Pabna; Muhammad Abul Kalam Biswas, acting editor of Daily Shirsha Barta Manikganj; MA Jalil, editor and publisher of Daily Ajker Jamalpur, Jamalpur; Begum Ferdousi Ali, editor of Daily Purbanchal, Khulna; Mobinul Islam Mobin, editor of Dainik Gramer Kagoj, Jessore; Ekram-ud-Daullah, editor of Dainik Kalyan, Jessore; Sardar

Al Amin, editor of Daily Mathabhanga, Chuadanga; Rezaul Karim Reza, editor of Daily Uttar Kantho, Natore; Sohrab Hossain, editor of Daily Mukto Sangbad, Gazipur; Fazole Alahi, editor of Dainik Parbattya Chattagram, Rangamati; Nurul Alam Farid, editor of Dainik Biplabi Bangladesh, Barisal; KM Enayet Hossain, editor of Daily Rupantar, Patuakhali; Jahangir Hossen Monju, editor of Dainik Shatakantha, Jhalakathi; and Md Matiur Rahman, editor of Daily Uttar Bangla, Dinajpur.

Twenty-two of them joined the grand reception under the banner "26 Years of Journalism without Fear or Favour" at the International

THE YOUNG CHANGE MAKERS

CATEGORY: Education Online
ORGANISATION: 10 Minute School
FOUNDER: Ayman Sadiq

They teach Maths, English, Science and other subjects to school students. They also take special English classes along with IELTS classes for adults. On a daily basis, Ayman and his team teach more than 40,000 students online from their website. More than 25,000 students attend their live classes every day.

CATEGORY: Creating a Youth Network
ORGANISATION: Youth Opportunities
FOUNDER: Osama Bin Noor

Osama and his team run a website where they bring together all kinds of opportunities like scholarships, fellowships, funding opportunities, awards etc for the youth on one platform, which otherwise lay scattered all over the internet space. This makes lives easier for the young people in Bangladesh who, otherwise, are never aware of these self-development programmes. Osama won the Queen's Award for this initiative in the year 2016.

CATEGORY: Energy
ORGANISATION: Change
FOUNDER: Sajid Iqbal

Sajid and his team shot to fame when they created the 'bottle-baati' -- using solar energy to create light through glass bottles. This initiative of theirs, helped thousands living in crowded slums in many places of the country. Sajid was awarded the Queen's Award earlier this year.

CATEGORY: Immediate Medical Support
ORGANISATION: CriticalLink
CO-FOUNDER: Rahat Hossain

Rahat and his team have been providing first-aid and other medical training to students and workers. Their aim is to provide immediate medical support to those who meet with accidents on the streets or who have strokes and heart attacks at homes, work places and streets. Rahat was awarded the Queens Award earlier this year.

CATEGORY: Blood Donation
ORGANISATION: DonateBloodBD.com
FOUNDER: Shubrata Deb

As a university student, Shubrata would often look for blood donors amongst friends and fellow students in Dhaka, during emergencies. Soon enough, Shubrata developed a massive network of donors not only in Dhaka but also in

Chittagong, Sylhet, Khulna and elsewhere. In the last 4 years, his website had 16.53 million hits and today he has more than 3,000 registered donors.

CATEGORY: Social Enterprise
ORGANISATION: Toru
FOUNDER: Saif Kamal

As an institution, Toru builds capacity and skills. The organisation creates social entrepreneurs, mentors them and grows them to be empathetic leaders, who will become role models and shape policies in the future paving a path towards inclusive growth. In fact his mentee Ayman, the founder of 10-minute-school and Saif are on the same stage today!

CATEGORY: Education and Rehabilitation
ORGANISATION: Mojaar Ishkool
FOUNDER: Arian Arif

Arian and his team have set up schools everywhere -- on the streets of Malibagh, at a small area near Sadarghaat, in Gulshan, Uttara -- you name it! Children who beg and sell by the street-signals are all students of Mojaar Ishkool. As the name indicates, the school provides food, sometimes a place to sleep and a fun space for young children where they sing, dance, sketch, express themselves, along with the regular studying of course.

CATEGORY: Working with the Physically and Mentally Challenged
ORGANISATION: Identity Inclusion
FOUNDER: Shamsin Ahmed

Shamsin and her team work with the physically challenged, provide them with direct psycho-social support. She also regularly organises capacity-building workshops.

CATEGORY: Creating Climate Change Awareness
ORGANISATION: Climate Tracker (the South Asia Hub)
FOUNDER: Sohara Mehroze

The youth will very soon be bearing the brunt of Climate Change, especially in this side of the world. Sohara makes it a point to make the young people aware of what Climate Change is, its impacts and how to solve this global dilemma. In 2016, the Singapore Environment Council had awarded Sohara the Asian Young Environmental Journalist of the Year award.