

This year 2017 began with promises for self-development, to do better as a human being and to contribute more to the country. With this in mind, many an individual look for platforms to learn, gather knowledge, develop skills, to express and also to share. Earlier this month, young people from all over Bangladesh got the opportunity to do just that, thanks to Jaago Foundation and Volunteers for Bangladesh.

The Jaago Foundation has successfully gone beyond its little school in Rayerbazaar for the underprivileged, which had begun more than a decade ago. Today, the organisation boasts a host of schools all over the country, along with online schools as well.

Earlier this month, Jaago Foundation along with Volunteers for Bangladesh got together to host the first National Youth Assembly, where more than 200 young volunteers participated from all over the country.

A capacity building leadership programme, the 4-day event, was held in Cox's Bazaar. Volunteers from 19 districts got together on one platform to learn and

# AN ASSEMBLY OF CHANGE

ELITA KARIM

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

also share. "All the volunteers belong to the Volunteers for Bangladesh (VBD) and have been working with us for a long time," says Korvi Rakshand, the founder of Jaago Foundation and VBD.

After working with VBD for 6 months and more, a general volunteer becomes a committee member, according to the VBD rules. "The member can then nominate



## STAR CHANGEMAKERS CIRCLE

and vote for their respective board members," says Nusrat Jarin, the Senior Manager of the P&B department at Jaago Foundation. "The board usually stays for one year."

Over the four days, the volunteers went through rigorous training programmes and also were given the opportunities to ask questions and learn from prominent personalities and researchers. For instance, the day long course on SDGs was conducted by Dr Debapriya Bhattacharya, an economist and public policy analyst from Bangladesh.

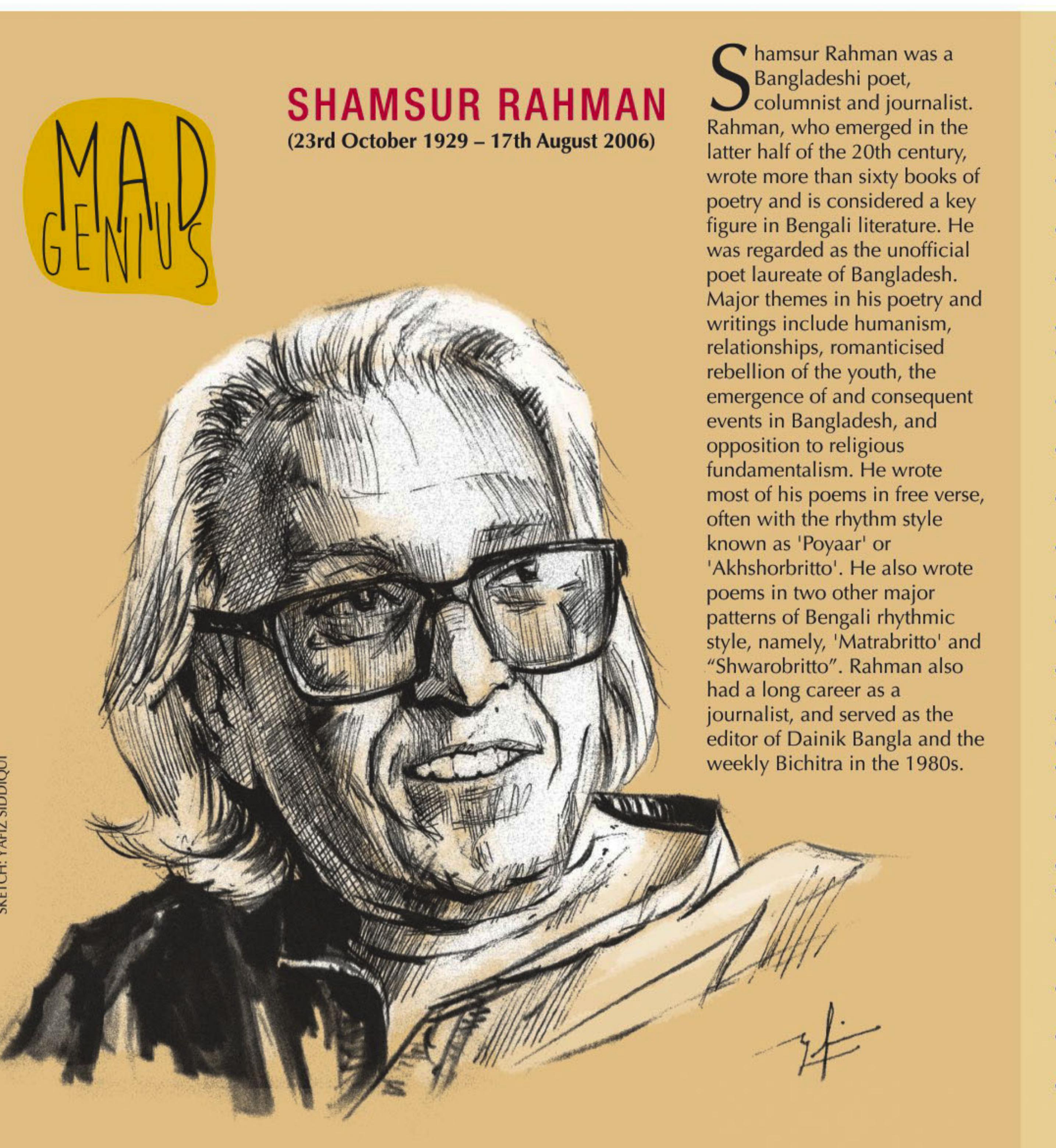
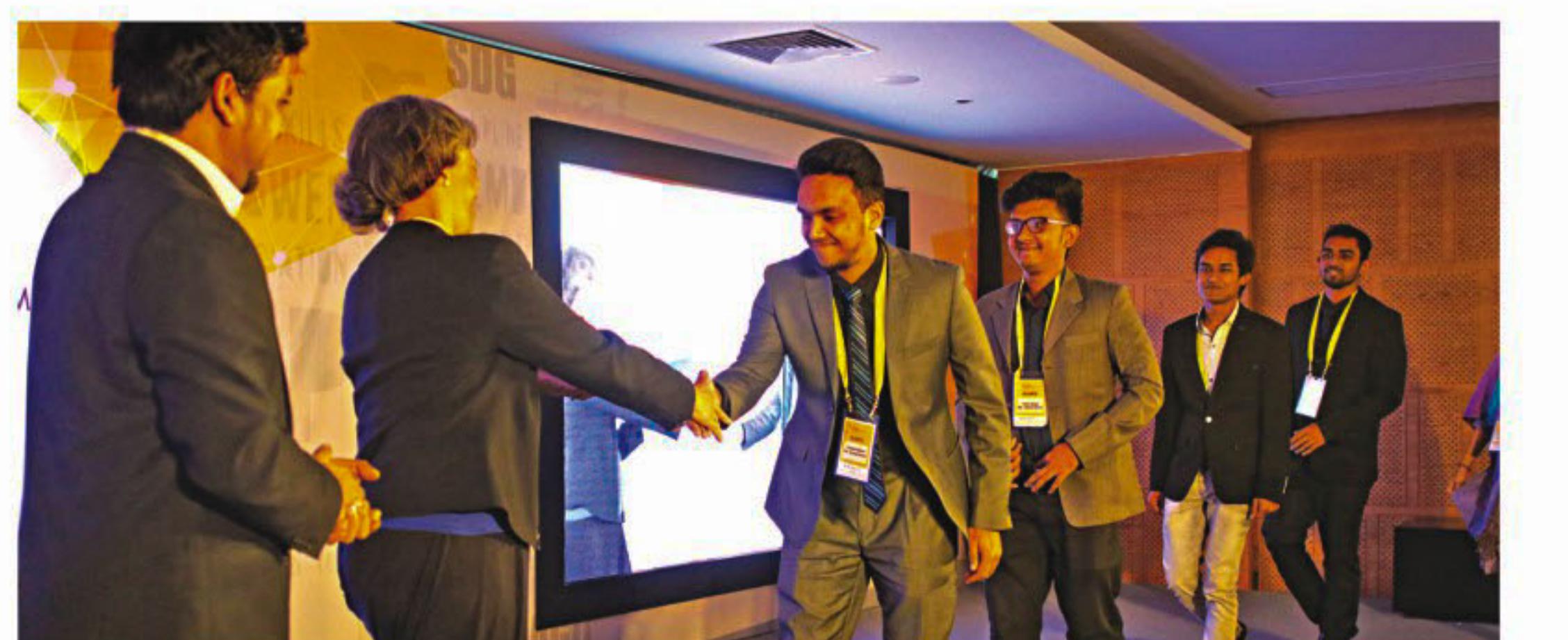
On the very last day of the workshops, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, State Minister, ICT division, conducted a session where he showcased, in a presentation, the many successful young Bangladeshis who had created history and made a mark globally. According to him, these young Bangladeshi 'doers' have been around earlier than the 1950s. "It's the youth who have always steered the country in the right direction," he said. "Let's not stop now!"

The session ended with powerful words of encouragement and inspiration from Marcia Bernicat, the American

Ambassador in Bangladesh. In fact, she could not help dancing to the tune, along with the young volunteers, at the every end, while giving out certificates and tokens of appreciation to them!

All in all, the volunteers had classes on leadership training, ICT, the role of youth in the media, youth and entrepreneurship and a special session on water – crisis in Bangladesh and also globally. "These workshops will definitely help the young volunteers to work in their own areas more constructively," adds Nusrat.

To bring about positive changes in society, one cannot work alone. In fact, individuals from all corners and walks of life need to come together under one umbrella and operate on one platform. And that is exactly what these young volunteers and the young changemakers are doing!



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## LIVING IN A HOSTEL

I have started staying in a hostel and I feel homesick quite often. Hostel life can be a real challenge for someone who never had the experience before. Here, you have to act differently from what you do in your home. Sometimes, I embarrass myself, sometimes I feel triumphant. To be comfortable in a hostel, you have to be very open-minded and see every event as a learning opportunity and acquire the experience as much as possible. You have to expect the unexpected, even if they are beyond the realm of your imagination. One of my friends, whose family lives in close proximity, took me to her place the other day. I felt as if I was in my own home. We spoke about everything and they cared about my safety, health, and feelings. I felt as if they are a family to me, away from my own home. I was worried and sad in the beginning, but now, I have started taking this as a learning opportunity.

Tarannum Jannat  
Bashundhara R/A, Dhaka



PHOTO: NILIMA JAHAN

## ANIMAL BRUTALITY

The other day I was going to pick some fruits from our village garden when I saw a few people beating a newt mercilessly. I requested them to stop beating it and to let it go. They did not pay heed to my request and scolded me instead. Finally, they struck a fatal blow which instantly killed it. Once there was a time when our village garden was home to different species of animals. Many species have become extinct due to our ignorance. Now, the rest of the species are in the threat of extinction. Animals are important for the balance of the ecological system. But, sadly, everyday, thousands of animals are being killed, strangled, injured and repressed by ignorant people. They are not aware of the environmental issues, the consequences of its degradation and why we need bio-diversity. So, the government, NGOs and the civil society should make an effort to create awareness amongst ignorant people regarding these issues.

Nazimuddin Patwary  
Ramgonj, Lakshmpur

## SIGNIFICANT POETRY

- Prothom Gan Ditio
- Mrittur Age (1960)
- Roudro Korotite (1963)
- Biddhsto Nilima (1967)
- Niralokay Dibboroth (1968)
- Neej Bashbhumay (1970)
- Bondi Shibir Theke (1972)
- Dusshom
- Tabley Applegulo Heshe Othay (1986)
- Shopnara Dukray Othay Barbar (1987)
- Khub Beshi Valo Thakte Nei (1987)
- Moncher Majhkhany (1988)
- Buk Tar Bangladesher Hridoy (1988)
- Matal Hritik
- Hridoy Amar Prithibir Alo (1989)
- Shay Ak Porobashay(1990)
- Grihojudder Agae(1990)
- Khondite Gourob(1992)
- Dhongshor Kinare Bashay(1992)
- Akash Ashebe Neme(1994)
- Uzar Baganay(1995)
- Asho Kokil Asho Shornochapa
- Manob Hridoy Naibuddo Shajai
- Hemonto Shondhay Kichukal(1997)
- Chayagoner Shonghe Kichukkhan
- Meghlokal Monoz(1998)

## SHORT STORIES:

- Shamsur Rahamaner Golpo
- NOVELS:
- Octopas(1983)
- Adbhut Adhar Ak(1985)
- Niyo Montaz(1985)
- Elo Je Abelay(1994)

## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE:

- Alating Belating(1974)
- Dhan Bhanle Kuro Debo(1977)
- Lal Fulkr Chora(1995)
- Noyonar Jonno(1997)
- Amer Kuri Jamer Kuri(2004)

## AUTOBIOGRAPHY:

- Kaaler Dhuloy Lekha
- Smritir Shohor

## COLLECTED COLUMNS:

- Akanto Bhaban