



PHOTO: MD ATA ISLAM KHAN MOJLISH

“Peace is seeing the sunrise or a sunset and knowing who to thank.” —Unknown Author

**SNAPSHOT**

**MAILBOX**

Please note we have a new email address:  
starweekendtds@gmail.com



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

**When will our national museum improve?**

I would like to thank *Star Weekend* for publishing a story on the dire situation of our national museum. The country is progressing at a decent rate. We are expected to be a middle income country within the next three to four years, but do we actually have anything to depict the rate of our progress? Do we actually have a place that can systematically show us our history? I would like to be able to show youngsters and even my friends who come from abroad the history of Bangladesh and for that we will need to improve the state of our national museum. If you cannot document your past appropriately, it will in some way or the other hurt you in the future.

Nafiz Alam  
Farmgate, Dhaka

**Helping others or themselves?**

Even though winter is a time for colourful pashminas, vacations and a festive mood prevails among the privileged few, it means suffering for the poor masses. Quite sadly, many poor people in our country cannot afford to buy warm clothes for winter. In this scenario, women and children especially suffer more. Many people, especially students, donate winter clothes and blankets at this time. While this helps those without a roof over their heads to pass yet another cold night sleeping on the footpaths, it is unfortunate that many of these people use the opportunity to show off that they are doing good. Think what goes on in the minds of people whom you are helping when you ask him or her to take a picture, or even pose, during the act. It makes no sense that you help people only to upload it on the social media to validate your efforts. If you have good intentions, your work will be recognised anyway.

Rifatul Islam  
Dhaka



PHOTO: STAR FILE

**Rallying around Ivy**

The incident which occurred in Narayanganj on January 16 put us all to shame. On last Friday's issue of *The Daily Star* we came to know that the mayhem was ultimately all about money. Attacks on serving mayors are certainly nothing new. The late mayor Annisul Huq came under such an attack in the capital's Tejgaon area where he was attempting to free up space occupied by long lines of trucks taking up an entire road. The difference between what Annisul Huq and Mayor Selina Akhter Ivy faced is that the former was not intimidated by any lawmaker. In Ivy's case, the attack was instigated and carried out by another local MP Shamim Osman and his gang. How much longer are we going to stand and watch ruling party men wield muscle power and issue such threats with impunity? An entire city cannot be kept hostage by a few individuals, even if they come from influential families and big political parties. We demand that appropriate action be taken by the authorities against those who carried out the attacks on Ivy and her followers. Let Ivy recover and serve the city again with vigour and courage.

Nuzhat Rifa Ehsan  
Baridhara, Dhaka

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

**OPINION**

I say this with conviction: it is an arduous task staying single in Dhaka. If you are a single woman, and self-dependent, you will probably agree with me on how difficult it is to just BE, let alone have any radical aspirations. Apart from the practicalities of the matter, which is no less challenging by the way, it is more so because of how you are being perceived.

If you are a lone wolf living in Dhaka, like me, you must have experienced a dose of single-shaming at some point or the other. It comes in all shapes and forms. Some are quite blatant, while others are inferred,

my own family, only the composition of that family has changed. But, I don't receive those cards anymore. I fall under my father's family. I have ceased to matter as an individual with everything of me intact but that change in my marital status. The absent card with my name on it is a reminder of that social indifference leading to my invisibility. This could have been that one rare moment when I would have been happy to have Benjamin-Buttoned to my much younger self. Who wouldn't? I could be happy too, only if it was about me. It is not about me—young or old—at all! Not having a certified

male partner seems to make all the difference. I have ceased to exist with the dissolution of my marriage, no matter how failed a marriage it was!

Well, this is pretty unintentional and benign compared to the forced absences I have experienced elsewhere. It was during my house-hunting expedition in one of Dhaka's upbeat residential areas that I was rendered invisible again, and this time with much soreness.

Most landlords disapproved of me as a prospective tenant. There was this elderly landlord who, after much discussion with his wife, seemed to be confused. He seemed to like me, all the more so because I'm a teacher by profession. The perceived nobility of my profession has always worked as my saving grace. And I, quite conscious of it, would play this card as fast as I could to avoid my singlehood from spoiling my chances. Accordingly, I had already handed my business card

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**SINGLE-SHAMING IN DHAKA**

TABASSUM ZAMAN

but they are there. They are in the curious stares of acquaintances, bewildered looks of friends of friends, loud-enough thoughts and comments of aunts at weddings, the first impressions you make on prospective landlords among all. They are ubiquitous, making the air around you so thick with judgment that you can almost feel the weight on you. A single woman in any shape or form is a social anomaly, quite the eyesore, and hence invites invectives, directives and everything sad, bad and ugly.

Wait! Before you get me wrong, this is not a rant against marriage, but against that shame bomb you drop so indiscriminately anywhere and everywhere on those who choose to stay away from it, due to whatever reasons or circumstances.

These shame bombs hit me in two contradictory ways—one renders me invisible and the other makes me the centre of all attention, and quite relentlessly so. I find both equally unacceptable.

Dhaka puts me in a serious existential crisis as a human being. I'm regularly rendered invisible due to my singlehood. I'm in my late 30s and have toiled hard to give a certain contour to the trajectory of my life, which is generally thought of as good enough. I run a functional family, consisting of my son and myself, primarily. I decide the proceedings of my household in all aspects. I give you these details not to make you privy to my household, but to make you aware of the fact that the basic operational logic and mechanics of everyday life in my family is no different than in any other. Yet, in social interactions, my non-existent husband becomes present in his absence, while, I, with all my corporeality, am rendered invisible with more ease than I could possibly expect. It does not feel good.

This is one reason why I dread the wedding season. Relatives don't know what to do with me when they come to invite my parents and bump into me. Things were different when I was married. I would receive a separate invitation card as I was old enough, no longer living with my parents and had my own family. I'm older yet now, still don't live with my parents, still have

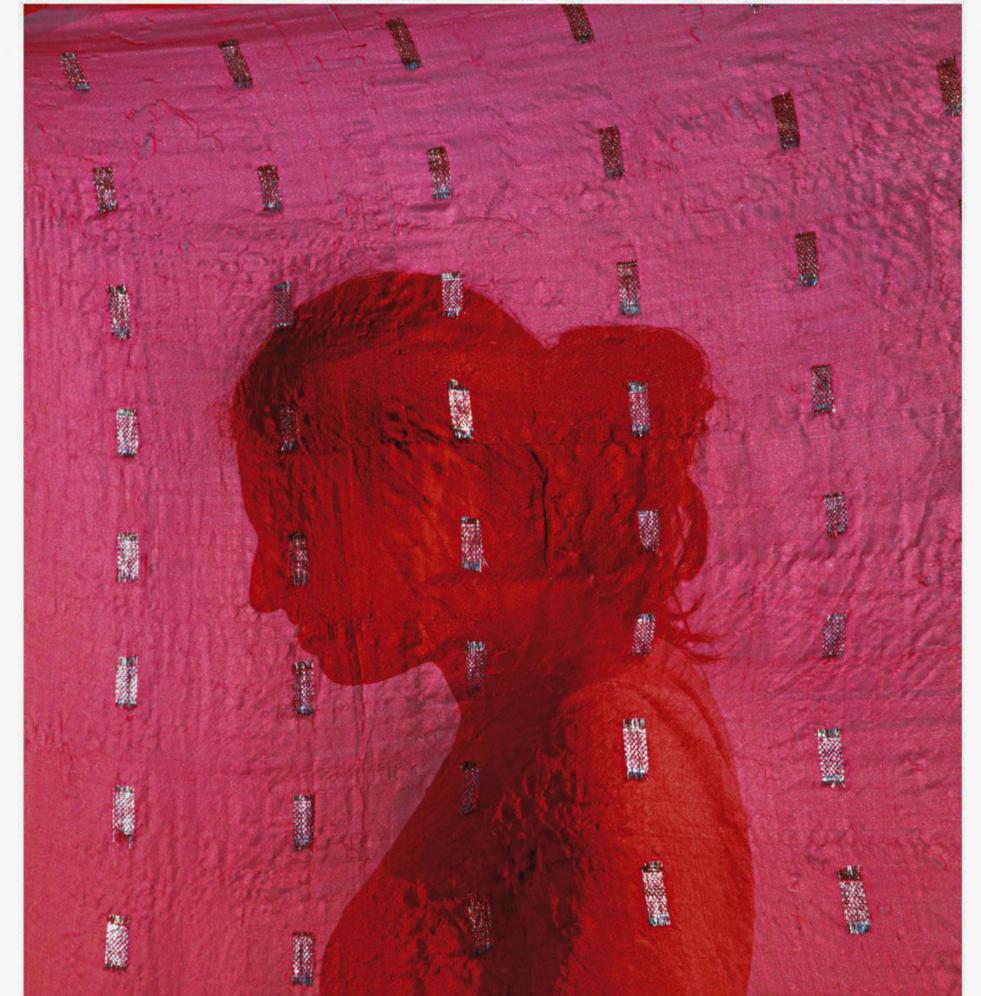


PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

বিশ্ব বলেছিলো- পদ্মা সেতু 'সম্ভব না' একজন প্রধানমন্ত্রী আর ১৬ কোটি বাঙালি বলেছিলাম- 'কেন না!'

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