



PHOTO: KAZI MD JAHIRUL ISLAM

“For small creatures such as we the vastness
is bearable only through love.”

— Carl Sagan

SNAPSHOT

MAILBOX

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

Clean energy for me, for you

Energy is the ability to do work. Without energy, how would we go on with our lives? These days we don't run electricity, electricity runs us. In fact, we are so dependent on it that when the power runs out our work practically stops. But the energy sources we are using to create electricity are not always clean, producing greenhouse gases which contribute to global warming.

Yes, a lot of the responsibility resides in our hands. Just a little more pollution doesn't hurt, or does it? We humans have trashed our planet and it is our job now to clean up the mess. There are a few simple ways to save energy: turn off all the electrical appliances when not in use, plant more greenery in your neighborhood, purchase energy efficient devices (light bulbs, fans, faucets etc.), make your friends and family aware, and contact the city corporation to install a rooftop solar home system.

This is also to bring this issue to the government's attention—we want our country to be greener like it once was. To take precautionary steps to reduce pollution and of course, install more solar power plants, rooftop solar systems for



industries to run their machines and increase usage of renewable and sustainable energy sources such as biogas. Organisations like the Infrastructure Development Company Limited (IDCOL) is already funding various renewable energy projects such as solar home systems, biogas, solar irrigation and improved cooking stoves. Hopefully, they will be able to meet their goals and continue their projects in the endless determination to do something good for our country.
Mir Reenaz Nawar
Grade 5, Aga Khan School
Dhaka



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Myanmar must take back its citizens

It is not a matter of consideration, nor an act of kindness or sympathy by Myanmar. Rather it is a right of the Rohingya Muslims who have been driven away from Rakhine state inhumanely, breaking all records of atrocities and barbarism the world has ever seen. The Myanmar army not only drove away lakhs of people from their ancestral lands creating indescribable panic but also burnt their houses and fields, demolishing their savings and possessions. Thousands of youth were killed, girls and women indiscriminately raped and then killed mercilessly.

Media coverage has drawn the attention of the world. Right organisations and governments have severely criticised the role of the Myanmar army. The message is clear to all. The people of

Myanmar are not citizens of Bangladesh. They have been forcefully sent to our country violating their citizenship and basic rights and we have given them temporary shelter on humanitarian grounds, despite facing serious threats to our local economy, environment and ecology for this huge number of floating people. Now it is high time Myanmar realises the fact, changes its evil design of the ethnic cleansing of its own people and take back the Rohingya from Bangladesh in the shortest possible time. For the sake of humanity and for the stability of this region, act wisely and take necessary steps to resolve the crisis. Otherwise, history will not pardon Myanmar.

Abul Kalam Azad
Ibrahimpur, Dhaka

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

EMPLOYMENT

When she was a child, every time Shobita was asked what she wanted to be when she grew up, she would reply: “a lawyer”. And, valuing her passion, Shobita's father—a primary school teacher—left no stone unturned to fulfil her dreams. She graduated from a private university in 2015; unfortunately, however, she soon found there was more to becoming a lawyer than completing her studies.

There is a legal obligation for a law student to complete a six-month apprenticeship under a senior lawyer with at least 10 years' experience of practicing law. As she did not have

constituted under the Bangladesh Legal Practitioners and Bar Council Order, 1972.

“But the problem is, although the Bar Council is supposed to complete the enrolment process of the applicants in the district courts each calendar year, in reality it takes two to three years to complete the process,” says Shobita.

For example, Shobita attended her enrolment examination in 2017 and is still eagerly waiting for the results of her written exams to be published. “I continue to be a burden on my father who still has to bear my accommodation costs in Dhaka. Till I get my results, I

supposed to live on?”

These factors—the indefinite delay in publishing results and low remuneration—discourages most of these apprentice lawyers from continuing the pursuit of their dream profession. “We feel really bad when we see our friends living content lives with secure jobs while we carry a sign that says 'graduate unemployed' at the age of 28-29,” says Shourov Mitra, an apprentice lawyer, practising at Brahmanbaria Judge Court. “If we could have foreseen our futures, we would not have chosen to be lawyers.”

Moreover, a large number of the apprentice lawyers allege that in court, some seniors do not treat them as junior colleagues or show any respect. “Yes, there are obviously good seniors, but the overall culture is one of condescension,” says Sumon Khandaker, another

apprentice lawyer. “Even, the clerks sometimes address us as “*Shikkhanbish* (apprentice)”.

Many apprentice lawyers believe that their problems would be solved if the enrolment examinations were held every year and the results were published within the shortest possible time, in keeping with a verdict by the Supreme Court last year. The verdict highlighted the Bar Council's inability to perform its responsibilities properly, including failing to “conduct the enrolment process of advocates properly”.

A year later, the situation does not seem to have improved significantly.

Attorney General Mahbubey Alam, who is the former officio chairman of Bangladesh Bar Council, argues that the delay in the process of enrolment lies with the proliferation of law

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LEGALLY BARRED THE PLIGHT OF APPRENTICE LAWYERS

personal connections, it was difficult for her to find a senior lawyer to work under. When she did manage to find one, the experience was not a happy one.

She relates that although there is a legal obligation, there are no strict guidelines prescribing what apprentices will learn from their seniors. “This is why seniors usually teach juniors at their sweet will. My senior used to pay extra attention to those who had connections to famous lawyers or were backed by lawyers' families. Meanwhile, students like me won't get that much consideration in spite of having good results,” says Shobita.

Like Shobita, a number of apprentice lawyers also allege that their seniors are not willing to take them along to court and instead try to keep them busy with administrative or clerical tasks. “I know it's a guru-disciple relationship, and I am ready to do anything for him with due respect, such as typing, dealing with clients, or even making tea for him. But, it is really unfortunate if they keep us only for such tasks and don't take us to court at all, despite us having all the qualifications,” says Saiful Islam, another apprentice lawyer, practicing at Dhaka Bar. “The apprenticeship is supposed to give us 'hands-on experience'; but if we never end up in court, how are we expected to really learn?”

As part of the next step, law students are supposed to sit for a competitive enrolment examination conducted by the Bangladesh Bar Council, the statutory autonomous body of the government

NILIMA JAHAN

cannot even apply for posts of law officers in different corporations or banks,” she adds.

Tousif Ahmed, another apprentice lawyer, practising at the Dhaka Bar, says he goes to court for his senior on a regular basis, collects files and dates of the cases, submits them at the courts, helps his senior prepare notes and in administrative work, but at the end of the day, his senior hands him only Tk 50 or 100, as remuneration.

“You know very well that Tk 100 is not even enough for our daily transport fare to go to court. My friends and I are accustomed to eating only one or two small snacks for lunch, although we run from one court to the other all day. Nothing can be sadder than the fact that, despite having a graduate degree, we have to ask for pocket money from our parents at the age of 28,” rants a frustrated Tousif.

“Ironically, sometimes we feel so privileged when we see that many apprentices are not even paid nominal sums, because their seniors say 'you have come to learn, not to earn'. Our seniors earn Tk 50,000-60,000 from a single case, but they hesitate to give us Tk100 or Tk 200!” he exclaims. “What are we



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

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

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