

Editor and Publisher
Mahfuz Anam

Editor (Star Weekend)
Sushmita S Preetha

Staff Writers
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Chandan
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Nilima Jahan
Maliha Khan
Abida Rahman Chowdhury
Sarah Anjum Bari

Staff Photographer
Kazi Tahsin Agaz Apurbo

Graphics
Debashis Kumar Day

Production
Shamim Chowdhury

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"Thank God men cannot fly, and lay waste the sky as well as the earth."

— Henry David Thoreau

SNAPSHOT
PRANTO NAYAN

MAILBOX

starweekendtds@gmail.com

Disaster-resilient slums

It is very heartening to know that some slum dwellers have access to necessary equipment to address disasters by dint of some non government organisations. Since most of the slum-dwellers don't keep any safety equipment in their houses, these resource centres are truly lifesavers for thousands of people living in packed slums to protect their homes and lives. The NGOs have created a model by establishing such resource centres. And now it's the government's turn. Since the slum development officer of Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) appreciates this model, the DNCC should adopt the model and introduce more such centres in slums. If the government cannot learn anything from such initiatives, no significant change will come in the end. Rather, everything will go in vain when the project ends.

Sufia Mosaddeque
Mirpur, Dhaka

Summing up Chobi Mela

I have attended the Chobi Mela for years but never before have I felt the emotions that rose out of me this time. When Shahidul Alam was arrested, the media outcry was a reflection of the inner turmoil I was going through. The fear was real—maybe even the bravest can be silenced! But the festival proved that when public support is there, it will be very difficult to stop dissenting voices from speaking out.

Adil Hosseini
Kakrail, Dhaka

No room for Hindu women

It is saddening that a large number of Hindu women are deprived of their property rights due to the archaic Hindu Women's Right to Property Act, 1937 and conservative Hindu leaders who don't want any reform of the law. In my opinion, Hindu leaders are against giving property rights to their daughters because people from other religions might grab land by marrying Hindu women. This way, the 'Sanatana Dharma' will eventually become extinct. The fear is also legitimate because, worldwide, the Hindu popu-

lation is declining gradually which is a great threat for conservative Hindu leaders. Anyway, the Hindu community in Bangladesh are still deprived of their basic human rights in other spheres of their life. Before ensuring women's property rights, we should ensure that the minorities are provided with better protection overall.

Kalyan Chandra Dhar
Taanti Bazar, Dhaka

