

# From streets of Dhaka to London

Bangladeshi youngsters taking part in Street Child Cricket World Cup

BISHAKHA DEVNATH

Running between ministries, passport office and court is over. Fifteen-year-old Jesmin Akter and seven other children are now excitedly ready -- with all their documents -- to fly to the UK tomorrow to play cricket.

With pride, they will be representing Bangladesh in an international cricket tournament throughout the first week of May in London and Cambridge. Seven nations including England, India, Pakistan and Nepal will be participating in the event organised by Street Child United, a UK-based charity that aims to change negative perceptions about street children through sports.

"The Street Child Cricket World Cup" convenes ahead of the 2019 ICC Cricket World Cup in England to bring street children under the spotlight. On the pitch, the teams will be representing their nations. Off the pitch, the youngsters "will make their voices heard and make recommendations to help improve the lives of street children worldwide", the charity says on its website.

Like others, the Bangladeshi team will demonstrate how street children, if given opportunities, can prove to be resilient and reach their full potential.

"They are ecstatic and excited," said Forhad Hossain, executive director of Leedo, an organisation working for the disadvantaged -- confirming over the phone that all



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PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

procedures had been completed.

That life would be taking them places was beyond imagination five or six years back for the eight young cricketers wandering around Dhaka streets -- homeless, aimless. Jesmin was rescued from Kamalapur Railway Station. Like her, Nizam Hossain, Rubel, Sopna

Akter, Abul Kashem, Rasel Islam Rumel, Sania Mirza and Arju Rahman were found in different corners of the capital. Between the age of 12 and 15, they now live in Leedo Peace Home in Dhaka's Basilla.

Getting over their bitter past and rebuilding life took years, Forhad

said in a recent interview, as Jesmin shared her daily routine that revolved around school, cricket and 51 peers at the Peace Home.

At the time, participation in the international sports event was uncertain as the passport office had turned down applications

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# Drama over Mokabbir continues

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The drama centring Gonoforum leader Mokabbir Khan and his decision to take oath in the Awami League-led parliament is yet to end.

Early this month, Mokabbir took oath as a member of parliament, defying his party decision.

He faced criticism from different quarters as well as from party President Dr Kamal Hossain.

Despite that, the Gonoforum presidium member took part in a special council of the party yesterday, held at Mohanagar Natya Mancha in Gulistan.

The council was presided over by Dr Kamal and he shared the stage with Mokabbir and other senior leaders.

However, a section of leaders were angered by the incident and termed it a "dual role".

Disappointed, Rafiqul Islam Pothik, training affairs secretary of Gonoforum, left the council hall and announced that he might resign from the party soon.

"Many of us are angry because of the dual role... He [Dr Kamal] told Mokabbir to 'get out' when he [Mokabbir] went to his chamber a few days ago. But today [yesterday] they shared the same stage," Rafiqul told The Daily Star.

Mokabbir's oath-taking was against the party decision, he added. "It's better not to be in a party, where these types of activities go on," Rafiqul said.

In the 11th parliamentary election, Mokabbir was elected from Sylhet-2 constituency. He was the second MP from the opposition coalition -- Jatiya Oikyafront -- to join the newly-formed parliament.

On March 7, Sultan Muhammad Mansur, elected from Moulvibazar-2

constituency, took oath.

Two days ago, Zahidur Rahman, a BNP leader elected from Thakurgaon-3 constituency, took oath going against the party's decision to not join the parliament.

BNP yesterday alleged that the government mounted pressure on Zahidur to take oath as a member of the parliament.

Party Secretary General Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir came up with the allegation after Zahidur took oath on Thursday against the party's decision of not joining parliament. Fakhru was talking to reporters after placing wreaths at BNP founder Ziaur Rahman's grave along with leaders and activists of Jatiyatabadi Mahila Dal.

Meanwhile, asked about Mokabbir's participation in yesterday's council, Advocate Subrata Chowdhury, executive president of Gonoforum, said the recently sworn-in MP came to the venue "on his own".

"He's supposed to stay away from party activities as an organisational decision is to be taken against him [for taking the oath]," said Subrata.

The senior leader denied making any comment about the "dual role".

Speaking at the council, Dr Kamal urged law enforcement agencies, particularly police, to perform their duties properly. He also called upon people to stay alert to protect democracy as well as the country's independence.

"Police are not the owner of the state; they are servants. They should perform their duties obeying the constitution and law," he added.

Dr Kamal also termed the Supreme Court verdict on the 16th amendment "historic".

## HEALTH HACK

**COOL FOODS**  
Summer is all about being hydrated and keeping your electrolytes in balance. That is why it's important to make the right food choices.

1. Fruits are your friends. A big slice of watermelon straight from the fridge will not only keep you cool but hydrate you as well.
2. Avoid caffeine and drink juice. Caffeine has a dehydrating effect, which is especially bad for summer.
3. Avoid fast food and eat at home. Consuming excess oil and sodium, usually found in fast food, may lead to digestion problems and dehydration. If you must eat outside, have some sushi.
4. Eat more green leafy vegetables. They have high water content.

## DEATH OF BRACU STUDENT Ride-sharing biker held, pickup driver still on the run

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Police have detained Suman, 23, the biker working for a ride-sharing service, from whose motorbike Brac University student Fahmida Haque Labannya fell before being run over by a pickup on Thursday.

The pickup and its driver are yet to be traced, however.

Suman was held from Nabinagar Housing in the capital's Mohammadpur around 1:25am yesterday, said Biplob Kumar Sarker, deputy commissioner (Tejgaon Division) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police, adding that his bike was also seized.

A case was filed with Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station in this connection. However, Suman was not yet shown arrested in the case filed by the victim's father.

In primary interrogation, Suman said that Labannya took the fatal ride from Shyamoli around 10:36am on Thursday, to go to Khilgaon. A jaywalker suddenly appeared in front of the bike, trying to cross the road near National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, prompting him to brake, he said.

Due to sudden brake, Labannya fell off the bike and a pickup ran her over, the police official said quoting the biker. Doctors declared her dead after passers-by took her to Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital.

"We are now verifying statements of the biker and investigating whether he was responsible. We are trying to arrest the driver of the pickup as well," he added.

Suman is now undergoing treatment at

Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital under police custody.

Jane Alam Munshi, officer-in-charge of Sher-e-Bangla Nagar Police Station, said they have collected some CCTV footage, but they are not clear enough to identify the vehicle and its driver responsible for the incident.

"We are looking for more footage of the area," the OC added.

Labannya was a third-year student of computer science and engineering at Brac University.

The accident happened just a month after the death of university student Abrar Ahmed in a road crash that triggered mass protests over unsafe roads and poor traffic management.

**PROTEST DEMANDING SAFE ROADS**  
A group of students from Brac University and Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University formed a human chain around 3pm yesterday in front of Shaheed Suhrawardy Medical College and Hospital demanding safe roads.

With placards, students wanted to know how much time the authorities would need to ensure safer roads and better traffic management.

The students said deaths of young lives on the road are not acceptable at all and the government must ensure safe roads for all.

They also demanded bringing the persons responsible under speedy tribunal.

"We heard that the biker was held. Now the pickup driver should be booked as soon as possible to deliver justice," said a Brac University student.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

With summer fruits starting to hit markets, some unscrupulous people -- to make a quick buck -- spray chemicals on them to increase their shelf life or ripen them prematurely. Yesterday, protesting use of such toxic chemicals, people of all ages formed a human chain in front of Jatiya Press Club. They demanded that the government take immediate steps against food adulteration. Nirapad Khaddo Chai (we want safe food) organised the event.

## PHOTO OF THE DAY

AMRAN HOSSAIN



A vendor arranges sliced watermelons on top of a makeshift surface to sell them to weary commuters. The juicy fruit helps people stay hydrated and beat the summer heat. But leaving the chopped-up pieces uncovered exposes those to the risk of contamination by dust or germs. At the same time, hovering little pests may swoop down on the fruits. The photo was taken at Hatirpool near Eastern Plaza on Thursday.

## BBF celebrates 12 years of innovation

CITY DESK

Bangladesh Brand Forum, a platform where creative minds meet and share knowledge, is stepping into its 13th year this month. Starting from a single desk in 2007, the think tank has evolved into a platform that promotes knowledge, innovation, and creativity. Industry stakeholders, business leaders, and policymakers often share their two cents on various

## Bangladesh BRAND FORUM

Inspiring the Nation

initiatives of the forum. In its early years, when the idea of promoting brands, creativity and knowledge was not prevalent much, Bangladesh Brand Forum (BBF) took bold steps that would become norms a decade later. From recognising creative communication for the first time in the industry to awarding the most loved

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## DHAKA TODAY

**TALK**  
Journey with Cinematography by Barkat Hossain Polish  
Venue: Jatra Biroti  
Time: 6pm

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Time: 7:30pm

**EXPOSITION**  
The Bake Expo Bangladesh 2019  
Venue: Tokyo Square Convention Center, Mohammadpur  
Time: 11am

**AUTISM AWARENESS SEMINAR**  
SAIDING AWARENESS ON THE BEST PRACTICES IN THE FIELD OF AUTISM  
Venue: Celebration Point, Gulshan 2  
Time: 10am

**LECTURE**  
New Trend in Filmmaking  
Venue: Pathshala, Dhanmondi  
Time: 5pm

Embrace Differences  
Organiser: Inner Circle Dhaka  
Venue: Celebration Point, Gulshan 2  
Time: 10am

**SESSION**  
Undo 1.0  
An event where prominent individuals share their experiences.  
Venue: EMK Center, Dhanmondi  
Time: 4pm

**FASHION EXHIBITION**  
Local International  
Venue: Gyantapas Abdur Razzaq Bidyapeeth  
Time: 12pm

**FILM SCREENING**  
Our Shorts Their Shorts  
Screening 2019

**ART EXHIBITION**  
Borjo Namta  
Venue: Kala Kendra, Mohammadpur  
Time: 6:30pm