

Garbageman: An architect's quest for a greener city



PHOTO: COURTESY

SIHINTA SABEEN SHEMBIL

The saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure" rings true for Fahim Uddin Shuvo, Founder of Garbageman. During his undergraduate education in Architecture at North South University, Shuvo saw the problematic lack of waste disposal methods. Notably, around 5000 tonne of waste is dumped daily into landfills. This leads to environmental hazards, from air and water pollution to exacerbated global warming. As a young architect, Shuvo is determined to ameliorate such environmental situations of Dhaka.

After winning in Startup Bangladesh 2017, Shuvo set out to collect on-source separated waste, both organic and inorganic through his initiative, Garbageman. The inorganic waste is upcycled after it is sold to third parties. On the other hand, the organic waste is converted into high quality vermi-compost, and sold mainly to rooftop gardeners, under their social business wing, Regen. Garbageman calculates that one kilogram of vermi-compost sold equates to preventing three kilograms of waste going into landfills. They currently have 12 workers and one trained waste-picker.

The on-source segregated waste collected by Garbageman undergoes further manual separation. Approximately one hour is taken for three people to filter through 300 kilograms of waste. The organic waste is sequentially placed in a shredder, an anaerobic cylinder vessel at 70 Degrees Celsius to kill pathogens and seeds and then into a composting bed, making it worm-friendly. Finally, the Red Wiggler worms, which Shuvo digs out himself from cattle farms before ordering a bulk amount, are added. The final product is the nutritious and soil-friendly vermi-compost. The processes Garbageman uses involved learning through YouTube, guidance from university professors and a testing by Mritika Institute. Presently, Garbageman is affiliated with Delft University of Technology as a knowledge sharing partner. They also receive technical support from the institution. Initially, Shuvo's parents and friends were skeptical about his project, but over time, seeing Garbageman's integral part in building a cleaner and greener Dhaka, they have grown more supportive.

Garbageman operates in 30 tea stalls, two restaurants and one kitchen market at Uttara. The team plans to expand to more places in the near future.



A still from 'Paradise Nest.'

PHOTO: COURTESY

Arif Ahmed's journey with 'Paradise Nest'

SHARMIN JOYA

Arif Ahmed's short film, *Paradise Nest*, won the award for Best Film on Nature/Environment at the 17th Calcutta International Cult Film Festival. The film was screened at Italy's Cefalù Film Festival, India's International Festival of Short Films on Culture and Tourism, and the USA's 41st International Wildlife Film Festival. The film is yet to be released. Arif is a fashion photojournalist by profession. He is also passionate about wildlife photography. Arif, who grew up in Kushtia, was fascinated by bird nests from a young age.

Paradise Nest focuses on the Paradise Flycatcher, locally known as *Shaheb Bulbuli* or *Shah Bulbul*, once a common bird in Bangladesh. However, it is on its way to extinction. The film depicts the way the birds build their nests, hatch their chicks and how their home, their paradise, gets destructed by the injustice of the ecosystem. "I took five months to complete the film. I had to keep the safety of the birds in mind during filming," explains Arif.

Many species are becoming extinct, owing to the mistreatment of nature by human beings. Cutting



PHOTO: MONON MUNTAKA

down trees is depriving birds from building their nests. "The world is suffering, the Amazon, the lungs of the earth, is burning. It is a cry for help from nature.

If trees live, birds will live and as a result, people will live, nature will live. It is a chain process," says Arif.

Wild birds and other animals are hunted and traded around the globe. Arif believes that his film will be a medium of awareness. "When the audience witnesses that birds have the same emotions as people do, they will feel a connection. Every year, over a thousand birds are killed by human actions, primarily because of unawareness," explains Arif. "Parents and schools can play vital roles by teaching children to enjoy natural environments without harming animals. Furthermore, if we stop trading, hunters will be unable to thrive."

Arif is happy to see that young people are developing their passion for photography and representing Bangladesh around the globe. "My message to young photographers would be that when you represent our country internationally, make sure that you feel proud of what you are showcasing to the world," says Arif.

Arif plans to make YouTube episodes on a hundred types of Bangladeshi birds, most of which are on the verge of extinction. He is also working on two more films on birds.



MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

Twenty-two-year old Sabiha Mili, a graduate from Jahangirnagar University, started her journey with Model United Nations (MUN) in 2014. She attended her first conference as a delegate in Ireland, representing an intelligence agency committee. Usually an extracurricular activity at institutions, MUN is meant to engage students and allow them to develop a deeper understanding of current world issues. Participants in MUN conferences are placed in committees and assigned countries to represent, or occasionally other organisations or political figures, where they represent members of that body. They are presented with their assignments in advance, along with topics that their committee will discuss. Delegates conduct research before conferences and formulate

positions that they will then debate with their fellow delegates in the committee, staying true to the actual position of the member they represent. At the end of a conference, the best-performing delegates in each committee, as well as delegations, are sometimes recognised with awards.

In March 2018, the United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York organised a three-day conference where Sabiha and her younger brother participated with a scholarship. 2,500 other people from across the world also participated in the conference. They got the opportunity to spend one day at the UN Headquarters.

Sabiha's interest in developing a career in the UN grew over time. "The solutions proposed in our conferences are of no actual use as we are just young students. I can create real solutions only if I was in the UN," she says. Incidents of

gender-based stereotypes, such as when her mother was questioned for letting her go to conferences outside Dhaka alone, further fueled Sabiha's ambitions.

Sabiha also received the Women in Leadership Award for her youth leadership activities. She has recently participated in the Geneva International MUN Conference as the President of the Human Rights Council. It was a week-long event, held in March 2019, inside the UN office in Geneva.

Sabiha is passionate about promoting and protecting human rights. She currently works with 10 Minute School and plays a key role in the United Nations Youth and Students Association of Bangladesh. Furthermore, she intends to address the existing misconceptions about MUN, which she believes is an immensely educational platform for young students.

PHOTO: AVIPSU DAS GUPTA



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