

Noman Shaikat's jute fibre bicycle: For a better economy and environment

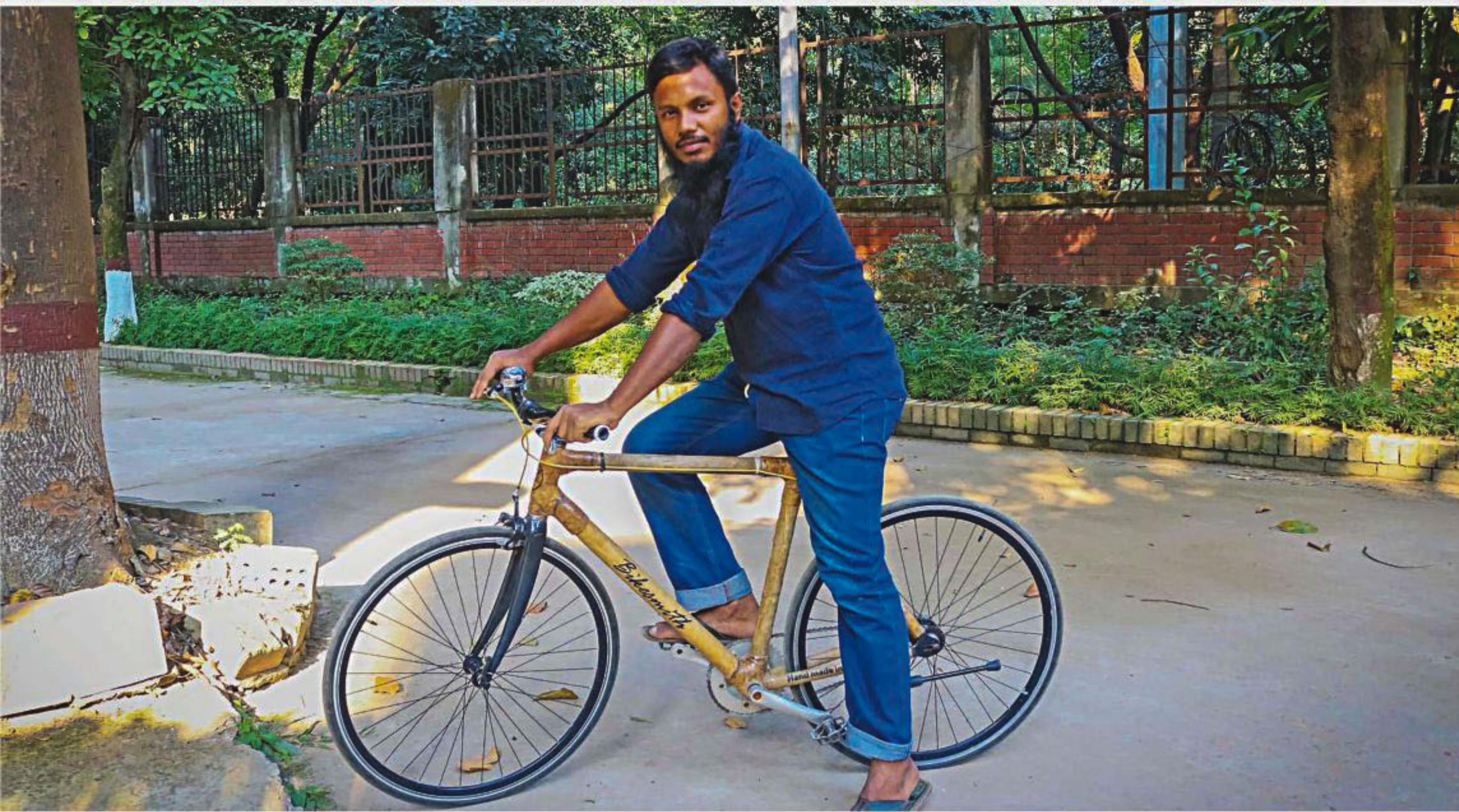


PHOTO: MONON MUNTAKA

SHARMIN JOYA

After completing his education in Civil Engineering, Noman Shaikat started off his business of building bicycles, something that he was always passionate about. Keeping the flexibility, durability and budget friendliness in mind, he experimented with making a bicycle out of jute fibre. His efforts did not go in vein, as he succeeded in innovating the environmentally-friendly vehicle in 2016. The bicycle will not only help the rider in terms of budget and comfort, but also generate domestic business for the country. "Bicycles made out of jute are extremely light. As a result, they are comfortable to ride," asserts Noman. "I made the bicycle out of my own curiosity and I believe that it can be the pride

of our country in the international market." Earlier, Noman opened up a workshop where bicycles are repaired and customised. "The idea of starting a bicycle workshop came to me when someone misbehaved with me at a repairing centre," says Noman. "I initiated my workshop Bikesmith with the thought that we can provide better services with well-behaved workers." According to Noman, most good quality bicycles are made of aluminium, steel and carbon fibres, which are quite expensive. While carbon fibres make bicycles lighter, high quality aluminium and steel often have to be imported to Bangladesh from other countries. Carbon fibres are made by only four companies in the world. At the same time, these products have negative impacts

on the environment. Keeping those facts in mind, Noman wanted to switch to something that is easily available and budget friendly. He has made two jute fibre bicycles till now and participated in the second season of the television reality show, *Udbhaborer Khoje*. The programme is an initiative of Channel i, in association with a2i. "I want to get the vehicle patented first. Then, it will need to go through some tests. After that, I will approach investors in national and international platforms to make more jute fibre bicycles," shares Noman. "I believe this eco-friendly vehicle will be useful for farmers, and bike enthusiasts, both environmentally and economically." In addition, Noman hopes to continue making customised bicycles.

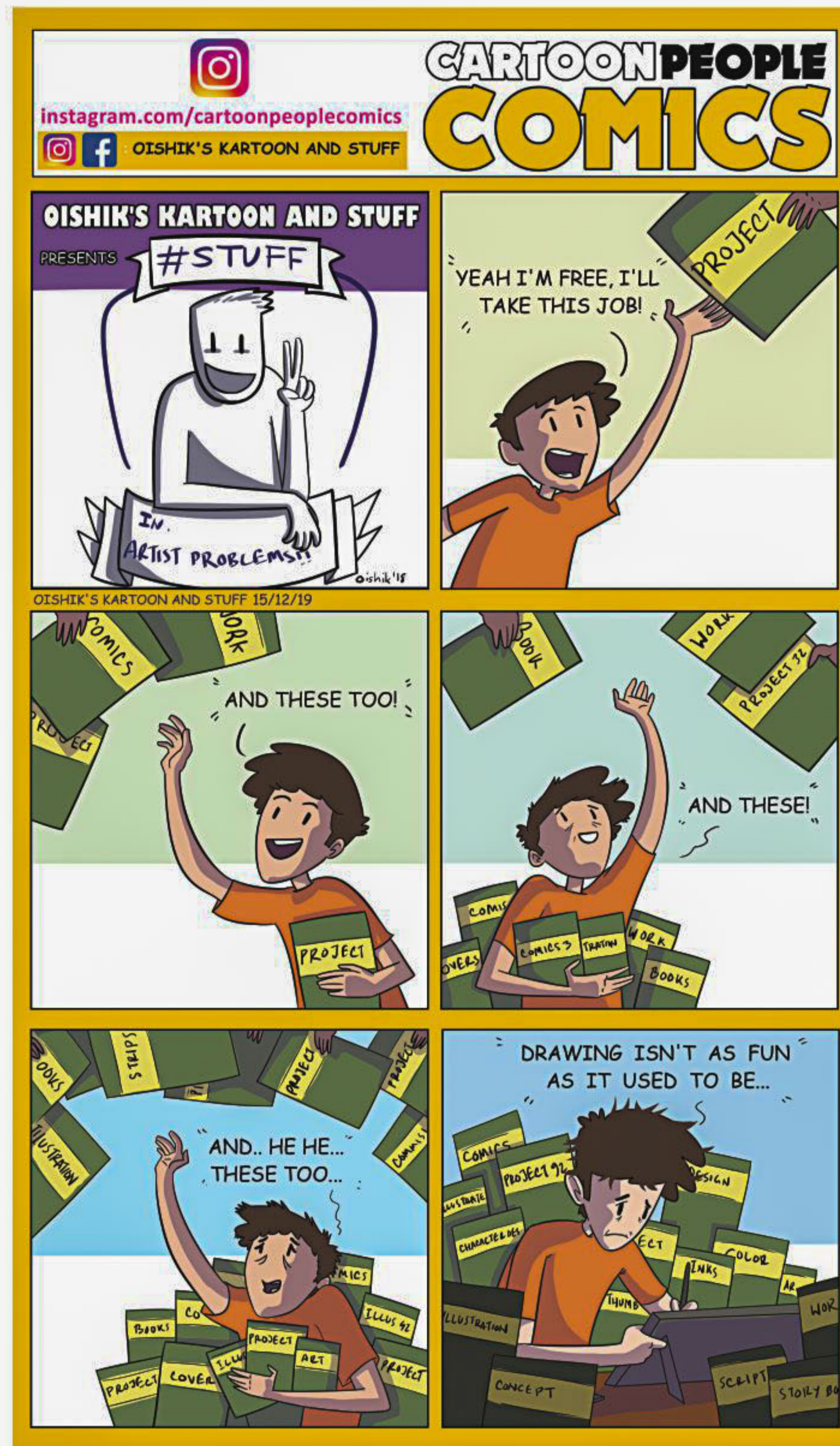


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CIDER International School celebrates The Global Perspective Day (Term 1)

YOUTH DESK

The Global Perspective Day (Term 1) was celebrated at the auditorium of CIDER International School on December 11. Global Perspective is a research subject of Junior Cambridge. Its curriculum develops the skills of research, analysis, evaluation, reflection, collaboration and communication, and strengthens the links across other subjects, including English, Mathematics and Science, amongst students.

The event, hosted by the CIDER Junior School Cambridge section, was a success. Students from Grade 1 to 5 of the school shared their real-life issues and challenges, as well as the things that they have explored in this term through various presentations, raising some thought-provoking questions about current world affairs. They presented their ideas and themes through music, plays, interviews, role-playing and discussions.

Tanvir Shahrir Rimon, CEO, Ranks FC Properties Limited, Alamgir Sabuj, Bureau Chief, Desh TV, Chattergram, and Paul Beatty, Director, William Carey Academy, graced the occasion as guests of honour. Gyanesh Chandra Tripathi, Principal, CIDER International School, and Neeti Tripathi, Vice Principal, CIDER International School, presided over the programme, while Alexious Serrao and Sadia Afroz Chowdhury coordinated the event. The presence of the guests was a great source of motivation for all the students.

Banglalink Ennovators 3.0 champions Team Silver Lining promises safe roads

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

With an objective to tackle road safety issues, Team Silver Lining, the champions from Banglalink Ennovators 3.0, came up with the idea of having a real-time fitness tracking device to provide On Board Diagnostics (OBD) for all vehicles across the country.

Four young innovators, Farah Tasnim Hossain from East West University and Irfan Uddin from University of Dhaka, along with Shahrir Raihan Sakib and Ferdows Abid Chowdhury from Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP), came up with this idea during their 24-hour boot

camp at BRAC CDM. "The brainstorming session at BRAC CDM was the best part of the whole experience for me. We were brought together in one platform and made into a group in the digital gamification session. Then, we had to work as a team," shares Sakib. "We had 24 hours to come up with an innovative idea and find ways to execute it."

Ferdows thought of installing motor vehicles with OBD ever since BUP student Abrar Ahmed Chowdhury's road accident in March this year. "We always wanted to come up with an initiative that helps to reduce road accidents in the country," mentions Ferdows. "Upon research, we

found out that despite the BRTA authority asking buses and trucks to obtain their fitness certificates, around half of them do not visit BRTA offices for inspections. Improper car conditions may lead to technical malfunctions in the vehicle's braking system and its speeding ratios, causing deadly road accidents in return."

Team Silver Lining aims to create an online based monitoring system, through which the models, drivers and locations of vehicles can be tracked. "We want to make sure that all the cars are in proper condition and the drivers are fit to drive. Even though OBD systems have been installed in many other countries across the world,

we have not yet come across this tracking system in Bangladesh," mentions Farah.

"We want a smooth online system to access all information without hassle. To that end, we want to incorporate Banglalink's server by installing sim cards for each OBD device. This way, the process becomes much easier," says Irfan. The team also plans to collaborate with the government of Bangladesh to ensure that this facility is made compulsory for all vehicles. "We are going on a trip to Banglalink's parent company, VEON's HQ, in Amsterdam. We look forward to presenting our idea to the authorities as soon as we return," concludes Irfan.



PHOTO: PRABIR