



Sayeed Rimon(R) distributes food boxes at Airport Railway Station, Dhaka.

YOUTH IN ACTION

Shochetonotar Feriwala

A sliver of hope for spreading social awareness

AKHLAKUR RAHMAN

Sayeed Rimon, also known as 'Shochetonotar Feriwala', has been raising awareness about different social issues for the last 12 years.

He started his Facebook page, Sochetonota Firiye Ano, in 2010, posting awareness posters, pamphlets, videos, and pictures to convey important messages about issues such as mugging, pick-pocketing, and road safety among others. His posts have grown quite popular since his page's inception. Police forces in Barishal, Natore, and Barguna, among other districts, have used pictures from his page in their awareness campaigns and billboards. Rimon has nearly 700 social awareness pictures on his page.

"Initially, I went around my hometown Barguna, requesting cable providers and mobile service providers to air my videos locally or install them into people's phones," he recalls. A graduate of Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology, Rimon is a textile engineer by profession. Currently, he is the CEO of OSN Sourcing and an adjunct faculty member at the Department of Textile Engineering, Northern University. "My father used to help people



Sayeed Rimon raises awareness about issues such as mugging, pick-pocketing, and road safety, with his posters, pictures, pamphlets, and videos. PHOTOS: COURTESY

open small savings accounts. He inspired me to work on social causes," adds Rimon, who received a letter of commendation from Barguna Police as well. He has become a familiar face in buses, train stations, schools, and other public places.

However, most of Rimon's videos and posters feature him as a model, which has often led

to distress for him. "I have been publicly mistaken multiple times," he says. "I once earned some money while dressed as a beggar, but I have also been brutally beaten while portraying a mugger for an awareness project."

Since the start of the pandemic, his efforts to help people have only increased. "My wife and I distributed 35 boxes of home-cooked meals everyday initially. As more and more people came across our Facebook posts, they wanted to contribute as well," he shares. Till date, Rimon and his wife have ensured proper meals for over 1,500 people around them.

Rimon started his initiative, Gosto Kokai, last year during Eid-ul-Azha. "I travelled via a CNG-run autorickshaw, collecting contributions from my supporters, which fed nearly 1,000 people," mentions Rimon. Through this initiative, he distributed 600 food boxes on this Eid-ul-Azha. He has also been distributing masks and hand sanitisers in different areas.

He hopes to continue supporting people in need through his initiatives, moving forward.

The author is a freelance journalist. Email: akhlak-urrahmancharles@gmail.com.

MUSINGS

What do we learn from Rabindranath Tagore's 'Kabuliwala'?

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Rabindranath Tagore was a polymath who revolutionised Bengali literature and music. Let us revisit "Kabuliwala", one of his most famous short stories.

In the short story, readers are introduced to Mini, a curious young girl, and her father, who is the narrator. One day, an Afghan vendor called Rahamat, who sells exotic fruits comes over to their house and soon develops a filial bond with Mini. Despite Mini's family being well-off and Rahamat being an underprivileged outsider, an unconventional friendship strikes between Mini and Rahamat that transcends age and social class. The story portrays true connections built between people from different walks of life.

Rahamat also has a daughter of his own, but he is miles away from her. Soon after he meets Mini, they both begin to enjoy each other's company – He listens to her constant chit-chats patiently, and she reminds him of his daughter.

Mini's mother does not understand why a man of Rahamat's age, class, and race would want to associate with her daughter. Subsequently, Mini's father asks him to leave. Tagore brilliantly portrayed how people in the upper class are so comfortable in their own bubbles that they refuse to step out of it. When a feeling of trust is instilled

from one father to another, Mini's father eventually eases to Rahamat.

Unfortunately, Rahamat gets arrested for defending himself during a scuffle, and is imprisoned for 10 years. When he is released, he goes back to Mini's place, only to realise that she is no longer that little child anymore. She has grown up, and is now ready to be married. Despite the passage of time, Rahamat's memories of Mini are still fresh, but Mini does not seem to reciprocate that.

Rahamat is forced to face the harsh truth that his own daughter back in Afghanistan must have grown up too, and does not remember him very well.

He shares this with Mini's father, who understands his pain and grief, as he is about to be parted with his daughter too. So, Mini's father gives Rahamat money to go visit his daughter. Yearning for a loved one and the spirit of sacrifice are integral themes of the story.

Although class pride and bias initially prevent Mini's father from treating Rahamat with respect and equality, their common ground as fathers of well-loved daughters suggests that they are not so different after all, allowing them to truly connect with each other.

The author is a freelance journalist. Email: shanzaychowdhury@gmail.com.



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

YOUNG ACHIEVER

Moriom's passion for social work earns accolades

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

Masuma Moriom from Bangladesh received the Kalam Youth Leadership Award 2021 for her phenomenal contribution in social work. Khwab Foundation of India presented the award, in memory of former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam.

Moriom is a master's student in the Department of Disaster Management, University of Dhaka. She hails from Sherpur upazila in Bogura. Her parents are teachers by profession.

On July 26 and 27, Khwab Foundation organised the Kalam Youth Leadership Conference for the third time, with youths from different countries. Among the 22 recipients of the Kalam Youth Leadership Award, Moriom was the only Bangladeshi this year.

She also received the National Youth Icon Award 2019, and was shortlisted for World Young Person of the Year 2019. She was honoured as the Best Speaker at the Kalam Youth Leadership Conference in 2020.

"I founded Shwapno Youth Development Organization, a non-profit initiative, in 2015, with the help of Advisory President Shahnaz Parveen and President Masuma Moriom. It was registered with the Department of Youth Development in 2018. Although we started out in Bogura, from December 2019, we expanded our activities all over Bangladesh, with 25 volunteers," shares Moriom.

At present, the organisation has seven working members, 20 general members, 62 volunteers, and 26 campus ambassadors



Masuma Moriom PHOTOS: COURTESY

from different colleges and universities of the country.

Shwapno Youth Development Organization hosts various timely training programmes and workshops every month.

Their notable programmes include 'How Are You, Really?' and 'Psychological First Aid Training' to raise awareness about mental health among young people. Moriom also launched 'Right to Fight Against Harassment', a campaign to prevent violence against women.

Recently, she worked on an awareness building programme on the coronavirus pandemic for students of different schools in Dhaka and Chattogram. She also facilitated photography, writing, and power-point presentation competitions for them.

In addition, she organised the International Youth Development Summit, a virtual programme, with nearly 750 youths from 34 countries. She has also worked on a youth advocacy project for sexual and reproductive health for all, and ensured active participation of men in stopping child marriages.

Moriom considers the support of her family and the role of all the volunteers working with her to be the key to her success.

NURTURING DREAMS

Empowering farmers through technology

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

SK Shoaibur Rahaman founded Agri-Science Society (AgSS), a non-profit agricultural organisation, in 2019. Being a student of Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University, he has been actively working with farmers, students, and organisations to promote agricultural digitalisation. For his contribution in this field, he was selected as a Sir Fazle Hasan Abed Ashoka Young Changemaker in 2020.

Shoaibur grew up in a village where farming was the main income source for many. He witnessed farmers struggling with traditional methods due to their lack of knowledge about advancements.

"Their backdated practices could lead to environmental damage and threats to food security in the long run. I wanted to



SK Shoaibur Rahaman

do something effective for these farmers," shared Shoaibur.

AgSS primarily intends to help farmers by promoting agricultural technology and connecting them with experts. The organisation facilitates agricultural education and research through innovative programmes and projects.



Agri-Science Society's 'Farmer Consultation Programme' educates farmers about sustainable agriculture and provides them with prescriptions to save their crops from emerging diseases.

They recently organised 'Agriculture Virtual Summit', which brought together important stakeholders in agriculture for discussions on potential solutions while addressing the current crisis. The six-day event consisted of six sessions conducted by 18 experts.

The organisation's 'Farmer Consultation Programme' educates farmers about sustainable agriculture and provides them with prescriptions to save their crops from emerging diseases.

Their website and social media platforms contain over 100 articles and blogs about agricultural researches and new technologies. They have hosted 15 webinars during the pandemic. The organisation's app, 'Agricultural Dictionary' has definitions of more than 6,200 agricultural terms. It can be downloaded for free from Google Play Store and Galaxy Store.

'Farmer Aid', AgSS's web-based service, allows farmers to ask questions and get solutions from experts. The platform allows farmers to connect with each other and share ideas. AgSS plans to develop a user-friendly app that will be launched later this year. They will also collaborate with the Department of Agricultural Extension to extend their services to a wider range of beneficiaries.

Moving forward, AgSS plans to launch AgriPro, an artificial intelligence driven app for detecting plant diseases and providing prescriptions. "I want to work in food supply chain management. After graduating, I will continue to promote agricultural research in my country," concluded Shoaibur.

The author is a freelance journalist who likes reading, planning, and scribbling. Email: mislammonamee@gmail.com.