

YOUTH IN ACTION

A global movement EMPOWERING WOMEN

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USRAAT FAHMIDAH

SheDecides is a global political movement that was launched as a response to defend women’s fundamental rights and bodily autonomy against a policy imposed by former US President Donald Trump, which restricted funding for NGOs in foreign countries that supported abortion advocacy.

The global movement, which empowers women at societal and policy-making levels, has now spread over to 27 countries, including an active chapter in Bangladesh, which started out in 2019.

It aspires to create a society in Bangladesh where women and girls are empowered through raising awareness on bodily autonomy and human rights, sexual and reproductive health, and gender based violence, engaging feminist and youth leadership.

“Young girls face even more blockades to care than older adolescents, in terms of access to proper services and information,” explained Samara Mortada, Movement



Key team members of SheDecides Bangladesh at “Art-ivism”.

PHOTOS: MONON MUNTAKA

Supporter at SheDecides.

Samara started out as the Regional Movement Supporter for the Asia region. Now, her current role entails supporting 15 grassroots collectives globally, starting from Portugal, Northern Ireland, Namibia, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, among other countries.

“All our initiatives, which include a radio show ‘In her shoes’, art therapy sessions, debate competitions and collaboration with influencers and activists to create awareness about bodily autonomy— were able to get the attention of the young people, especially young women who are looking for a platform to express their feelings and thoughts around bodily autonomy. SheDecides Bangladesh is planning to hold many more activities to engage young people,” added their Core Project Lead Najia Jarin.

SheDecides has made connections with

activists across the world who champion women empowerment. In Bangladesh too, it has created a space for young people to come together and work on sexual reproductive health and rights.

Recently, SheDecides Bangladesh hosted an exhibition called, “Art-ivism”, which incorporated art and activism to promote bodily autonomy and rights. The two-day event involved live painting and community art therapy sessions, alongside different performances.

“We are in the process of designing our new strategy. We will be able to talk more about it when things are finalised. But SheDecides will continue to be a safe space for activists, champions and young people to be able to work towards a world where women decide their futures,” concluded Samara.

The author is a freelance journalist.



Artworks on display at “Art-ivism”.

TALESPEOPLE SPIELS

Once more, with feeling

Dear Reader, Another Ramadan is upon us, and for some of us, that means the return of Sehri Tales. Now entering its fifth year, the humble self-challenge has crossed borders, so that we now have Talers writing in from around the world.

SABRINA FATMA AHMAD

Last year, we got to see some stellar writing and some incredible art. What was more inspiring than the quality of work produced during the holy month, was the community that was formed in the process. There were some people who joined Talespeople to read the fresh stories. They took it upon themselves to cheer on the writers, encouraging the tentative first-timers. It is because of this selfless support that we were truly able to foster a warm, nurturing safe space for our participants. My first shout out this season, therefore, goes to our tireless cheerleaders. You made a fun event so much more meaningful.

When I created the challenge, I hadn’t thought much beyond the intrinsic rewards of producing original writing, but at Talespeople, we wanted to give our participants a little more motivation. Thanks to our collaboration with Star Youth, we got the opportunity to showcase the best writing every day on this wonderful platform provided, and to bring these stories to you! A big heartfelt thank you to The Daily Star for joining us for an encore.

A fifth year is a milestone indeed, and we hope to celebrate with some neat surprises. So stay tuned for more announcements, and more importantly, please stay hydrated.

The author is the founder of the Sehri Tales annual creativity challenge



PHOTO: SYED HASIB RAHMAN

GUIDES

5 interesting podcasts for university students

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

One of the best parts about university is having meaningful conversations and coming across fresh ideas. For your daily dose of knowledge, podcasts are a great resource. Just by listening, you can connect to broader discussions and gain new perspectives that will not only help you in your academics but also shape you as a person.

The Bangladeshi Perspective

This Bangla podcast intends to introduce amazing Bangladeshis from all over the world so that listeners can learn from their habits, traits, philosophies, and life lessons. Hosted by Secam Shahid Noor, this podcast contains over 70 interviews. Each episode features an individual from a different industry as they talk about how they grew as an individual, what they learnt along the way and leave valuable suggestions for the young audience.

99% Invisible

99% Invisible, produced and created by Roman Mars, is a weekly exploration of the process and power of design and architecture. The show intends to expose the unseen and overlooked aspects of design, architecture, and activity in the world. Each episode generally focuses

on a single topic or specific example, often including interviews with

architects, experts, or people who have influenced or been influenced by a given urban, industrial, graphic or other design. New episodes are added every week.

TED Talks Daily

Every weekday, TED Talks Daily presents the latest talks in audio format. The show’s

host, journalist Elise Hu, is

well known for bringing thought-provoking ideas on every subject imaginable; right from artificial intelligence to zoology, and everything in between. This podcast is all set to challenge perspectives, ignite curiosity, and learn something new, one episode at a time. Most TED talks are just as good in audio form as they are in the video, so listeners do not miss out on the overall experience.

Brain Science

Through this podcast, Dr Ginger Campbell, an experienced emergency physician, teaches listeners about the latest findings in neuroscience. It follows her passion for exploring how recent discoveries in neuroscience are revealing how human brains work. What makes it unique is the fact that people from every background can understand and relate to the said discussions and enjoy her interviews with eminent neuroscientists from around the world. With new episodes being added every month, this podcast definitely serves the purpose of gaining more knowledge.

The Tim Ferriss Show

Having authored the bestseller “The 4-Hour Workweek”, Ferriss is already popular for his approach towards work and entrepreneurship. His podcast looks at things through the same unique lens, busting myths and offering practical tips on how to succeed in a business environment. Each episode deconstructs a renowned performer to extract the tactics, tools, and routines that made them stand out. This includes everything from their favourite books, morning routines, time-management tricks, and much more.

ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

INTERVIEW

Blending creativity with development communication

We did a workshop in Rajshahi this year with icddr,b under USAID ACTB (Alliance for Combating Tuberculosis) Project which helped to raise awareness for TB.

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Adnan Mehedee Khan is the Director of Project Development & Communication in Jolputul Puppets, a non-profit organisation that hosts puppet shows. He also works with mPower Social Enterprises Limited as Manager of Communications & External Relations.

Adnan is currently pursuing a post-graduation diploma from Pathshala South Asian Media Institute in Film and Television under the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Fellowship. He has earned a place in the Dhaka Hub Global Shapers 2021 Cohort. The Global Shapers are a community of young leaders and changemakers aged between 20 and 30, curated by the World Economic Forum. The Dhaka Hub was founded in 2014.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Adnan shared his career journey, valuable insights and more.

What does Jolputul Puppets do? How did you become involved with them?

While transitioning from theatre to puppetry, Jolputul Puppets caught my attention. It is a misconception that puppetry is children’s entertainment. In fact, the kind of activities and campaigns we do attract audiences of different demographics, and work as an effective medium to convey messages about social stigma. We did a workshop in Rajshahi this year with icddr,b under USAID ACTB (Alliance for Combating Tuberculosis) Project which helped to raise awareness for TB.

What does your work as Manager of mPower Social Enterprises Limited entail?

This job gave me the opportunity to work in USAID’s Youth Entrepreneurship and Empowerment Support (YES) Activity Programme. As I am leading a team of communication professionals in projects that empower the youth, I get firsthand experience

of how today’s youth think about society and empowerment.

How did you avail the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Fellowship?

It was offered to me for my engagement in in radio, audio visual media, and puppetry. Getting connected with an international hub of professionals from all around the world has been very rewarding.

How has being a part of Dhaka Hub benefitted you?

I had the scope to connect with passionate development workers from multiple disciplines. Collaborations like these were very rewarding for me. From youth engagement to sports, the diversity is boundless.

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PHOTO: COURTESY/TUTUL NESAR