



Six organisations, including a bank and a mobile financial service provider, and five individuals yesterday won the second “A Better Tomorrow CSR Awards” by The Daily Star and the CSR Window Bangladesh for their efforts to improve people’s lives. The individuals and representatives of the organisations pose for a photo during the event at Le Méridien Dhaka. Planning Minister MA Mannan, *right*, handed over the awards while BAT Bangladesh Managing Director Shehzad Munim spoke, *bottom left*, and Joint Secretary at the Prime Minister’s Office Mohd Monirul Islam delivered the keynote speech at the event.

PHOTO: STAR

### Education: BKASH

Since 2014, bKash, in collaboration with Bishwo Shahitto Kendro and teachers from 2,900 schools, has been arranging events for students to participate in book readings and quizzes to assess the students' learning outcomes.

Over the last seven years, bKash distributed 263,700 books to 2.7 million children from around 2,900 institutions.

They also refurbished or replaced old and worn-out books in school libraries and introduced new collections.

Every year, bKash distributed around 40,000 books and added 100 new institutions to its list.

The company also partnered with 'Proyash-Jashore' in 2019 to fully fund special education for 118 students. Under the initiative, Tk 15 lakh is disbursed annually.

The MFS also partnered with 'Biggan Chinta' in 2019 to organise the Nationwide Science Festival, where students from grades 6 to 10 present science projects representing 350 schools from seven divisions.

This annual event includes quiz competitions, lectures by renowned teachers of the country, robot exhibitions, magic shows, orientation with various scientific concepts, cultural shows, and a prize-giving session for winners.



### Environment: HSBC

With an objective of increasing environmental richness and carbon sequestration, HSBC, in partnership with BRAC and BEZA, has been implementing a project – Mangrove Plantation for Climate Mitigation – to ensure an alternative livelihood for the people.

The objective was to create a 15 acre mangrove forest on allocated land at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Shilpa Nagar in Chattogram's Mirsharai.

So far, around 42,500 mangrove saplings have been planted in order to offset 492 tons of Green House Gas emission yearly and provide benefits to the climate vulnerable people.

The plantation land is a newly accredited sandy land. It has tidal effects during the monsoon, but during the winter, the water levels at the mouth of the Feni river goes down. Thus, there is no inundation.

The mangrove vegetation will also provide habitat and breeding grounds to many species of fish, crabs and mollusks, said the multinational bank.

The saplings for the plantation have been collected from Khulna, since there is no mangrove nursery available nearby. Under the project, five community members, including two women, have been trained.

Through the initiative, awareness on climate change and importance of mangroves in coastal areas have been created among over 200 local students.



### Financial Inclusion: MARICO

Since 2018, Marico Bangladesh is supporting an initiative that aims to provide ultra-poor and vulnerable rural women with social and economic empowerment through sustainable livelihoods, food security, and financial inclusion.

The initiative is dubbed Strengthening Women's Ability for Productive New Opportunities.

Beneficiaries are chosen from an ultra-poor group identified by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies with assistance from the UNDP and the government.

Rural women, who are widowed, divorced, separated or married to a husband, who is not able to earn, are selected as beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries are given cash for participation in projects such as road repairs and dam building by local governments. Monthly wages are paid through mobile banking services, with a forced saving of 25 percent.

This forced savings contributes to seed capital for asset creation.

By the end of 2020, households under the programme showed an increase in an average monthly income of Tk 3,545 compared to Tk 205 in other households.

Under the project, 10,000 women-led households graduated out of ultra-poverty and some 65,000 ultra-poor women in 1,030 unions in 106 upazilas of 22 districts benefitted.



### Community Engagement: COCA COLA

The Coca-Cola Foundation in partnership with United Purpose established Women Business Centres (WBCs) in 2015 to create fully sustainable businesses in rural communities.

Under the initiative, women are provided training in business management, IT, and poultry farming to help them develop skills.

They also provided capital to address daily obstacles that women entrepreneurs face along with necessary solutions for the economic empowerment of rural and marginalised women.

Through the WBCs, women entrepreneurs are also given loans, spaces to operate businesses, and opportunities to sell their products.

In the first phase of the initiative, 70 WBCs in Jamalpur, Khulna, and Bagerhat directly impacted the well-being of 100,000 women and indirectly 400,000 incumbents.

Each women's net capital was Tk 50,000, which increased to Tk 130,000 in 2020. Besides, each WBC earns Tk 40,697 per month.

The income of each individual WBC member has increased by an average of 200 percent.

The second phase of the initiative aims to empower 40,000 women entrepreneurs through 30 WBCs in Sunamganj and Gopalganj.



### Healthcare: LAFARGEHOLCIM

Over the last several years, LafargeHolcim Bangladesh Ltd (LHBL), a multinational cement manufacturer, has been giving free primary health care support to remote and marginalised communities around its cement plant in Sunamganj's Chhatak.

The LHBL took up the project – Comprehensive Health Program for Chhatak community – as most of the people in absolute or partial poverty, mostly depending on how the monsoon affects them.

Most of the locals cannot afford medical treatment, while not many health care facilities are available in or near the remote area.

Under the circumstance, LHBL, with its implementing partner – IDEA, has set up a healthcare center for the communities there.

At least six days a week, one doctor and a trained nurse provide basic treatment, family planning services, pregnancy checkups, EPI vaccinations for children and other health support for free in Noarai union of Chhatak, and Narshingpur and Banglabazar unions of Dowarabazar.

The company has so far spent over Tk 5 crore in this regard.

It has also spent Tk 3 crore to build a two-storey community development centre that houses the medical center.

So far, 250,000 patients have received healthcare services.



### Rapid Response: EPYLLION GROUP

Epyllion Group is providing various forms of support to people and communities through its many initiatives.

After the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country in March 2020, the group started to provide medical, infrastructural and relief support to people under a project titled "Joy of Giving".

It provided relief to over 4,000 families in Gazipur and Sunamganj for a month during the lockdown, which was implemented to curb the spread of the contagious virus.

During the recent flood, Epyllion, a leading knit garment, textile, wet processing and garments accessories maker, provided relief to over 3,000 stranded families in shelters in Sunamganj during the flood – under the same project.

Some 116 families relocated to new houses built for them, at the cost of over Tk 2.32 crore, after the natural disaster, said the company.

Epyllion Group started its journey as a house of readymade garments engaged in manufacturing and exporting knit apparels in 1994 and is considered today as one of the biggest conglomerates with substantial establishment of its backward linkage of all kinds of knit garments, textile, wet processing and garments accessories.



## Hats off to CSR champs

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Le Méridien Dhaka, the hospitality partner for the event.

LafargeHolcim's Comprehensive Health Programme for the Chhatak community won the award in the healthcare category, while bKash's National Book Reading Programme & Science Fairs bagged the top award in the education segment.

HSBC's initiative The Mangrove Plantation for Climate Mitigation took home the accolade in the environment category, while Coca-Cola Bangladesh won in community engagement.

The Best CSR in Financial Inclusion award went to Marico Bangladesh, while Epyllion Group won the award in the Rapid Response category.

Five young changemakers were also awarded as the Young Humanitarian of the Year: Adnan Hossain, founder of It's Humanity Foundation; Shekh Mohammed Moinul Islam, founder of Human Aid Bangladesh Foundation; Shanjidul Alam Seban Shaan, founder of EcoVation Bangladesh; Azwa Nayeem, founder of Alokito Hridoy Foundation; and Md Sahariar Hasan Jiisun, founder of Bloodman.

It's Humanity Foundation provides free quality education, healthcare and skill development training for marginalised communities, while Human Aid Bangladesh Foundation is working to empower underprivileged women and children through healthcare and education.

EcoVation Bangladesh engages youth volunteers with communities to help marginalised people with solar power and tech innovations, while Alokito Hridoy Foundation is training thousands of teachers in modern and gamified teaching methods.

Bloodman is a platform that connects blood donors to patients in Bangladesh.

CSR is a mammoth task and the government knows it very well," Minister Mannan said, adding that

there is synergy between the private sector's CSR and the government's social development works.

Nowadays, the spirit of volunteerism is fading; even with money, young people cannot be brought into volunteerism, Anam said.

"If Bangladesh has to continue a sustainable journey, all of us will have to work together," he added.

Asper estimates, Bangladesh needs nearly \$1 trillion between 2017 and 2030 to implement the sustainable development goals (SDGs), said Mohd Monirul Islam, joint secretary (SDGs) at the prime minister's office, in his keynote speech.

He mentioned five Ps for balanced and sustainable development in society: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.

"Until and unless jobs are created, economic growth will not be sustainable," he said, while calling for a multi-stakeholder partnership for sustainable development.

Monirul also called for accountability and proper data to incorporate everybody in the government's SDG plans.

"Without proper data and accountability, it is not possible to confidently say that nobody was left behind – which is the main target of the SDGs."

To ensure better data protection, the government has created the national data coordination committee under the PMO, Monirul said, while urging the private sector to come out of the traditional CSR practices.

"We want to see a day when Bangladesh no longer needs foreign aid and we can solve our social problems on our own. We envision a day where every organisation will have humanity as one of its core values," said Ahsan Rony, co-founder of CSR Window Bangladesh.

Shehzad Munim, managing director of BAT Bangladesh, called for

moving on from CSR activities and adopting the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) standards, which provide a framework for evaluating a company's efforts to positively impact its people, communities and the planet.

For that, support from the government and societal changemakers is needed.

BATB, which has been conducting CSR activities for the last 43 years, is the first company in Bangladesh to publish an ESG report and such reports will be published every year by the company, he said.

"ESG should be considered as an investment, rather than as CSR, which is philanthropy," he said, adding that the country needs to shift to greener and cleaner energy for environmental sustainability.

### Three killed in twin school shootings in Brazil

AFP, Brasília

At least three people including an adolescent girl were killed and 11 others wounded Friday when a 16-year-old shooter wearing Nazi symbols opened fire on two schools in southeastern Brazil, officials said.

Authorities in the city of Aracruz, in Espírito Santo state, said the shooter fired on a group of teachers at his former school, killing two people and leaving nine others wounded.

He then left that school – a public primary and secondary school – and went to a nearby private school where he killed an adolescent girl and wounded two other people, officials said.

Authorities have arrested the shooter, said Governor Renato Casagrande, who declared three days of mourning in the state.

City

## Why the outrage?

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innovation that this edition of the showpiece event in Qatar was set to offer.

While five substitutions instead of three and the long – and to some extent arduous for players in the middle eastern nation – added time have not had an immense impact on viewer experience, the semi-automated technology that is being used for the first time has somewhat impaired the experiences of fans, at least from the what can be gathered fans' emotional outpouring over the goals that were ruled out on social media.

Goals are being celebrated prematurely by fans and players alike, ultimately only proving an exercise in futility. However, that is nothing new in 2022.

Non-seasonal football fans have become accustomed to such swerves for quite some time, with top leagues around the world using Video Assistant Referee (VAR) for around the past five years. Even seasonal fans had a taste of that drama in the 2018 World Cup in Russia, where VAR was in action as it made its World Cup debut.

Waiting for a VAR review after a goal from open play has been a convention for a while now. So, why is it that goals in Qatar being ruled out is apparently irking fans more than ever?

The answer can be found in the details explaining the new semi-automated offside system, which is simply an added tool to enhance the performance of the commonly used VAR. For the World Cup, FIFA installed 12 cameras in each stadium dedicated to tracking the ball, which has a sensor inside to help trace the body parts of players.

This new tool, incorporated and approved by FIFA for use as it saves significant time in making offside calls, also shows a 3D mock-up of offside players on screens in the stadium and on broadcasts, pinpointing and highlighting the millimeters of a limb caught offside.

It has only been a week since the 'greatest show on earth' commenced and, as it stands, the World Cup has seen a number of goals denied due to fractions. In fact, it took only three

minutes for the new tool to kick in, denying Enner Valencia of Ecuador from becoming the fastest to score in a World Cup opener.

If that was not enough to rub fans the wrong way, surely the three first-half goals from Argentina that were ruled out against Saudi Arabia – with Lautaro Martinez's one due to barest of margins – were enough to see one of the most vociferous fanbases revert from anger to denial, unable to come to terms with the outcome of one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history.

Although VAR has long been disallowing goals, it is its latest iteration, featuring big screens highlighting marginal decisions to the public, that is causing the outrage.

It is also not new for VAR to make a decision that some fans will find controversial. That grey area will always be a part of such high-stakes decisions. But questions are being raised more than ever since that grey area has now been made more apparent by virtue of the latest weaponry in VAR's arsenal.

Lautaro Martinez.

Within a minute, Messi found space just over 20 yards from goal to take a drilled pass from Angel Di Maria, which he cushioned with a sublime first touch to then pick out the bottom corner with a fierce low drive.

Scaloni immediately switched to a back three, bringing on centre-back Cristian Romero for winger Di Maria.

Mexico coach Gerardo Martino responded by throwing on forward Raul Jimenez for a defender and changed to a 4-3-3 formation.

But substitute Fernandez had the final say, curling a delectable strike into the top far corner.