



PHOTOS: DIYER STUDIO

# The dynamic duo of DIYer STUDIO

RBR

When your university courses come to an end and you are left with a few bundles of quality, loose sheets of paper, what do you do with it? Give it away, forget about it, or do you make a bespoke personalised notebook?

Well, Hosneara Binni, of DIYer Studio specialising in stationery and lifestyle products in Dhaka, did exactly that.

"I took one of my paintings got it printed and took it to a printer and binder to make me a personalised notebook in hardcover and that was how the seed of DIYer Studio was sowed.

"My friends loved the notebook and ordered for themselves and from that time in 2017, I never looked back," she said, adding that her manager is her sister, Suraiya Kamol, a high court lawyer.

The creative and talented sister duo has given a profitable spin to a stationary boutique focused on handmade and hand-painted stationery which can be personalised too.

"We are more than just notebooks. We make personalised wedding invitation cards, wedding favours and take bulk orders for gift boxes. Most recently, we have been offering a delightful selection of flower and herbal teas to soothe your soul, scented candles to set the mood, organic lip balms to pamper your lips, solid perfumes for a touch of

fragrance, besides our popular items of personalised stationery, to express yourself in style, along with gift boxes to delight your loved ones," says Kamol.

DIYer Studio is conscious about the products it uses and keeps them as organic as possible. Their lip balm is crafted from natural butter and essential oils. The herbal tea is made from a blend of handpicked herbs and flowers.

"We do the infusion and blending with utmost care and sell those in tiny bottles and paper bags. These are hand-painted and

labelled with romantic names like Lady Crimson, Queen of Hearts, and Winter in Dhaka. Our candles are inspired by our terrace garden and we named them Garden of Eden, Spring Maiden, etc.," said Binni, who is the creative brain of the business.

Self-taught artist Binni is inspired by nature. Soft pastel shades of watercolour and gouache medium are what she mostly works with. Her art has a soft feminine touch with flowers, gardens, and serene landscapes.

In a world where technology reigns supreme, customised stationery has an aristocratic feel -- writing on paper is like riding a horse when everyone else is driving a car, as explained aptly by one of their clients.

You can order DIYer Studio products online. They are also available in stores like Bookworm and Reading Café. Their studio is located in Banani, Dhaka.



## Dhruba Esh admitted to hospital, moved to ICU

STAR REPORT

Renowned book cover designer Dhruba Esh has been hospitalised due to a lung infection. He was admitted to Health and Hope Hospital in Panthapath last morning after experiencing breathing difficulties.

The news of his hospitalisation was confirmed to The Daily Star by his friend and prominent journalist, Alim Azij.

Dhruba Esh initially felt uneasy Wednesday night and was admitted to a regular cabin the next morning. However, as his breathing issues worsened, he was transferred to the ICU to receive necessary oxygen support.

Dhruba Esh's name is indelible in the world of book cover design, having crafted countless iconic covers that adorn bookshelves worldwide. Notably, he is the visionary behind the covers of many of Humayun Ahmed's celebrated novels, including the beloved Himu and Misir Ali series.

Having a career spanning three decades in the publishing industry, Dhruba Esh began his journey as a cover artist in 1989, during his second year as a student at the Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka.



## Nor'westers knock out power for 3.5 lakh users

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Around 350,000 electricity connections under the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board (BREB) were disconnected from the power grid after intense nor'westers (seasonal thunderstorms) lashed several districts between Wednesday night and early yesterday, knocking down electric poles and other key instruments.

As a result, many affected households experienced a day-long power outage, according to the Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources.

In a statement yesterday, the ministry said, most of the connections could be restored by last evening.

Around 8:00pm, the ministry in a Facebook post said around 70,000 consumers in parts of Pirojpur, Narsingdi, Kishoreganj, Habiganj, Feni, and Chattogram were still out of power.

Pirojpur Palli Bidyut Samity General Manager Abu Umam Md Mahbulul Haque said poles and other instruments of the main electricity transmission line connecting Pirojpur and Bagerhat were damaged during a thunderstorm.

## Make family members quit upazila polls

FROM PAGE 1

Family members and relatives of AL MPs and ministers are running for at least 14 chairman posts in the first phase.

An AL insider said Hasina was irked hearing about incidents like Lutful Habib, general secretary of Singra upazila AL in Natore, abducting a rival candidate and Ekramul Karim Chowdhury, AL MP from Noakhali-4, threatening to halt development projects if his son was not elected chairman.

She called Quader and asked him to issue the directives.

According to AL sources, Quader held an informal meeting at the political office of the AL chief in Dhanmondi yesterday morning and

asked the organising secretaries and office secretary to issue the instructions.

During the meeting, an organising secretary called MP Shajahan Khan of Madaripur and Ekramul of Noakhali and told them about the party's decision.

The sons of these two lawmakers are vying for UP chairman posts.

The Daily Star reached out to Ekramul for comments last night. He said, "When the party general secretary called me I told him that it would have been convenient for me to make a decision had they informed me of the decision before the submission or scrutiny of nominations. And secondly, the one who is running against

my son campaigned for an anti-boat candidate in the last national election. If my son has to withdraw, then he [the other candidate] should also be punished."

"If it's the decision of the party high command, we will think about it before the withdrawal of nomination. Then we will see what happens," he added.

The party ministers and lawmakers were also instructed not to get involved in the polls in any shape or form.

AL high-ups think that the ministers and lawmakers are fielding their preferred candidates to establish their supremacy in the areas. They are also trying to use the local administration and police.

## Democracy sliding

FROM PAGE 1

Policy Dialogue office in Dhanmondi.

Prof Sobhan said that while progress is evident in several sectors, including human development, there are still many gaps, leading to inequality.

He said the book would give readers insight into the multifaceted dimensions of Bangladesh's journey, its economic and social transformation, and political and cultural contestations.

The book features articles by 16 eminent writers.

"It also portrays new empirical data and proposes new theoretical and analytical frameworks to explain the country's complex and paradoxical developments," read the blurb handed to the press.

Authors Rizwanul Islam, MM Akash, Iftekhar Iqbal, Selim Jahan, Sohela Nazneen, Fakhru Alam, Mirza M Hassan, Ali Riaz, and Hossain Zillur Rahman took part in the discussion on the chapters of the book they wrote.

Speaking about his chapter, Prof MM Akash said although the average of everything, including income, has increased, there is a deception.

He said the growth was not

inclusive.

"If we could analyse it closely, we would see that the income of the poor has increased at a snail's pace, while the income of the rich has soared like a rocket, resulting in inequality..."

Taking part in the discussion via video conference, Political analyst Prof Ali Riaz said, "There is a long tradition of Islamist politics. It was not created hastily or by the state. But the state has a role to play here."

"The conservative section of Islamists has gradually strengthened in Bangladesh, socially and politically. Islamist groups will become stronger in the future."

Speaking on one of the chapters written by Mirza M Hassan, Prothom Alo Editor and Publisher Matur Rahman said Mirza mentioned in his chapter that the political system has three forms: dominant party state, now prevailing; military rule; and competitive party system.

"Trade and commerce have grown over the decades. However, the business community's ability to take collective initiatives has decreased. The business sector is now eager to reap benefits by building relationships with political elites," he said.

Quoting a chapter written by Arild

Engelsen Ruud on the violence in the politics of Bangladesh, Matur said after the fall of the Ershad regime, the third phase of Bangladesh's politics began.

Until the 2014 and 2018 elections, the opposition could have hoped to assume power through polls, he said, adding that after the elections of January 7, 2024, it can be said that that possibility has become very low.

Recalling his memory of joining the procession of the first student strike against the military rule in 1962, Matur said he chanted the slogan with people that they do not want military rule; they want elections, democracy, the right to vote, and freedom of speech and the press.

"Around 62 years have passed, but we still talk about these demands. I still write - 'I want elections, democracy, the right to vote, the right to speak, and freedom of the press'," he added.

Organised into six sections, the book presents a multidisciplinary, holistic, and interrelated narrative of the Bangladesh story covering its economic and social transformation, political history, and changing cultural landscapes.

## Lowest outcome from highest committees

FROM PAGE 1

of this year compared to the same period last year, according to data from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA).

INACTIVE COMMITTEES

National Road Safety Council (NRSC) was formed in 1995. Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader is its chairman while several other ministers, including those of home and railways, top government and police officials and transport leaders are its members.

The council, a top policy making body on road safety, is supposed to sit every six months or as per the will of the chairman.

It held its last and 29th meeting on November 15, 2022, and decided that the authorities would "closely monitor" five national highways and keep illegal three-wheelers off of those.

Three-wheelers were banned on 22 major highways in August 2015. NRSC's 28th meeting held on February 18, 2021, decided that the authorities would register illegal three-wheelers in order to control them.

However, operation of such vehicles on highways is rampant and authority has not initiated a system to register them.

Three-wheelers are believed to be a major cause of crashes. Contacted, BRTA Chairman Nur Mohammad Mazumder, also the member secretary of the council, said the road transport minister has ordered a meeting soon.

In February 2014, the government formed the Cabinet Committee

on Road Safety with Quader as the convener of the seven-minister body.

The committee was supposed to take steps to remove markets and commercial establishments on or by national and regional highways and keep locally made illegal three-wheelers known as Nasimon and Karimon off the roads, reads the Cabinet Division circular from February 13, 2014.

Sixteen top government officials and police were supposed to assist the committee. The committee did not hold any meeting in the last few years, sources at road transport and bridges ministry said.

A high-powered taskforce led by Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal was formed in October 2019 to execute 111 recommendations made by a government commissioned committee to reduce crashes and bring discipline on roads.

Secretaries of different ministries, top police officials, transport leaders, experts, and road safety campaigners were members of the committee.

The taskforce held its seventh and last meeting on May 17, 2023. It was decided that the taskforce would take an initiative to give appointment letters to the drivers, helpers and conductors of the commercial vehicles.

The taskforce had made the same decision at its second meeting in December 2020. The issue was discussed in the following three meetings as well. But the decision has not been implemented.

The taskforce, in its meetings, discussed and took decisions about stopping service charge outside of

terminals. That decision also remains on paper.

The government in 1985 formed the Road Transport Advisory Council under Motor Vehicle Ordinance-1983. The council led by the road transport and bridges minister had top bureaucrats, police officials and transport leaders as members.

The council was abolished after the enforcement of Road Transport Act-2018 in November 2019, as the Ordinance was repealed then, Mahub-E-Rabbani, director (road safety) BRTA told this correspondent.

The council in its last meeting in August 2018, decided to strictly enforce the ban on three-wheelers and other slow vehicles on highways.

Ilias Kanchan, a member of both the taskforce and NRSC, recommended establishing a management board dedicated to implementing the decisions.

The BRTA chairman, also a member of the taskforce, said the following meeting of the taskforce was postponed twice for different reasons.

DRIVES INTENSIFIED  
Meanwhile, BRTA has written to local administration and police to intensify the drive against errant drivers and risky vehicles, its chairman told The Daily Star yesterday.

The agency on Wednesday ordered its offices across the country to contact the district administrations and organise mobile courts, he said.

"The mobile court drives will continue until further notice. The drive will continue even on weekends," he added.

## Janata in deep trouble as BB digs up scams

FROM PAGE 1

cancel the interest waiver.

But talking to The Daily Star at his Motijheel office yesterday, he said, "AnonTex has yet to repay the loan even after the interest waiver facility."

He said he is worried that the bank's bad loans will now soar further.

At the moment, the bank is not approving large loans and is trying to recover the previous loans, he added.

Janata Bank disbursed around Tk 3,527.9 crore in loans among 22 companies of AnonTex Group between 2010 and 2015. Including the interest, the amount stood at Tk

6,528 crore in December 2022.

The amount exceeds 25 percent of the lender's capital base, and violates the Single Borrower Exposure Limit set by the Bank Company Act 1991.

After a central bank probe unearthed large-scale irregularities in loan approvals by Janata, the regulator in 2018 had ordered the lender to conduct a functional audit and take legal action against those involved in the scandal. But Janata has yet to take any legal action against anyone.

JANATA'S FINANCIAL HEALTH  
Janata was once one of the most reputed banks in Bangladesh, but

its financial health started to slide downhill thanks to a series of loan scams involving AnonTex and Crescent Group.

In 2017, its bad loans stood at Tk 5,818 crore, which skyrocketed to Tk 17,501.44 crore in December last year, which is 19.2 percent of its total disbursed loans.

BB data show the bank had a capital shortfall of Tk 2,189 crore till June last year.

A recent central bank report shows 75 percent of the bank's total loans are concentrated in five branches, which is highly risky.

## World's largest election begins

FROM PAGE 1

ended on Wednesday evening as the top leaders of BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the opposition Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc made a last ditch effort to woo voters.

The country has more than 2,500 political parties but just 10 of them hold 86 percent of all seats in the Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament.

Modi spearheaded BJP's campaign with whirlwind tours of several

constituencies, pitching the "Modi ki guarantee" (Modi's guarantee) against the Congress's "Nyay" (social justice) planks.

Addressing an election rally in Assam's Nalbari on Wednesday, Modi explained why he is seeking a third successive term, "In 2014, Modi came to you with hope. In 2019, Modi came with trust and in 2024, Modi has come to you with a guarantee, Modi's guarantee, a guarantee of fulfilling guarantees."

With Nalbari having a sizable

Muslim population, Modi said the law passed by his government criminalising triple talaq has "liberated Muslim women benefitting not only them but also their families".

BJP focused its attack on issues like corruption, dynastic politics of Congress and alleged insults to the Constitution and Hinduism while opposition leaders centred their campaign on the issue of electoral bonds, alleged misuse of probe agencies, inflation, and unemployment.