

THE AI Imperative

For a Future Ready Generation

Spotlight Personage

Kingkor Ahsan
Ayman Sadiq
AK Rahul and Brothers

Cover Story

The AI Mandate for the Future Ready
Generation

Writing Contest

An Open Letter to Bangladesh's
Education System and The Way Forward

SCAN HERE



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THE EDITORIAL



The journey of Voice of Business for the last 18 years is as inspiring as its establishment as the country's first student-run business publication. This platform carries the same vision in every effort - nurturing the next generation leaders, inspired by professionals in industry and academia. Just like its previous 14 editions, this magazine is a testament of Voice of Business's commitment to its long old legacy- one that has been continued for generations with an incredible shared spirit since 2007. More often than not, the annual magazine is an effort to connect students with the world of business, economics, technology and/ or an intersection of all. But it doesn't stop there, real insights from practitioners come with a 360 degree trajectory of how the actual field looks like, and that offers our readers a completely new perspective.

The Cover Story of the 15th Edition- **The AI Mandate for the Future Ready Generation** is a framework, not just to survive in the age of AI but to excel and thrive in it. And specially in the context of Bangladesh, it takes everything from redesigning syllabi and research practices to leveraging AI skills and toolset in the right way, just to keep a pace with the global stage, irrespective of the field. The magazine also featured exclusive talks with industry flagbearers, offering readers a refreshing perspective. And the level of diversity and exploration our Editorial people came up with this time in their write-ups is simply amazing. That's a reflection of growth with different perspectives and views under the same banner. This year, Voice of Business Writing Contest has experienced a tremendous participation of students with the title- 'An Open Letter to Bangladesh's Education System and the Way Forward' and the top 3 have made their places in the magazine.

The bunch of amazing people at Voice of Business make the magazine possible every time. It needs an orchestration of well crafted stories, aesthetic designs, sufficient funds and a full fledged logistical support- every bit of it to finally have a tangible form. I am immensely grateful to everyone who brought this issue to life. But my words would not find their edges without mentioning a few names- thanks to our Editorial alumni Maisha Apu, Faisal Bhai and Naome Apu for making the Editorial feels like home, for shaping my entire journey in Voice of Business. This magazine would be nothing without my Deputy Editors, Ishrak and Saquib, who made Editorial commitments possible every time. Of course, it's Fatema and Jarraf who propelled our most capable executives brilliantly. The Publication Wing makes our magazine a craft every time, my fair share of gratitude goes to Nahid, Hasan, Supreo and the whole team as well. The collaborative effort of our other wing leaders of the Cabinet- Zarif, Alvi, Sumaiya, Lazim, Tusmit, Siam, Rahim, Apon, Anindo, Akhi, Shahriar- is what turned this edition, and this entire tenure, into a great run.

Just like every signature mark of Voice of Business, the magazine holds the collective spirit of our beloved associates and executives from every single wing. I hope, together, you make your journey in this club a meaningful and memorable chapter to look back on.

Thanks to Rezoan Hossen Shamim and Ibastum Suraiya- I cannot imagine this tenure being so beautiful without you.

This edition's journey has been rewarding in so many ways, and something I will be deeply grateful for in retrospect. It continues to embrace the change while keeping the legacy alive. Well, isn't that what Voice of Business is all about?

Amrina Rahman
Chief Editor

Message From **The Dean**

Dr. Mahmood Osman Imam
Faculty of Business Studies,
University of Dhaka



It is a genuine pleasure and honor to acknowledge the outstanding efforts and dedication of the Voice of Business Club, Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka. We are delighted to present the 15th issue of the Voice of Business Annual Magazine. Year after year, this publication proves itself to be an essential intellectual platform, fostering lively discourse and shedding light on the critical areas that drive the growth and resilience of our national economy.

The theme chosen for this edition, "**The AI Imperative for the Future Ready Generation**," is perfectly timed and deeply relevant. It reflects a keen awareness of the complex realities facing our nation and the global community today. Keeping with its strong tradition, this issue highlights the Club's commitment to exploring ideas and topics that directly shape our country's economic future. The seamless teamwork among our student-members to create a magazine that informs, inspires, and cultivates both creativity and critical thinking is a powerful testament to the Club's vision and the spirit of the Faculty of Business Studies.

I want to extend my sincere thanks and high praise to the dedicated members of the Voice of Business, as well as to our valued sponsors and contributors. Your collective hard work reinforces the values of our institution, actively helping us develop the next generation of forward-thinking, innovative, and responsible business leaders.

I trust that this edition will serve not just as a source of inspiration but also as a truly valuable resource for students, faculty, and professionals across the corporate world.

Warm wishes,
Dr. Mahmood Osman Imam
Dean
Faculty of Business Studies
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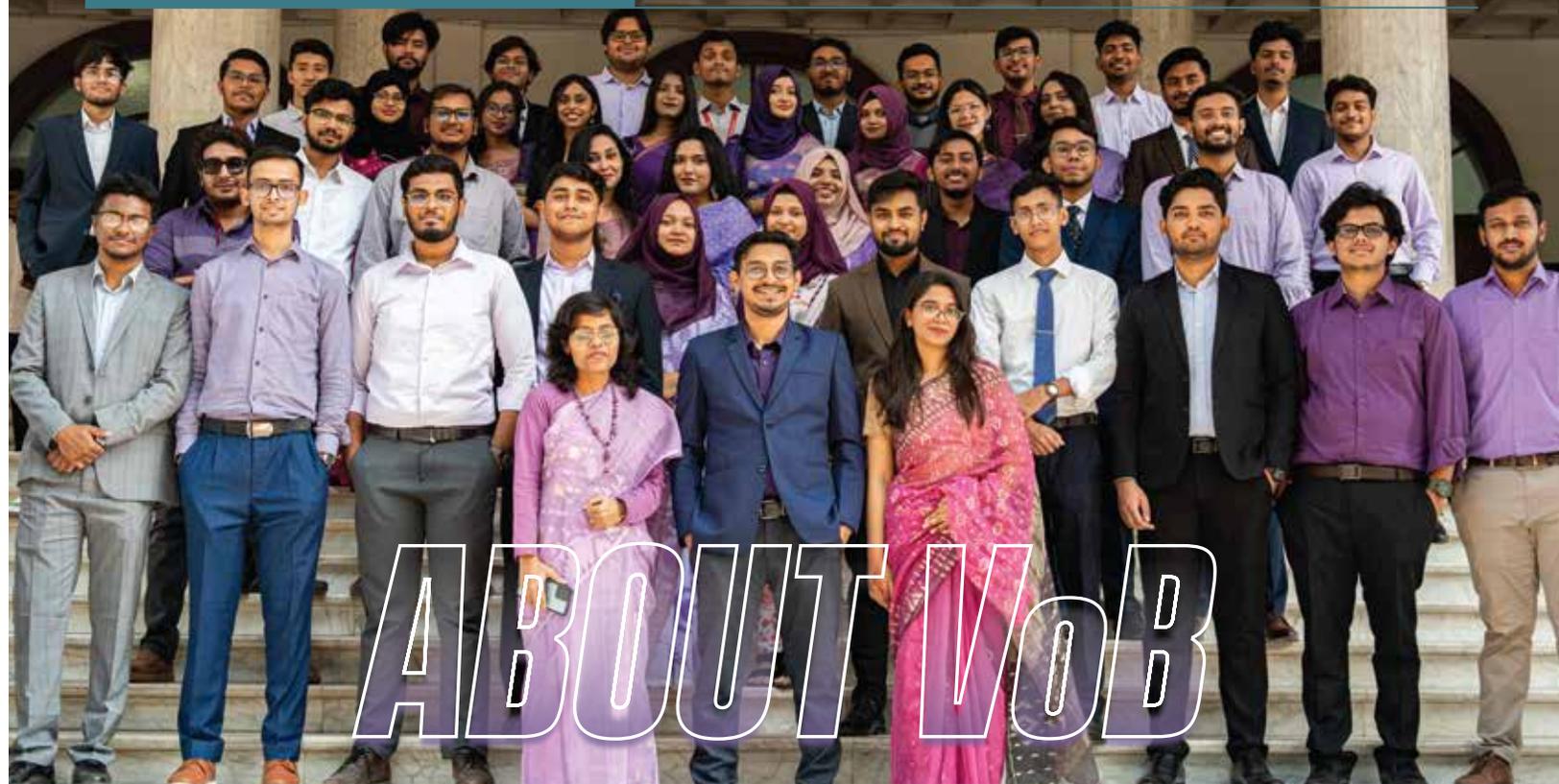
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Voice of Business is a trailblazer among all the student-led business publications in Bangladesh and continues to stand as the largest of its kind. Since its inception in 2007, it has been continuously functioning as an elite business club under the Faculty of Business Studies at the University of Dhaka to provide a platform to the business students so that they can showcase their potential and at the same time, be nurtured of their talents by gathering real-world experiences.

Voice of Business is driven by its motto, “**Empowering the Leader Within**”, and has long dedicated itself to narrowing the division found between stressful academic life and the challenging professional world for the students to find the transitioning cues into corporate roles. In an effort to uphold its motto and missions, the club regularly hosts seminars, holds interactive workshops, and curates knowledge-driven events by featuring insights from corporate veterans, business pioneers and industry leaders.

Voice of Business has not come to be on its own, rather it is a collaborative effort among the students from all nine departments within the Faculty of Business Studies, University of Dhaka. Moreover, all of their efforts are bolstered by the guidance of a Board of advisors, composed of faculty members across the same nine departments within the faculty, which also have been endorsed by the Honourable Dean and the respective department Chairs.

Voice of Business, as a part of its long-standing legacy, is well-known for some of its signature events. For starters, Voice of Business has organized its nationwide **Writing Contest in 2025** just like the previous years. It also has launched the fifth iteration of its national branding competition, **BRANDrill 5.0**, which is well-acclaimed among undergraduates across the country for its exposure to creativity. Moreover, the club has published the 7th issue of its quarterly bulletin in 2025.

Since the release of the esteemed club’s first magazine, which helped the club to gain traction among university readers nationwide, Voice of Business has become a dominating name in the arena of university clubs. In the process, the club has grown in both quality and impact. With all the responsibilities on our shoulders to uphold our legacy, we are proud and excited to unveil the 15th edition of the Voice of Business Magazine.

2024-2025

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MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step" - Lao Tzu

I joined Voice of Business, asking a simple question- what is VoB? Since the first day, when I only made a simple effort to get into this club, it slowly but surely became one of the most rewarding and life changing experiences in my life. Looking back at my experience working with Voice of Business, I understand how this platform has influenced not only my leadership, but also my personal development.

I have laughed, learned, panicked and celebrated so many occasions with this one particular entity over years. Every problem I had to overcome at VoB taught me to be resilient and every achievement I had was reminding me of the power of having a team.

What I gained from this club? The people I have met on my way are one of the things that I will treasure the most in my time here. My experience with people of varied skills, outlooks, and interests provided me with a good opportunity to develop and grow. Everyone I met developed me in one way or another, teaching me some things, remembering some things and reminding me that being a good leader is more about listening and learning than it is about leading.

Our greatest accomplishment this year was the BRANDrill 5.0, which was a demonstration of what we, as a team, can do. Our members were passionate and dedicated to this flagship event and inspired the people and reaffirmed VoB as a bridge between academia and the corporate world.

I am thankful to our mentors, faculty, and well-wishers as I conclude my term because without their guidance, I could not have gone through this journey. I am most grateful to our honorable Dean sir, Chairperson and esteemed faculties who have been supportive of our vision. A word of gratitude to our advisor whose support we had during the path of overcoming all the challenges without any hesitations.

I strongly believe that the next generation of leaders at this club will continue the tradition of passion, and excellence, and enable more students to make bold decisions toward their dreams.

Entering into Voice of Business, I'm really grateful that I made a simple decision back then.



MESSAGE FROM GENERAL SECRETARY

Voice of Business has been a remarkable part of my university journey from the very beginning. VoB taught me resilience, dedication, and the importance of teamwork. No matter the challenges, the unwavering spirit of this place motivated me to push my limits and achieve more than I ever imagined possible. Together with my wonderful team, we managed to pull off BRANDrill 5.0 and the 15th issue of our magazine despite all the uncertainties along the way. I am deeply grateful to our mentors, advisors, and honourable dean sir Dr. Mahmood Osman Imam for all that constant support and encouragement throughout the tenure. Finally my journey with VoB has come to an end. Thank you to everyone who has been a part of this journey with me. You've made these years unforgettable, and I couldn't be more grateful. Here's to growth, to memories, and to the incredible future ahead for VoB.

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Data, Devices and a Dying Planet

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Every email sent, video streamed, or AI-generated image comes with an invisible cost. Behind the smooth, instant connections we enjoy, there exist vast data centers, quietly powering the modern world. These facilities already consume nearly 1% of global electricity, and their demand is climbing as our digital appetite grows. From billions of Google searches each day to the rise of AI-powered services, the energy needed to sustain our online lives is rising at a staggering pace.

Data centers are just the tip of the iceberg. The devices that we cannot imagine a day without, including smartphones and laptops, carry an environmental price that might one day become impossible to repay. Pollution levels are at an all-time high, and natural disasters linked to climate change are making headlines with alarming frequency.

Now, the question is, who is truly responsible for this impact? the corporations designing it; the consumers demanding it, or the system that fuels it all?"

The Dark Side of Technology Growth

Technological advancements have undoubtedly brought us convenience. However, the environmental crisis that this is leading us to is often overlooked. The amount of electronic waste generated globally in 2022 was 62 million, with only a fraction of the

waste getting recycled. Adding to that, there is the constant push from the brands to upgrade their devices, which are often intentionally designed with shorter life spans. Toxic substances like lead and mercury from discarded devices seep into the environment, contaminating soil and water, and posing serious health risks.

Beyond waste, the carbon footprint of technology is vast and growing. For example, billions of daily Google searches and the increasing use of video streaming and AI-powered applications demand enormous energy, often sourced from fossil fuels. The extraction of rare earth minerals used in smartphones and other devices further exacerbates the issue, causing habitat destruction, water pollution, and toxic waste generation. Rapid resource depletion at an unsustainable pace is what defines the present technological landscape.

Who's Really to Blame?

The environmental toll of technology is a shared burden, but pinpointing responsibility is not straightforward.

Corporations are often blamed for fast product cycles designed to maximize profits. For example, the average consumer smartphone is replaced every 2.5 years, largely driven by companies releasing new

models annually. Many tech giants have faced criticism for limiting repairs and updates, pushing consumers toward buying new devices instead of fixing old ones.

At the same time, consumers play a role by chasing trendy gadgets, frequently upgrading devices even when the old ones still work. This culture of overconsumption fuels demand for new products and the extraction of scarce resources.

Lastly, governments and regulators sometimes fall short. Many countries lack strong laws to manage e-waste properly or to hold manufacturers accountable for their products' full lifecycle. Without effective policies, it's difficult to curb the environmental damage or encourage greener innovations.



How can we mitigate the impact?

The environmental cost of technology may be high, but it's not irreversible. Change requires coordinated action from corporations, consumers, and policy-makers alike.

Tech giants are beginning to invest in greener operations. Google and Microsoft have pledged to run their data centers on 100% renewable energy by 2030. Shifting manufacturing to use renewable power and sustainable materials can significantly cut emissions.

Extending the life of devices through repairing and recycling programs can help to mitigate the impact of climate change to a certain extent. The European

Union (EU) introduced "right to repair" laws which led to saving up 20 million tonnes of CO₂ emissions annually.

Governments around the world have to work harder to fulfil their responsibilities towards climate change. Strong policies and regulations can push industries toward sustainable design and higher recycling rates. In Japan, strict recycling laws already make this vision real, pushing industries toward greener design.

Consumers play a pivotal role in this as well, and they can contribute towards curbing the pollution by not jumping into the overconsumption trends and rather avoiding unnecessary upgrades. Enabling energy-saving settings and recycling old electronics can further reduce personal tech footprint.

When corporate responsibility meets mindful consumer choices and strong policies, technology can grow without draining the planet's future.

The way forward

If industries innovate responsibly, policies set clear standards, and consumers make conscious choices, we can rewrite the story from one of environmental cost to one of sustainable progress. After all, even a single smartphone requires about 70 kilograms of raw materials to produce; imagine the change if millions chose to keep their devices just a little longer. The future of tech doesn't have to come at the planet's expense; it can be the key to protecting it.

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Contemporary Poetry in the Land of Poetic Legacy

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*Today's expression of poetry holds a different rejoice,
 Yet always looking for tomorrow's beautification
 Can never bring the true essence of today's voice.
 Tomorrow might be the golden age,
 But the contemporary is the stage—
 Where it speaks in the tones that past never knew.
 Though the decades gone may shine as the greatest of all,
 They may not rise to answer today's call.
 To compare for betterment is fair and wise,
 But today's verse too holds timeless skies...*

Today, it is often assumed that the poetry of earlier generations was so noble and often praised for its richness and depth—the highest form of artistic expression. In comparison, contemporary poems are seen as falling short, not quite equalizing that legacy. But such a belief overlooks the evolving nature of poetic thought. Today's poetry, shaped by new perspectives and digital habits, deserves equal space in our creative consciousness.

While classical poetry still holds its value, contemporary verses dare to explore fresh content, rising voices, and even the complexities of the poetry economy. It acknowledges both the bright and grey areas of human expression. In this blog, firstly, I invite readers to reflect on the richness of now, without dismissing the greatness of the past—and the financial prospect of contemporary poetry.

Is Today's Poet Taking the Quote "A Poet is a Man Speaking to Men" in a More Literal Sense?

Yes, more than in the past. Poets of today speak within society rather than above it. Wordsworth's concept of poetry as an uncontrollably strong emotional outpouring has been further humanized. For instance, Binoy Barman does not separate poetry from everyday life. His writings,

such as *Binimoye Takey Tumi Katotuku Dao*, deal directly with human cruelty, class inequity, and ethical failings.

The poet of today is not a prophet on a pedestal but rather a protester, a thinker among thinkers, and a witness among the masses. The poet frequently challenges authority, protests publicly, and speaks plainly when necessary.

Is Contemporary Poetry Less Composed of Symbols?

Not exactly. Even though contemporary poets employ symbolism less frequently than their classical counterparts, they frequently do so in novel, striking, and politically charged ways. Even when Akash employs unusual structure or regional language, his poetry is highly symbolic. The article claims that his "web of symbolism" compels readers to "pause and think" by conjuring vivid mental images.

However, modern symbolism is frequently ambiguous and connected to actual suffering, such as the child buried in Bengal (Ghasher Restura) or the dysfunctional class structure in Rakibul Hasan's *The Life of an Earthworm*. The approach differs: poets of today use symbols to reveal the world, whereas those of the past used them to escape it.

A Matter of Passion, Not Paycheck?

Poetry, in its essence, has never promised riches. But in a world that increasingly demands every passion justify its price tag, poets often find themselves at a crossroads. Globally, the poetry industry—bolstered by spoke. *Voices of Change: What Contemporary Poets Are Saying*

By combining surrealism, local themes, and post-modern motifs, Obayed Akash exposes the subconscious and symbolic tension in poetry. He demonstrates how poems that are firmly grounded in genuine suffering and love can be "made of blood and bread."

The poet Binoy Barman, who was influenced by Buddhism, believes that poetry can be used to promote social change. Though firmly rooted in freedom, optimism, and animal rights, his work is profoundly philosophical. We are challenged to remove artificial superiority by his well-known statement:

"Human beings are human beings due to their clothes / but under the clothes is a naked identity."

In contrast, Rakibul Hasan delves deeply into pessimism. He criticizes society's fixation on materialism, conformity, and moral decay in his work **Ekhono Murti Hoyte Parini**. Even his darkest poems, however, contain seeds of awakening and resistance.

Can Poetry Pay? – Financial Prospects in a Land of More Poets Than Crows

As one critic aptly put it, we are living in "the years of anthologies." A fresh batch of poems is delivered every few weeks, bundled in serious titles and suffused with adjectives that shout transcendence, catastrophe, and urgency. These books make claims about being significant, the future, or beautiful, but the expectations they carry frequently leave the average reader speechless.

This is not specific to Bangladesh. Poetry pub-

lishing is changing all over the world, but particularly in the West. Journals supported by universities and independent presses are developing. Poets are becoming more visible through spoken word competitions, digital magazines, and prize circuits such as the Pulitzer, Forward, and Griffin. Yet, only a small percentage of poets—those with the appropriate networks, education, or language access—are being heard in spite of this worldwide wave.

I was reminded of this phenomenon while reading about *The Great Bengali Poetry Underground* (Kitaab, 2021), edited by Rajat Chaudhuri—a collection that doesn't pretend to be mainstream, manicured, or manicured-for-sale. It is raw. It is neglected. And most importantly, it is real.

What is underground poetry, one might ask? Perhaps it is simply poetry without the privilege of visibility. In Chaudhuri's own words, these were poets who wrote because the language was intoxicating, not lucrative. They weren't trying to build careers—just communities. But as with many artists in Bangladesh and West Bengal, life eventually demanded something else. Salaries over stanzas. Deadlines over dreams.

This conflict—the love of form vs. the weight of survival—is not new. And in Bangladesh, it's nearly omnipresent.

"There are more poets in Bengal than crows," someone once said.

It sounds like an exaggeration. But is it?

Here, poetry is more than an art form—it is an inheritance. It is a protest. It is a lullaby and love letter, mourning cry and wedding song. From Nazrul's rebellious anthems to Rabindranath's spiritual meditations, verse flows through our public and private lives. Our first lessons in morality are often rhythmic. Our first heartbreak is confessed in verse. Even those who never read poetry still live inside its shadows.

And yet—where is the space for the contemporary poet in this land so rich with poetic legacy? The truth is painful. Poetry in Bangladesh is respected but rarely supported. There is admiration, but no infrastructure. Poets are called "soul-

ful” but not “professional.” Book launches echo in empty auditoriums. Anthologies are printed at personal cost and never stocked in major stores. Even today, a poet must rely on passion—and often poverty—to keep writing word festivals, social media, and indie publishing—has opened up some new streams of income: digital monetization, Patreon subscriptions, paid workshops, university residencies, and brand collaborations. A few poets have even become household names through Instagram or viral performances.

Yet in Bangladesh, poetry still walks with bare feet.

Here, the financial prospects of a poet remain thin—almost symbolic. Anthologies are usually self-funded. Poetry books rarely reach bestseller lists. Literary grants are few and competitive. Honorariums, when offered, are modest. Most poets earn through teaching, translation, editing, or unrelated day jobs. The poetry itself often remains unpaid labour—something done despite the system, not because of it.

So is the future bleak, then?
Not always.

We are at a turning point. As Bangladeshi poets enter digital spaces, engage in activism, build communities, and self-publish, the walls are shifting. The underground is rising. And with the right support—patronage, policies, platforms—poetry can become more than a private calling. It can be a public profession.

Reimagining the Poetic Space in Bangladesh

1. Valuing the “Underground”

Instead of waiting for mainstream publishing to approve of us, we must do what these underground poets did: build our own spaces. Zines, online journals, street readings, Instagram reels, collaborative anthologies—our platforms are ours to create.

2. Supporting Young Voices

Universities, NGOs, and arts foundations must start funding poetry projects, organizing regular

readings, and offering honorariums to poets. Artistic work is labour. Let’s stop expecting it for free.

3. Digital as Democratic

The rise of TikTok poetry, Instagram reels, and YouTube recitations may not feel “literary,” but they’re powerful. In a country where few can afford literary journals, these platforms are the new public square. Let’s use them well.

4. Archiving the Unseen

Projects like The Great Bengali Poetry Underground matter precisely because they preserve the invisible. Every young poet today should think about archiving their work, even if just on a blog. Someday, it will matter to someone.

Conclusion

Above all, rethinking and reimagining the poetic industry in Bangladesh is essential. Until then, we must be honest: Contemporary poetry in Bangladesh is not yet a career; it is still a cause. And like all great causes, it depends on those who believe in it fiercely, even when it pays in applause, not bills.

When I read about those poets Chaudhuri mentioned—who wrote for the love of the line, but had to abandon it for jobs—I feel both sorrow and solidarity. Like many of us, they were not failed poets. They were simply poets caught in a system that refused to make room for them.

And yet, they wrote.

That’s the courage we must carry forward—not the illusion that poetry can always pay the bills, but the belief that poetry can change the way we see the world, even if no one else is watching. Because in a Nation full of poets, even crows must learn to listen.

A.K BROTHERS

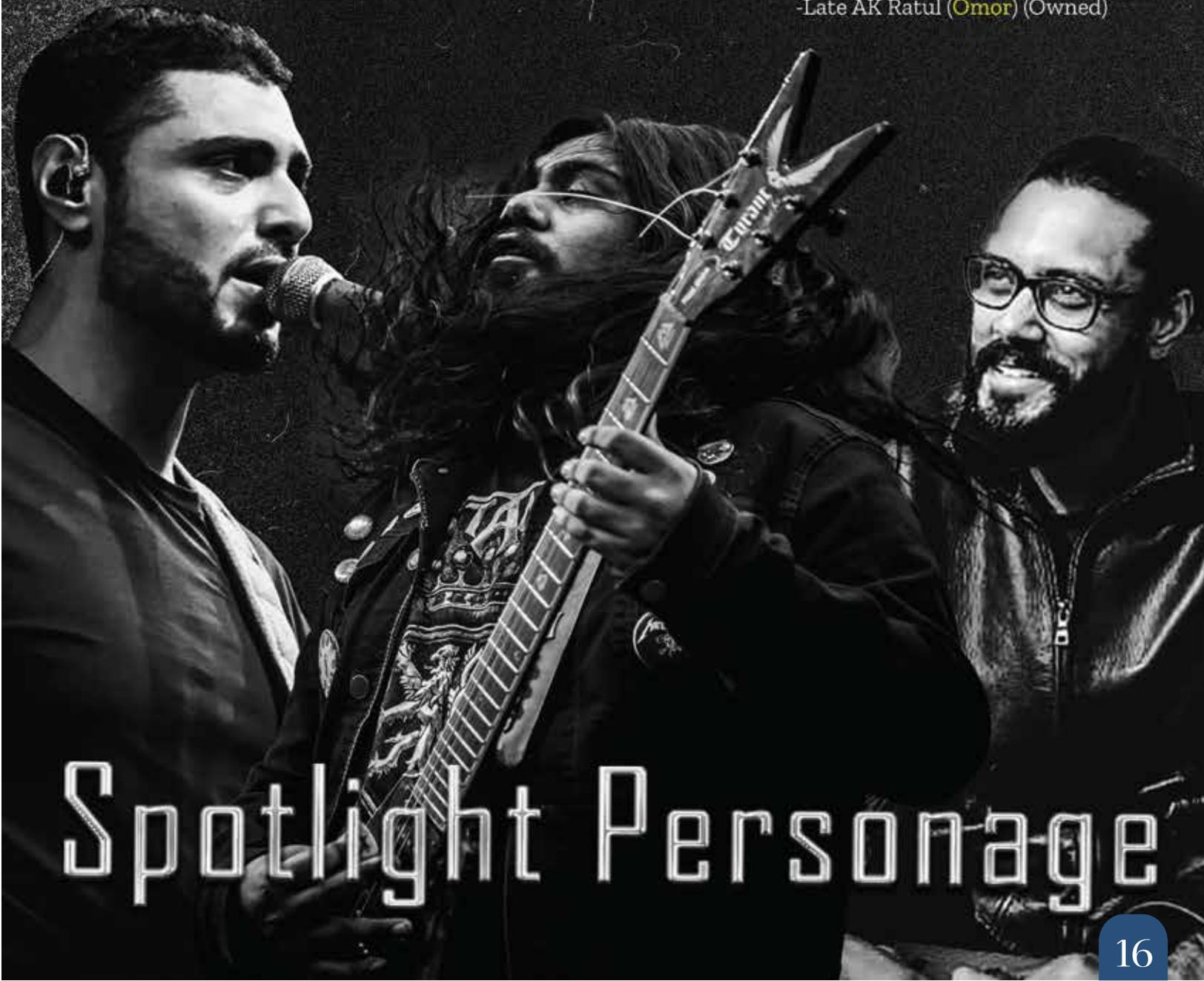
AK Samee, AK Ratul, AK Rahul

Bangladeshi Musical Trio

“হয়েতা সব হারোনার পর বুঝব সবকিছু
-এখন যে তুচ্ছ পরে হবে সে অমর”

"Maybe after being stripped bare will I know one day
-who is trivial now, will once become unfaded

-Late AK Ratul (Omor) (Owned)



Spotlight Personage

These words in the voice of AK Ratul (R.I.P.)

remind us that some people never part but rather become a part. The AK Boys - AK Samee, AK Ratul, and AK Rahul - share brotherhood not only by blood but also in impacting Bangladesh's music. The elder brother, Samee, is a drummer for the popular rock band Owned. Late AK Ratul, the second brother, was the vocalist, bassist, and sound engineer of the band. Though Rahul—the youngest of them—didn't join the same band, he is an impactful guitarist and music content creator, having affiliations with bands like Trainwreck and Poraho. Currently, he performs solo with songs in trend like 'BHANGCHUR' and 'We Are One'. These three sons of the late actor Jashim have been building the legacy of the country's rock music for years."

Being the sons of Jashim, one of Bangladesh's most iconic film actors, do you feel any pressure to live up to a certain legacy?

AK Samee: I don't usually introduce myself with this identity because I don't like to enjoy certain privileges that this identity might and does provide me. I don't feel pressured, rather I do feel proud. We wanted to create our own paths without the privileges of nepotism.

AK Ratul: I personally don't feel pressured at all because we didn't follow the footsteps of our father. Rather, we embarked on a totally different journey of our own, but as we are dealing with the media all the time, some obnoxious interviews do pop-up here and there. **AK Rahul:** We don't feel pressure from being our father's sons. The only pressure is in making sure our actions don't diminish his legacy. I joke with people, "Tui janos ami kar pola?" But honestly, I didn't get to spend much time with him, so I try to preserve his legacy. That's why I end up in so many interviews talking about him. I did get some backlash once because of how I presented myself in an interview, but I've learned from it.

How have you each shaped your identity while being part of a well-known family?

AK Samee: We've always done what we felt like. The kind of music we create isn't for everyone, and I know we could only

pursue this because of the financial freedom our family provided. That privilege allowed us to choose this path, which might be impossible for others. We're grateful. The love we get from fans is something we've earned, not inherited.

AK Ratul: Maybe we would've felt pressure if we'd become actors. I've been offered drama roles over the past couple of years, but I turned them down because it's just not me. I enjoy working behind the scenes—especially the technical aspects.

AK Rahul: Our passion to follow our own path comes from our father. When he introduced action films in Bangladesh, that genre wasn't even popular. Similarly, we pursued music we loved. We feel fortunate that people support us for our music—not because of our family name. Honestly, we don't know much else besides music—we can't even drive or untie knots (laughs).

Ratul, you've fronted 'Owned' for over a decade. Now it has built a strong identity in the Bangladeshi rock scene. How did you define that vision from the beginning? What inspired the formation of the band?

AK Ratul: Well, the start of the band, I believe was because Samee started playing drums and as his brother, I had to do something to catch up, so I started playing bass. So, from the very start we kind of decided that Samee would play drums and I'd play bass. Our entire band is us two brothers and our friends, we practically started learning instruments and jamming together which ultimately resulted in the formation of our band, it's not that we planned too hard about it. We had a versatile taste for music from the beginning, back then we were into a lot of nu metal. We heard bands like Limp Bizkit. **AK Samee:** People mistook our music genre to be original, actually it was not like that, we were inspired by others. I believe in the context of Bangladesh, as our type of music is quite new, people perceive it as original. If we were in a band in the USA, we probably would've gotten nowhere.)

I believe you have one of the tightest live music amongst the performing bands of today in Bangladesh.

AK Ratul: Well, I believe if band-mates perform together for as long as we have, they are bound to produce tight performances.

Samee, as the drummer of 'Owned', what inspires your rhythmic patterns? If you had to introduce your drumming to someone through just one 'Owned' track, which would you pick?

AK Samee: In the start it was always 'David Silveria', the drummer of the Nu-Metal Band 'Korn'. We had this DVD called 'ASYLUM', which was a documentary of 'Korn'. Me including my brothers and I have watched that DVD for at least 20 times as there was no internet and we could wholly focus on a single thing. If I talk about inspiration, there was a segment in that documentary where David was 14-15 years old and he was playing drums and the best part is, he didn't sound like anyone. And later I got into 'GRUNGE', and "Dave Grohl" the drummer of the band - 'NIRVANA', the biggest inspiration for me. Dave Grohl changed my life as I was going through a bad phase of my life. Later on, listening to Foo Fighters felt like a friend is always talking to me. Their music gave me hope. 'Amorsho' is the song I would introduce to someone because it is the toughest song to play for me. I took it as a challenge that I shouldn't sound like anyone else or any drummer. From that particular song I created my own style and identity as a drummer. There's also another song Bondi, which we made in descending order. We jammed and created the last part first and then created the whole song.

Rahul, your switch from Trainwreck to a solo career has been bold. What led to that decision? What challenges and opportunities have you encountered while managing your solo career, compared to your time with a band?

AK Rahul: As I have said earlier, Music is my bread and butter. So, at one point I saw everyone in my band "Trainwreck" was busy and couldn't allow me enough time and also, I left another band "Poraho" for the same reason. That time I was so frustrated that I am not able to generate music. So, one day a boy named 'Arian' rang me and told me to perform in a show in spite of both the bands being inactive. So, I performed there with my own name. And after that 6-7 shows are shown periodically from 'Arbovirus'. He is the guy who guided us and pushed us for-

That's how "AK Rahul" started. After a while I got serious when I got a show in India (Beyond my wildest dreams). This love of people kept me alive and pulled me out of that bad phase of my life. Then we created a song called "We are One". I started with my own name because restarting was not possible for me at that time so I decided to stick to my name. I really don't bother if I face criticism for playing with my own name, what matters to me is doing Heavy music. It's more flexible because we don't have any particular genre, we can do whatever we love.

Why haven't we seen a collaboration between the three of you yet? Is it creative differences, timing, or just circumstances?

AK Samee: As we come from different genres, we didn't want to push it. We didn't want to create a gimmick. **AK Rahul:** We might do a collaboration when we feel like it.

Tell us about your WWE influences

AK Samee: Music and Wrestling is THE common topic for us.

AK Rahul: It had a huge influence because probably we would have found a job and stick to it if there was no wrestling.

Who

were your biggest musical inspirations? Do you all have similar influences or completely different ones?

AK Samee: Internationally it will be 'Foo Fighters', 'Nirvana', 'Deftones', initially it was 'Korn'. I got into 'Led Zeppelin' a lot later but I love it. Recently, I am into 'Wolf Alice' which is a British rock band (I listen to a lot of British bands). I was into 'Tool' 10 years back. Now it's more musical for me. In Bangladesh definitely it was 'Black', I was introduced to the underground scene by listening to 'Black'. Shaju bhai from 'Artcell' was also an influence. Another special mention would be Asif Asghar Ranjan Bhai from 'Arbovirus'. He is the guy who guided us and pushed us for-



-ward.

AK Ratul: Initially it was all nu metal. We listened to nu metal because we had access to MTV. Recently I am super into 'Sleep Token' and 'Bad Omens'. I am mainly a music producer so I have to listen to a lot of different kinds of music.

AK Rahul: Internationally for me are 'Korn', 'Linkin Park', 'Limp Bizkit', 'Slipknot'. Later on, I started listening to 'Lamb of God'. 'Breaking Benjamin' is one of my huge inspirations. Individually 'Dime Bag', 'Nick Thompson'. My drummer influences are Joey from 'Slipknot', and Tony bhai from 'Black'. Shifa bhai from 'Poison Green' was also an influence in my guitar playing.

AK Samee: In Bangladesh, a massive influence for the 3 of us would be 'Cryptic Fate'.

Outside of music, what inspires your creativity – books, films, personal experience, or something else?

AK Ratul: For me it's video games and Anime. My favourite anime is 'JoJo's Bizarre Adventure' and my favourite game is 'Dark Souls'.

AK Samee: For me it's definitely movies. I am a huge fan of 'Tarantino', 'Wes Anderson'. I used to watch movies since I was a kid. My dad introduced me to 'Jackie Chan', 'Pacino', 'De Niro'. I remember I watched 'Godfather' when I was probably like 7-8 years old. My favourite movie is undoubtedly 'Pulp Fiction'.

AK Rahul: For me it's wrestling and video games. I also do podcasts because of wrestling. To me, it's really inspiring. You guys should definitely watch the documentaries: Triple H and Undertaker's 'Last Ride'. These athletes go through a lot which is often inspiring. And yes, I watch a lot of documentaries.

In a world dominated by streaming platforms, how sustainable is a music career financially - especially in Bangladesh?

AK Ratul: If you're on the technical side or you're working behind the scenes then there's a lot of money as I earn mostly by doing so. But earning by just doing live shows for a band like us is practically impossible. In the music scene, everything requires a healthy amount of time. Learning just the instruments takes up to 5-6 years, only then you can start your career. In 2009 I started the producing and engineering side. Now I think I have learned at least something. You have to have a lot of dedication and you have to sacrifice a lot. If music is your plan B? then it's not worth it, you should stick to your plan A. 90% of the time your plan may not work out. So, it's not ideal saying "follow your dreams". Because in Bangladesh it is not a music scene but a social group of some people who do music. You might have to give up your financial freedom and other things to be a musi-

-cian. Think realistically.

AK Samee: To become a musician is a gamble. Doing band music and being financially stable is not possible in our country. If someone can do it, kudos to them. But this is one in a million cases. We do music firstly for ourselves then our audience. You should have a backup initially, doing music alongside.

AK Rahul: If you're an artist? you can explore a lot. If you work with brands? There are scopes of endorsements, sponsors etc. For me it's not only playing guitar on the stage but doing a lot more as an artist. Content creation, hosting is something I do alongside doing music. It's not possible to earn only by doing metal. Take social media very seriously. If you work on that you might be able to create your own money. I would suggest that if you have a guitar start playing it and upload it into YouTube as sort of a content creation.

AK Samee: At first, we have to like the song. We don't measure it by

How do you measure a song's success - streams, audience reactions, or personal fulfilment?

AK Samee: At first, we have to like the song. We don't measure it by views or something like that.

AK Ratul: There are loads of bands which make songs similar to a particular song which got more views. But to me it's like losing your creativity and being an AI machine.

Music is about art and creativity not just being viral and getting views.

AK Rahul: To me longevity is most important. There are bands like 'Nirvana' or 'Metallica' which are still the most "listened to" bands. They didn't create songs for views? cause YouTube wasn't even a thing back then. Also, how a song impacts you is important. How they help you in your difficult times and how you as an audience relate to it.

In the age of digital content and easy sharing, how do you protect your music from unauthorized use or plagiarism? Have you ever faced any challenges relevant to copyright infringement, either as a victim or while navigating the system?

AK Ratul: No. We always give our music for free. This doesn't apply to us. But if you're a business professional or a company who needs to use our songs professionally then it's a different case.

AK Samee: Music is not our bread and butter, so we don't bother about that.

AK Ratul: Our music is for everyone. But if some company or organization asks for the ownership then definitely it's better to have copyright protection. But we don't mind if someone plays or covers our song(s).

What role do you think musicians play in shaping youth culture today?

AK Rahul: Music defines fashion. Artists have the power to inspire that can be lyrical, fashion-wise or any other way.

AK Ratul: During the 'July-Movement', music played a huge role in inspiring people. Songs like 'Gonojowar' from 'Nemesis' influenced a huge number of youth and people. Definitely artists possess the ability to inspire and leave a lasting impact on people.

Where do you see yourselves and the Bangladeshi rock scene - five years from now?

AK Samee: I don't like thinking about what will be after five years or where I see myself after five years. But I hope to listen to novel sounding bands in the next five years. In the Last 5-6 years, I barely listened to any new or fresh sounding band except 'Firoze Jong'. I want at least 10 new sounding bands

within 5 years in our country, but to let that happen the underground scene must come back. Because, if the fresh bands don't have any platform, they lack motivation and therefore collapse.

AK Rahul: Bands like the 'Level 5', 'Conclusion' came from the underground scene and now they sound really interesting. There's no underground scene because people lack dedication. They don't want to face the loss.

What are the differences and changes you see in the Bangla band music industry as a whole, in comparison to the 80s and 90s?

AK Ratul: Now it's easier to learn and record, besides you have resources aplenty in your hands. Everyone has the minimum access to recording a track. I think, production wise, 'Owned' has reached another level compared to other bands. **AK Rahul:** I like the fact that people nowadays listen to more rock music. I like the fact that bands like 'Karnival' are performing in Army stadium. People started to accept and listen to those particular types of music. Also, 'Artcell', 'Warfaze' did an international tour. But to me, the performances will be on the next level, when they share stages with other international bands.

If you weren't a musician what would you guys be?

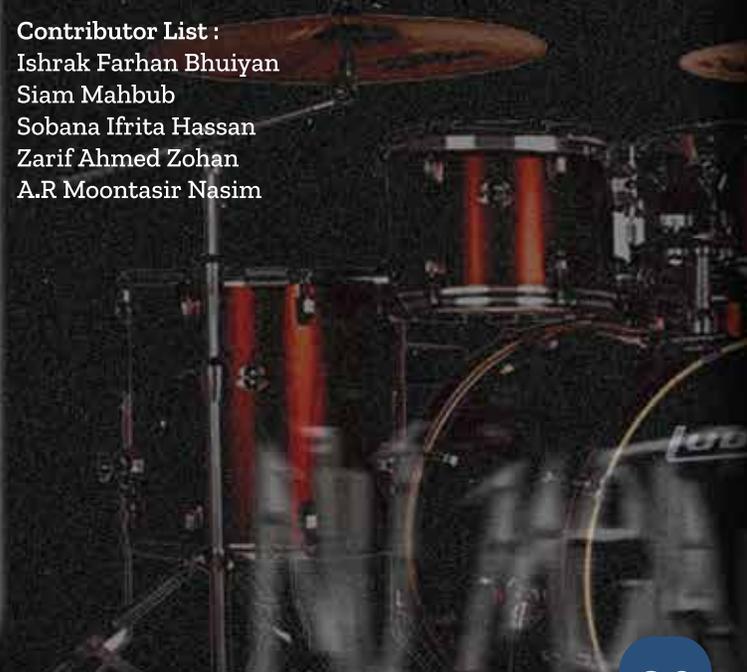
AK Rahul: Wrestler

AK Samee: Cricketer

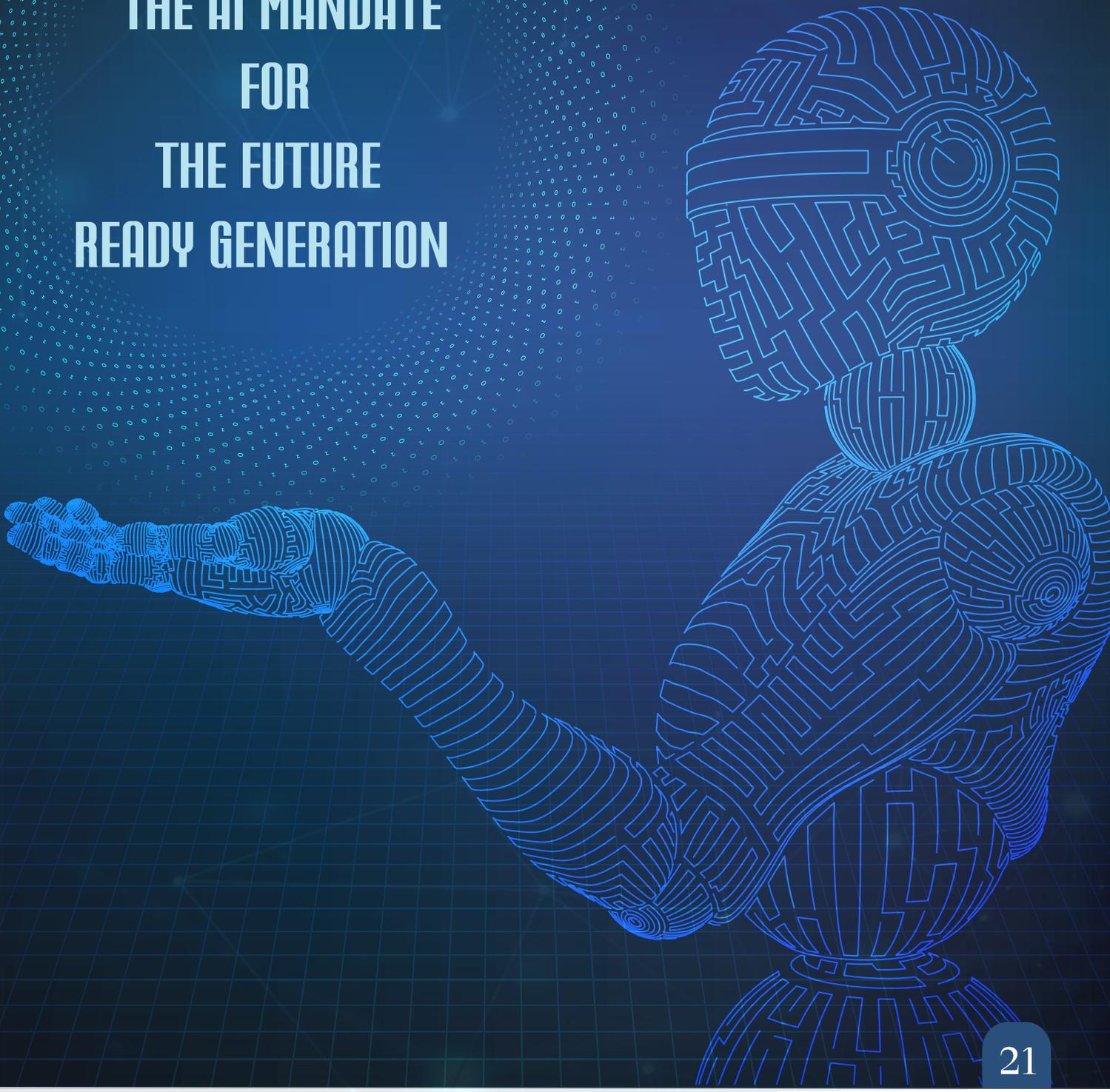
AK Ratul: Something related to Video games.

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**THE AI MANDATE
FOR
THE FUTURE
READY GENERATION**



Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant concept, it's already transforming how Bangladesh learns, hires, and works. The country's AI market is set to hit a staggering US \$1.06 billion by 2025, growing nearly 26% each year to reach US \$4.3 billion by 2031. This rapid surge shows that AI is not just shaping the future; it's redefining the present.

Yet, progress comes with immense pressure. A study by the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies warns that greater automation could cost up to 1.8 million jobs, including 1 million in the garment sector. With over 60% of the population under 25, Bangladesh must act fast; upskilling youth, rethinking recruitment, and redesigning workplaces ; to ensure people and machines can definitely grow together, not apart.

This story aims to explore how AI is reshaping Bangladesh across three fronts; education, recruitment, and the workplace. From overhauling how we learn to redefining how we hire and work, each shift brings both challenges and opportunities. Together, they showcase how Bangladesh can turn the fear of automation into a roadmap for a successful human-machine collaboration.

ACADEMIC ASPECT

Nusrat, a computer science student in Dhaka, was quick to adopt AI tools like ChatGPT to finish assignments faster. At first, it felt like a shortcut; write a prompt, get the answer, submit. But when midterms came, Nusrat realized she could barely solve problems on her own. That was her wake-up call.

Instead of relying on AI for ready-made answers, she started using it as a partner: asking for hints, comparing different solutions, and testing her own ideas against what the system suggested. Slowly, her mindset shifted. She wasn't just completing tasks anymore; she was learning how to build AI systems, also theoretical and practical knitty gritty of this discipline. But at the same time, she felt it is quite necessary to revise the country's academic curriculum to integrate AI education across all disciplines.

Her story reflects what many students must embrace: excelling in the age of AI doesn't mean copying from machines ; it means understanding the underlying concepts, using them smartly, and preparing for challenges that no tool can solve alone.



Dr Mohammad Saidur Rahman is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Computer Science at University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), where he leads the IQSeC Lab, focusing on machine-learning driven cyber-defence, malware detection, network security and quantum-secure communications. With a PhD from Rochester Institute of Technology (2024) and experience as a security research intern at Cisco Quantum Lab, he brings the kind of deep technical insight that links AI capability with the urgency of human-machine collaboration.

It is not just a buzzword, Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming part of everyday life, from smarter apps and banking to healthcare and entertainment. This quiet revolution is changing what students need to learn and how they prepare for the future.

For Bangladesh, it places education at a turning point. Preparing students for an AI-driven world is no longer optional; it's essential. Universities must move beyond traditional teaching to rethink curricula, methods, and partnerships with industry and policymakers. The aim is not just to help students adapt, but to enable them to lead and innovate in an AI-powered era.

CURRICULUM REVISION: MAKING EDUCATION AI-RELEVANT

Traditional academic syllabi no longer meet the demands of an AI-driven economy. To stay relevant, universities in Bangladesh must modernize their curricula across all disciplines, embedding AI concepts not only in computer science but also in fields like business, law, agriculture, and healthcare.

As Dr. Mohammad Saidur Rahman, Assistant Professor at the University of Texas, explained: "In many countries, AI has become a national priority and is integrated across almost every discipline. That's what Bangladesh needs to do as well. It's not enough for students to simply use AI tools; they must understand how these systems connect with real-world challenges." Updating curricula, strengthening university, industry links, and creating opportunities for practical projects are key steps to bridging this gap for the upcoming future.

HANDS-ON, PROJECT-BASED LEARNING: FROM THEORY TO PROBLEM SOLVING

AI literacy requires more than classroom concepts ; it depends on active, practical engagement. To prepare students with real skills, universities must move beyond rote memorization toward lab-based, project-driven learning.

A 2022 BRAC University study found that 66.7% of students encountered project-based learning (PBL) for the first time at university, yet 100% agreed it was beneficial for analytical thinking, teamwork, and motivation. As Dr. Rahman noted, "Theory should be learnt but going beyond theory is necessary. In the US, most courses are taught through project-based learning; otherwise, knowledge remains at the level of buzzwords. Pursuing an MBA at Harvard, for example, is less about textbooks and more about learning by doing."

Still, challenges remain. Many students found PBL time-consuming and struggled with limited local research materials and fair evaluation. Rahman also highlighted the resource gap: "It will take a huge amount of investment to make this accessible to everyone. Universities must ensure that certifications are not devalued and that graduates emerge as resourceful individuals."

If implemented strategically, project based learning can turn students from passive learners into confident, AI-ready problem solvers.

RESEARCH PATRONIZATION: FUELLING INNOVATION AT THE ROOT

Bangladesh invests only 0.30% of GDP in research and development; among the lowest globally. This lack of funding leaves universities struggling to build strong AI programs. As Dr. Rahman explained, "Research is expensive; we might try 1,000 experiments and succeed in only one. That kind of risk tolerance requires government-level support." Without resources, universities cannot develop the competencies needed to compete internationally.

Barriers also include the high cost of publishing (\$3,000–\$4,000 per paper) and presenting at global conferences, which limits visibility for Bangladeshi researchers. As a result, top talent often moves abroad to pursue opportunities in countries with better funding structures, such as India or the U.S. "If we don't value our researchers properly, they will look elsewhere, and we lose the chance to solve our own national problems," Dr. Rahman warned.

To change this, universities must create dedicated AI and data labs, provide research grants, and encourage international collaboration. Crucially, research should focus on Bangladesh's pressing challenges; from traffic congestion to agriculture and disaster management — turning local solutions into global contributions. As Rahman emphasized: "If we can create the right environment, our researchers won't just follow global trends, they will set them."

STRENGTHENING ACADEMIA INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

Bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world practice is crucial for preparing students for an AI-driven economy. Universities can play a key role by building partnerships with industries through internships, industry visits, expert-led seminars, and joint research projects that give students hands-on experience with workplace technologies.

But as Dr. Rahman pointed out, the challenge in Bangladesh is a lack of credible partners. "The industries in Bangladesh are corrupted. Who are we going to collaborate with? They don't have any idea. Do you think the rich manufacturing organizations care about AI? They don't." For this reason, he urged

students to seek opportunities abroad, highlighting how graduates from Dhaka University and IIT have secured roles at global firms like Google.

Still, collaboration within Bangladesh is possible if industries begin to embrace the role of AI. In fields like healthcare, finance, and marketing, AI-driven systems are already transforming operations worldwide. With openness and vision, local companies could follow suit. Until then, universities must both push for change at home and equip students to seize opportunities abroad, ensuring they graduate with the entrepreneurial mindset and problem-solving skills the future demands.

EXPANDING ACCESS THROUGH SPECIALIZED COURSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

In today's fast-changing digital world, not every learner can access full university programs. Short courses and professional certifications can fill this gap by offering flexible, targeted training in AI and related skills. Global platforms like Coursera and edX already provide high-quality content, while local universities and EdTech start-ups are beginning to design their own bootcamps. But as Dr. Rahman pointed out, "They need to have their own competency first. If they don't have the infrastructure or resources, how can they launch something for others?" His reminder stresses the importance of building faculty expertise and facilities before expanding to the wider public.

With that foundation, the opportunities are significant. Micro-certifications and intensive bootcamps can equip learners with job-ready skills, even without a full degree. Global partnerships can ensure world-class quality, while local initiatives can customize training for Bangladesh's unique needs. If designed well, these programs can open doors for students from all backgrounds, helping them upskill, reskill, and remain competitive in an AI-driven economy.

THE NEXT STEP

For students in Bangladesh, the rise of AI is both a challenge and an opportunity. Universities are beginning to change; updating courses, adding more hands-on projects, supporting research, creating links with industry, and offering short certifications. But

much more still needs to be done.

If institutions focus on building strong skills, giving real chances to experiment, and making learning more accessible, students will be better prepared for the jobs of tomorrow. With the right support, they won't just keep up with global change, they will have the tools to lead it.

ACADEMIC ASPECT

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ❏ MODERNIZE CURRICULA ACROSS ALL DISCIPLINES (BUSINESS, LAW, AGRICULTURE, HEALTHCARE, ETC.), NOT JUST COMPUTER SCIENCE
- ❏ PROJECT BASED LEARNING (PBL) COMES WITH CHALLENGES INCLUDING TIME CONSTRAINTS, LIMITED LOCAL RESEARCH MATERIALS, LACK OF FAIR EVALUATION
- ❏ THE HIGH COST OF PUBLISHING (\$3,000—\$4,000) AND CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE LIMITS THE VISIBILITY OF BANGLADESHI RESEARCHERS
- ❏ AI LITERACY REQUIRES ACTIVE, PRACTICAL ENGAGEMENT, MOVING FROM THEORY TO PROBLEM-SOLVING
- ❏ PBL IS HIGHLY BENEFICIAL FOR DEVELOPING ANALYTICAL THINKING, TEAMWORK, AND MOTIVATION
- ❏ TRAINING SHOULD BE CUSTOMIZED FOR BANGLADESH'S UNIQUE NEEDS.

RECRUITMENT ASPECT: THRIVING IN THE MODERN WORKPLACE

Liza, a fresh computer science graduate, has just started applying for data analyst and AI-related jobs. But after sending dozens of CVs, she received no interview calls, and so she decided to seek advice from his senior, Abesh, who worked at a tech company.

Abesh explained that companies now use AI tools to scan CVs before a human even reads them, and they skip the CV if it does not have the right keywords. From that night, Liza started using AI-powered tools to improve her resume. These tools helped her experiences sound clear and professional.

Soon, Liza realized it was not only about writing a strong resume. Companies now valued projects over grades. So she began working on small real-world projects — predicting house prices using Python, and creating a sales dashboard with Power BI. She posted her work on GitHub and LinkedIn. Within weeks, a local startup noticed her profile and called him for an interview.

The interview process was partly automated. The first round was an online test managed by AI software, followed by a short video interview. Finally, she spoke to a human recruiter and she got the job.

Her story shows how job seekers in Bangladesh can adapt to new hiring methods. Instead of fearing automation, they can use AI tools to prepare smarter. In this new era, it's not only about degrees, but about creativity, adaptability, and the willingness to grow with technology.



Dr. Gazi Naser Ali is an AI research scientist at Intel Corporation, bringing expertise in machine learning and human-machine collaboration to our discussion. He emphasises that the real frontier for countries like Bangladesh is not simply automating jobs, but enabling people to work with machines and lead in AI-augmented roles. His insights help frame how our education, recruitment and workplace systems must evolve in concert with technology.

THE EVOLVING WORLD OF PROFESSION AND INDUSTRIES

The demand for analyst and machine learning (ML) jobs is increasing in Bangladesh in various industries as companies become digital and adopt data-driven strategies. When asked about the AI and ML roles evolving in developing countries like Bangladesh versus developed countries like the USA, Gazi Naser Ali explained, "AI is a tool for every professional. It won't replace your work; it will make you more productive. Areas like Agent AI, large language models, robotics, cloud infrastructure, and even AI hardware will expand. In Bangladesh, automation can increase productivity without replacing human labour. Familiarity with cloud tools and AI applications will be valuable."

AI is reshaping industries across Bangladesh and creating fresh opportunities for skilled professionals. In banking and finance, BRAC Bank and City Bank use AI for fraud detection and credit scoring. The ready-made garment (RMG) sector is adopting robotics for precision and productivity, while e-commerce platforms like Daraz and Chaldal rely on AI-driven recommendation systems and chatbots. Healthcare providers such as Maya and Praava Health use AI for faster diagnostics and patient support, and telecom companies like Grameenphone and Robi apply it for customer analytics and service optimization. As industries digitize, the demand for professionals fluent in data, automation, and analytical reasoning continues to grow.

WHAT RECRUITERS VALUE MOST FOR AI/ML ROLES

Technical skills are of the most concern to AI/ML hiring managers, especially Python and Python libraries like TensorFlow, PyTorch, and Scikit-learn, as well as SQL and cloud environment tools. They also welcome hands-on projects that clearly show how machine learning was employed to solve real problems including what methods were applied and results achieved. About the recruitment criteria, Gazi Naser Ali highlighted, "Look for unique contributions. A resume may list many projects, but what is your core idea? Skills must be real and testable. Creativity matters, think independently and show your imagination." An appropriate educational background and course work in ML, statistics, or linear algebra is also preferred. Practical experience with data pipelines or model deployment is a definite advantage, and certifications can add meat to a junior candidate's CV. Technical work presented in simple, concise

EVOLVING ROLES AND CORE COMPETENCIES

AI has transformed the job space which led to a dynamic change in both prevailing job demands as well as the creation of entirely new jobs. Gazi Naser Ali mentioned that using AI or ML should be beyond disciplines, "AI is a tool; whatever your major, use it to make your work impactful." For all other occupations, the shift requires a pervasive "AI literacy," in that they must understand the ability and boundary of AI, use AI-based tools appropriately

to perform mundane tasks like content writing or summing up information, and develop intrinsically human competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, and complicated problem-solving since these become the key differentiators in a future where menial tasks are getting automated. With AI and ML taking such a pace, it is absolutely the projects and real-life experiences which are the strongest pieces of evidence for a candidate's hands-on skills and their solving ability. When asked about the domain knowledge gap, Gazi Naser Ali highlighted, "Workload is split. Technical people handle modeling and optimization, domain experts provide feature knowledge. Collaboration bridges gaps; AI cannot replace domain expertise entirely."

Artificial Intelligence is emerging as a production force that is reshaping the nature of work itself and the business environment is transforming not only the existing roles but also fostering the development of entirely new ones. New jobs are being created within the scope of existing positions, raising the demand for specialists, such as MLOps engineers who are essential for model production, maintenance, and deployment, and generative AI specialists capable of creatively and analytically leveraging large language models. Moreover, the AI governance and ethics field calls for attention, hinting towards the need for impactful and responsible applications of AI technologies.

PROJECTS AS PROOF OF SKILLS

In the rapidly advancing areas of AI and ML, working on projects provides the deepest proof of a person's skill and issue handling capabilities. Whether it is accomplished through personal passion projects showcasing diverse methods, contributions to open-source projects, success in Kaggle competitions, or formal internships and consulting efforts, the end is always to possess an impressive body of work with clearly articulated problem definitions, clear methods, and measurable outcomes. When asked about the importance of GPA and Projects, he explained that a high GPA shows standard, but stellar, impactful projects can balance a lower GPA. Projects don't always need to be domain-specific. In fact, uniqueness and core skills are more important. Broad projects are better than very narrow ones.

So, which kinds of projects? Demonstrating real-world value in AI or ML roles adjacent to these fields can be showcased even without a technical background. In

marketing, for instance, one could assess previous campaign data to identify key engagement drivers through Excel or Google Sheets. Building business intelligence dashboards depicting small business sales data can also assist them in making informed business decisions. Constructing employee turnover analytic dashboards using public data sets or no-code software like Orange ML to build basic churn prediction models as described in HR could also be done. Even freelancers could perform sentiment analysis on social media reviews, track Google Trends for market analysis, or even optimize advertisement spending using their performance data; all without programming, pseudo-deepcoding knowledge. And for most of the professions, having a portfolio is particularly important for people with a technical background. Projects and work experience attest to one's competence with AI and machine learning tools, and how well they program.

AI IN RECRUITMENT AND JOB PREPARATION

The use of AI is steadily growing in the recruitment sector, significantly altering how candidates are assessed and chosen. Gazi Naser Ali commented, "AI helps with initial screening, testing, and summarizing, but the final hiring decision is always human. It can also reduce bias in candidate selection if used properly." At the initial phase, during the resume screening, AI systems focus on relevant phrases in the documents submitted such as the job title, required skills, and specific tools as well as skills outlined in the job description. Problem-solving and technical skills are often assessed on automated platforms such as HackerRank and TestGorilla. At the very initial stages, some candidates may be filtered through chatbot prescreening that checks for basic qualification or availability of the candidate and then passes the details to a human recruiter. Candidates intending to apply for positions through the AI systems are advised to "board" the systems with relevant details and instructions like CVs, pertinent phrases, thorough prep for automated evaluation etc. with AI tools.

FREELANCING IN THE AI ECONOMY

Freelancers, too, are finding new opportunities in AI-powered analytics, chatbot design, and data visualization. Beginners are encouraged to master tools like Python, Power BI, and SQL while focusing on solving real client problems. As Dr. Gazi advises, "Don't lose your identity. A business analyst using AI is still a busi-

ness analyst, not an AI engineer.” Authenticity, strong communication, and execution remain the keys to standing out in an increasingly competitive freelance market. On top of that, labeled data can also be purchased on these platforms, allowing freelancers to branch out into higher-paying niches, such as e-commerce analytics and social media sentiment analysis, AI-powered chatbots for small businesses.

THE WAY FORWARD

As the single most important thing, Gazi Naser Ali advised, “Know the core concepts of your field, whether STEM or non-STEM. Build skills on a solid base- without it, nothing else works.”

People don’t need to be coders to work effectively with AI; what matters the most is their ability to solve problems and tell compelling stories with data. Focusing on these skills allows them to add value by interpreting insights and driving decisions, even without deep programming knowledge. The key is to upskill smartly, master one tool at a time and apply it through meaningful projects that demonstrate their capabilities. Employers value curiosity and a willingness to learn just as much as formal credentials, so showing their passion for growth and adaptability can set them apart in today’s AI-driven workplace.

RECRUITMENT ASPECT KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 🔧 AI IS A TOOL FOR COLLABORATION, NOT SUBSTITUTION
- 🔧 THE SHIFT REQUIRES A PERVASIVE “AI LITERACY” FOR ALL OCCUPATIONS
- 🔧 AI IS TRANSFORMING ROLES, RAISING DEMAND FOR SPECIALISTS LIKE MLOPS ENGINEERS AND GENERATIVE AI EXPERTS
- 🔧 RECRUITERS LOOK FOR UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS AND CORE IDEAS; SKILLS MUST BE REAL AND TESTABLE
- 🔧 AI HELPS WITH INITIAL SCREENING, TESTING, AND SUMMARIZING, BUT THE FINAL HIRING DECISION IS ALWAYS HUMAN
- 🔧 PEOPLE DON’T NEED TO BE CODERS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY WITH AI; WHAT MATTERS THE MOST IS THEIR ABILITY TO SOLVE PROBLEMS AND TELL COMPELLING STORIES WITH DATA
- 🔧 KNOW THE CORE CONCEPTS OF YOUR FIELD, WHETHER STEM OR NON-STEM, AND BUILD SKILLS ON A SOLID BASE.

WORKPLACE ADAPTATION & AUGMENTATION

Rafiq works at a customer service desk in a telecom company in Dhaka. Every day, he used to answer the same questions over and over, from balance checks to SIM activation issues. It was tiring, and long queues meant customers often got frustrated.

When the company introduced an AI chatbot, routine questions were handled automatically. Rafiq could now focus on the complicated cases that really needed a human touch. His workload became easier, and customers left happier.

For Rafiq, AI didn't take his job away; it made it more manageable, showing how technology can support workers instead of replacing them.

Walk into any major corporation in Dhaka today, and you will likely see employees collaborating with artificial intelligence to achieve tasks that once felt impossible. From Grameenphone's service teams deploying chatbots to bKash analysts using machine learning for fraud detection, AI has shifted from experimental tech to essential business infrastructure.

This transformation is not confined to IT. Banking, manufacturing, retail, and even agriculture are realizing that AI is no longer optional, it is the competitive differentiator.



Zubair Tusar is currently Manager of Data Science at Robi Axiata Limited in Dhaka, where he leads the design and deployment of end-to-end AI and machine-learning solutions across B2C and B2B segments. With a background in software engineering and a keen focus on applied analytics and automation, Zubair has helped his organization monitor acquisition-quality, optimize field-force efficiency and embed AI into everyday operations.

THE TOOLS DEFINING WORKPLACES

Globally, companies use two broad categories of AI: predictive and generative. Predictive models forecast demand, optimize logistics, and analyze customer behavior, while generative AI creates new content, text, images, video, even code.

"Predictive models like XGBoost deliver accurate forecasts, while generative tools such as ChatGPT or

Gemini are now everyday aids for content creation and customer interaction," explained Zubair Tusar, Manager of Data Science at Robi Axiata.

Bangladesh follows the same pattern. Microsoft 365 Copilot has become the backbone of many corporations, blending language models with Excel, Outlook, and Teams. At Robi, marketing teams analyze customer data and draft campaign proposals simultaneously; tasks that once took days.

ChatGPT remains the most versatile, helping everyone from junior analysts at BRAC Bank to senior consultants at DataSoft.

Specialized tools are also on the rise: Pathao uses machine learning for route optimization, Shohoz for dynamic pricing, while garment factories such as Beximco experiment with AI-powered quality control. By 2023, AI adoption in textile factories reached 45%, boosting productivity by up to 30% since 2020.

BEYOND TECH ROLES

The biggest misconception about AI adoption is that it's confined to IT. In reality, non-technical functions are some of the heaviest users.

In marketing, for instance, 68% of Bangladeshi businesses now use at least one generative AI tool for content creation and customer targeting, with predictive analytics timing ads so precisely that, as Zubair Tusar noted, "It often feels like Facebook is listening, but really it's just recognizing cycles and patterns." In addition, Finance teams are also reaping benefits; bKash's adoption of fintech tools Nimonton and Biponon led to a 76% productivity increase and 15% monthly onboarding growth.

Meanwhile, HR is also vastly transforming with Unilever's AI-driven screening processing around 250,000 applications, reducing hiring time from four months to four weeks and saving 50,000 hours of labor. Together, these examples reveal that AI is not replacing staff but augmenting them, enabling faster decisions and greater efficiency across diverse corporate functions.

Rather than replacing staff, AI is augmenting them. "AI can generate 10 draft ideas, but it's better to first think for yourself, then refine with AI," Zubair Tusar said. "That way, the machine augments you, it doesn't replace you."

TAILORING AND HUMANIZING AI

Adoption also means tailoring AI to local culture. Grameenphone's systems now understand regional dialects and indirect communication styles. Research initiatives like Bengali.AI are building

models trained on Bangla data, helping global tools adapt to local nuance.

"Even if accuracy is limited, AI-powered agents augment customer service and improve satisfaction," Zubair Tusar explained.

TRAINING THE WORKFORCE

Smart corporations are pairing adoption with training. Robi Axiata provides prompt engineering workshops to help employees extract maximum value from generative models. "We are not building foundation models," Zubair Tusar clarified, "but employees are encouraged to use AI effectively and even propose AI-based solutions."

Across the country, companies are introducing AI literacy programs so staff in marketing, finance, and operations can build function-specific skills.

DATA SECURITY AS RESPONSIBILITY

With AI comes responsibility. Zubair Tusar emphasized that customer data is tightly regulated under telecom licenses, anonymized before use, and checked for compliance by regulators. But he also flagged emerging risks like prompt injection, which can manipulate AI systems much like a software hack.

Forward-thinking firms are addressing this not only with technical guardrails but also with transparency. By explaining how AI protects users, rather than hiding it, companies like bKash are strengthening customer trust. Many now view AI security as part of corporate social responsibility, running digital literacy workshops in rural areas to build wider awareness.

THE ROAD AHEAD

The story of AI in Bangladeshi workplaces is one of rapid but uneven adaptation. Some employees fear job loss, others embrace change, while many fall in between. Yet strategies and training are steadily pushing the curve forward.

Zubair Tusar offered practical advice: "If AI can replace you at one level, move to a higher one. Focus on system design, architecture, or strategy; roles that need human thinking. Be curious and proactive."

Ultimately, the companies leading this transformation are not those with the biggest budgets but those that combine global AI capabilities with deep local knowledge. The future of work in Bangladesh is being shaped not by machines alone but by people who learn how to adapt, augment, and guide AI responsibly.

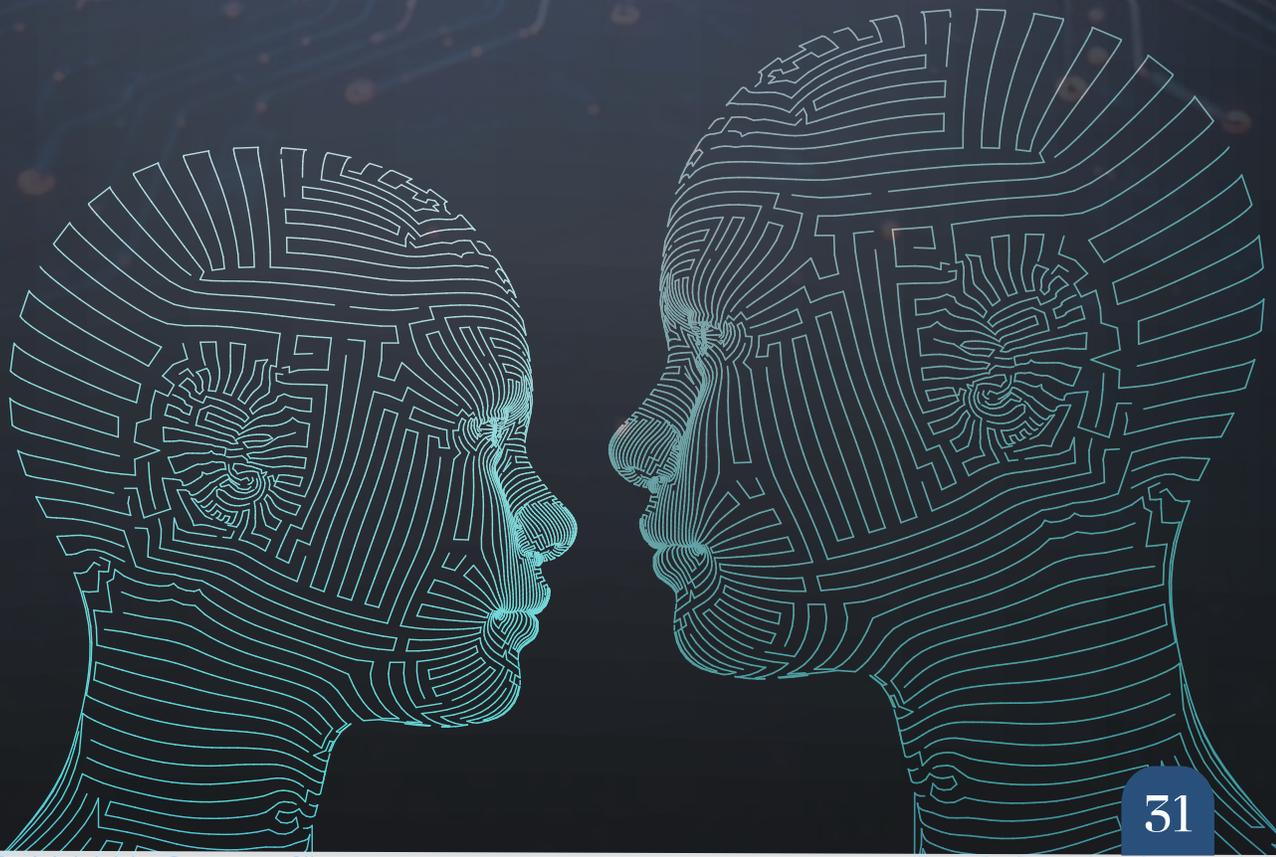
WORKPLACE ADAPTATION & AUGMENTATION ASPECT

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- AI IS THE COMPETITIVE DIFFERENTIATOR AND IS NO LONGER OPTIONAL IN SECTORS LIKE BANKING, MANUFACTURING, RETAIL, AND AGRICULTURE.
- ADOPTION IN TEXTILE FACTORIES REACHED 45% BY 2023, BOOSTING PRODUCTIVITY BY UP TO 30% SINCE 2020.
- EMPLOYEES SHOULD MOVE TO HIGHER-LEVEL ROLES LIKE STRATEGY AND SYSTEM DESIGN.
- TAILORED SYSTEMS (E.G., GRAMEENPHONE'S) CAN AUGMENT CUSTOMER SERVICE AND IMPROVE SATISFACTION, EVEN WITH LIMITED INITIAL ACCURACY.
- VIEW AI SECURITY AS A PART OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY. TRANSPARENCY (EXPLAINING HOW AI PROTECTS USERS) STRENGTHENS CUSTOMER TRUST

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Game On

Esports Evolution in Bangladesh

- MUHD. NAZMUS SAQUIB

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Thursday night, after a long, hectic week, Late hours, a dark room, RGB casing fans glowing over your face, a gaming pad in your hand. The hours roll by—FIFA, COD, PUBG, GTA V— what could be a better option to spend the weekend for a gamer, right? But what if your mom or dad walks in and sees you glued to the screen like a zombie for hours or even days? They would literally turn you into a zombie, no?

To Gen-Z, gaming is a form of recreation, where they can indulge themselves in a realm of excitement. But to the parents? a waste of time and a bad addiction. The concerns range from unproductiveness and addiction to physical issues like back pain, headache and many more.

So many concerns, but what if- this waste of time is actually a window of opportunity? What if this addiction turns into an actual earning source? No one in this country would have thought of gaming as an income source even ten years ago, but now the scenario is changing. With an estimated global market of US\$4.8bn, esports gaming has a bright future in Bangladesh as well. How did it start? What are the possibilities? How can it be institutionalized? - To understand this shift and the trends, we need to look at how esports took root here.



Rise of E-Sports in Bangladesh

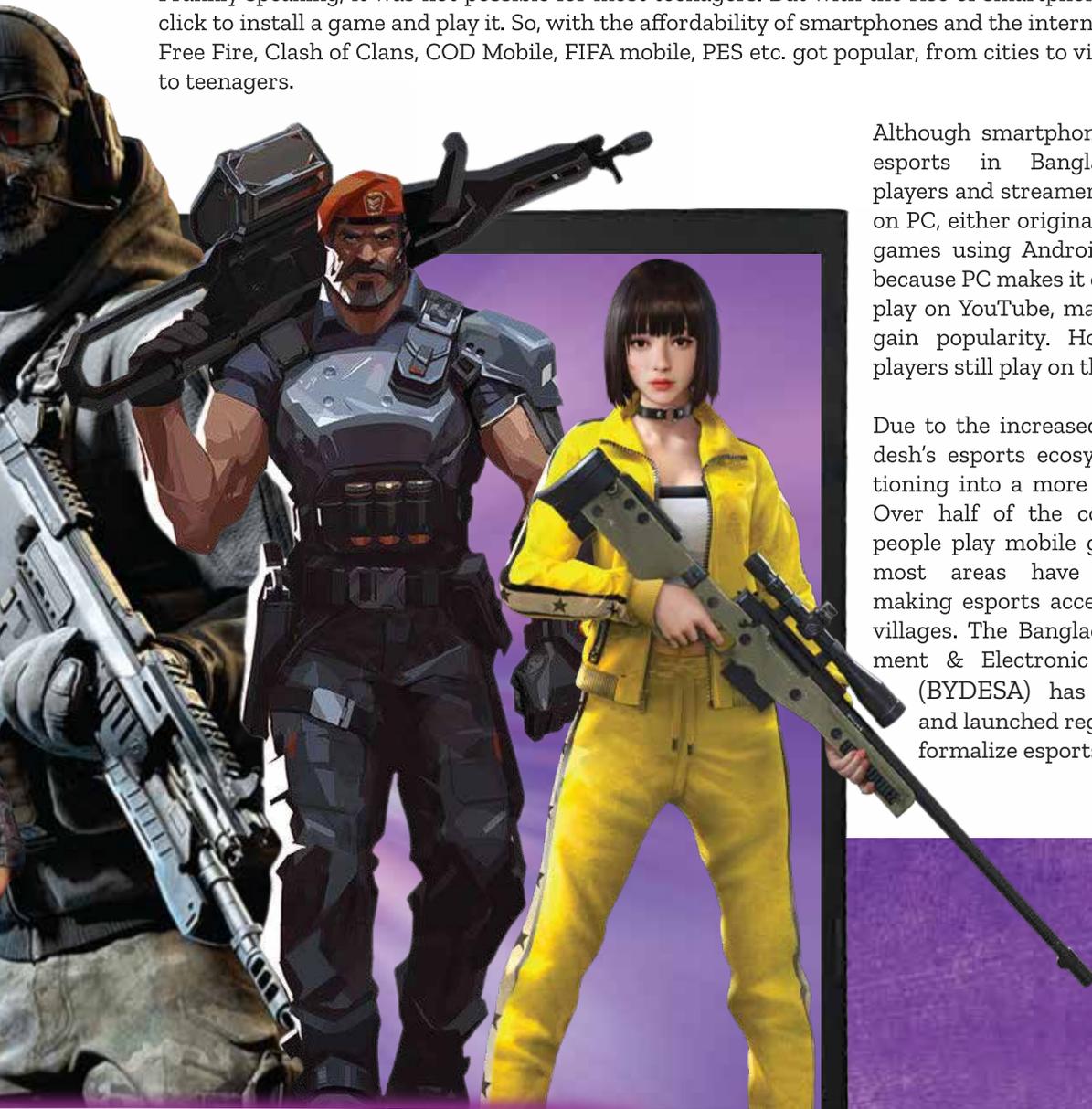
The rise of Esports among the masses can be directly linked to the rise of smartphones and broadband internet from the 2010s. As the technology became cheaper and smartphones became available at a very low budget, more and more players got drawn into esports. The reason why smartphone affordability was essential to popularize esports is simple.

PC or console gaming has been well-known to teenagers since the 90s. *Mustafa*, *Road Rash*, and *GTA* were the most famous games among the players. Upper-class kids had their own system, while middle-class kids were drawn into local video gaming shops. However, the esports scenario was not quite popular until the games came to smartphones. The core reason is that computers or consoles like Xbox and PlayStation are neither cheap nor simple. *Firstly*, the system is too costly to afford just for gaming. *Secondly*, one needs thousands of taka to buy a licensed game (most of us used to play pirated versions of offline games anyway). Even if we ignore the monetary fact, one needs to know the functions of using a computer, installing games, tweaking the settings, and only then can they play them.

Frankly speaking, it was not possible for most teenagers. But with the rise of smartphones, it just needs one click to install a game and play it. So, with the affordability of smartphones and the internet, games like PUBG, Free Fire, Clash of Clans, COD Mobile, FIFA mobile, PES etc. got popular, from cities to villages, from toddlers to teenagers.

Although smartphones have popularized esports in Bangladesh, professional players and streamers tend to play games on PC, either original pc games or mobile games using Android emulators, mostly because PC makes it easy to stream gameplay on YouTube, manage comments and gain popularity. However, the general players still play on their mobile phones.

Due to the increased popularity, Bangladesh's esports ecosystem is now transitioning into a more structured industry. Over half of the country's 170 million people play mobile games regularly, and most areas have internet coverage, making esports accessible from cities to villages. The Bangladesh Youth Development & Electronic Sports Association (BYDESA) has standardized rules and launched regional leagues to help formalize esports.





Income from Gaming?

Okay, we now know gaming is popular in Bangladesh. But how do you earn by playing games?

The easiest earning source to think of is **YouTube**. Thousands of players stream their gameplay, get monetized and earn money. That's the basics.

But then what? If you're good enough, you get a **sponsorship**. Yes, just like franchise league teams in cricket or football get sponsored, you can get sponsored too.

Don't like the uncertainty of these options? Then why not join as an employee? Yes, you can get a job as a gamer. All you have to do is be good at gaming and get picked by a team. Then sign a contract. How-

ever, the salary in Bangladeshi esports culture is not that high.

If you want to go after a big shot, try joining **tournaments**. There are tonnes of domestic, international tournaments across the world to participate in and earn lakhs of Taka. Domestic tournaments typically offer prize pools ranging from BDT 1,000 to 60 lakhs, and for international tournaments, prize pools can be \$4,000 - \$40,000 for regional South Asian events, and potentially a share of *millions* of US dollars for top-tier global competitions.

Other than the above-mentioned sources, esports players or teams also earn from coaching, merchandise sales, community events and other ventures.

How to Get on Top? -Institutions Helping Out

After knowing about the income sources, it feels lucrative, right? One can earn millions if they are good at gaming. But is it that easy? The answer is- no. From the 80 million gamers, including 6 million PC/console gamers, only a few, the top few, can reach the level where they can start earning from gaming. So, how can someone differ from the 80 million and stand out on top?

The **telecom companies** like Grameenphone and Robi arrange frequent tournaments as well as offering Fellowship, which includes free high-end gear, paid internship and coaching.

On the private side, actual **coaching centres** are offering weekly sessions for popular titles like PUBG Mobile and Valorant. These academies provide one-on-one video analysis of the gameplay, simulated battles against other academy teams, and in-house workshops on streaming setup and personal branding.

Furthermore, **Academia** is also getting on board. Universities like DU, Brac, NSU, and EWU have already established esports clubs. These clubs not only provide regular practice partners and facilities but also host training sessions on teamwork and strategy.

The global revenue in this sector is expected to have an annual growth rate of 5.56%, which will result in a projected market volume of US\$5.9bn by 2029. With such help from both the public and private sectors, the industry is becoming more competitive, and the prospects are getting stronger day by day.

Challenges & Future Outlooks

On July 13, esports was officially recognized as an official sport in Bangladesh by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, which is, of course, good news for the gamers. But there are numerous challenges affecting the progress.

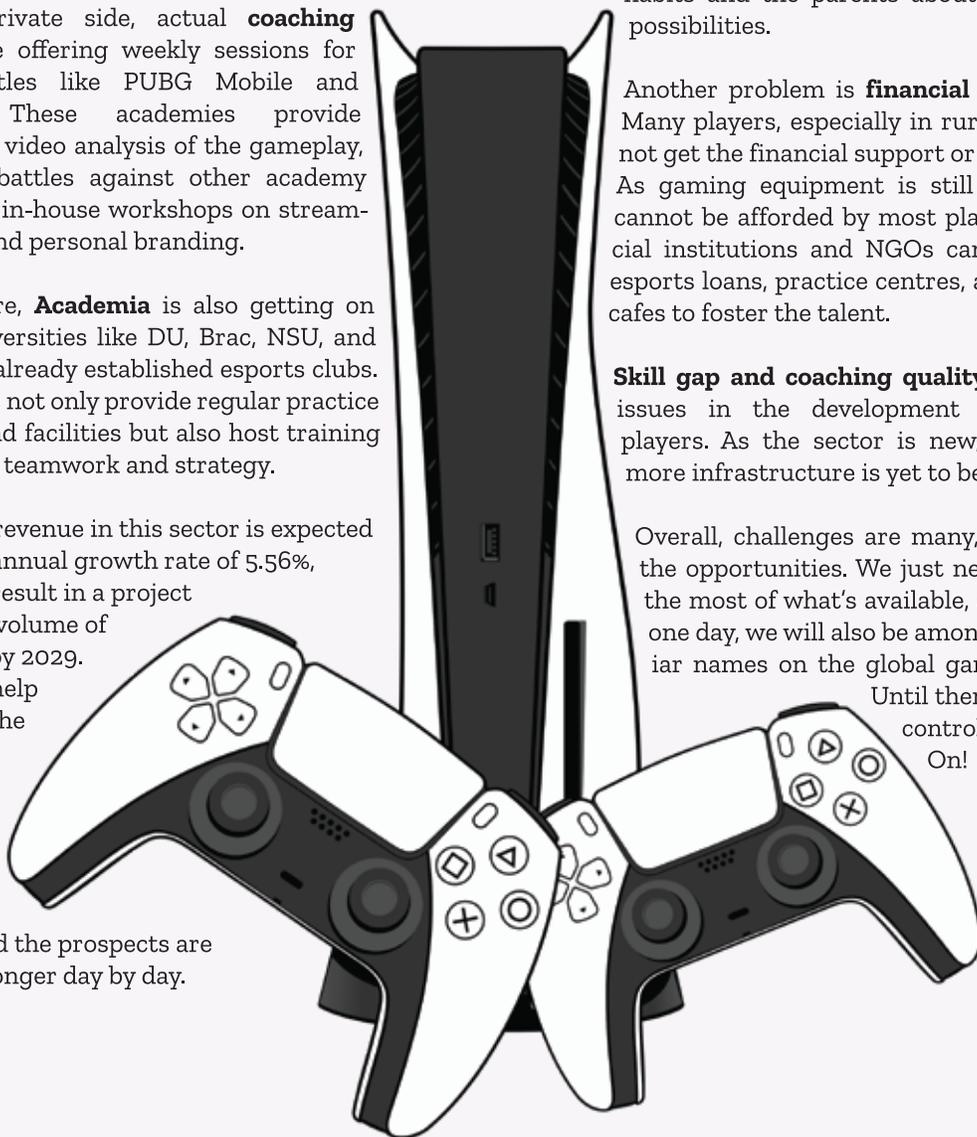
The first and foremost one would be the **social view** on gaming. As mentioned earlier, parents believe gaming to be a time waste. To some extent, it is true as most gamers are casual, and it just becomes an addiction. The serious gamers with potential are therefore also seen to be wasting time. To fix this, high-potential players should be identified. Besides, we must educate the teenagers about safe gaming habits and the parents about the career possibilities.

Another problem is **financial conditions**. Many players, especially in rural areas, do not get the financial support or equipment. As gaming equipment is still costly and cannot be afforded by most players, financial institutions and NGOs can introduce esports loans, practice centres, and gaming cafes to foster the talent.

Skill gap and coaching quality are other issues in the development of esports players. As the sector is new, more and more infrastructure is yet to be developed.

Overall, challenges are many, but so are the opportunities. We just need to make the most of what's available, and by this, one day, we will also be among the familiar names on the global gaming stage.

Until then, grab your
control and Game
On!



SUSTAINABLE FINANCING IN BANGLADESH:

Origin, Development & Current State

Jarraf Rahman Rasha
Department of Finance
University of Dhaka

Sustainability and third-world developing countries, the two terms do not really blend well. But inevitably, with time, every country is bound to improve their ESG criteria and double down on their application of them. With every industry across the globe trying to figure out how they can become more sustainable, finance is not that far behind and also due to the impact of the financial industry on the economy, it is even more significant to ensure that the transition happens faster rather than later. In that regard, sustainable financing is aimed at supporting and developing funding projects as well as activities which can bring about positive environmental as well as social outcomes without reducing economic benefits. The main importance of sustainable finance is that it secures the environment for sustainable growth for a country and at the same time, helps in ensuring social development as well as enhances market opportunities for better economic benefits.

Now, the Bangladeshi financial sector is mainly composed of three segments, which are the formal, semi-formal and informal segments. All of these segments host different institutions, ranging from the supreme authority, such as the Bangladesh Bank, to regular financial institutions such as commercial banks. About sustainable financing, Bangladesh hosts one of the most promising environments and the country's central bank, Bangladesh Bank, as well as the government, have already put efforts towards achieving the sustainability goals in the financial sector.

Before diving into the challenges and prospective solutions as to how the financial industry of Bangladesh can be better leveraged from sustainable financing, let's explore some of the initiatives that have been taken, which will go to show that Bangladesh actually has been pioneering in the world of sustainable financing.

1. Green Banking Initiative: To introduce sustainable financing to the Bangladeshi financial market, the Bangladesh Bank has curated quite a lot of initiatives, including guidelines for environmental risk assessment, green marketing, green product innovation and how the financial institutions can actually move forward to help achieve the target.

2. Green Transformation Fund: This is one of the most important initiatives undertaken to date in the context of sustainable financing, which has been operational since 2016 to support environmentally friendly projects and initiatives, promoting sustainable finance.

3. Sustainability-Linked Loans: Another important initiative taken to further promote sustainability finance has been the introduction of specific sustainability performance targets (ESG Goals) to be fulfilled by companies on the basis of which they can obtain cheaper loans, as well.

The major reason behind saying that the two terms sustainability and third world developing country do not blend well is that the dynamics and the underlying challenges engulfing the developing countries do not give the businesses working in various sectors the breathing opportunity to free their wings and meet the ESG goals as doing so increases the operational costs by a lot. There are other issues, as well, some of which are outlined below.

1. Limited Financial Resources: Bangladesh is plagued with an acute shortage of resources, for which funds cannot be allowed to flow to green projects a lot if they cannot ensure enough returns to justify the transaction.

2. Regulatory & Policy Hurdles: The current regulatory and policy framework is quite an old one, which has not been designed to support such radical changes.

3. Technological Constraints: In Bangladesh, the dependency on traditional energy sectors such as crude oil, fossil fuel etc. is too high, and it does not have the infrastructural support to integrate the components of the renewable energy sectors.

4. Capacity Building: One of the greatest challenges in promoting and integrating sustainable financing is implementing the policies introduced till this point and onwards. The major issue here is that the financial institutions are not yet ready to allow funds in amounts greater than required due to the underlying risks.

In this part, before elucidating the probable changes, it is important to elaborate on the benefits that can be derived through the implementation of sustainable financing.

1. Economic Benefits: With more and more sustainable financing occurring, more and more innovations will subsequently follow through. This will surely attract newer investments, create job opportunities and contribute to the growth.

2. Environmental Benefits: With a reduced carbon footprint and conservation of resources encouraged through sustainable financing, the ultimate beneficiary will be the population of the country.

3. Social Benefits: With a better environment to live in and a healthy economy with lots of job opportunities, the standard of living will increase over time.

Now, in the context of Bangladesh and its financial sector, the following changes can be introduced gradually to foster a better environment to support sustainable financing.

1. Policy-Level Changes: In order to ensure sustainable finance is incorporated into the financial industry, it is important to bring policy-level changes and include the guidelines at the fundamental levels. For this reason, expanding policies such as the Sustainable Finance Policy can help to do that.

2. Capacity Building: By increasing the investment efforts in sustainable financing through training and education for the financial institutions, the promotion and integration of sustainable financing can be ensured.

3. Incentive and Support: With financial incentives, it is bound to attract both businesses and financial institutions to keep pace to complete their roles and responsibilities regarding ESG more effectively in the long term.

Overall, the concept of sustainable financing is an important one, and if it can be applied, the financial sector as well as the entire economy of Bangladesh will benefit in many ways that have already been outlined.





SPOTLIGHT PERSONAGE

Ayman Sadiq is a Bangladeshi educator, entrepreneur, and the founder & CEO of 10 Minute School, the country's largest online education platform. Launched in 2015, the platform offers free academic and skill-based resources to over **250,000 students** daily. Ayman's innovative approach to education has earned him significant accolades, including the Queen's Young Leader Award in 2018 and a spot on **Forbes Asia's "30 Under 30"** list the same year. An alumnus of the Institute of Business Administration at the University of Dhaka, he is also a motivational speaker and bestselling author, dedicated to empowering youth through education and skill development.

Your journey as a leader in the EdTech industry began with tutoring sessions on Facebook which ultimately evolved into what we know as 10MS. On a personal note, what incident or moment led you to believe that the tutoring sessions were more than just any other project?

During my university days, as a tutor at Mentor's, I have seen students discontinuing their education due to financial struggles. You know, the university admission period is already filled with challenges, and this affordability issue is an extra burden. Then I thought that teaching in a class can only serve students present in that particular class. But a video can serve the purpose for a large number of students and that's also free of cost which actually led to the establishment of 10MS on 17 May, 2015.

Did you have a different career trajectory before 10MS? Can you share that with us?

Initially, I didn't even have the idea of what EdTech is. I grew up in an Army-based environment. My father joined the Defense Force, he was also a student of University of Dhaka. Continuing the tradition, I qualified for the ISSB (Inter Services Selection Board) before starting my journey at IBA. Seeing my family struggles, my mother advised me not to take the hard route (smiling). And then I joined IBA.

Tutoring students helped to earn a handsome amount of money within a short time. However, I participated and won a number of prestigious business competitions like Brandwidth (it was the most famous one in IBA back then), Biz Maestros, Future Leader League etc.

We were the youngest winning team of Biz Maestros at that time and also earned the title of the Global Champion of this competition. This led to receiving an offer to join Unilever Bangladesh. But at the same time, we got the sponsorship offer from Robi Axiata Limited for 10MS. Then I thought, "Why not give it a try?"

We can safely say that 10MS is not just a platform for video tutorials, rather a comprehensive learning ecosystem. We are pretty much sure it was not easy, but if you had to outline the greatest challenge of all, what was it and how did you navigate it?

The greatest challenge was to keep the sponsorship alive. We needed to completely rely on our sponsors for operating 10MS because of our free products and services. So, the fear of losing this financial support was always there. Another challenge emerged when we decided to offer paid products to our students in 2020. This time, it was about financial investment. Although we were new to the paid products and services area, we had 5 years of experience in the EdTech by that time. So, we played this point to our investors that our experience in the industry can be valuable.

Actually, when you operate in an industry, you have to understand where it is going. In this case, we had nobody to follow. So, we had to learn it on our own facing all these challenges.

Bangladesh's demographics represent an interesting landscape driven by opportunities and challenges. But, which local education challenge did you find the most surprising to address using technology?

It's interesting that a significant percentage of the country's total population fall under the age of 25, which definitely is a huge opportunity for Bangladesh. But the thing is, we need to have proper language and technology skills. For example, if a person knows a language properly, s/he can go abroad and make his/ her life better and make great contributions. We are focusing on language education for this.

You now have a large workforce but once it was a small team juggling through making videos and promoting them. What has been your approach to oversee this massive change in content creation?

It's actually the team. When you have the right people in the right place, there is little to worry about.

Your platform has now expanded significantly in terms of what you teach. What is the process you follow to decide which subjects take precedence over others?

We basically focus on academics always, especially grades 6-10. We have found emphasizing the

higher grades in this range effective as junior students often find it difficult to learn something using devices.

During the pandemic, how did you handle the operations? As you already mentioned that you launched paid products at that time, that was a major decision-level change.

Yes but still 97% of our audience use our free products and only 3% of them use the paid ones. We achieve our operational sustainability from these paid products which helps us to better serve the other portion of the audience. But it took us a long time to realize this, we thought people would only focus on the paid products if we launch them.

From being a teacher to being a CEO, what skill did you find the most challenging to acquire? How did you finally obtain it?

Oh, I love being a teacher! I do not like being a manager (smiling). But, yes, I need to manage people for the sake of my job. Communication, coordination, instruction – all these are parts of my job. But I'm a teacher by passion...and profession. And an entrepreneur by luck.

Let's go back to your alma mater. How has your IBA education and connections helped you to build and scale 10MS if there is any.

Not sure about the education (smiling). But, yes, connections built here helped me a lot. Especially in the initial days when we had little to no recognition, these connections really came out to be helpful while approaching unknown people for the first time.

How do sports influence your philosophy?

Absolutely! I've played multiple sports since my childhood like basketball, football, and pool. I was also a basketball champion in my early days. Now, I run marathons and have completed running a significant amount of distance. I'm also planning to participate in Ironman which consists of running, cycling and swimming.

AI tools have started becoming the new future and we are pretty much sure students will be using AI tools more and

more to study and get them integrated into their learning habits. How are you responding to that change and what plans do you have in stores to maybe integrate these technologies into your platform?

It's incredibly important to learn and understand AI. People are doing work which didn't exist five years ago, and there will be professions in ten years which do not exist now.

Students should have skills to integrate AI into their studies. We are trying to launch a course for smart students to use AI as a smart study partner. I'm also writing a book using AI, so, AI is my co-author here.

What educational need do you think is still underserved in Bangladesh and what are you doing or planning to do to address it?

We lack quality teachers in our country. We have around 4 lakhs of teachers and close to 50 thousands of them are qualified. So, we need more teachers who are actually qualified. We also need to revise our curriculum and improve the quality of our education. Also, there should be more incentives and remuneration for teachers. A teacher who gets a better working environment and remuneration in the EdTech industry will not work in the conventional education system we have in the country.

Let's say you decide one morning that you will leave the EdTech industry. So, what will you want to pursue that may surprise people?

I don't know, maybe, sports.

RAPID FIRE SEGMENT:

Physical or E-books?

Physical books but I generally read e-books more.

The most underrated skill for entrepreneurs?

Emotional Intelligence .

Someone in the tech industry from Bangladesh, as a whole, we should be watching?

I would say follow the global tech leaders of companies developing Grok, Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, Deepseek etc.

Lastly, and I know that we have finished the interview, what is that one question that you wish interviewers asked you more often?

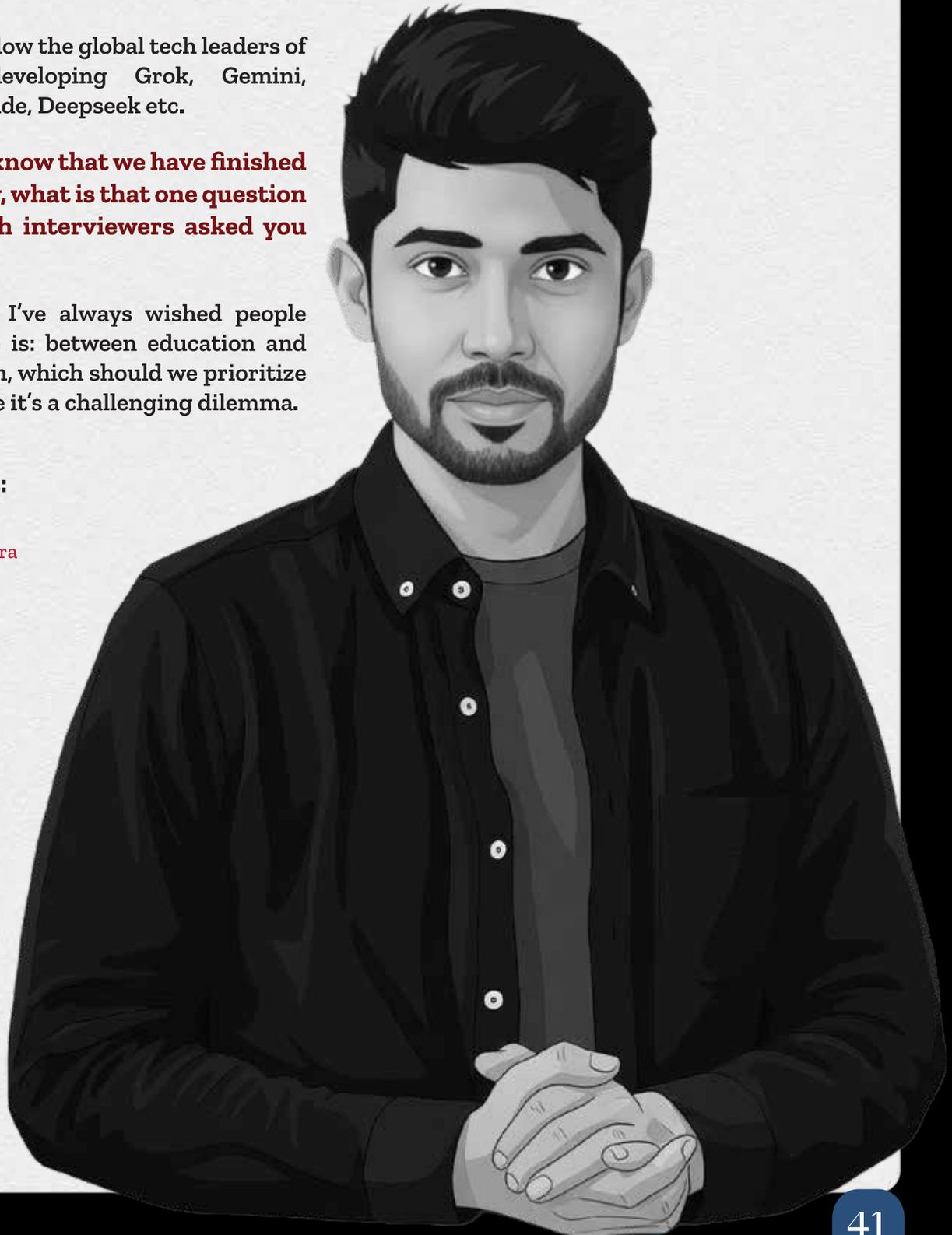
One question I've always wished people would ask me is: between education and physical health, which should we prioritize more? I believe it's a challenging dilemma.

Contributors:

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Jarraf Rahman





THE RISE OF CONTRARIANISM

“IF EVERYONE LOVES IT, I PROBABLY HATE IT.”

Fahim Rahman
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Aadi, an undergrad student, loves watching movies. He has been a big fan of the classic action-thriller John Wick since its release. Perhaps John Wick was his favorite hitman movie until one fine morning when he found out that it was widely popular among all his friends than ever. From that day, he chose to be a critic of John Wick. He couldn't help disliking John Wick more and more each day his friends talked about it.



Thinking of oneself as different from the mass people isn't a new trait of human behavior. However, the recent surge of forcefully contrasting with popular opinions, mainstream movies, and common habits seems unprecedented than ever. People don't like to be conventional these days. They want to contrast, they want to be different, they want to raise their hands in oddity, to draw attention or show they are not like others.

Suppose a new soft drink is launched called 'Rise'. The drink is excellent, and only a few people seem to like it for its odd, energetic taste. I loved the new drink. But, as soon as the mass people accept the new drink, I, as a contrarian, don't prefer that drink anymore. It hampers my identity of being different from others. Most of the time, this tendency comes from trying to establish my image as an elite intellectual person. However, another reason could be that I don't want to associate myself with a particular class of people, which is the common people in this case. And since the common people mostly don't think rationally, I resist being aligned with their thoughts and behavior.

There's a lesson in marketing -

“We don't buy products for what they do or their functional benefits, but also what they mean, what they symbolize or communicate about us.”



This explains why most people prefer an iPhone over Android, even though it has more functionality, -because it reflects a certain image and class identity. There's a segment of people who want to differentiate themselves from the mass people.

Remember Aadi? Initially, he seemed to be a fan of John Wick. But when all of his friends started talking about John Wick, as a contrarian, he refused to like it anymore, and he started to find flaws in it. Because "Adoption of others can change the meaning of a particular brand." Notice that his goal is not to evaluate his preference rationally but simply to avoid being part of the crowd.

Matter of fact, "If mass people start buying luxurious products to look rich, the truly wealthy would abandon those brands." That's exactly why you can't just walk into a store and buy a Rolex or Bugatti, even if you have the money. Rolex takes 6 months to 5 years to buy some of its exclusive watches. Bugatti has an average waiting period of one to two years. Not to mention, these brands don't sell just to anyone. Customers are personally vetted by the company. They mostly prefer celebrities and high-profile individuals as their customers. These brands protect their exclusivity.

However, apart from the social psychological studies on contrarians, there's a big room for the brands as well. Contrarians create a niche market, allowing brands to generate more profits with less competition and highly loyal customers through an easier approach to building a community.

- Brands that want to attract contrarians should deliberately avoid chasing trends or mass appeal. Rather, they can position against the mainstream, framing the brand as not for everyone, not driven by hype, and not mass-produced.
- Exclusivity doesn't need to be loud or pretentious. Highlighting exclusivity without arrogance may have a positive impact on the customers' thought process, making people feel special without alienating them.
- Contrarian consumers often reject celebrity culture and manufactured endorsements. They're more drawn to authentic stories, whether it's a brand's humble beginnings, its social values, or its founder's vision. Leaning on storytelling rather than celebrity endorsement makes a strong and long-term relationship with the customers as well.
- Encourage intellectual identity, like positioning the brand for people who are smarter, less manipulative, and more informed. Remember Apple's old slogan, "Think Different"? It was incredibly powerful for this reason.
- Contrarians value intimacy and belonging over clout and crowd size. Create micro-communities, rather than massive followings, making the customers feel like a part of a secret society.

Contrarians like to go for niche, vintage, minimal, or deliberately bold and 'ugly' fashion. They don't like to get sold. They want to discover something that others don't understand yet.

"Keeping all the gruelling discussions aside, let's calm down for a moment. Do we really have to make this life that complicated? We don't have to do something because others are doing it, nor do we have to resist something just because others are doing it. Righteousness must be upheld, regardless of whether it is embraced by all or by none. Next time you take a stand, for or against, ask yourself: is it right, or just a reaction?"

Chai, Tea, Latte

Exploitation in a Cup

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“Tea is a religion of the art of life

-Kakuzo okakura, the book of Tea (1906)

The Flower bud: Tea as a whole

The cups kept on the cupboards (preserved only for guests), the biscuits dipped in the steaming hot cup, the clinking of the spoon inside the swirl of a warm liquid running in the veins of the drinkers can tell stories none can tell us.

The bittersweet drink that varies in color and consistency quietly mixes with the region. The strong and slightly bitter English morning tea, which is sometimes replaced with Earl Grey infused with bergamot oil, is a perfect fit for rainy London. The same tea takes a much sweeter and spicier taste and diverse looks in the South-Asian region of the world, often varying from the pink Kashmiri 'Noon-chai' resembling a flamingo to the 'kadak-chai' resembling the population and occasionally the red and fiery lime tea or 'Lebu-cha'. On the Eastern-Asian side-the tea almost resembles its organic form, grassy and medicine-like.

Stem: How tea became a household drink

The diverse nature of tea and its consumption is reflected in the consumers as well. The British started drinking their now favorite drink-tea in the 17th century when Dutch traders started bringing it to Europe in large quantities. It first

arrived in Britain in the 1650s, when it was served as a novelty in London's coffee houses. In South Asia, tea was introduced through colonization in the early 1800s.

The British chose Assam, Darjeeling and Sylhet for their climate for tea cultivation. Considered a 'British' drink, tea consumption was limited to British homes, clubs and railway stations. The prejudices disappeared gradually with the rise in consumption in traditional urban homes and later on in rural areas.

But nothing that touches this region stays simple. Tea was given spices, sweetness and was named Cha\Chai. But tea was not integrated in South Asia on its own. It was made popular intentionally to grow the domestic market and normalize tea cultivation. It was a trick that worked. Brought from Madras, Bihar, West Bengal and other famine-stricken parts of India, the workers were mostly of lower Hindu castes and were used to experiment with tea cultivation in Sylhet by the British. The tea industry grew with time, and so did the exploitation. The British paid the workers less than one tenth of a taka. The British had to leave, but before leaving, they transferred ownership and the key to oppression to South Asian business corporations.

The underside of the leaf: The legacy of exploitation

In the early 2000s, the daily wage of a labor was BDT 25 to BDT 35 per day. It increased from BDT 60 to BDT 85 per day, which was much below the poverty line of Bangladesh. In 2022, a labor protest could only raise the labor wage to BDT 170. The BTA claims that compensation makes up around BDT 450 per day. One cup of 'Chai Tea' at Starbucks sells for 3.75 USD, which is equal to BDT 448.15. TBS reports that Bangladesh earned 45.96 crore in tea exports, a surge of 57.55%. The amount exported was 2.45 million. Tea has been a consistent 1% contributor to the economy's GDP and an industry of consistent exploitation.



Tea, like women in this part of the world, has been a silent part of our lives for centuries, resembling the dark-skinned and hardworking labor, the underpaid corporate employee, the frustrated college students serving verbal tea and the light-skinned second-generation Bangladeshi ordering Chai Tea Latte at Starbucks. And just like that, while a neglected industry itself, it managed to silently brew its addictive magic.



The new sprouts: Modern world and tea

But things must change now. Starbucks serves over 50 Tea-based drinks on its menu. The coffee-house chain sells over thousands of 'chai tea latte' every year and vendors around the world sell more than millions of cups -each cup full of history, culture, cultivation and exploitation. To stop the century-old exploitation and bloom new sprouts, we must act on all levels—policy, business, and consumption. Some steps include:

Minimum wage for tea-labors should be increased and facilities must be introduced. The BTA claimed BDT 450 should not just be a claim but also a reality for the labors so that they can sow the seeds of dreams along with those of tea plants.



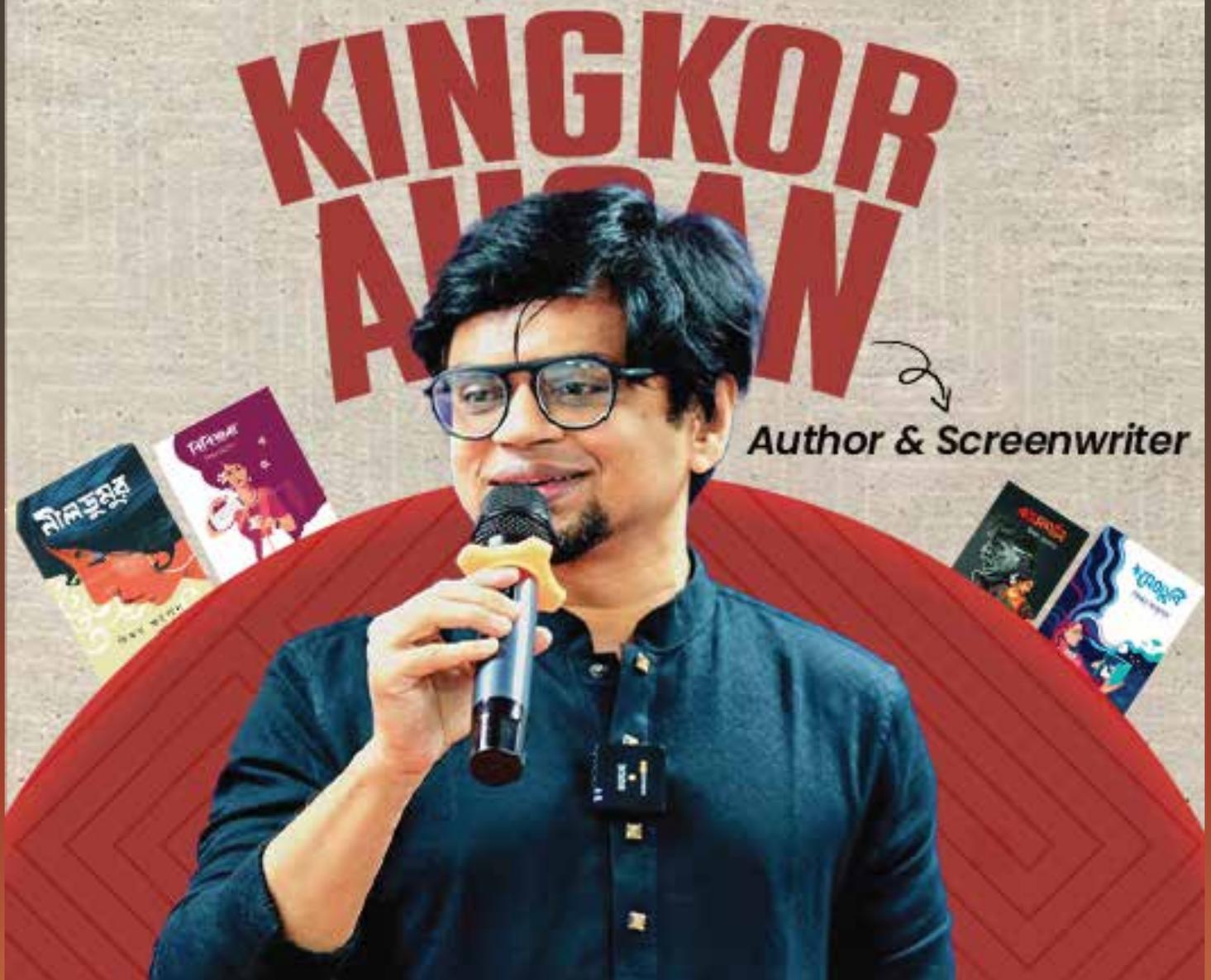
The labor laws can be more than just written words written and spewed over a cup of 'cha'. Strict regulation and monitoring over the factories (especially export-oriented ones) should be implemented. A certification system can also be introduced to keep the regulations in place.



Consumers can play a big role too. Consumers can urge the brands to adopt ethical sources for their products. Remember, voice for the just never gets unheard!

Tea/coffee chains can make it mandatory for the supplier to ethically source raw materials as a condition for the transaction. If well-known brands can get an adaptation to it, it will surely be a great source of awareness.

Exploiters always try to continue the exploitation, until they are forced to stop -by awareness, resistance, and reform. It takes time, pressure, and the right temperature. **Change will not come overnight. Till then, let it brew...**



SPOTLIGHT PERSONAGE

Kingkor Ahsan, one of the prominent voices heard in modern times of Bangladeshi literature, is a writer who connects the reader with reality in a new way. Even though his first publication was in 2017 with the novel 'Moddhobitto', his writing career traces back to his age of 14, when he was publishing in different newspapers. 'Meghdubi, Bibiana, Rangila Kitab,' etc. are some of his notable creations, which gained popularity for engaging the readers with real-life struggles of common people.

Completing his MBA from the University of Dhaka, he worked for different creative positions at advertising agencies like Asiatic JWT and Sun Communications. There are several popular advertisements and TV plays scripted by him. With 'Rangila Kitab' and 'Love Sab,' he is entering the world of screen media. For his contributions to literature, this author received the 'Mahaseta Debi Excellence of Literature Award' from India.

You were deeply involved in various student organizations (Dhaka University Writers' Association, Dhaka University Film Society) during your time at the University of Dhaka. How did those experiences shape your identity as a writer?

I believe family plays the first and most crucial role in shaping a person's character. After that, the institutions we engage with leave a lasting impact. My time at Dhaka Residential Model College instilled in me a strong sense of discipline. But it was at Dhaka University where my worldview truly expanded.

The campus culture, especially around the TSC, was full of vibrant student organizations. I actively took part in groups like the Dhaka University Writers' Association and the Film Society, and I was involved in debating during my earlier college years. These platforms gave me space to explore my creative side and improve my writing.

What made these experiences so meaningful were the people I met along the way. Interacting with diverse individuals enriched my understanding of the world and taught me lessons I couldn't have learned from books alone. These activities shaped my critical thinking, offered fresh perspectives, and helped build a network that still supports my journey as a writer.

Was there a particular book or project that you consider a turning point in your career?

There were several authors who deeply influenced my journey into writing including Al Mahmud, Mahmudul Haque, Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay, and Haruki Murakami, to name a few. Their works made me fall in love with the power of words. But more than any single book or project, it was a series of moments that shaped my path.

One memory stands out in particular. When my book *Bibiyanā* unexpectedly became a bestseller, I was at a book signing event at the Ekushey Boi Mela. In the midst of the event, the electric power supply suddenly went out, and everything plunged into darkness. Unsure of what to do, I took a pause, but then I saw people turning on their phone



flashlights, encouraging me to keep on going. That simple gesture lit up more than just the space, it lit something within me.

That moment gave me a deep sense of purpose. It reminded me that my words could connect with people, inspire them, maybe even comfort them. Even now, when I go through moments of self-doubt or discouragement, I revisit that memory. It continues to give me quite the

Could you walk us through your writing process? Are you someone who sticks to a routine, or do you write when inspiration strikes?

Honestly, creativity doesn't follow a fixed formula. If there were clear rules to becoming a writer, then perhaps everyone would be one. Just as every person is different, so is every writer's process. Take Humayun Ahmed, for instance; he had a disciplined routine and used to start writing early in the morning. My approach, however, is more instinctive.

I usually write when inspiration strikes. I find ideas in everyday life through observing people, their emotions, and their stories. These moments often spark something within me. That said, as a contemporary writer, I also have to consider practical aspects. For example, there's always pressure to finish a book in time for the Ekushey Boi Mela, which demands a more structured timeline. So, while I lean heavily on inspiration, I also balance it with responsibility. At the end of the day, writing is both a creative journey and a professional commitment.

Your bestselling novel Rongila Kitab was recently adapted into a film—how did it feel to see your story come to life on screen, and what was the experience like for you as its creator?



seemed to work. Just when I had finally let go of the dream, I received a call from Hoichoi, inviting me to an event. That call changed everything.

I have always believed that life unfolds according to a plan greater than ours. What we can do is put in the effort; the rest is up to the Creator. Coming from a middle-class background, I have seen how hard work defines our lives. For over five years, I worked tirelessly to get *Rongila Kitab* adapted into a film, but nothing

Watching my story come alive on screen was surreal. Seeing my name, my words, transformed into a visual narrative made me feel, just for a moment, that anything is possible. It was as if the story had taken on a new life beyond the pages. Rongila Kitab is no longer just my book; it now belongs to the audience. And that transformation is one of the most fulfilling experiences a writer can have.

Following your love for books, ‘Prithibi Ta Boi-er Hok’ felt like more than just a commercial; it captured the souls of readers and gently encouraged a love for books. What inspired that concept, and how did you approach blending emotion with messaging in such a subtle yet powerful way?

In recent years, we’ve seen a rapid rise in technology use in Bangladesh, especially with smartphones becoming so widespread. Unfortunately, this has contributed to a noticeable decline in reading habits. Interestingly, though, in many developed countries, the market for physical books is actually growing. Frankfurt, home to the world’s largest book fair, sees book sales so high that their value could build multiple Padma Bridges. It’s clear to me that nations that prioritise reading tend to progress better, and that’s not just a theory; it’s visible in reality.

With that in mind, I wanted to create something that would gently remind people, especially in our country, of the magic of reading. Prithibi Ta Boi-er Hok wasn’t just a commercial; it was a heartfelt attempt to rekindle a lost connection. I envisioned a world where people of all ages are seen reading and letting their imaginations roam free. It was a completely new concept in Bangladesh to create a commercial solely dedicated to books, and I’m grateful I could help pioneer that message. My goal was to make people not just see the ad, but feel something, and hopefully, pick up a book again.

The audience witnessed another powerful narrative through Jui’s ‘Ek Chul o Char Noi’—a campaign that delivered a strong message against violence with remarkable storytelling. It deeply resonated with many. Could you take us back to the creative journey behind it, and what it personally meant to you?

The making of any impactful advertisement is the result of many creative minds coming together. I was responsible for scripting the ad, and at the time, none of us anticipated the kind of impact it would have. Our focus was primarily on a long-format film for JUI that was also set to release, and we were confident

that it would be a major success. We weren’t expecting much from this particular advertisement.

So, it came as a complete surprise when, upon its release, the response was overwhelming. With every refresh of the page, we could see the views climbing rapidly. What made it even more surreal was seeing an article about the ad in The New York Times, at a time when international media coverage of South Asian commercials was incredibly rare. Soon, newspapers from neighbouring countries were covering it too.

I believe two key elements contributed to its success. The first is honesty; when a story comes from a place of truth, expressing human vulnerability and emotion, it connects on a deeper level. The second is rewatchability, a narrative that reveals something new each time you watch it. When these two elements align, the result is something truly powerful.

I’m genuinely proud to have been a part of that project. It reminded me that sometimes, the things we least expect end up making the most meaningful impact.

As someone who has navigated both the literary world and the film industry, how would you compare the creative process in writing a book versus developing a script? What challenges or freedoms do you notice in each medium?

I was lucky to start my career writing features for a newspaper, where I learned structure and how to develop long-form content. Feedback from editors helped me grow as a writer. Later, working in advertising taught me how to grab attention quickly and understand the psychology behind impactful storytelling.

These two experiences shaped my approach to both books and scripts. Writing a novel gives you the freedom to dive deep into characters and emotions, while scriptwriting demands brevity and visual thinking. Both have their challenges, but moving between them has made me a more adaptable and thoughtful storyteller.

With so much accomplished already, what excites you most about the next chapter of your creative journey?

I often see my books as flowers; some bloom brightly, gaining attention, while others quietly add beauty to the whole. I’ve written 20 so far, but my dream is to grow that into a garden of 200. In the rush of competition and expectations, I once found myself

losing the joy of writing, so I stepped back from that race to reconnect with the process I truly love.

Now, I'm exploring other creative paths like acting, something I'm still new to, but it's been surprisingly fulfilling. I may not know exactly what the next chapter holds, but I'm excited to keep exploring and nurturing that spark of curiosity that keeps my creativity alive.

AI tools are increasingly entering the creative space. How do you see this shift affecting the writing industry?

When I first learned about AI, I was genuinely concerned about its impact on jobs, especially in creative fields like writing. But over time, I've come to see it differently. AI is more of a tool, a support system that can enhance our work, much like a taste enhancer in food. It adds value, but does not replace the cook.

What sets human writers apart is our emotional depth, something AI can't truly replicate. That said, AI can be incredibly useful for research, brainstorming, and refining ideas. If we use it wisely, not as a threat but as an aid, it can actually empower creativity rather than diminish it.

Lastly, for young writers who want to balance creativity with multiple interests like you, what's one piece of advice you wish someone had given you early on?

I still consider myself a learner, so I hesitate to give advice. But if there's one thing I've found truly valuable, it's this: read, read, and read. Reading expands your perspective, it opens doors to ideas, emotions, and worlds you may never physically visit. And along with reading, travel when you can. You can't tell the stories of the people of Bandarban unless you've walked their paths, shared a moment of their lives, and felt their reality.

There will be phases of disappointment, unmet expectations, and self-doubt. But those moments are part of the journey. What matters most is that you keep going. Don't let setbacks convince you that you're not enough. Keep learning, keep creating, and trust that your voice matters.

Rapid Fire Segment

1. Pen and paper or keyboard?

Keyboard

2. A book that left a lasting impact on you:

"Kalo Borof" by Mahmudul Haque

3. A word your friends would use to describe you:

Hard working

4. A favourite line you've written (if any comes to mind):

"In the future, the ones who turned away will search for my presence."

5. One story idea that's in your mind but you have not explored yet?

One story I've long wanted to explore is that of Mir Jafar, but from a different angle. We know him as a traitor, but I'm curious whether history has overlooked a more human side of his story. I hope to visit Murshidabad, walk the places he once did, and uncover nuances that could help us see him, and perhaps all villains, with a bit more complexity and empathy.

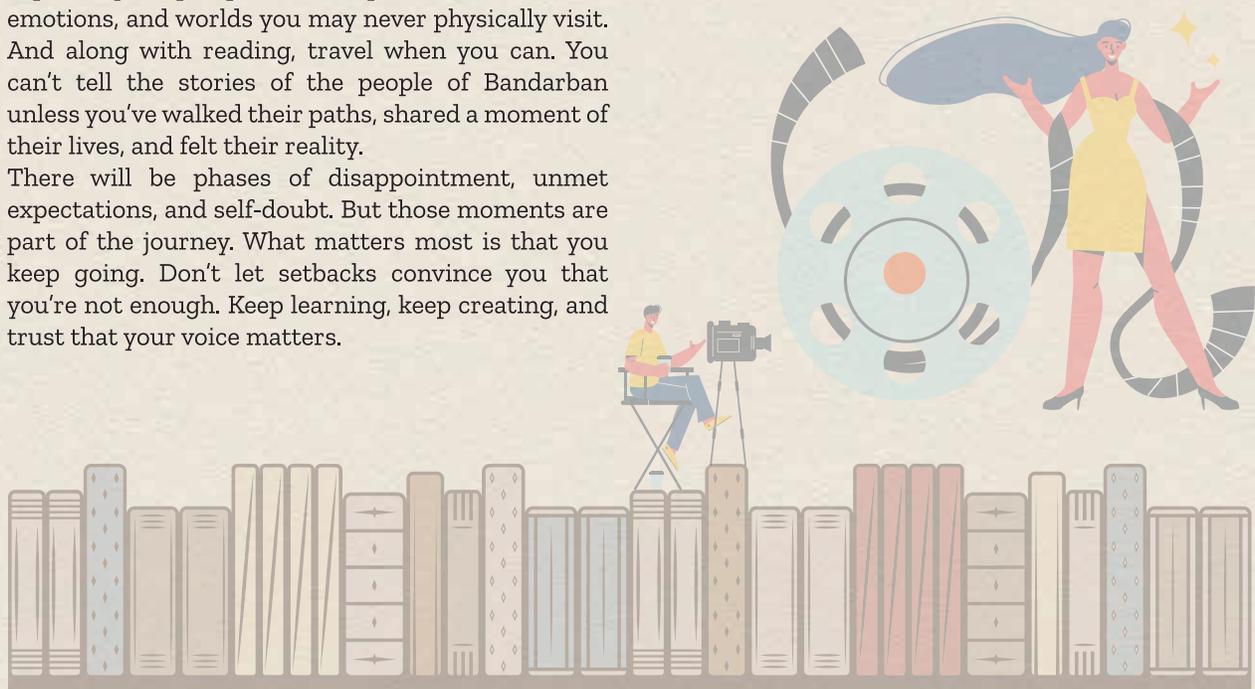
Contributors:

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From Grassroots to Growth: The Role of NGOs in Bangladesh's Journey

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NGOs and Development : In context of Bangladesh: Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) activities began in developed and developing countries after World War II. NGO activities developed mainly in the socio-economic context of third-world developing countries. Moreover, when the government agencies failed to improve the country's socio-economic system, the private organizations' activities were started along with the government agencies at the initiative of the donor countries and some local individuals.

The origins of Bangladesh's NGO sector are both local and international and can be found in the immediate years after the country's independence war. Long-standing traditions of voluntary action had been shaped by experiences of natural disaster, resistance, and war. Continuing poverty faced by large sections of the population during the 1970s and 1980s led people to experiment with new forms of helping and community development. Also brought local activists and social workers into closer contact with the international aid industry. Through such interactions, many relief and development NGOs were established, mainly by the middle classes, and involved outside funding, with a range of influences including charitable goals, improving social work practice, innovating new approaches to tackling poverty, and professionalizing aid delivery. Organizations such as Gono-shasthya Kendra, BRAC, Proshika, and Samata each have their origins in these early years.

From relief and rehabilitation, microcredit loan programs, and education to strategies of water treatment, NGOs have found a niche for themselves in the

gap between society and state, seeking to promote the people's welfare through grassroots initiatives and development programs. In a country with large numbers underemployed and unemployed, NGOs also provide much-needed job opportunities, stimulating small enterprise development, and inspiring and equipping people from a traditionally agricultural society to pursue non-farm livelihoods. In short, NGOs play an indispensable role in partnering with international development partners to bring precious resources to the country during times of devastation, and implementing health education and literacy programs. NGOs in Bangladesh are participating in grassroots legal reform to target and empower the most vulnerable portions of the population, in the hopes that such a reform will provide at least a satisfactory solution to disputes where none was previously available.

Influence ,Effect, Growth and Funding: Few countries have witnessed the dramatic growth of NGOs as much as Bangladesh, which currently has a total of 26,000 NGOs registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau .NGOs have been able to flourish in Bangladesh due significantly to the availability of funding, especially from foreign development agencies and international NGOs (INGOs). Smaller NGOs tend to receive a greater proportion of their financing from northern INGOs, while larger organizations receive more from development agencies. Most NGOs rely on funds received from foreign sources, such as INGOs, development partners, foreign private organizations, and multinational organizations. A World Bank Report (2004) indicated that 34.1% of the foreign aid received by Bangladesh was allocated for the NGO sector. A

notable portion of which is being allocated to the Rohingyas since 2017. Though foreign funding has been declining ever since for consecutive years, the local NGOs are sourcing funds from elsewhere. There are no estimates of funds from other sources involved in this ever-growing sector. Some civil society experts believe that Bangladesh NGOs rely too heavily on foreign development partners. Rehman Sobhan of Dhaka's Centre for Policy Dialogue suggests the ubiquity of foreign funding has contributed to an enormous NGO sector, which has pushed the Government out of the provision of public services through delegitimization of the State and an increasing reliance, at least in the social sector, on NGOs which has become a counterproductive exercise. Members of the NGO community have argued that the Government does not have the capacity to provide these services, regardless of NGO involvement.

NGOs appeared at the interface of two sets of factors: international aid, of course, as Bangladesh has always been subject to the activities of aid agencies and pressures of international policies. But NGOs also emerged from traditions of charity, self-help, activism and social movements. International aid has not been as strong a shaper of the NGO sector in Bangladesh as it has in many other Global South countries, because of the strength of those traditions, already present in Bangladesh. They also emerged from activist visions of the need for alternative, more participatory forms of development practice. We can connect these progressive development movements and the movements that contributed to 1971 – there was a ferment of ideas and practices and values and aspirations. NGO sectors in other countries (with the possible exception of the Philippines) have tended to be less dynamic in my view, partly because they've been more dominated by international organizations. In this sense I think Bangladesh has always been more in control of its own NGO sector. This is important because a lot of people simply assume that it was international aid that drove the growth of NGOs. It's more complicated than that. Aid made it possible to channel this energy, this nationalist desire for development from idealists, including from those on the left. We all know the origin stories of organizations like ASA, which was set up by young radicals after liberation, and even BRAC's founder Sir Fazle Hasan Abed self-described as a Marxist then. After Liberation, when Left politics was being suppressed in the 1970s, NGOs became one of the spaces where youthful radical energies could be absorbed.

Challenges & Prospects: Bangladesh has some of the most innovative, effective, and imitated non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the world. The NGO community has been more interesting, influential, high-profile and distinctive than anywhere else. NGOs have clearly played important developmental roles in Bangladesh on a whole range of issues – health, education, reproductive rights and services, and humanitarian relief. But People in Bangladesh are divided on whether they think NGOs are a good thing or not, even if they recognize that they have played key roles in the country's development. As the

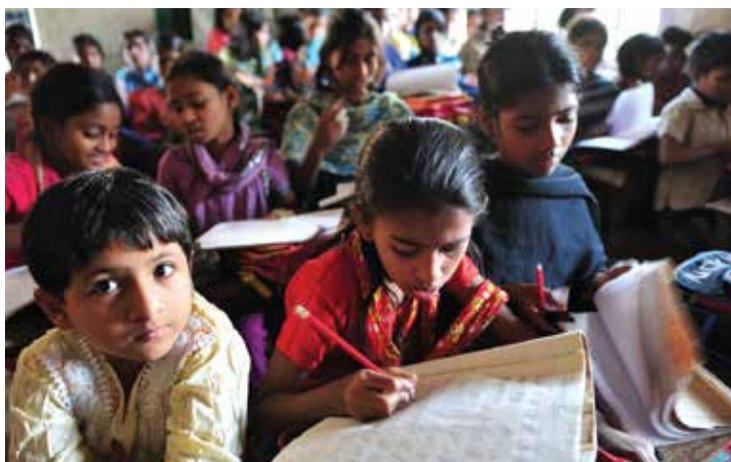


sector became more politically polarized, other social tensions were becoming apparent. Including other incidents, some BRAC schools were also attacked in 1999, most likely the result of a local dispute over resources, but seen by some as evidence of a clash between religious conservatism and NGOs as purveyors of Western modernity, evidenced for example by the growing numbers of female NGO field staff working in public places and recently the narrative push for the LGBTQ+ community.

In the 1980s, NGOs were often praised as innovators, but that idea was not so much about technology or business and more about social organizational innovation. Today's version is more like an ultra-technical, turbo-capitalist version of development innovation. Earlier celebrated NGO innovations like microfinance or oral rehydration were simple, viable ideas that emerged from engagements with real people's lives.

Later, in the 2000s, when more and more NGOs turned to microfinance and did less to mobilize rural people around their rights, they were criticized by some people for turning to markets instead of building people power, and for helping to create a new NGO service delivery monoculture. But it was also a bid for sustainability – microfinance helped cover costs of their other activities, like helping women organize around their rights.

Today the line between NGOs and the private sector has blurred, with the growing popularity among donors of business-centred development approaches, and there is less interest in civil society and governance issues. NGOs are now



seen primarily as contractors and market-based service providers. Even microcredit has come to be seen as a service that can just as easily be provided by the private sector or by the government as by NGOs. At the start of the twenty-first century new importance started to be given to impact philanthropy, corporate social responsibility and new forms of 'not-for-profit' organization. BRAC no longer saw itself as an NGO but now called itself a 'social business', and the Grameen Bank a 'specialised financial institution'. There are obviously huge questions about different ways of working in those humanitarian spaces that that need to be challenged, rethought, and reinvented. Hopefully most NGOs won't go in one single direction. Some NGOs will probably return to their humanitarian origins. It's also a space where international agencies continue to hold considerable power.

In Conclusion: If we look back, we can identify moments during the past 50 years where there was some dominant idea or vision about the NGO sector's role in development. But I think that's probably now gone and that what we have today is a bunch of different kinds of NGOs, informed by many different sorts of values, and doing different kinds of work. And that's ultimately a good thing. I remain quite optimistic about the fact that there are organizations trying to challenge the current narrowing of civil society space, and continuing to expand the possibilities of what an NGO can be – whether focused on an activist agenda of rights, on business development and employment creation, or on relief, charity and welfare.





STARLINK ARRIVES IN BANGLADESH: A NEW CHAPTER IN CONNECTIVITY

-Tanvirul Islam

Starlink is more than just faster internet—it's a gateway to opportunity. For years, people in rural Bangladesh struggled with poor or no connectivity. Students missed out on online classes, entrepreneurs couldn't reach markets, and freelancers lost work during political unrest. But on May 20, 2025, that began to change.

SpaceX's Starlink officially launched in Bangladesh, offering two unlimited data plans: Residence (₳6,000/month) and Residence Lite (₳4,200/month), with speeds up to 300 Mbps. A one-time setup fee of ₳47,000 gets you a satellite dish and a direct link to the digital world.

Now, a student from a remote village can learn online, a farmer can check market prices, and a mother can video call her son abroad—without any interruption. Starlink bypasses traditional infrastructure by using satellites, bringing stable internet even to the most isolated areas.

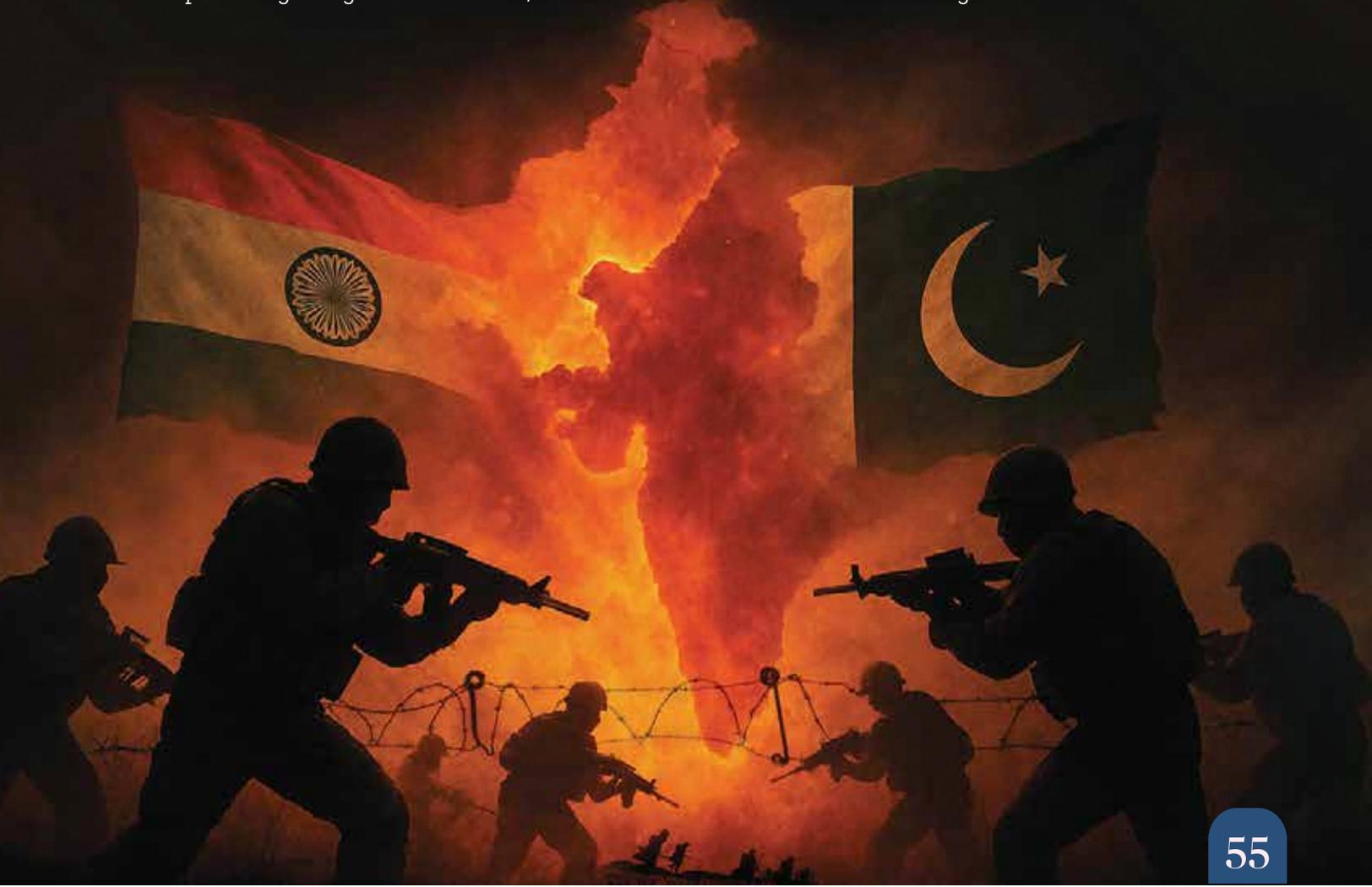
This is more than connectivity—it's a step toward a more inclusive, empowered Bangladesh.

INDO-PAK WAR 2025

FUELS ECONOMIC TENSION

Tasniya Hossain Asha

On the night of **7th May, 2025**, India and Pakistan engaged in cross-border military actions which instantly triggered instability in the South Asian region. While the two countries were busy executing their strikes against one another, the **global prices** spiked momentarily in fear of a long war that was looming right around the corner. Investor confidence dipped as seen in the **Dhaka Stock Exchange** and **Chattagram Stock Exchange**, both of which plummeted in their major indexes. However, a ceasefire on **10th May**, with mediation from the USA, both sides came to an agreement to stop their fights against each other, and all the above tensions started easing out.





When cities become smart and humans dumb

As cities become smarter with AI, sensors, and automation - managing everything from traffic to waste, people are giving up more than just tasks—we're surrendering the way we think. Convenience is replacing curiosity, screens are taking over our memories, and algorithms are making decisions we once handled ourselves. The more technology solves our problems, the more we lose the ability to think independently and reason for ourselves. Smart cities are designed to make our lives easier, but if we lose the ability to think, we risk losing ourselves in a world driven by technology. The real challenge isn't just building smarter cities; rather, it's about keeping our minds sharp enough to keep up.

- Faria Tahsin Medha

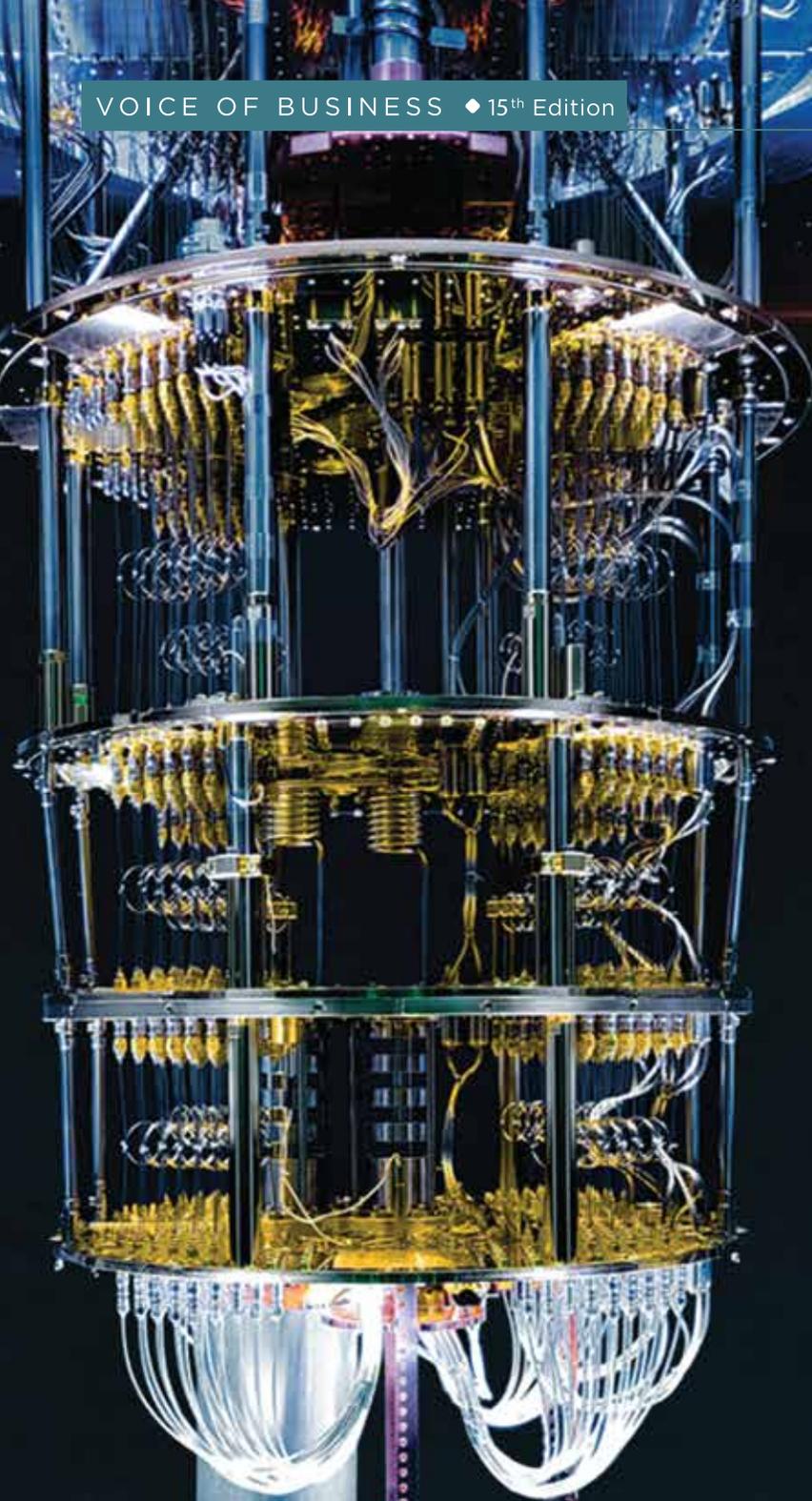
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QUANTUM COMPUTING

Jarraf Rahman Rasha

Quantum computing has become more real than ever before with breakthroughs being presented by major companies such as IBM, Google, IonQ etc., showcasing its practical applications. Most of these companies have got into a race to show who can outdo whom. This is indeed great news for the world as it will accelerate the process to reach peak practicality of quantum computing in the shortest possible time period. Now, full-scale and fault-tolerant quantum computers are yet to be developed, but the current technology does allow for exploring critical areas such as cryptography, materials science, logistics, etc. The next decade will be critical to determine how quantum transitions from lab experiments of companies to real-world impact.



GOOGLE REAL-TIME TRANSLATION: Bridging Language Barriers



Jarraf Rahman Rasha

On a misty winter morning, accompanied by fog, a German tourist found himself lost in the beauty of Sylhet's tea gardens. With his phone dead, he then asked for directions from the locals in a broken Bangla accent. Locals did gather, but rather unsure of how they might help the lost soul. Out of nowhere, a 15-year-old boy became the centre point of the crowd, holding out his broken phone on which he had opened Google's real-time translation. In a quick 20-second conversation between the lost person and the Bangali boy, Bangla turned to German instantly, where barriers melted like the morning mist over the Surma River. Laughter followed while the German remained en route to his cottage. *In that scene of rural Bangladesh, technology did not just translate some mere words; rather, it united two different nationalities.*



End of an era: The Downturn of Bangladeshi Dramas

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“আমরা সবসময় ভুল
মানুষকেই ভালবাসি!”

These iconic lines from the *'Kothao Keu Nei'* reflect the golden era of Bangladeshi dramas.

Back in the day, dramas were rich in script, dialogue, cinematography, and acting, with background music that elevated every scene to perfection. They reflected an astounding level of care, brilliance, and creativity. In contrast, today's dramas fall far short of the quality and standards set by the golden era. Over time, the essence of drama has deteriorated; not abruptly, but gradually, like a house of cards collapsing piece by piece. What we now see in the name of drama often lacks the soul, depth, and artistic integrity once considered the hallmark of the industry.

What happened to those masterpieces which were meant to inspire future generations of producers, directors, and actors? Instead of following their predecessors' legacy, the industry has lost its credibility, creativity and most importantly, the essence. Now there seems to be no premise left upon which it can thrive again.

Historical Context

Dramas from the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s stand as some of the finest pieces of art ever produced in the industry. Among them, *"Ei Shob Din Ratri"*, directed by Humayun Ahmed, became an iconic portrayal of middle-class life. Other notable works include *Bohubrihi*, *Ayomoy*, *Aaj Robibar*, and *Nokkhotrer Raat*, the latter delving into emotional and psychological interrelationships and inner conflicts. Dramas such as *House Full*, *69*, *Biprotip*, and *Amader Anondo Bari* from the early 2000s were also widely cherished, domi-

nating the industry and receiving acclaim from both audiences and critics. So why did this shift occur in the first place? Several reasons can be discovered once we delve deeper. The structure and theme of recent dramas reveal a stark contrast to those from the golden era, highlighting a significant divergence. In the 90s and early 20s or 2010s, dramas were mostly family-centric. They used to revolve around members of the whole household which portrayed and highlighted each character's significance in that particular surrounding and of course, in the family. They had substantial screen time and a unique blend of characteristics.

But these days, the total number of characters in a particular drama is limited to between 3 to 6, mostly and stories are usually stereotypical. Most dramas have this delusional, unemployed guy accompanied by a humorous sidekick who bursts out the worst possible jokes and gives kind of hopeless advice to approach the lover, in most of the cases, the female lead. Most of the time, there is a mother involved in the storyline, and a father figure occasionally pops out in the middle of the story.

Today's drama mainly focuses on these specific characters, other than what it used to be before, so people can not really relate to it anymore. Often, cast members are recruited based on their popularity, avoiding the significant criteria of their recruitment which is acting skills. Many of them may not be suitable for a certain role, but they eventually get it through powerful industry connections, and thus fail to deliver their best as they are not fit for the role which overall bears a heavy impact on that particular drama and their career as

well.



Creative Stagnation

This also serves as a strong reason behind the decline of the drama industry. Most of the dramas produced today are heavily stereotyped. Producers and directors tend to stick to a limited range of genres, mainly romance, comedy, or thrillers, and show little willingness to step outside their comfort zones. There is a noticeable reluctance to explore diverse themes and storytelling approaches, many of which could prove highly successful if introduced to the industry.

Rise of Digital Media & Changing Habits

With the rise of digitalization, especially in the realm of media, people can now access any type of content with just a simple click. Platforms such as YouTube, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, and HBO Max offer a wide range of categories, delivering high-quality content that reflects contemporary themes, including real-life dramas, documentaries, series, and more. Unfortunately, modern Bangladeshi dramas fall far behind this standard. A significant gap exists in

terms of quality, casting diversity, cinematography, and depth of script. The



distinction between international productions and local dramas is stark and undeniable.

Dramas such as 'Bachelor Point' are an example where any dialogue mixed with local dialect and bits & pieces of English & Bangla can sound diabolical and hilarious at first, but upon closer inspection, anyone can certainly point out the fact that it is nothing more than dramatic descent and cultural decay. Because of this low-standard content, people are now switching their gears and time to foreign series, movies and even anime, which are far better than what is now being produced in the industry.

Industrial Setbacks

Apart from these numerous issues, the industry faces a range of additional challenges, including tight budgets and excessive advertisements. Most current dramas operate with high-end or mid-range budgets that often run into lakhs. However, these budget expectations are frequently not fully met, leading to compromises in production quality as the work is completed as cheaply as possible. To eradicate this hurdle, most directors and producers cut costs by

paying less to the cast or shrinking the casting member at a great number. In most cases, it ranges from 3-6 people, and they hire crew members who offer to work at reduced paychecks, often lack the desired expertise to produce a well astounding job.

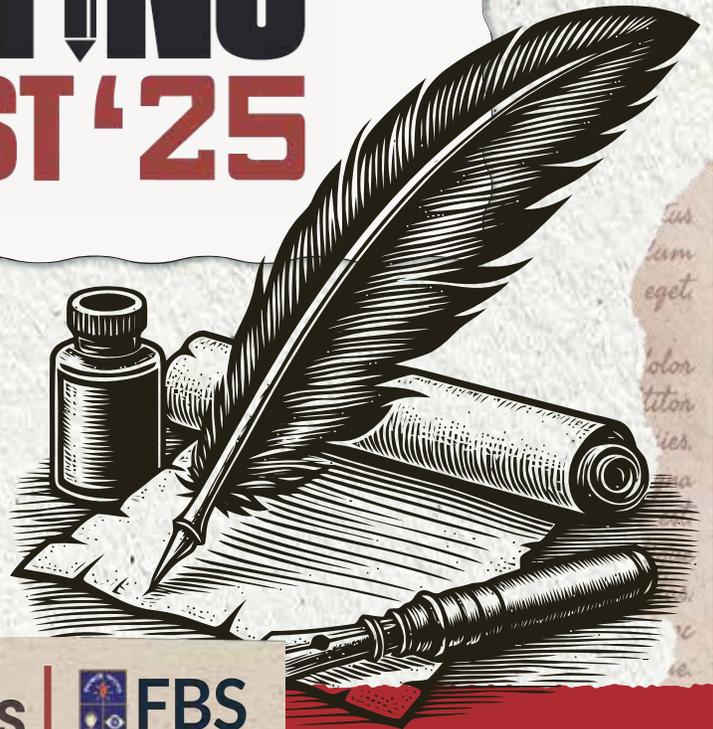
Expertise in areas such as video editing, cinematography, and scriptwriting is essential. When professionals lack proficiency in these key aspects or fail to meet industry standards, it becomes evident why many of today's dramas suffer from poor quality and lacklustre execution.

Other than this stumbling block of tight budgets, excessive ads prove to be a great hurdle. Most of the companies & brands often demand great screen time through ads while broadcasting dramas. As a matter of fact, almost every audience would easily get annoyed with this and often leave the drama unfinished, or skip it midway & thus fail to experience what could have been a good drama.

Despite all the challenges within the industry, a strong comeback is still possible — but only if proper initiatives are taken not just by directors, producers, TV channels, and OTT platforms, but also by actors, crew members, and even journalists through constructive criticism. With collective effort and commitment to quality, the drama industry can once again reclaim its place in the hearts of the public, just like in its golden days.



WRITING CONTEST '25



Rewriting the Syllabus of a Nation

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Champion- Writing Contest'25

The classroom clock ticks, the world runs ahead, but time stands still here. Bangladesh's education system remains trapped in 1971, like a prisoner of fate.

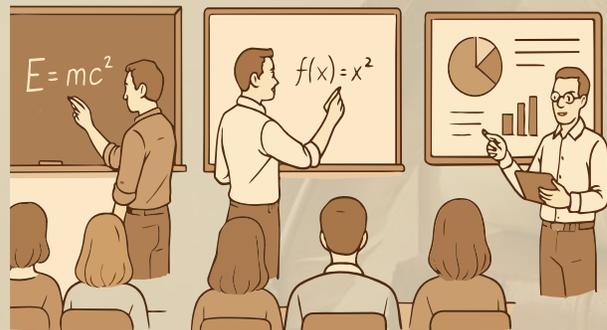
The world is advancing through artificial intelligence and is entering the fourth industrial revolution, but our classrooms remain frozen. Globally, education is transforming, and learning is becoming more personalized, strategic, and technology-driven. Worldwide, AI-powered learning, microlearning, gamification, hybrid learning, and technologies such as VR or AR are becoming norms. And in the meantime, Bangladeshi education focuses on memorization-based learning with minimal involvement in practical education. The outdated education system continues to produce graduates for jobs that no longer exist, while essential skills, i.e., analytical thinking, creativity, & innovation, remain neglected.

In 1971, Bangladesh had scarce resources and limited access to institutionalized education. Only 25% of the population could read. The majority of the population was capable of rote learning, which was due to people's tendency towards religion and the influence of local Maktabas.^[2] The education at that time was shaped by necessity, focusing on basic literacy and patriotism, which fit a nation in its infancy.

But dear education system, have you evolved with time? You have watched the generation grow, but have you grown with them?



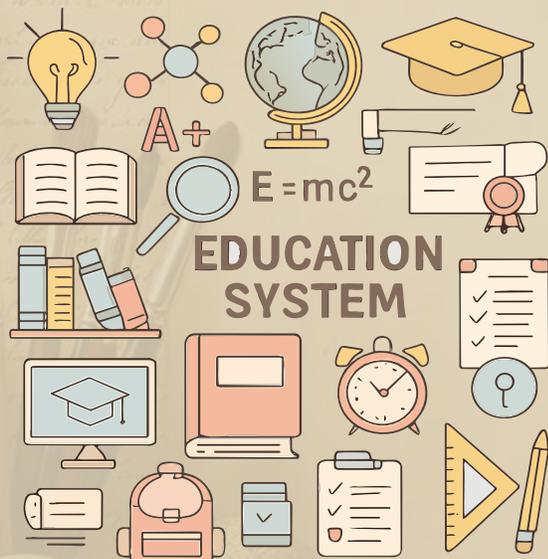
In the 54th year of independence, our literacy rate has tripled to 74.66%. However, the classrooms remain as fossils of the past. Chalk-duster lectures have been modernized into whiteboard-marker and digital screens, but they still strangle curiosity, multiple-choice questions still decide destinies, and rote learning is still treated as a valuable life skill. *The aftermath?* Every year, nearly 2 million people enter the job market, and 11.5% of them remain unemployed.^[5] Shockingly, one-third of the unemployed population in Bangladesh holds a tertiary degree. These numbers are not mere statistics; these are stories of our Bangladeshi youth and the consequences of an education system that has provided our students a certificate, not life skills.



The reality of our broken system goes even deeper. The incompetence of our schools and the influence of toxic competition have given rise to coaching centers—a parallel education universe. The exam-focused training completely disregards true learning, while institutional teachers prioritize private tuition over public responsibilities. This approach of commercializing education erodes respect for teachers and deepens inequalities. Besides, constant policy shifts without prior warning leave students confused. MCQs one year, creative questions the next, and introducing a new grading system and a curriculum without enough preparation breeds frustration and mistrust among the students, parents, and teachers. It fails to build confidence and rather sows doubt and anxiety and

fails to train students for the future. Besides, multiple lines of education, i.e., *English medium, Bangla medium, and Madrasah*, each only enhance educational inequality, and educational justice remains unfulfilled.

Employers worldwide currently seek employees possessing analytical skills, creativity, emotional intelligence, leadership, and team-management skills, which our syllabus has miserably failed to integrate. The World Economic Forum predicts that **40%** of the workers' core skill requirements will be shifted by **2030**, while our education system remains revolving around outdated disciplinary practices rather than future-facing reformations. During COVID-19, only **18.7%** of the students could access remote learning,^[7] which shows our drastic inability to ensure equitable technology access.



But these situations aren't meant to evoke pity; these demand discussion and, most importantly, action. Every year of delay produces another cohort of unprepared graduates who will fail miserably in the face of modern challenges. **Will we let another generation get crushed under the outdated syllabi?** The first and foremost crucial reform must initiate with the curriculum. The existing curriculum is extremely outdated and inadequate. It needs to be modernized. Coding, financial literacy, climate science, and analytical skills should be taught from middle school onward. Students should be allowed to choose project electives, i.e., *robotics, theater, agro-tech, and environmental science*, as Finland has shown drastic success by adopting this measure.

Secondly, the assessment technique must be redesigned. The high-stakes assessments should be replaced with year- or semester-long projects,

presentations, and digital portfolios. The assessment should be restructured to honor growth rather than memorization skills.

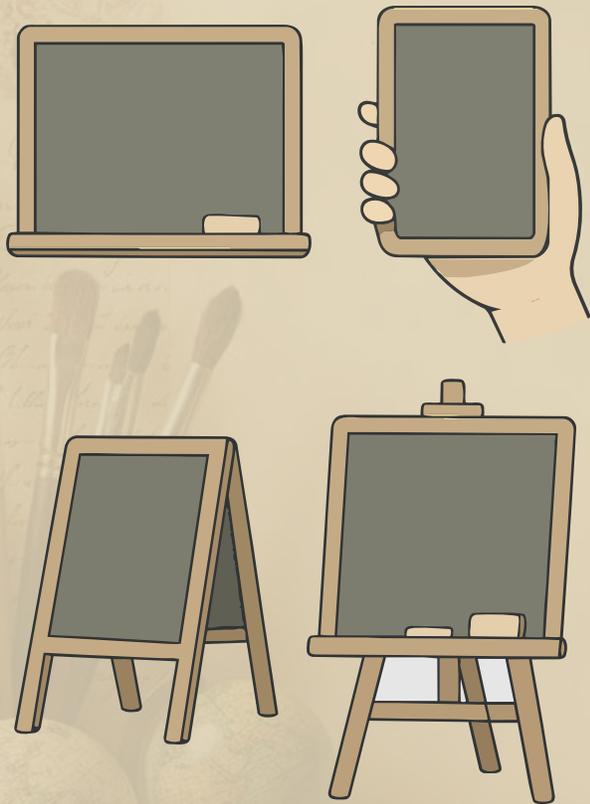
Our educators are the backbone of any reform. They have to be well-trained and well-incentivized. Teachers should go through annual digital-pedagogy training, and they should be offered research opportunities and grants, as well as bonuses.



Lastly and most importantly, we must bridge the technological divide. Every rural school must receive high-speed internet, a reliable power source, and low-cost devices pre-loaded with open-source learning materials. Public-private partnerships with local tech companies can turn this into a reality. Simultaneously, community-driven initiatives will assist parents and teachers in adapting to the changes.

Now, when I think of a future Bangladesh, I imagine a school in Rangamati equipped with solar panels, computer labs with high-speed internet, and students designing flood-resistant house prototypes in labs. Bangladesh, where students will chase their dreams and their passion and learn about innovation. Where mothers don't have to forcefully teach their kids, where education is fun, where graduates don't wander for a job that matches their major, where employers can report more and more job-ready graduates, and where our students can continue learning through cyclones and pandemics.

The clock hanging in our classrooms has been a silent witness to our static education system and the choices we have made. We have watched the world change through the window of our unmoving classrooms, but this time we have to open the doors. The same hands that once slid through chalkboards now swipe through screens, and the same brains used for memorization now seek answers, innovations, and creation. Gen Z does not need miracles—they need an education system that matches their curiosity, ambition, and potential.



The clock is still ticking. Will we let it witness another generation left behind? Or will we move with it this time?

Dear education system, let's move with it this time. partnerships with local tech companies can turn this into a reality. Simultaneously, community-driven initiatives will assist parents and teachers in adapting to the changes.

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Degrees Without Direction

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1st Runner up- Writing Contest '25

There's a strange rhythm to how we grow up here. School bells ring, notebooks fill, and students memorize information from the textbook like they're decoding the world. But somewhere between learning and living, the system forgets to ask what kind of minds it's trying to shape. And lately, it feels like it's not shaping any; it's just weighing them. The numbers aren't whispering anymore. They're shouting.



This year's SSC results were released with a thud, with only **68.45%** passing (Prothom Alo, 10 July 2025). And we all saw it coming. Not because students are lazy or unwilling, but because the system they're trapped in doesn't meet them where they are or where the world is heading. Even as far back as **1974**, the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission warned of a system too obsessed with books and too blind to life. It called out the tendency to treat education as a tool for producing obedient minds instead of imaginative ones, pointing out how our schools had become "*bookish, imitative, and detached from life*" (Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report, 1974, p. 13). That was fifty years ago. The warning still

rings true. In classrooms across the country, students still chase grades. They recite dates of revolutions without knowing what rebellion feels like. They solve equations but rarely tackle real problems. Teachers, often overburdened and under-supported, run through the syllabus as if creativity is a distraction. **Critical thinking? Optional. Imagination? Risky. Curiosity?** A bit too loud. Yet this isn't just about what happens inside a school building; it's about what happens after. Employers consistently say graduates aren't ready. They know things, yes, but can't think on their feet, communicate clearly, or lead with confidence. **The World Bank (2022)** bluntly states that less than one in five university graduates in Bangladesh are deemed job-ready. That's not a personal failure. That's structural neglect. And still, there's a deeper, quieter harm.



Education here is rarely a joyful pursuit; it's a performance. A means to survive, not to thrive. The Commission envisioned education as something larger: a way to build "*good citizens,*" grounded not just in literacy but in empathy, ethics, and action (Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report, 1974, p.11). But in reality, how many students feel *seen, heard, or inspired* in the process? Let's talk about work. Manual labor is still looked down upon, even though technical skills are what the economy actually needs. Vocational training remains an afterthought. The Commission also flagged this issue, noting our "*disinclination to give appropriate value to physical and manual work*" (Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report, 1974,

Let's talk about work. Manual labor is still looked down upon, even though technical skills are what the economy actually needs. Vocational training remains an afterthought. The Commission also flagged this issue, noting our "disinclination to give appropriate value to physical and manual work" (*Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report, 1974, p. 16*). In Germany, students can graduate from school already trained in fields like mechatronics or culinary arts, blending academic learning with real-world experience (*OECD, 2023*). Here, we still act like the only smart students are the ones with notebooks full of algebra and never a speck of soil under their nails. Teachers, arguably the backbone of this whole system, are often the most unsupported. Many work in conditions that don't allow for growth or creativity. Without better training, empathy, and structure, teachers cannot lead change (*Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report, 1974, p. 20*). You can't pour from an empty cup. Most students don't really learn; they prepare to pass. They cram test paper questions, memorize exercise answers, and once the exam is over, everything's forgotten. Honestly, I doubt many could solve those same problems on their own without help. English classes aren't any better. Schools teach it like a formula—just grammar rules and a belief in students that the longer your paragraph, the higher your marks. **But what kind of learning is that?**

If we're training students to memorize instead of understand, how are they supposed to build a future? How do we expect them to get jobs if they graduate with nothing but notes in their heads and no real skills to offer? When the language itself feels foreign, and the system only rewards repetition, we have to ask—what exactly are we preparing them for? Still, there are blueprints for hope. Finland ditched high-stakes exams and focused on trust, play, and teacher autonomy, producing some of the happiest, most competent students in the world (*Sahlberg, P., 2015. Finnish Lessons 2.0: What Can the World Learn from Educational Change in Finland?*).

Japan teaches moral education as a core subject, not an afterthought. Canada's classrooms are inclusive by design. These aren't miracles; they're decisions. One of the most overlooked aspects of education in Bangladesh is the absence of real-world skills in the curriculum. Students graduate knowing how to write essays but not how to write professional emails or how to communicate with professionals. They can fill out answer sheets but freeze in interviews. Communication, networking, and collaboration—these are not soft skills; they are survival

skills. In today's job market, the ability to express ideas clearly and build professional relationships is just as important as academic knowledge. Yet, year after year, countless graduates stumble at the first hurdle, not because they're not smart, but because they were never taught how to present themselves, speak with confidence, or connect with others meaningfully. If we want students to thrive beyond the classroom, these skills can no longer be optional; they must be foundational. So what would it mean to make different decisions here? To create a classroom where real-world projects mattered more than papers. Where students learned coding alongside poetry. Where students would genuinely 'learn' something. Where assessments were based on growth, not memory. Where a student's background didn't define their horizon. We already know what needs fixing. The Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission told us. So did teachers. So have students, in every silent protest, scribbled in the margins of their notebooks. This isn't just about education reform. It's about changing what we believe education is for. Because right now, the system is creating examinees, not students.



Education, Our Ever-Distant Parent

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2nd Runner up- Writing Contest'25

Dear "Education"—our second parent,

We plead to you as your children—long raised under your care, disciplined by your rules, and molded by your quirks. After all these years, we can say you provided —yes. But you did not listen. You ensured our stomachs were filled with degrees and syllabi, but you forgot to notice our hunger for meaning, value, and guidance.

You increased enrollment rates in primary education from **62.9%** in **2000** to over **97%** by **2013**. You fought for gender parity and, in many cases, won. You provided stipends, free books, and midday meals —as a father, you brought food to the table. You saw the need to bring every one of us under the same umbrella. So, you built schools. You posted numbers. We acknowledge that. [1]

But dear Education, when did you last sit down beside us and listen?



You never asked why a classroom full of children often feels so empty. You never noticed how our teachers —underpaid, untrained, and overburdened — repeat the same notes year after year without ever being taught how to teach. [3] You never asked why, even after finishing five years of primary school, nearly half of us couldn't solve basic arithmetic problems or read aloud from books fluently. [1] You never stayed up with us the night before board exams, when the pressure of memorizing essays

from "Advanced Learners" crushed our ability to write our own words. You reduced our worth to grades, shaped schools into factories, and made teachers hostage to test results. You say the curriculum aims for "**communicative competence**," yet the exams are solely demonstrations of memorization through writing, with no room for thought, voice, or wonder. [3] And so, we memorize. We coach. We fear. We pass —but we do not grow.



You outsourced your presence to coaching centers. You left us in the hands of private tutors, who sometimes taught more in two hours than schools did in five days. Yet they could not show us a better path of academic achievement other than the one you created, sometimes even making it worse. Is this how a parent should care — from a distance, through others? And why should some of us flourish because they have the money to afford tutoring? Yes, dear Education, inequality haunts your house. In rural homes, the return on education remains uncertain. Those who live close to schools, whose families can pay for tutoring —they advance. The rest trail behind. [2]

You continued to introduce new curriculums, new content, and new infrastructure without giving the means to utilize them – books without exercises, labs without quality equipment, libraries without useful books, and new methods without training. Dear education, we do not want to see flashy steps or immediate action. We want a properly functioning curriculum with all its elements. You do not have to do everything from scratch following other countries. You just need to build on what we always had -a simple curriculum – but with proper values, improved pedagogy, emphasis on learning & adaptiveness, and adopting teaching with care. When our mothers shout at us, we slowly curl up into small areas and forget to explore. Give us the opportunity to see the world with open eyes. This letter isn't written in anger. It's written in hope. Because we still believe in you. We want you to listen – to pave the way to a better destination: prioritize teachers' training and establish teaching as a noble profession with good wages and benefits. Teaching is not just about content — it's about pedagogy, empathy, and responsiveness. Make pedagogy a national conversation. Bring in the meritorious minds of the nation to work in this profession.

Secondly, exams shouldn't feel like trials but rather reflect actual learning. Improve our exam system to evaluate ideas, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning, not just recall. Then, introduce portfolio-based assessments and continuous evaluations with a structure that both students and teachers understand fully. A child who is scared to fail cannot truly learn. Introduce mental health support in schools. Train teachers to care, not just teach. Train them to deal with toxic parents.

Last but not least, quality of education must not depend on geography or social status. Schools should not be battlegrounds of political interests. Make a simple curriculum that can cater to the students in a cottage in the farthest village to the ones in the high-rises of Dhaka. Make a good governing body at the local level to monitor the activities of schools & assist them in the shortest possible time.

Don't just give us blank hope – create a real timeline and proper planning to implement each of these step-by-step. Live up to it. Don't just raise us. Raise us well.

With hope, your children, who want to learn, not just survive.

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EXAMS SHOULDN'T FEEL LIKE TRIALS



BUT RATHER ACTUAL LEARNING



PHOTOGRAPHER: SUPREO NAG

In the vibrant heart of the University of Dhaka, where history breathes through every corridor, and banyan trees whisper the tales of student movements and intellectual awakenings, lies a citadel of business education: the Faculty of Business Studies (FBS). FBS, the part of the university that never sleeps, is the pioneer in business studies and research in Bangladesh.

Founded in 1921 as the Department of Commerce under the Faculty of Arts, FBS has undergone an inspiring metamorphosis over the decades. From the corridor of the Arts building to the iconic glass-and-concrete architecture and modern facilities, FBS has come a long way. Today, it stands proudly as the largest business school in the country, producing around a thousand graduates each year under its undergraduate program. Later on, in 1970, it was developed into a faculty named the "Faculty of Commerce", and in 1995, the name was converted into the "Faculty of

INSIDE FBS

Business Studies" to reflect the evolving nature of business education and to align with global academic standards, as well as encompassing a broader and diverse business discipline. In the following year, the offered programs B. CoM and M. Com were changed to BBA and MBA degrees, respectively.

Starting with only one department back in 1921, today, the faculty comprises nine diverse academic departments, each contributing to building a comprehensive business structure. Over the years, the faculty has introduced specialized programs such as Management Information System (MIS), Organization Strategy & Leadership (OSL), International Business (IB), Banking & Insurance, and Tourism & Hospitality Management to keep pace with the ever-evolving global business market. From

finance to hospitality management, this faculty offers chiefs from every department that a global business seeks.

Today, the faculty nurtures around 6000 business minds within its different programs, offering BBA, MBA, EMBA, M. Phil., and PhD degrees. From microeconomic theories to digital marketing analytics, from case studies on local start-ups to keen eyes on global trade policies, the academic curriculum is designed to be rigorous, relevant, and responsive.

FBS, known for its rich cultural diversity, is a vibrant reflection of Bangladesh's cultural mosaic. Students from every corner of the country, from the hill tracts of Rangamati to the riverbanks of Barisal, from the crowded streets of Dhaka to the quiet villages of Sylhet, come together here, bringing with them a rich cultural blend of dialects, traditions, and perspectives. The cultural diversity breathes through the classroom debates, group projects, case studies, and everyday interactions. This enables the students to communicate and to navigate the complexity of real-world communities shaped by language, heritage, and behavior patterns of different regions and ethnicities of Bangladesh, making them adaptive to every part of the country.

Beyond lectures and presentations, there's a powerful research engine quietly behind the scenes, inside the Faculty of Business Studies: the Bureau of Business Research. Students and scholars turn their classroom studies into real-life experiments here. From the study of consumer behavior in rural markets to the analysis of banking trends in the world, the bureau works as a research arm of FBS.

A student at FBS today is part of something bigger than a classroom. Global research, joint seminars, and collaborations make FBS a more dynamic and outward-looking space. FBS has signed MoUs with universities in the USA, UK, Germany, Japan, India, China, South Korea, and

other countries, allowing students and faculty members to engage in joint research and academic visits. Meanwhile, the students are learning and adapting to the global business market, giving them an edge to explore the international market as well.

FBS has one of the strongest extra-curricular and co-curricular cultures in the entire University of Dhaka. From BNCC to NGOs, from debating to corporate clubs, from business research to national business competitions, there are barely any ECAs that the FBS students don't engage in. Some choose to dominate the corporate world, securing early internships or campus ambassadorship programs, whereas others are busy with sports, social service, SMEs, and whatnot. The faculty hosts some of the most vibrant student clubs in the country, such as the first-ever student-led business magazine club in Bangladesh: Voice of Business. These platforms offer students the chance to organize national competitions, attend career boot-camps, host talk shows, and publish their own research.

Today, 55 years after the establishment of this faculty, it still promises to uphold the future of business education in the country. At the end of the day, FBS is more than classrooms, GPAs, and career charts. It's the place where dreams are whispered, where future leaders are burnished, where lifelong friendships are made over group projects and Tong Ghor's tea.

Author
Fahim Rahman
Marketing 29th

Our Moitree:

Inside VoB

VoB Writing Contest

WRITING CONTEST '25

Voice of business successfully launched its signature event the VoB Writing contest 2025, providing a platform to both undergraduate and post graduate students to showcase their talents, insights, skills and creativity through pen. This year's topic was "An Open Letter to Bangladesh's education System and Way Forward". This topic sharply examines the systemic weaknesses of Bangladesh's education structure, highlighting issues such as rote learning, lack of teacher training, political interference, and neglect of student well-being. It urges policymakers to recognize the crisis and initiate meaningful, student-centered reforms.

This contest had BDT 15000 prize pool and top three best writing secured their spot in the magazine.

VoB Bulletin

Manifesting the belief that every story holds the

power to inspire, here, at Voice of Business, our aim is to present readers with a versatile reading experience that caters to their inquisitiveness, avocations etc. On every new release, we try to present readers with a mixture of various topics that include the worlds of business, science, technology, and art.

Our bulletin is filled with such interesting topics that keep you on the edge to know, learn, or discover further.

VOICE OF BUSINESS

BULLETIN

The bulletin introduces readers with diverse range of themes. The 7th issue of the bulletin covered 10 topics including "May Day", "Rishka Festival", "The Dire Wolf is Back", "Islamic Finance", "Bangladesh Investment Summit" our FBS's exclusive band "Ants on the Run" etc. Dive into the world of transformative business ideas through our bulletins! From bold decisions to flawlessly executed strategies, we highlight remarkable stories from the global business arena. And for those seeking

entertainment, we offer insightful reviews of films, series, anime, music, and more.

excel in the fast-evolving field of corporate branding.



BRANDrill

With the goal of equipping students with valuable insights and real-world corporate experience, Voice of Business launched its nationwide branding competition, Brandrill, in 2017. The competition provides students with a hands-on journey through the entire branding ideation process, encouraging them to enhance their creativity and critical thinking abilities. Brandrill is crafted to guide students toward becoming capable future business leaders in an increasingly competitive professional environment.

This year Voice of Business launched BRANDrill 5.0 powered by CBC tiles, co-sponsored by Concord Group. After weeks of brainstorming ideas the grand finale of Brandrill 5.0 was held on 11 October 2025 in a grandeur manner. Out of 350 teams only 6 teams made it to the final and Team Jhalmuri was crowned champions followed by Team Skyfall and Team Smashed Burger securing positions of 1st and 2nd runner up respectively. The competition had a total prize pool of **BDT 215k**.

As one of our signature events, Brandrill reflects our dedication to creating an empowering environment where aspiring business leaders receive the guidance and resources needed to

Job Market Essentials

Let's face it — the job market, at present, is tougher than ever. However, achieving success is far from impossible. In this highly competitive era, succeeding in the job market requires more than just academic competence; it entails adaptability, creativity, resilience, and a proactive attitude toward professional growth. Interestingly, even with a surplus of job seekers, actual employment opportunities continue to dwindle. Many graduates still struggle to address how to effectively prepare themselves to meet the growing demands of modern employers.

To address these challenges and building upon the remarkable success of its first edition, last year, Voice of Business once again took the initiative to bridge this gap through the iteration of "Job Market Essentials".

This event was designed to empower students, allowing them to dive more deeply into the job market and provide them with necessary information about the required credentials, skills, and strategies needed to triumph and get a competitive edge in the job market.



Vob Week

One of the most awaited and prestigious events of Voice of Business is VoB Week, a grand annual celebration registering the launch of our magazine. Since 2011, this distinctive event has been a vibrant gathering of ideas, creativity, and inspiration.

VoB has proudly published 14 issues of its magazine since its inception in 2009, and this year marks the celebration of the 15th edition — a testament to the dedication, creativity, and teamwork of our members.

The launch of the magazine is quickly followed by VoB Week, a joyous celebration of the club's achievements. This packed week offers diverse and exciting activities, including games, job and internship fairs.

VoB Week stands as an insignia of our unwavering and relentless pursuit of excellence, perfection, and delivering the best, where we esteem not only the publication of our magazine but also the collective effort and diligence that continues to pave the way for Voice of Business.



Contributor List:
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Brandrill Memories

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VOICE OF
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Separating The Experts, Within



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Business Publication

Our core activity is based on our annual business publication which focuses on the current trends and

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Elora Sultana
Session: 2004-05



Anik Chandra Saha
Session: 2011-12



Rudaba Mohsin
Session: 1999-2000

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