

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

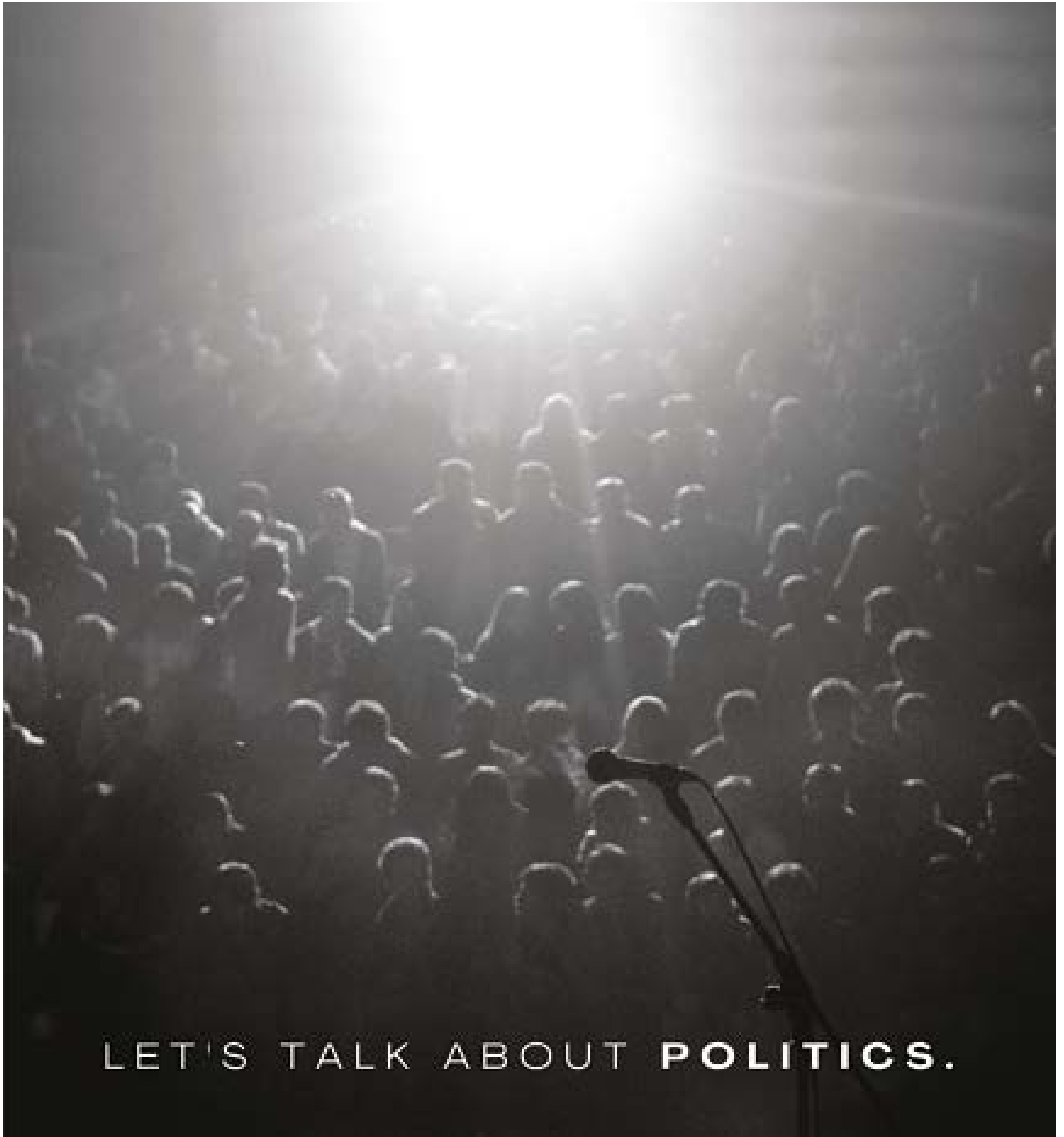
# SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 2, 2020, ASHAR 18, 1427 BS | A PUBLICATION OF *The Daily Star*



IS THE INTERNET MAKING  
US FORGET STUFF?  
**PG 3**

A TALE OF TWO  
LAPTOPS  
**PG 6**



# EDITORIAL

I went on a life changing trip to a magical place last year. It was a place full of football, cricket, and history. There, I saw a rainbow.

I remember it well, I was on a bus going from one realm to another. I was mesmerised by the uninterrupted openness, the bright sunshine, and the small town on the horizon with clouds gathering above it. The clouds, the sunshine, and the rain in between created the most beautiful rainbow I've ever seen, a full arch, grand and distinct, right in front of me.

Back home, however, I've recently seen hatred for rainbows. Mobs have been gathering with keyboards for pitchforks, and the source of their chagrin is rainbows. I've heard it being said that rainbows are unnatural, unwanted, and Western propaganda. But if rain is natural, and sunshine is natural, how can the union of the two be against the laws of nature?

I honestly didn't think of that rainbow too much at the time, but everyday, I remember it more. Rainbows are beautiful, natural, and loved. Rainbows are needed in a gloomy world.

– Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### TECH HELP



This is the cursed image

# Wallpaper that kills your phone

OSAMAN BIN AHMED

*Disclaimer: The writer or the publishing body will not be responsible for what happens to your phone after you try the wallpaper.*

Wallpapers are an important part of how we personalise our phones. From black holes to a view of the Alps, wallpapers reflect our interests and desires.

Let's picture a typical scenario: you see a beautiful wallpaper on your Twitter feed and want to download it. Without a hint of suspicion, which is obvious, you download and set it as your wallpaper. Instantly as you move past the lock screen, your phone display starts to blink. In a last ditch attempt, you rush for the power button and restart your phone. Your efforts are still in vain! Your phone gets stuck in an endless boot loop.

#### So, what's the science behind it?

The wallpaper is a photograph of St Mary Lake in Montana. The photograph was taken with a Nikon camera and edited using an Adobe Lightroom preset and then uploaded to Flickr. Technically speaking, it is not a fault of the photographer, rather of some Android devices' colour engines.

Simply put, most Android devices have their colour engines work in the sRGB (standard RGB) colour space. After an inspection of the real image's colour space, it is found out that the colour range is more wider than sRGB, i.e. ProPhoto RGB. Most devices using Android 10 and under do not know how to

process these colour ranges, so every time this wallpaper is rendered on your device UI as a wallpaper, the phone crashes. Google has stated that Android 11 will fix this issue.

#### Ok, I get it. Now help.

You ran out of luck the moment you began downloading that photo. Unfortunately, the only fix is that you factory reset your phone. All data in your internal storage will be lost and cannot be retrieved unless backed up to a cloud service or otherwise. Should have listened to your tech-savvy sibling when he bragged about having Google Drive \*shrugs\*.

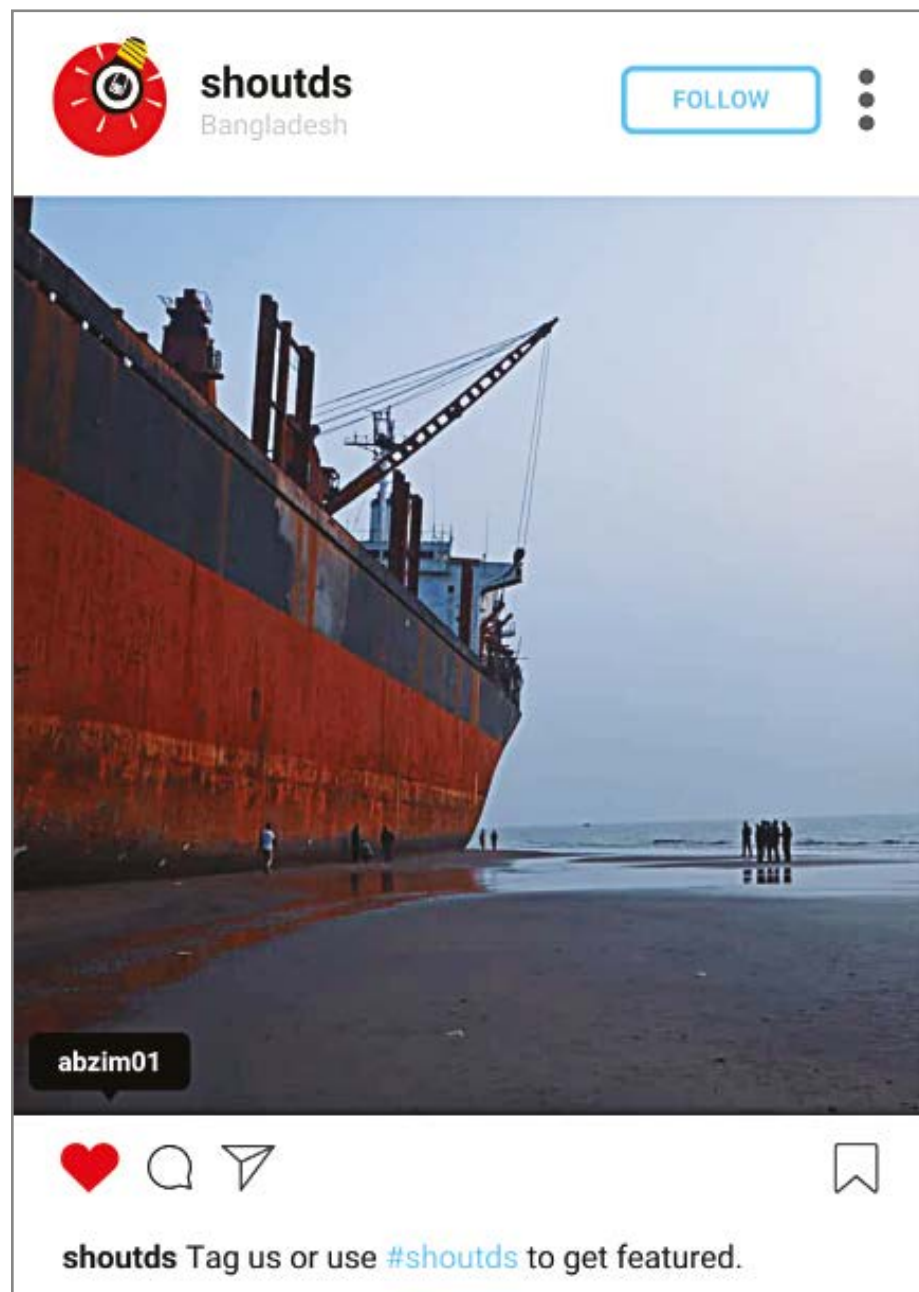
#### But, I really like this wallpaper. Is there any way to use it?

Fortunately for you, yes. You can simply take a screenshot of the photo and then apply it as a wallpaper just like you would do to any other wallpaper. What screenshotting does is take a photo of the screen in the compatible colour space with some compression just like social media does. So yeah, you're safe. Just don't download an original copy of the photo.

#### You're lying. My phone works perfectly fine!

Firstly, no. Secondly, there's a reason for that. Your phone manufacturer probably uses a different colour engine or you've got Android 11 installed.

*Osaman is a curious mind always wondering about AI, simulations, theoretical physics and philosophy. To discuss nerd stuff DM him on [www.fb.com/osaman.binahmed](http://www.fb.com/osaman.binahmed)*



# Is the Internet making us forget stuff?

**H. RAINAK KHAN REAL**

“Raise your hand if you can share some interesting facts about Nordic countries,” the Professor declared, minutes after entering the class.

I instinctively raised my hand upon hearing the term “Nordic”, because I remembered reading a great article on the countries of northern Europe two days ago. With the Professor’s signal, I stood up to share my knowledge with the rest of the class. I froze.

I realised that even though the article was full of information and I enjoyed reading it, I didn’t bother remembering the facts, partly because the link will always be available on the Internet so I can just come back later, but mostly because I was continually distracted due to my online multi-tasking: switching between reading, googling things that needed a second look, and checking my Facebook feed for no good reason.

It is very easy to get lost within the ocean of information available on the Internet, but very difficult to retain the stuff we actually need. That’s because our short-term memory and long-term memory function quite differently.

Our short-term memory is of limited capacity which is exposed to the constant bombardment of information from the real world and unless the information is transferred to our long-term memory, we tend to forget them. However, once our long-term memory retains the information, we become capable of not only recalling, but also of innovation and critical thinking. But this transfer requires effort: concentration and time. Distractions only hinder this transfer and cause us to lose

information.

Research has found that instead of relying on our memory, if we tend to rely on smart devices to remember the information for us, it is more likely that we will forget it ourselves. Another study suggests that taking too many photos of our memorable moments negatively affects our ability to remember the details, which was termed as the photo-taking-impairment effect. Hence, it is no exaggeration to say that the Internet and technology are influencing our memory, particularly on our short-term memory.

However, there is no scientific evidence that the extensive use of technologies deters our learning capacity.

So, if we cannot recollect a specific thing at a particular moment, it is not because our memory has failed us, rather it is more likely that we didn’t pay enough attention to retain that piece of information into our long-term memory, perhaps due to stress, distraction or multitasking.

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*H. Rainak Khan Real has stopped searching for the elixir of eternal youth, instead he has begun searching for the potion that can slow down the time. Send him clues at rainak-khanreal@gmail.com*



## A BRAIN CELL ROUNDTABLE

**ADHORA AHMED**

*Cells One, Two and Three have gathered for their meeting inside Mili’s brain. The rest either don’t exist or are doing whatever brain cells do. These three are special, however, because of their exceptional slacking abilities. They don’t do much, but they give it all in mindless chatter every night.*

One: Okay folks, it’s time for our nightly chit-chat. What’s up?

Two: There’s this really obscure, avant-garde song Mili’s been listening to on repeat. Personally, I don’t like it, maybe because it’s not her style.

Three: Don’t worry, it’s just a phase. It’ll pass before you know it. Play the song anyway.

*They listen to the song together.*

One: Yeah, I don’t like it either. But let’s keep it in the background. Three, any words?

Three: I’m feeling very philosophical tonight. What’s the meaning of life? What does true happiness feel like? Can peace be achieved without violence?

*They ponder upon other rhetorical questions, leading to a heated debate.*

Two: Alright, all this musing is making me—

One: Yeah, enough of this. We need something lighter.

Two: Remember that one time Mili got into a fight at school over a pencil?

Three: Two, she was only eight! Leave it alone!

Two: But it’s still funny.

Three: And extremely embarrassing, because she got detention afterwards.

*They all laugh anyway, recounting the memory in detail.*

Two: It’s funny how Mili doesn’t even get scolded anymore, given the amount of classes she skips.

One: I know, right? How does she not get caught?

Three: Guess we could put some effort into helping her skip classes more effectively. Our other pals are doing all the hard work.

Two: Or we could put some guilt into her. At this rate, she’ll end up failing this semester.

One: Let’s add some longing as well.

Three: Longing? For whom? Don’t tell me it’s for that plain-faced celebrity.

*They laugh.*

One: Seriously though, it’s kind of sad to see Mili hasn’t fallen in love with anyone yet.

Two: All these love songs, even the one I’m playing as we speak, and she still can’t relate to the feeling.

Three: Neither can we. If she did have a genuine crush on somebody right now, we’d only talk—wait, is Mili getting up?

Two: I think so.

One: Eh, never mind. Maybe she needs to pee.

Mili realised that this was going to be another sleepless night. She went outside and opened the fridge even though she wasn’t hungry, she realised eating now would be a bad idea and just had some water. She went back to her room and got under the covers once again, and begged sleep to grace her closed eyes.

*Adhora Ahmed daydreams too much. Send her reality checks at adhora.ahmed@gmail.com*

# LET'S TALK ABOUT POLITICS

ALIZA RAHMAN & MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

As a child, when you were being taught manners, you might have been told to avoid a certain topic during conversations. *Politics*. If you went to dinner parties that ultimately culminated in middle-aged men engaging in shouting matches while discussing you-know-what and you-know-them, it might have seemed like sound advice.

However, that is unfortunate for more reasons than one.

Many people are discouraged by their families to speak about or be interested in politics from a young age. Twenty-four year old Shailla Zaman says, "We were told not to discuss politics with anyone and were made to believe politics was something that is scary and confusing and its best for us if we stayed out of it. As a result, I never tried to understand it and was rather quick to dismiss it."

For Afnan Rahman, from North South University, indifference for politics stemmed from elsewhere. "I have never been discouraged by my family in anything that has kindled interest in me. I am fortunate in that way. Rather I've seen documentaries and movies based on politics. The intertwined corruption that dismantles a whole state is what brought out my apathy towards politics."

Asked which political figures have done a great job in their eyes, Afnan says, "From our generation, I do not see anyone remarkable in this field. However, if someone makes a contribution in sports or climate change and disaster management, I always appreciate them." In contrast, Shailla is a bit more pessimistic, "Frankly I don't keep up with everyday politics that way for me to be able to name someone.

And this is because of the lack of hope I have in the system to begin with."

## THE AGE OF INFORMATION

It won't be a stretch to say we are the most informed generation in the history of humankind. A cursory glance at charts showing just how much content is produced and consumed per second can tell astounding results. This, however, can also mean we are the most misinformed people ever. Just the amount of false information spreading on multiple platforms from the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic

ings that upended the systems that existed then and brought about change that massively impacted the lives of the masses.

Tashrif Fairuz Raiza, a student of the University of Dhaka (DU) says, "Politics came along with my birth rights. However, my family never tried to feed me their points of view, but rather encouraged me to choose my own. Whether I wanted to have an active participation or not was always my choice to make. I would say it was actually because of them that political research intrigued me. Moreover, now



tells us how much misinformation is peddled on the internet, and how it influences the behaviours and decisions of people who may not fully be aware of how to make sense of what they come across.

In addition, the internet has enabled almost anyone to publish what they want, free of cost and with little-to-no supervision. Not only does this mean we need to be careful about what information we believe in, it means that we have a role to play in understanding events and disseminating information.

You might feel that having knowledge of politics isn't relevant to you, you're not a member of a marginalised community, you've been fine not knowing about political matters so far, or you're convinced that knowing won't help you bring about change so there's no point in knowing anyway, right?

But take a moment to think this through. Even if you're not concerned about hot button issues like taxes, unemployment, and other such matters, politics still affects you—and politics can be personal. Right from where you live to what you eat to the number of board exams you have to take in school to even the quality of the air you breathe in is impacted by politics, and being in denial of that is dangerous both for you and others surrounding you. Being politically aware enables you to shape the opinions of people in your vicinity, even if it is done unconsciously, for people are affected by what others in their social circle do. This is important, because when it comes to politics, you have to live with not only your own choices but the choices of others. History is filled with examples of protests and upris-

considering that I am doing my major from DU, this catalysed my eagerness about politics further."

Often, and especially at a young age, simply obtaining and spreading knowledge can have a massive impact. To see an example of this, we can look at the effect that television host and political commentator John Oliver has had on policies and politicians. From helping the Society of Women Engineers receive USD 25,000 in donation (a mere two days after the airing an episode (this amount is 15 percent of the donations they usually receive each year from individuals) to influencing a Washington state legislator to launch a new initiative that allowed people to comment on new legislation through videos uploaded online, Oliver has repeatedly managed to not only inform citizens of what is happening but also informed them on how they can take action. Democracy, remember?

## THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Discussions on the redundancy of a lot of what is taught in school have been going on for years, and demanding change in the education system is something we could still be doing. However, we have to acknowledge that before the change comes, it is up to us to learn ourselves.

We live at a time when we can obtain information not only through reading but also through media like podcasts, documentaries, and YouTube videos. Many of these tackle complex issues that might have been tedious for some to read about and also difficult to understand. Millennials make up the largest demographic in viewership for shows like *Last Week Tonight* and *The Daily Show* comprising

41 percent and 36 percent of total viewership respectively, which only shows young people do care about the issues surrounding them.

Asked about the importance of being informed, Afnan says "Politics is concerned with governing the country for its betterment. So we cannot be misinformed or ignorant about it. If so, it would lead to choosing a wrong representative for the nation which might be devastating."

"There are people who choose to be involved more into education than investing time in politics, and vice versa," opines Tashrif Fairuz. "What I believe is that no one should be shamed for choosing what they want. However, someone who chooses education doesn't necessarily have to play an active part in politics. However, they can do their part of education through research to be aware about politics.

It is important to be politically aware because as a citizen you need to know whether you are born in an independent country or not, whether it is politically free or not, and especially how it runs, for instance whether it is a diplomatic country, a socialist or federal one and so on. Not being politically aware means you are not aware of your own birth rights which the country offers, also of the rights you have as a human. It is very easy to exploit someone who is not politically aware. However, it is necessarily not the case that political unawareness will lead to one's own exploitation, but the chances are high. Being informed will not only be beneficial for themselves, but their surroundings too."

## IN CONCLUSION

It is far too easy to be cynical and not take steps to make a better society. The reality is that we are observed and our collective opinions, when loud enough, do reach the ears of people in positions of author-



It's easy to ignore politics and to walk past the important issues. But growing up unaware leaves us woefully uninformed about our surroundings, and underprepared for the world.

PHOTO:  
AZMIN AZRAN

ity. Even if systemic change and concrete actions aren't brought about, they do let authorities know what the people expect and what they are not willing to tolerate. Greta Thunberg and her climate activism is an inspiring example of this.

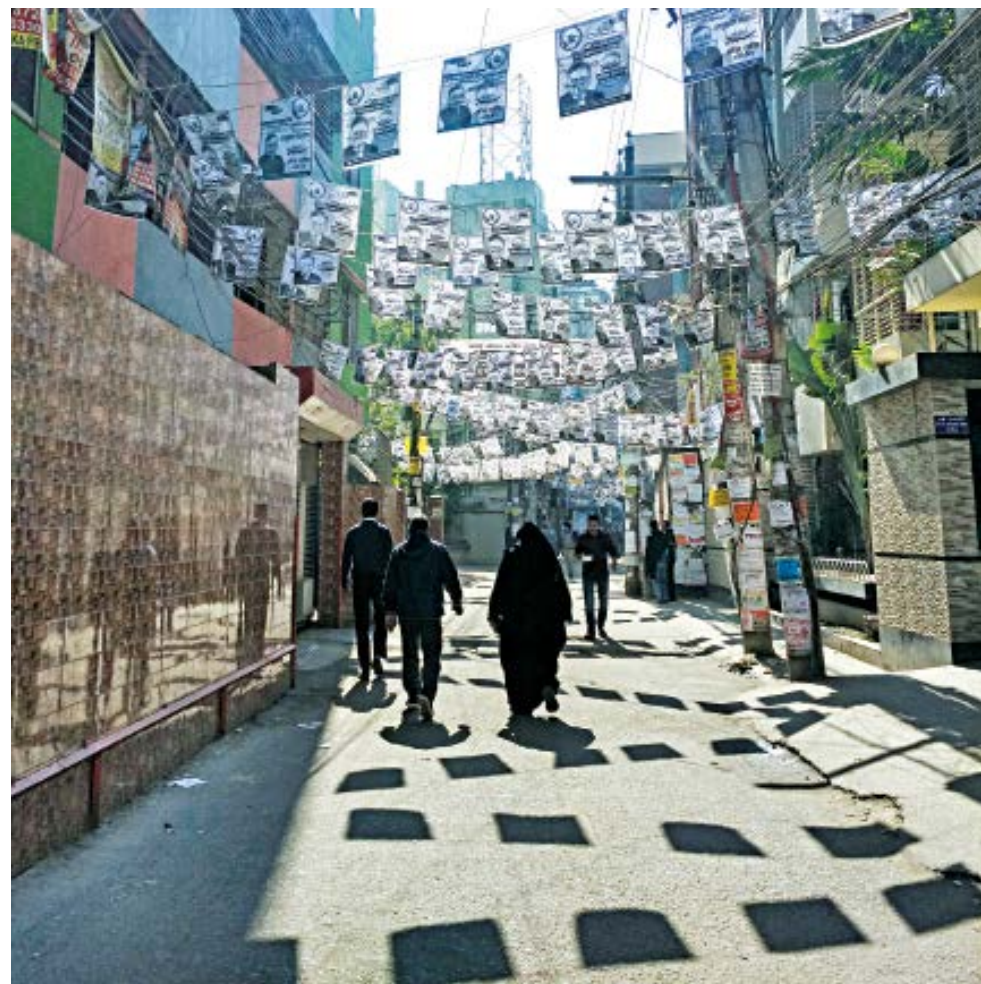
At a time when we are constantly bombarded with information about what is

happening across the world, it is understandable that people might be emotionally exhausted, fed up, and agitated at the state of affairs. We know change takes time but we also know that crucial moments of action can serve as catalysts for change.

In the meantime, the least we can do is become more politically aware, so that

when the time does arrive, we have the ability to make the right decision.

Aliza is Matilda resurrected. Reach her at [aliza.hridula@gmail.com](mailto:aliza.hridula@gmail.com); Mrittika Anan Rahman is a daydreamer trying hard not to run into things while walking. Find her at [mrittika.anan@gmail.com](mailto:mrittika.anan@gmail.com)



We're surrounded by issues. We can choose to ignore politics, but we end up living in its shadows.

PHOTO:  
KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD



THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE  
**SHOUT**



**ECHOES BY**  
 ASRAR CHOWDHURY

# A TALE OF TWO LAPTOPS

**I**  
 We have two laptops. One used to be mine. The other belonged to my father till he retired. My daughter would use that laptop when she got tired of her desktop. My wife never needed a laptop. She'd use her desktop for her school activities. I also had a desktop in my study. My dependence on my laptop was minimal. This is how life was moving on. Until the coronavirus came.

My wife and I started working from home. Our house-staff were advised to stay in their homes till things improve. The only person outside our family to stay with us was my father's nurse.

Two idle laptops and the coronavirus made us experience life in ways that would have been unthinkable in the beginning of 2020.

**II**

Soon after education institutes closed, I started working in our common living space with my father. My laptop became my workstation.

As I was developing video lectures, preparing Powerpoints, and writing notes, I spent more time with my father than I did in my whole life. My mother left us in



2007. Since then my father kept himself busy teaching in universities. After his second stroke in 2017 he decided to call it a day. I was busy with my life. I didn't focus on my father as much as I should have. Like many old people, he started leading a solitary life. Working from home made us develop a bond that didn't exist when I was growing up. It made me realise, old-age loneliness can be cruel.

**III**

What happened to the other laptop that was lying idle?

By June it became evident education institutes weren't going to open soon.

First my wife's school; then my daughter's school started online classes. The platform was Zoom. It coincided with my own experience of learning Zoom and alternative platforms to adapt in a changing world that may soon become reality. All of a sudden, the three of us started competing for two laptops.

My daughter starts Grade VIII in July. This is a critical year. Decisions taken now will influence the rest of her life. However, like all teenagers, she's developed a world of her own to which I seldom get access. Working from home and her tutor not coming created an opportunity for me to

become a part of her life once again. We started to re-discover each other. She's started to share her anxieties and her joys like she used to when she was a child always seeking my attention. Teen age is full of uncertainty. Uncertain outcomes can go either way, positive or negative, and leave a mark for the rest of one's life. Being able to talk with my daughter at this stage of her life has been more than a blessing in disguise.

**IV**

Age has made me appreciate, blowing up opportunities when I was younger was natural. It was a part of growing up. Age has also made me appreciate, opportunities don't appear every day. When they do, grab them while you can. As the famous last words of Sri Bhagvad Gita echoes, "What will happen shall happen for a good." Two laptops that were sitting idle for ages, were meant to be sitting idle to reveal a gift when the time came. Working from home turned out to be a good idea in the end.

*Asrar Chowdhury teaches economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com*

## How to make the most of online classes

**FAISAL BIN IQBAL**

As we enter yet another week of social distancing, and continue to try and embrace the "new normal", we must learn to adjust ourselves accordingly. One of the major shifts in this regard has been seen in the academic sector, where classes are moving online, and we're expected to attend them from the comfort of our home. Attending classes while sitting at home may seem like a dream come true, but certain adjustments need to be made to make these classes fruitful. In order to help you make the most of these online classes, here are a few things you should remember.

### SETTING UP A STUDY ROUTINE

This is something you need to ensure if you're working with pre-recorded lectures. The idea that the lectures are going to be there for as long as you need them might lead to procrastination. This in turn, creates a backlog before you can get started with assignments or quizzes. Hence, it's always a good idea to maintain a proper study plan. Fix up a dedicated time slot for each day or week during which you'll focus only on your studies and nothing else. Never allow yourself to think that you can always do something tomorrow when it needs to be done today.

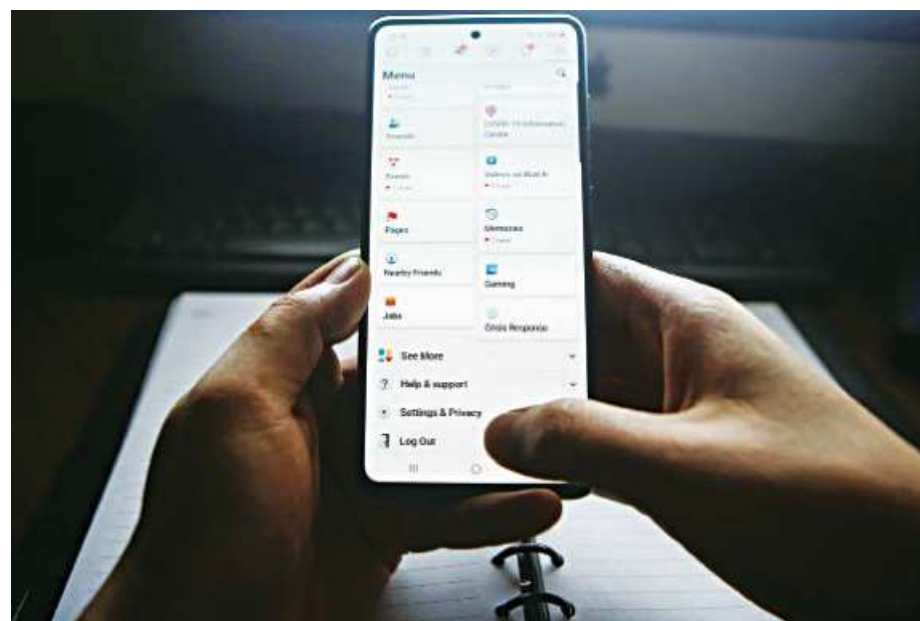


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

### LOGGING OUT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Given that you'll have to attend classes on your computer or smartphone, there's a high possibility that you'll be distracted by the chime or a ding of a notification. The best way for you to avoid these distractions is by simply logging out of all your social media accounts prior to your

class or study time. Don't let such inconveniences hinder your academic progress.

### ESTABLISHING A 'DO NOT DISTURB' POLICY

Ask your family members or roommates not to disturb you during your class or designated study time, unless it's an emergency. If possible, you should try and

isolate yourself in your room or any other corner of your house.

### TAKING NOTES

Don't let online classes stop you from taking notes. It's a habit that's very helpful, especially in cases where you need to have a quick glance at the lecture or topic without having to go through the entire length of it. You should also consider taking notes on pen and paper instead of your computer. Numerous studies conducted over the years have suggested that taking handwritten notes can help you remember them better.

### A SMALL BREAK EVERY NOW AND THEN

No one enjoys studying continuously at a stretch. That's why, you should definitely consider taking short breaks at certain intervals. Have a quick snack, or scroll through your Facebook feed for a few minutes, and then get back to where you left off. Make sure you're keeping track of time, and not overdoing these breaks.

While we continue our academic activities online, we should also remember that this is uncharted waters both for us, as well as our institutions and instructors. Hence, we need to give each other the opportunity to make full use of this new method of teaching, and help each other as much as we can.

# RAIN DANCE

**SAMIN SABAH ISLAM**

The sky was wildly blue with shrill rays of blinding yellow piercing through patches of wandering white clouds. Ayman searched the vast unknown above with creased eyebrows, barely able to keep his eyes open, for any symptom of a downpour.

On the other hand, Raiyan, the more practical, and less optimistic of the two twelve years olds stood under the green tin shed with his purple sunglasses on. Yet he was the one full of complaints.

"I told you this was a sham," he fussed, "If bizarre body postures could make it rain, my dancer khala would be the queen of Somalia."

Ayman rarely knew what Raiyan was talking about. Ignoring his best friend's cynical remarks, he focused on the task at hand – playing rainmaker.

"Maybe I'm not doing the stances correctly," he concluded, "Read the instructions again."

Raiyan silently cursed himself for proposing the absurd notion that perhaps if they could persuade the rain Gods above to shed some blessings, maybe Ayman's father

would have to postpone his flight and stay back one more day for his birthday. Unfortunately the tone of sarcasm in Raiyan's voice went undetected by his best friend.

Exhaling another audible sigh he reread the meticulous 14 steps of instructions for the eight peculiar body poses that Ayman had found on some random website.

"And finally, put both hands on your waist, face towards the sun and spin four times", Raiyan finished.

Obedying his commands Ayman spun, dropped to the ground and waited. Two minutes went by, then five and at nearly the seventh minute Ayman concluded that it wasn't a delay in the progression, but the ministry above simply wouldn't cooperate. He punched the concrete below in frustration as angry tears began to stream down his cheeks. Raiyan decided to keep his groan inaudible and swallowed the "I told you so" from the tip of his tongue.

"He'll be here for the next one," he sighed and dropped to the ground too, "That's the good thing about birthdays. There's always more to look forward to, unless you die before the next of course."

Before Ayman could protest about it

being his big 13th, his older sister called out from the staircase.

"Babu, abbu is leaving for the airport. Come see him off," she was panting from afar and it clearly wasn't in her design to reach the setting of her subject.

However, Ayman wouldn't budge. Frustration and disappointment had banded together into juvenile stubbornness. If Abbu was cruel enough to leave him like this, he was scarcely deserving of a proper adieu.

Abbu, being in a hurry to catch his flight, didn't have the luxury of climbing up to the roof to put out the flame. The parting between father and son hence remained wordless.

Daylight eventually bid farewell and darkness settled in comfortably. After a few attempts of affectionate coaxing followed by two angry slaps by Ammu, Ayman was forced to retreat for dinner. At night, the pitter-patter of rain against his sunshade kept him wide awake. Each thump mocked him, taunting the unloved child whose father wouldn't stay and the forsaken, trivial being God scarcely cared for.

Sleep did come eventually, but not to completion. While still in a trance, he

heard Apu rush to his room, scarlet faced and teary-eyed. Words had failed her. It was only a jumble of sounds she could relay to her little brother.

Due to the ferocious incessant rain-storm, the magnificent plane that Abbu had favoured over his son's happiness had crashed, swallowing the lives of its passengers.

The rain gods had answered, long overdue and charging a hefty price.

At the break of the first ray of morning light the following day, the fatherless child rushed to the next flat to awaken his best friend in a futile attempt to lessen his burden – the burden of a killer.

"It wasn't my fault," Ayman frantically reasoned with tears in his eyes, "If I knew it would make his plane crash, I never would have done the rain dance. It's their mistake for being delayed. I only wanted him to stay."

The other 12-year-old's usual impassive countenance altered into an unwonted expression of conflict. After a long drawn-out period of hesitation, and still stubborn of meeting his best friend's gaze, he whispered, "Who are you trying to convince?"





# THE MISFITS

Migrated from the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh in the 1950s, the Telugu diaspora of Bangladesh have strewn around three or four cities and the districts therein; most of the ones based in the capital city of Dhaka live in a scavenger colony near Gopibag. Apart from the social corollaries of living as a diaspora, being Hindus and Christians in a Muslim-majority country means that they end up holding jobs that are more than a few steps behind the occupational ladder. Living in less than hospitable conditions and little to no recognition as a community wouldn't put a stop to their ambitions, however, especially those of the young boys—no matter how vaguely ludicrous they may seem.

The young ones of the colony will catch your eye from miles away. Glowing trinkets, trendy sunglasses, and a hair dye so at odds with their complexion that it almost comes off like strings of sequin—these scenes fill up the colony at least once every year. This is punk fashion. Yet it's not a diversion. Then why do they do it? They want to be famous. They take in the extravaganza of South Indian movies almost ritually and take up these guises to follow in the footsteps of their icons, almost literally. They're not here to hide their light under a bushel. They want to guarantee that you're in the audience, clapping and cheering, while they walk away into the sun.

PHOTOS & TEXT:  
NAYEM SHAAN

