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(The Daily Star)

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PHOTO: NAYEEM JABAZ

"The reasons birds can fly and we can't is simply because they have perfect faith, for to have faith is to have wings."
— J.M.Barrie, Scottish novelist and playwright

SNAPSHOT

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A spoonful of chromium, with love

An alarming rise in the number of cancer patients in Bangladesh proves that heavy metal poisoning is quite common. The article titled "A Spoonful of Chromium, With Love" published in *Star Weekend* on April 28, 2017 reveals how these carcinogenic heavy metals have penetrated so deeply into our food chain that even some of our essential food items carry the life threatening elements. Water, egg, milk: some of the most essential sources of our nutrition have been contaminated by unsafe levels of heavy metals such as lead, arsenic and chromium. The article highlights that Bangladesh's health sector has not conducted any research on lead and chromium poisoning and its impact on public health. More research should be conducted on this issue so that these multiple sources of heavy metal emission can be identified and the current amount of heavy metal existing in our food chain can be neutralised.

Sheikh Shahbaz
Narinda, Dhaka

Living with the ghost of Rana Plaza

Last week I read the article titled 'Living with the ghost of Rana Plaza' (published in *Star Weekend* on April 21, 2017) which revealed the psychological condition of the Rana Plaza victims. I would like to thank the writer for writing on this important but less discussed issue. I really liked the beginning paragraph of the article which touched me and carried me through the rest of the article. I felt very sad for the workers who survived the incident but could not overcome the psychological shock. It is really appalling that, even after four years, these victims still feel the trauma of that tragic incident. They cannot work in an enclosed space as they feel like the walls and ceiling of the building are falling on them. Huge amount of money has already been paid to ensure medical treatment and rehabilitation of the injured workers. However, nobody cared about the psychological damage that has decisively affected the lives of these people. And, due to lack of psychological treatment it is very unlikely that these victims will be able to overcome this trauma in their lifetime.

Elias Azad
Pallabi, Dhaka



PHOTO: TASLIMA AKHTER

Setting our priorities straight

At first let me thank Scott Nova for his nice article. Being an official of a European logistics company operating in Bangladesh, I, myself, have been looking after the company's compliance related issues for a long time. So, Nova's article attracted me a lot. From my experience, I would like to state that Bangladesh has been implementing revolutionary changes in ensuring building and fire safety specifically after Rana Plaza and Tazreen incidents. Several local and international organisations are providing training on fire and building safety. They are also doing electrical and building safety assessments as per the Accord, Alliance and Bangladesh National Building Code guideline. Recently newspapers have published reports that said that 'The Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety', a group of major North American apparel brands, has appreciated Bangladesh's progress in improving fire safety standards in its major garment sector. However, it is necessary to continue these development initiatives to sustainably establish the rights of the workers.

Sharfuddin
Agrabad, Chittagong

The opinions expressed in these letters do not necessarily represent the views of the *Star Weekend*.

SPECIAL FEATURE |

Not long after he subscribed to a weekly paper that assembles job advertisements, Didarul Alam, desperate for a job, noticed a lucrative ad—from "Village Save The Children". The name of the organisation sounded familiar to the 21-year-old who had completed his HSC exams from a rural area in Khagrachari. The ad sought candidates for a few hundred posts of health care workers and office staff, with no prior experience required. Selected candidates were to be stationed in hospitals or clinics in their own locality and promised a monthly salary of Tk. 15,000.

Didarul was reluctant, but his parents insisted that he should give it a try. "What's so wrong with trying?" asked his father, who was about to retire from his government job and worried that his son would not be able to compete in the cutthroat job market.

Didarul sent his CV, and the next day, he was contacted by a woman. "You have been selected for the interview," she said. There was only one problem though: she also said that he would have to pay Tk. 2950 as "registration fee" if he's selected. Didarul, not knowing any better, agreed to the term, and came to Dhaka to face the "interview".

He went to the address provided in



HOODWINKING GULLIBLE JOBSEEKERS

NAZMUL AHASAN

and a logo that looks similar to our logo a few weeks ago, but the full name is different from ours," he says. Terming it as a "carefully thought scam", Drobnyak, argues that none of his colleagues could recall similar incidents in the past.

UNDP, on Tuesday, published a warning on its official Facebook page, stating that UNDP does not charge a fee at any state of its recruitment process.

Currently, the security department of UNDP is dealing with the case, and may soon turn this officially to law enforcement agencies. There's an ongoing internal investigation, following which the agency is expected to come up with an official statement for the media.

Job fraudulence through newspaper ads has been rife in the capital in recent years, claims Barrister Jyotimoy Barua, a lawyer at the Supreme Court. "If a company seeks candidates for a few hundred posts, at least 5000 job-seekers try it. If each of them is asked to pay, say, Tk. 300 as registration fee, where does the total figure stand?"

Do newspapers have a responsibility?

People behind these weeklies tried to distance themselves from the ads they publish. "We don't publish ads by ourselves. We republish ads that had

প্লান বাংলাদেশ (সবার জন্য শিক্ষা)-এ নিয়োগ
(আজকের শিশু আগামিদিনের ভবিষ্যৎ)

বাংলাদেশ সরকার কর্তৃক অনুমোদিত দারিদ্র শিশুদের মাঝে শিক্ষার আলো পৌঁছে দেবার লক্ষ্যে প্রতিটি গ্রাম, ইউনিয়ন, থানা ও জেলা পর্যায়ে স্থল প্রতিষ্ঠান লক্ষ্যে সারাদেশব্যাপী পুরুষ/মহিলা ১০ বছর স্থায়ীভাবে "মানবতার কল্যাণে" কাজ করার জন্য নিয়োগ করা হইবে।

শিক্ষক/শিক্ষিকা	৪৫ জন	S.S.C/ফলপ্রাপ্তি	১০,৫০০/-
ইউনিয়ন শিক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক	৩২ জন	H.S.C/ফলপ্রাপ্তি	১৪,০০০/-
থানা শিক্ষা নিয়ন্ত্রক	১৮ জন	ডিপ্লোমা/বি.এ	১৬,০০০/-
স্থল সহকারী	২০ জন	৮ম/১০ম	৭,৫০০/-

অভিজ্ঞতার প্রয়োজন নাই। তবে অভিজ্ঞদের ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষার যোগ্যতা শিল্প করা হবে। পেনশন সুবিধা দেওয়া হবে। তবে কমপক্ষে ৫ বছর কাজ করতে হবে। ছাত্রছাত্রীদের সেবাশ্রম সুব্যবস্থা। কাজের আধিকারে প্রমোশন ও বেতন বৃদ্ধি এবং প্রয়োজনে স্থল আন দেওয়া হবে। (স্বিংগারদের ক্ষেত্রে আধিকার দেওয়া হবে এবং যোগ্যতা শিল্প করা হবে।) **শি. প্র. গ্রাম নির্বাচিত হয়ে তিনমাস পরামর্শ চক্রা নিতে হবে। সকল স্বাক্ষরের মালিক বেতন থেকে ২২০/- কেটে নেওয়া হবে শি. প্র. প্রাপ্তি জরুরি।** **সূ. : নংকল ১০/০৪/১৭**

যোগাযোগ : বরাবর, প্রকল্প সচিব ড. সেলিম রেজা
সবার জন্য শিক্ষা প্রকল্প, গুলশান, ঢাকা-১২১২
মোবাইল : **01760314253**
ই-মেইল : **plan.ad.585@gmail.com**

ব্রাক (সবার জন্য শিক্ষা)-এ নিয়োগ
(আজকের শিশু আগামিদিনের ভবিষ্যৎ)

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যোগাযোগ : বরাবর, অধ্যাপক ড. রফিক আহমেদ (পি.এইস.ডি): ইন সুবিধা বঞ্চিত শিশু শিক্ষা মন্ত্রণালয় মৌলিক অধিকার প্রকল্প, মহাখালী ডি.ও.এইস.এস. ঢাকা-১২১২।
মোবাইল : **01763054979**
ই-মেইল : **brace.ad.16@gmail.com**

Scanned images of the fraudulent recruitment ads published in different newspapers.

the advertisement, and saw other candidates waiting for the interview. Among them was a friend he knew from his school days. A few minutes later, he was called in. The interviewer asked him to answer a set of questions and write a paragraph. After he finished, the interviewer told him that he had been selected.

Then, he was asked to pay the "fee". He did. He was instructed to go back home and assured that he would be contacted soon. Didarul never got the call. His friend, who had also been selected, was also never contacted.

It is unclear how many job seekers

become victims of such fraud every year. A content analysis of ten recent issues of four weeklies – chosen randomly – that solely publish recruitment advertisements reveals that 15 percent of the ads were of dubious, apparently fake organisations. For example, one ad in *Chakrir Khobor* seeks candidates for Project Director of "UNDP", which stands for "Union National Development Project" instead of United Nations Development Programme, using the original UNDP logo. Another ad seeks applicants for "Grameen Save The Children", apparently referring to microfinance organisation Grameen

Bank and internationally reputed NGO Save The Children Fund.

We sent CVs to 10 of these random ads, and received replies within hours. Half of them asked for a registration fee. "Grameen Save The Children" demanded Tk. 2,600. Another one, namely Trust Company, apparently intended to confuse job seekers with the Army-run Trust institutions, sought Tk. 520.

Dejan Drobnyak, Communications Management Officer at the UNDP, confirms that his organisation is aware of the fraud. "We noticed some fraud advertisements using UNDP acronym

already been published throughout the week by national newspapers," Mohammad Babul of *Chakrir Khobor* says in defense. When asked about job fraud allegations, he argues, "We publish a disclaimer that all the ads are collected from national dailies. We also caution readers not to exchange money under any circumstances. So if anyone gets swindled, we are not responsible."

A quick search on Google reveals that the advertisement Didarul followed had also been published in at least two national dailies, and that the same

Continued to page 4

