

“Solitude gives birth to the original in us, to beauty unfamiliar and perilous - to poetry. But also, it gives birth to the opposite: to the perverse, the illicit, the absurd.”

— **Thomas Mann**, *Death in Venice and Other Tales*

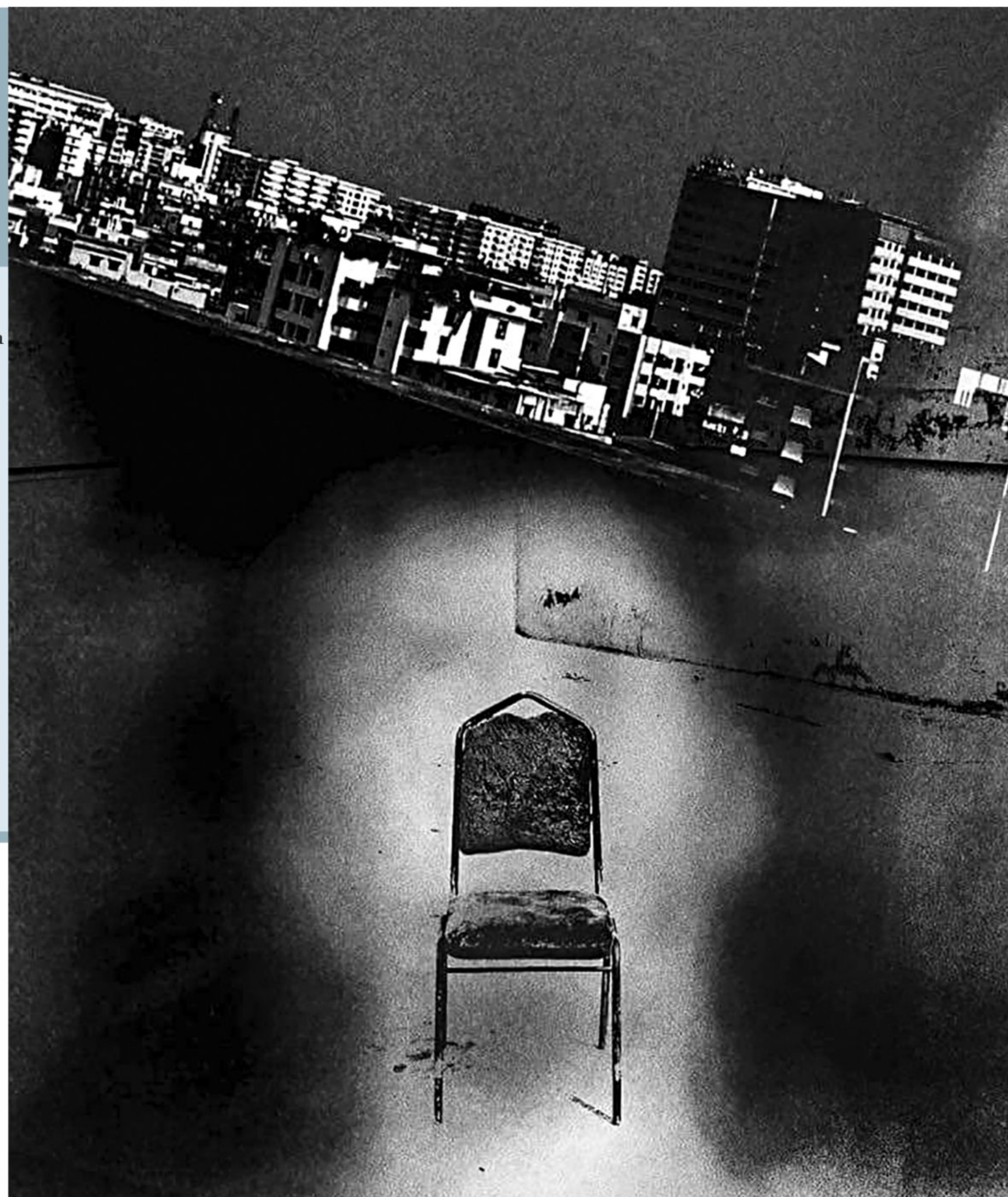


PHOTO: PAHN CHAKMA

THE NEVER ENDING CYCLE

It gives us, the public, immense pleasure that the main perpetrator, who abused 11-year-old Aduri brutally, has been awarded life sentence in a recent landmark case. Abusing domestic workers has become a common phenomenon and has been on the rise. Of late, the news about a minor domestic helper Sabina who was assaulted by her employer ignited public outrage. The photo of the child—her entire face bruised and eyes swollen beyond recognition—went viral on social media.

We waste no time in expressing our profound shock over such cruel behaviour. We even post statuses on Facebook demanding exemplary punishment. But in reality, how many such cases actually see the light of the day? We applaud the verdict that has given justice to this brave child. But this is not the end. Children, especially from marginalised groups, are vulnerable to all kinds of abuse in our society. If we cannot end this alarming menace, we will have failed as members of the human race.

Nuzhat Rifa Ehsan
Baridhara, Dhaka



PHOTO: COURTESY

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

MAILBOX

thestarmagazine@gmail.com

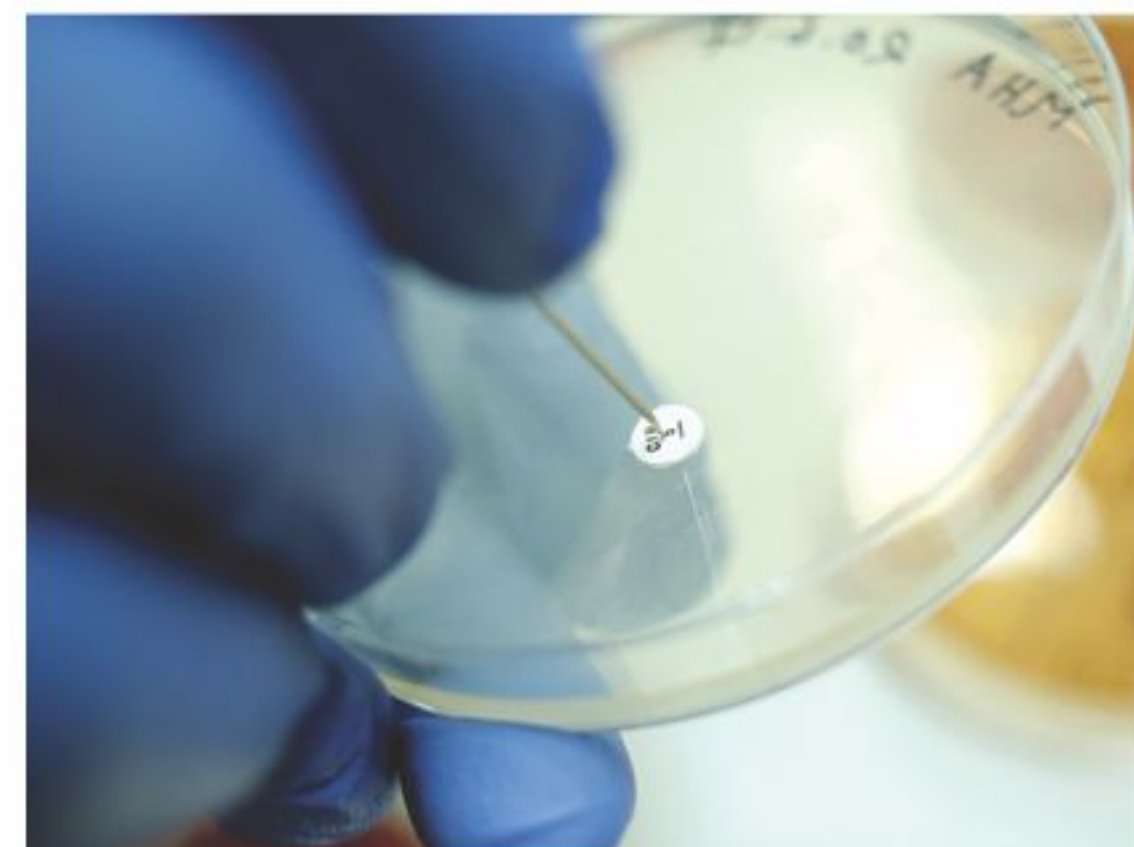


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Finding the superbug

The article titled “Finding the superbug” published in *Star Weekend* on July 7 was shocking! The article focused on the rapid rise of bacteria resistant to all antibiotics that is called the superbug. The issue of concern is that scientists proved that about 96% of samples from city hospital areas had these all-resistant bacteria. According to doctors, an attack of this type of bacteria may turn a simple disease lethal. This type of bacteria is spreading due to medical waste at garbage dumps on public roads. How can the authorities be so careless about such a serious public health issue? In the Dhaka Medical College area, the superbug is particularly prevalent as currently, it has no active incinerator for safe waste management. Patients who come to DMCH to get well often end up with lethal diseases. Md Tarek Aziz Bappi
Faculty of Social Sciences
University of Dhaka

EDUCATION



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

We are accustomed to an environment where students usually protest to postpone their exam dates. This time, however, students of seven government colleges previously under National University (NU) took to the streets demanding, among other things, the announcement of exam dates and timely publishing of their results.

Since the colleges' affiliation with the University of Dhaka in February 16, 2017, students had been waiting for a decision about a new curriculum from the DU authorities. However, having failed to get a response either from DU or their respective colleges for months on end, the students finally staged a demonstration in Shahbagh on July 20. What began as a peaceful protest voicing the legitimate concerns of students soon turned into a violent conflict, when the police charged upon them with batons and tear gas. Siddikur Rahman, a third-year student of Titumir College, was the worst victim of police brutality—he has lost sight in his right eye and his left eye is severely damaged.

But were the concerns of the student body not valid? The authorities seem to

ARE THE STUDENTS COLLATERAL DAMAGE?

NILIMA JAHAN

claim so. But in the process of invalidating the students' demands, are they attempting to hide their own failures to bring about the required changes to an ailing system? With the authorities blaming each other for the delay in instituting changes, is Siddikur—and the student body at large—collateral damage?

What drove them to mobilise?

According to AAMS Arefin Siddique, Vice-Chancellor of University of Dhaka (DU), the final decision to affiliate these seven government colleges first came

from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in 2014 to improve the quality of these educational institutions. The final decision, adopted in February 2017, states that DU will work on changing the syllabus, creating question papers, publishing results, monitoring whether classes are being conducted regularly, providing training to the teachers, issuing class routines and so on.

“Since it is a transition phase, we are experiencing some trouble, especially in terms of collecting information of these students from the NU authorities. However, we have announced the date of the due exams and finalised almost everything in a meeting held on July 18, with the principals of these seven

colleges,” says Arefin. “I don't find any reason for students to protest when everything has already been solved. Without asking their own principals or me, why they organised such demonstrations and involve themselves in a conflict must be investigated,” adds Arefin, suggesting that the protest was a ‘propaganda movement’.

However, Fakhru Islam Fuad, a third-year student of Titumir College, who took part in the first day of the demonstration, informs that they didn't receive any notice about the exam dates. “My classmates and I kept on asking our teachers about what was going on, what DU's plans were for us, but

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