# Young students must be part of public life

**MIR AFTABUDDIN AHMED**
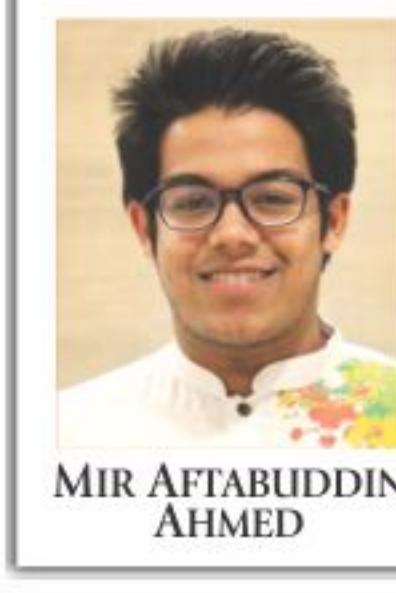
GIVEN the natural tendencies for middle-income countries such as Bangladesh to inherit or adopt architectural public policy designs from the West, domestic stakeholders in our country must surely push the state towards creating a holistic academic environment, catered solely towards and for the younger generation of our country. Canada has vocally promoted the integration of young students into the public sphere

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario is an integral constitutional forum in Canada's federalised governance structure; it demonstrates how academia and professional experience can be amalgamated under a single curriculum. Each year, about 140 young students from across Ontario are selected to participate in the *Legislative Page Programme*. This exclusive experience, open to all Ontario students in Grades 7 and 8, provides an opportunity to experience the ins and outs of the provincial legislature, with selected students being excused from school to serve their term as *Legislative Pages/Assistants* to the elected members of the Provincial Parliament. From a broader perspective, Ontario and indeed Canada's education structure, ensures that students get a taste of professional life simultaneously with studies, and engage in networks, dialogues, and learning experiences based on stipulated community/volunteering/professional/intern ship opportunities. As per provincial policy, all Ontario high school students are required to perform a minimum of 40 hours of volunteering service in order to graduate from schooling. In hindsight, such a policy reverberates onto the kind of human-capital centric approach, needed to make society progressive, vibrant and inclusive in the long-run.

A few days ago, eminent academic Dr Anisuzzaman criticised the prevailing condition of primary level education in



PHOTO: **IHTISHAM KABIR**

Bangladesh and wholeheartedly demanded a scrapping of examinations at this tier of academia. According to the well-respected Professor Emeritus of the University of Dhaka, our academic structure is "destroying the children's connection with knowledge and education in this exam-centric education system." Prioritisation of rote memorisation, question papers and passive learning tools are creating an ever-increasing number of SSC and HSC graduates, nevertheless one ponders about the viability of such a system, given Bangladesh's ever elusive 10.5 percent youth unemployment rate (age category 15-24).

Let us be frank. It is not just the government which is responsible for construing a system where children are forced to achieve the sought after 5.0

GPAs. Imagine the state of a household if a son or daughter somehow manages to struggle in mathematics and fails to get the *Golden* GPA. Imagine the kind of stigma we put such a child through. What we fail or ignore to realise is that our society has emphasised marks over active learning possibilities to such an extent, that we are pushing our children into being nothing other than mere mechanised robots. Dr Anisuzzaman, one of the architects of post-liberation education in the country, suggested that "a student's target is to get first place, not a good education. The entire education system is exam-centric now." This much is a national truth, and is the totalitarian result of a nationwide emphasis on *exam-centricness*.

So, what should society do now? It could start with the Education Ministry's lack of response to the National

Education Commission's proposals with regard to adding improved literary programmes, such as dance, fine arts and poetry, into the national curriculum. This integration is a good place to start. Furthermore, if Bangladesh is able to bring together private and public stakeholders under one roof, and make volunteering hours mandatory across primary and secondary schooling through formal partnerships, it will surely provide a holistic environment for students to experience public service and community engagement. The Canadian model of active learning, is an area in which our education ministry can acclimatise with experimentation. It is impossible for a country like Bangladesh, with weak and volatile public institutions, to completely change its style of academia. As such, the changes must come from within the existing

structure. Focussing on the arts, allowing entrepreneurship to bloom at an early stage through participation in social business programmes or cleaning the Buriganga river as part of an academic process, will not only push students towards learning from and with each other, but make them the kind of citizens we need in order to address the long-term problems of population growth, environmental change, radicalism and youth unemployment. When someone of Dr Anisuzzaman's stature suggests that examinations should be scrapped at the primary level, let us at the very least, pay heed and analyse such questions in broader depth.

The present government has done outstanding work in taking education to the children of this country over the last decade. Bangladesh has come a long way from the days when the government sought to integrate more rural girls into the schooling system in the 1990s. From the perspective of political parties, emphasising educational growth is a political and social reality. Rural or urban, rich or poor, most parents desire that their children get a better education than they did. But we need a collective realisation, both from the state and society, that the kind of approach we are taking towards education is morally, structurally and systematically flawed.

The reason why young students in Canada take an interest in public life is because of how the system grooms them. We need to groom our children to be leaders in their communities, let them experiment, fail and learn. We need to assist them in enhancing their thinking capabilities beyond the confines of textbooks, classrooms and examinations. It means little to nothing for students to get a piece of paper with a *Golden GPA*, neither does not being able to do so, mean the end of the world. Bangladesh is at a critical juncture in its story towards a *Shonar Bangla*. One hopes that we take the right steps in the right directions with the right attitude, and not merely politicise the future of this country.

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# The road to better health outcomes

## *Restructuring the healthcare system in Bangladesh using Big Data*

AHMED IMRAN KABIR and RIDOAN KARIM

THE healthcare industry has truly made strides in terms of information, record-keeping, administrative prerequisites, and patient care. The most recent decade has also seen real advances in the measure of data that is routinely generated and gathered in almost everything including human behaviour and technology. These patterns have together brought about the development of the field of Big Data.

Big Data is a term that is utilised to depict vast volumes of data. This data may be unstructured or structured. Both private and public companies are making use of Big Data to meet their organisational objectives. Big Data analytics likewise assumes an indispensable role for small or medium size enterprises. Today, numerous organisations assemble and analyse immense amounts of data, i.e. Big Data, because of its volume, velocity, variety and veracity.

Big Data analytics is no doubt profiting many industries such as the automotive industry, industrial engineering, retail, healthcare, financial services, entertainment, and so forth. Big Data is helping these industries identify their weaknesses and take measures accordingly.

In the brief span since its inception, Big Data has taken the

world by storm, impacting every arena, from healthcare to engineering, enhancing productivity and creating an environment conducive to innovation and technological advancement.

Because of the crucial role of information and communication technology (ICT) in healthcare today, one cannot ignore the potential of Big Data in healthcare. It can serve to enhance the frameworks and decrease the risk of medical blunders, leading to the wellbeing of people and communities—especially now that we have access to the newest tools needed to store and collect data. ICT-centred components are collectively known as eHealth.

Big data analytics in healthcare is generally an arrangement of strategies, methodology, structures, and advances that are utilised to change raw data into significant and meaningful data. These sets of data are then used to settle on decision-making tasks—be it tactical, strategic or operational.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers, Bangladesh is set to become the 28th largest economy by 2030. The country has been making huge advancements as of late. However, in spite of better economic and social indicators (for example, decrease in death rates and increase in per capita income), the healthcare industry is yet to reach its full potential. Indeed, millions in



Bangladesh do not have access to "minimum secondary and tertiary level medical care." Be that as it may, smart reforms headed by the government may transform the fate of the healthcare industry.

Big Data analytics in the Bangladeshi healthcare sector is developing into a promising field to gain knowledge from, through extensive data sets, leading to enhanced, more reliable results, as well as decreasing costs. In addition, data analysis would also help

healthcare services suppliers to better understand the demographics of the population and illnesses. As such, data analysis can actually help make the healthcare industry be more responsible. The data-sharing system increases efficiency and diminishes the overlapping of information.

Additionally, Big Data can help in the selection of the medications that are required for every patient. The arrangement of prior treatment can decrease the health costs and can wipe out the danger of chronic

diseases. Consequently, by using diverse analytical methodologies including data mining and text mining procedures, health pattern or trend examination and extensive patient management can all be made simpler utilising Big Data analytics.

Although there is immense potential of Big Data, there remain difficulties to overcome. Huge data frameworks require data analysts and data scientists who have the experience to design and analyse the

data so that it can be put to good use. Given the circumstances, Bangladesh lacks the skilled manpower—data scientists—who have the capabilities to actually undertake such complex research.

Big Data analytics can change the way healthcare providers in Bangladesh utilise sophisticated technologies to gather knowledge or insight from their clinical and other data storehouses and come up with informed and appropriate decisions. Big Data is the most recent development in the field of data management framework. In the interim, the technological headway is quickly moving ahead towards the usage of Big Data analytics. The healthcare industry in the country, sooner or later, will see the many benefits of using Big Data analytics. And as such, our policymakers and leaders in the healthcare industry ought to think seriously about the potential of Big Data analytics in Bangladesh's healthcare industry, which can in the future enhance national wellbeing by providing better services to the people of the country. Big Data analytics and applications in the Bangladeshi healthcare industry are at an early phase, quick advances in platforms and tools can pick up the pace of advancement.

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## A WORD A DAY



**PELAGIC**
ADJECTIVE

*Relating to the open sea.*

## CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

**ACROSS**
1 Baja resort, familiarly
5 Gambling mecca
10 Geriatrics study
12 — garde
13 Beeper's kin
14 Pole star?
15 List- shortening abbr.
16 Fury
18 Bear lair
19 "Gracious!
21 Fall sound
22 Fulton creation
24 Clean with effort
25 One might tow a skier
29 Bed board
30 Made flat
32 Supply with crew
33 Brewed beverage
34 Kind of pride
35 To any extent
37 Oscar winner Witherspoon
39 Move borders, perhaps
40 Harrison's successor
41 Catches
42 Shucking units

**DOWN**
1 Like Batman
2 Some marbles
3 Tiger or lion
4 Singleton
5 Bud's place
6 Mendes of moves

7 Best Picture of 1982
8 Pay to play
9 Position
11 Pained expresson
17 Work on a room
20 Bowler's button
21 Spasm
23 Undermine
25 Christian of "Mr. Robot"
26 Isthmus nation
27 Germany's Merkel
28 Puzzle
29 Stylish
31 Textile workers
33 Chamois' home
36 Track circuit
38 Iris' place
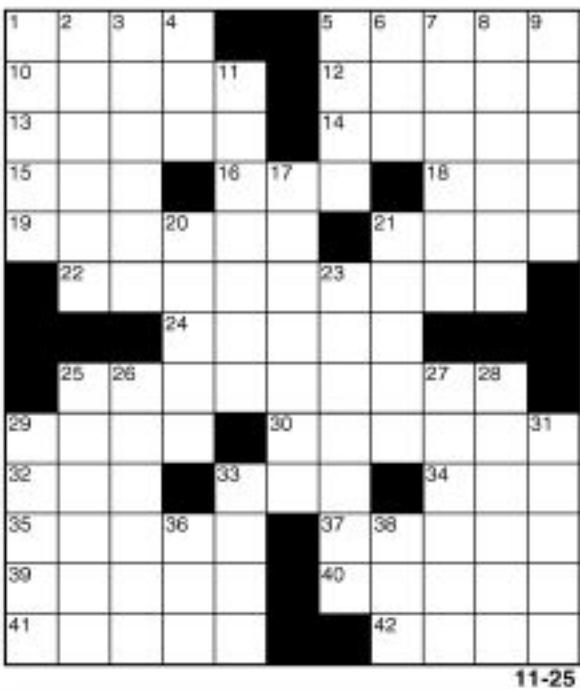


**YESTERDAY'S ANSWER**
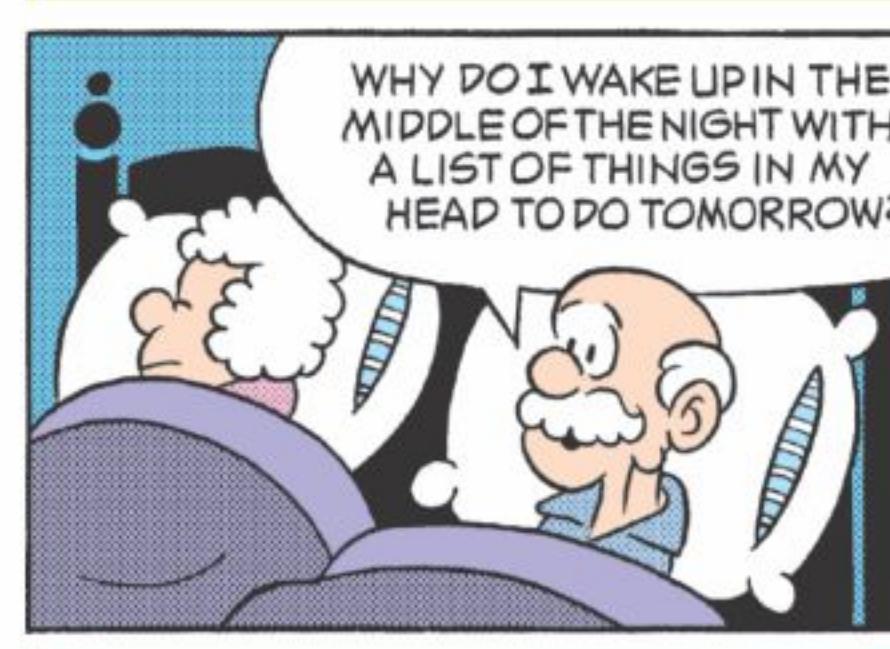


## BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



## BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT