

## MAILBOX

Please note we have a new email address:  
starweekendtds@gmail.com

### Smoking in public

This is in reference to a write-up titled "Are we slowly killing our children?" on February 9 in the *Star Weekend*. The write-up is bold and well-researched on the public health hazard and is a praiseworthy effort in spreading awareness about the effects of smoking on others.

Those frequently in the presence of smokers are susceptible to similar symptoms. Though smoking is banned in public spaces, it is not strictly followed. Smokers puffing away on their cigarettes on the roads bother passers by. If one humbly requests smokers to avoid these public places while smoking, they boast that they have not been caught. Smokers should realise that smoking in public spaces is not their right, instead, it is a bad habit that can be enjoyed in a safe zone or indoors without disturbing others. Common sense should prevail.

Md ZillurRahman  
Bhola



PHOTO: STAR FILE

### Punish the leakers

Due to questions being leaked, our educational activities are being disrupted and ruined. For every type of examination—PSC, JSC, SSC, HSC, BCS and even bank recruitment exams—questions are being leaked incessantly but our education ministry has been unable to prevent it.

In the ongoing SSC exams, all questions have been leaked. Before the English second paper exam, the leakers even announced in advance on social media

sites. They are leaking questions merely for money but in the process, are harming the country. Greedy teachers and self-serving students and parents are responsible for leaking the questions before examinations.

Last Monday, the education minister's resignation was demanded in Parliament. He consented to resign from his position but the Prime Minister ordered him to deal with the situation. A reward of five lakh taka has been announced for the capture of leakers. Since then, many leakers have been captured but the police have not been

able to glean much noteworthy information from them in order to take action against the main ringleaders.

There should be strict surveillance where the questions are printed. After printing, security must be present from there to the examination halls. The teachers who help in leaking the questions should be dismissed from their jobs and brought to book. If the leakers are strictly punished, future offenders will refrain from leaking examination questions.

Naeem Ariyan  
University of Chittagang

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

### COMMUNICATIONS

With more than 300,000 copies printed per day, *Faula de S. Paulo* is one of Brazil's largest newspapers. From the urban middle class and rural landowners to the civil society of the country, it has a wide-ranging audience and a deep influence on the South American nation's politics.

Barely a week ago, the newspaper's editorial team took a decision that made headlines around the world. The paper announced that it was going to stop sharing its stories on its Facebook page, which has almost six million 'likes'. The main reason behind the decision, it seems, is Facebook's new policy, which officially came into effect from January this year.

Facebook creator Mark Zuckerberg, through a status on January 11, announced that the social network would give personal content, meaning posts made by friends on Facebook, more visibility as compared to the information dispatched by publishers or other businesses.

What that basically means is that you are less likely to find content from the Facebook pages that you have liked, on your timeline, unless the page owner pays money and boosts its content. Zuckerberg stated that Facebook's new policy hopes to foster more "meaningful social interactions". However, online media specialists believe that Facebook's shift was a strategic move to compel publishers and brands to pay more money to remain visible.

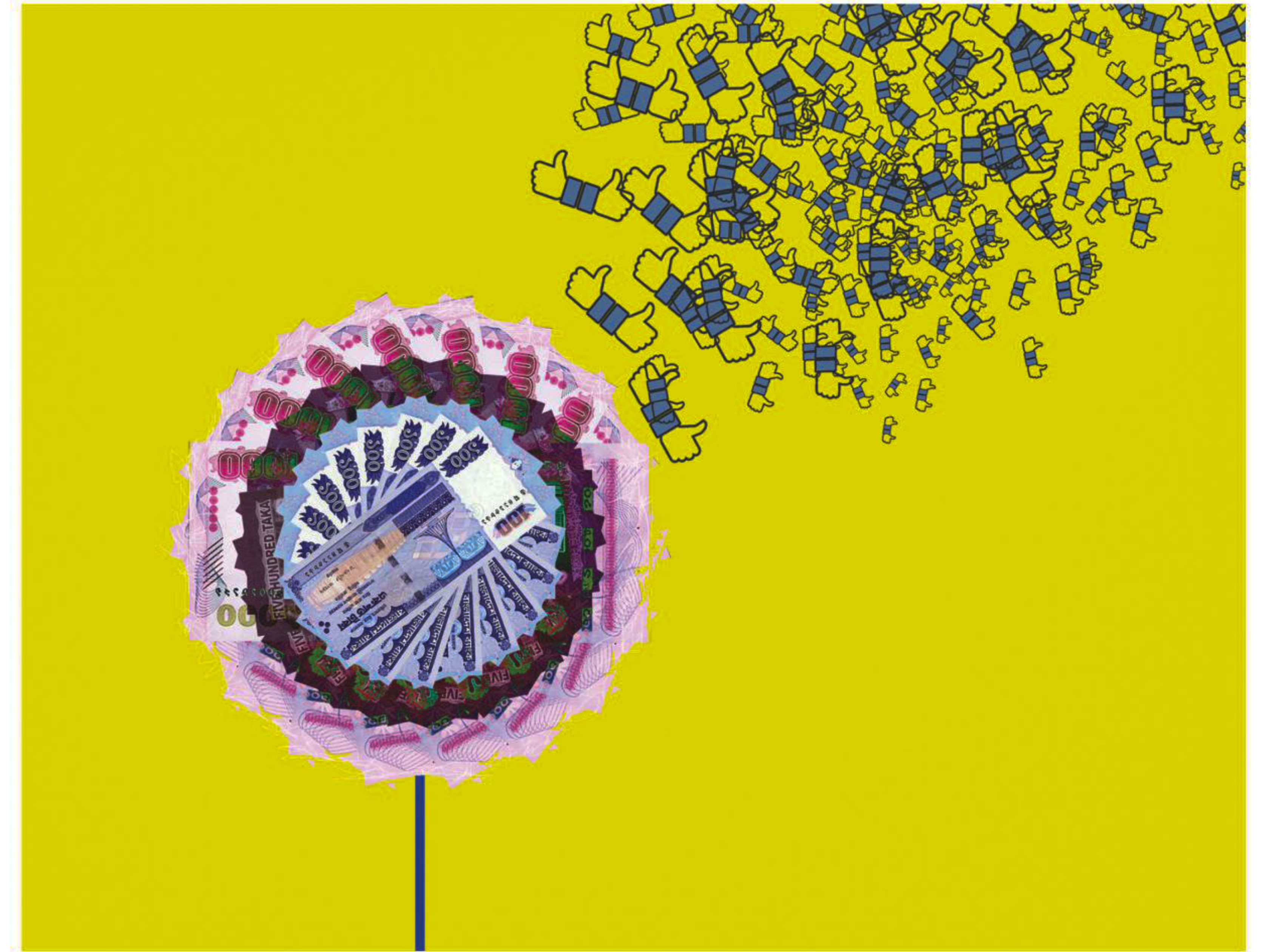


ILLUSTRATION: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

## CONFRONTING A DIGITAL STORM

*How has Facebook's new policy affected Bangladesh's media?*

NAIMUL KARIM

It is safe to say that a large section of Bangladesh's e-commerce websites and online media organisations depend upon Facebook for their publicity and thereby their survival. This brings to fore a vital question: how has the new policy affected Bangladesh's businesses?

"From my experience, I can tell you that the new policy has startled many media organisations and journalists," says Ahsan Kabir, online in-charge of the

daily *Kaler Kantho*. "It's not just the paper I work for, several journalists called me to find out why the reach of the posts had suddenly decreased. The last few months were quite confusing," he adds.

With more than 70 lakh likes on Facebook, *Kaler Kantho* has one of the highest subscriptions in the country. However, according to Ahsan, the reaction that their posts have been receiving lately is comparatively poor.

"We used to get 500 shares barely a minute after posting a story on our page. These days, we get around 20 to 30 shares after five minutes. At first, the in-house journalists were blamed for this.

But gradually everyone came to understand the reason behind the fall," explains Ahsan.

Ahsan claims that the paper, which never really used the boost option to get more coverage, has been forced to pay more frequently to get more visibility. One of the tactics that media houses have been using to counter this phenomenon is using the 'See First' option. Clicking on the See First option will ensure that you get to see that particular page on your timeline on a regular basis. And that's the reason why many media houses have repeatedly requested its readers to take that route.

According to Ahsan, the number of users on *Kaler Kantho's*

See First list has increased by 20 percent in the last few months.

Mohammad Kamrul Hasan, who handles the digital marketing segment of RTV, a channel, which has the highest number of subscriptions on Facebook among Bangladeshi television stations, claims that RTV too has been hurt because of the new policy.

"I personally think that 80 percent of Bangladesh's e-commerce businesses and online media organisations depend upon Facebook. This will hurt their business. Even if a user boosts his page, he won't get the reach that he used to before. He will need to spend a lot more money," he explains.

"There's no alternative to Facebook and so there's not a lot that you can do about this, except adjusting to the change in the best possible manner," adds

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