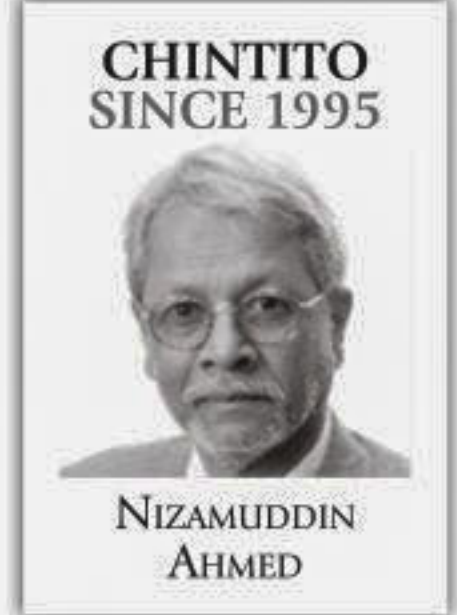


Of pink dogs and doggone humans



CHINTITO SINCE 1995
NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

WE have remarkable similarities: jobless or sleeping on the job when employed, being kicked about or loved like crazy, meaninglessly barking at each other, unkempt

2,500 people used to die annually from rabies, but commendably since the programme commenced in 2012, the number has dropped down to less than 400. The seven-year long campaign involves the two Dhaka City Corporations, the Health and Family Welfare Ministry's Communicable Diseases Control Unit, the World Health Organization and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. The splash of pink dispensed is

there could be a million more out there harbouring the communicable virus. We request all dog-owners to bring your friend from out of the closet. There is no shame in hiding from an impending injection. While I am confident that the learned promoters are keeping track of the validity of each vaccination, there is however one loophole. In this growing hell of rampant corruption, if dubious officers and assistants were

paid to mark them without their permission, albeit for a good cause, it seems logical to dab paint on human beings to single them out for their anti-community activities. I take cue from the High Court, which last month ruled, "a thief should be called a thief" and "a corrupt person a corrupt person". The bench of Justices FRM Nazmul Ahasan and KM Kamrul Kader observed, "Otherwise the country cannot be protected" (Prothom Alo, May 6).

food adulterer because blue tends to suppress the appetite; not many foods in nature is associated with the colour blue. The child molester would be identifiable by the red dye on hands and face, symbolising anger and danger. Rapists would be recognisable by their yellow appearance, as the colour symbolises cowardice. Those guilty of multiple offences shall be multi-coloured; for instance right hand green, left hand blue and face completely yellow. Second-time offenders would have to wear shorts compulsorily, because their legs would then be painted black and white. I hate to imagine what would be the fate of third and repeating lawbreakers. The polychromatic measures would help curb crime and deter offenders.

body hair or salon spoilt, ready to lick and leak in public; tree or wall is a matter of circumstances.

In spite of our lack of differences, if I had been a dog on the street this Ramadan, I would be terribly upset (growl) because someone had splashed a mug of coloured water in a vain attempt to transform me into the legendary pink panther.

Says man's best friend, "Other than spoil my velvety natural look, the attempt is humiliating since the pink good-for-nothing is no more than a cartoon character. Flaw in the centre of a diamond, huh?"

At first, I had assumed the dogs were at the wrong end of unkind pranks by some local gaye holud revellers. Nevertheless, when I saw several of the canine beings across the city, I began sniffing in earnest.

Prowling here and there revealed that the pink job was part of the government's noble vaccination programme to eradicate the fatal infectious disease, rabies, from the city by year 2022, quoting Directorate General of Health Service sources. Seven years ago, the target was to eliminate the mainly dog-transmitted deadly viral infection by 2020.

Missing a deadline is as common as confusion on chaand-raat, but the good news is that before the Mass Dog Vaccination (MDV) sweep, about



If our innocent canine friends can be dabbed with paint to mark them without their permission, it seems logical to dab paint on human beings to single them out for their anti-community activities.

SOURCE: HIVEMINER.COM

to mark every dog inoculated so that none gets to bark (in pain) "Owww..." more than once. By avoiding repeats there is also saving on workforce and medical supplies. Since no dog (or its owner) has to pay, every dog worth its bite wagged its tail, despite the ruffling of appearance and the sting. In the first half of 2019, around 1.3 million Dhaka dogs have been dyed pink, which is somewhat worrying because

perchance marking dogs pink without administering the required medicine, howling will overwhelm the present exultation. The danger is we will never know their sin, individual or collective, until the disease re-emerges with the most tragic consequences.

The operation on dogs nonetheless holds promise in tackling the nefarious elements in our society. If our innocent canine friends can be dabbed with

passport and visa pictures would be out of question, as would be wedding and social media portraits. The person with the painted face would have to travel at night, if at all, and along dark alleys, of which there are a plenty. That too is part of the sentence. To make life colourful there would be different hues for various crimes. The hands and face of the financially corrupt would be painted green because, from a negative perspective, the colour represents the materialistic. Blue would be the shade for the

Tourism would get a boost because people from all over the country and the world would like to travel to spot such coloured delinquents. The wrongdoers, one hopes, would be hiding in shame, castigated by society, chastised by family and friends. That would add to the drama and make hunting for the coloured devils more exciting, by night. By the way, hand-gloves would be strictly prohibited, and punishable by colouring of another part of the body, that is hair or head.

Our only possible loss will be the dying away of many traditional names based on colouration. The flamboyant neighbourhood Romeo would no longer be known as Lal Bhai lest he be confused with a paedophile. The forever young shall no longer be a Sabuj for he robbed no bank. Parents would not name a child Nilu because s/he would not grow up to be a food contaminator. Kala, Dhala and Rangila will all be beings of the past. Golapi may just survive.

Dr Nizamuddin Ahmed is a practising architect, a Commonwealth Scholar and a Fellow, a Baden-Powell Fellow Scout Leader, and a Major Donor Rotarian.

Producing the graduates of tomorrow

Skills mismatch between graduates and market demands is a growing concern for Bangladesh



IQRA L QAMARI

VISUALISE a sunny convocation day—students beaming with pride and their four years of strenuous academic struggles finally summing up to

artificial intelligence and massive data exchange. A transformation in the global demand for skills among graduates is expected due to these colossal changes. According to McKinsey Global Institute, 800 million jobs are to be replaced by 2030 due to automation. Enterprises worldwide will be challenged including our domestic ones.

In a world where artificial intelligence will redefine our job descriptions, having an edge with interpersonal skills is integral. But even if we keep aside this not-so-far-fetched future for now, we have to accept the fact that our own markets are struggling with the quality of graduates the universities are churning out. The calibre of new recruits is being called into question by employers. Employers expect them to be creative, possess complex problem-solving abilities, be quick learners and, most importantly, have people management skills. Contrary to the expectations of market leaders, most graduates here suffer from inhibitions when it comes to communicating. One would actually think that the university curriculum would therefore focus on equipping the students with these skills in demand. Unfortunately, that is not so. University curriculum is not modelled in such a manner that necessitates the development of interpersonal skills.

The problem here boils down to skills mismatch: the skills that the students actually acquire do not align with what industries require. Scrutinising this problem further would reveal the distress our National University graduates have to undergo—as substantiated by a World Bank report which disclosed that 46 percent of NU graduates remain unemployed for three years before securing a job. Our university curricula need to be reformed to not only keep pace with the ever-changing global landscape but

also feed the demands of our domestic market. Business graduates, in this regard, still have better odds at being more competent in terms of interpersonal skills. The courses are designed in a manner that encourages them to cultivate their communication skills. After all, the idiosyncrasies of the corporate world, or of any industry for that matter, revolve around dealing with customers, suppliers, intermediaries and all sorts of



A group of elated graduates throw their graduation caps in the air.

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

stakeholders—which only goes to show the importance of people skills. However, most business graduates are only superficially equipped and they often have to struggle when they face the real world. A business student, for instance, graduating with inadequate skills—related to slide-making and public speaking for example—would be put in a humiliating position if they

have to present in front of corporate big guns. Our world renowned RMG sector is an embodiment of that. With expatriates occupying the executive managerial positions due to a dearth of local skilled workers in the top management, in the RMG industries, around USD 2.35 billion is being remitted out of the country annually. It is quite unfortunate that our graduates are not being endowed with specialised skills pertaining to communication,

required to work on their basic communication skills according to their academic curriculum. Besides this, there are two other issues to be noted. First is the language barrier when it comes to communicating in English—a necessity of the 21st century. Second is computer literacy needed to excel in handling spreadsheets, making PowerPoint slides and having enough web skills to make the most out of this social-media-driven world. We should start focusing on harnessing the skills of our graduates. We should be producing graduates who have the required eloquence and confidence to present themselves in front of a panel of corporate heads. We need graduates who are able to solve complex problems and play critical roles in decision-making. The needs and demands of the industries are changing with the architecture of the global job market. The ripple effect of such a continental change would, one way or the other, have a huge impact on Bangladesh. Having symmetrical information between employers and job-seekers has become essential in order to perfect this market and reduce this skill mismatch. Bangladesh, despite its social and economic woes, is miraculously paving its way up the ladder of development. But the country's education system remains far behind. It has not kept pace with the exponential speed at which the world is changing. Fundamental skills are being overlooked and this will likely balloon into a much bigger problem in the near future. The agenda of ensuring continuous adaptive learning while nurturing an innovative mindset should thus be the raison d'être of tertiary education in order to help our graduates meet the demands of the time.

The picture gets even bleaker for students specialising in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) who are not even

required to work on their basic communication skills according to their academic curriculum. Besides this, there are two other issues to be noted. First is the language barrier when it comes to communicating in English—a necessity of the 21st century. Second is computer literacy needed to excel in handling spreadsheets, making PowerPoint slides and having enough web skills to make the most out of this social-media-driven world.

We should start focusing on harnessing the skills of our graduates. We should be producing graduates who have the required eloquence and confidence to present themselves in front of a panel of corporate heads. We need graduates who are able to solve complex problems and play critical roles in decision-making. The needs and demands of the industries are changing with the architecture of the global job market. The ripple effect of such a continental change would, one way or the other, have a huge impact on Bangladesh. Having symmetrical information between employers and job-seekers has become essential in order to perfect this market and reduce this skill mismatch. Bangladesh, despite its social and economic woes, is miraculously paving its way up the ladder of development. But the country's education system remains far behind. It has not kept pace with the exponential speed at which the world is changing. Fundamental skills are being overlooked and this will likely balloon into a much bigger problem in the near future. The agenda of ensuring continuous adaptive learning while nurturing an innovative mindset should thus be the raison d'être of tertiary education in order to help our graduates meet the demands of the time.

Iqra L Qamari is a student of economics at North South University and is an intern at The Daily Star.

QUOTABLE Quote

FRANZ KAFKA
(1883 – 1924)
German-speaking Bohemian Jewish novelist, short-story writer and one of the major figures of 20th-century literature
Youth is happy because it has the ability to see beauty. Anyone who keeps the ability to see beauty never grows old.

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Catches some z's
- 5 Work on jerky
- 9 Suggest
- 10 Taken all one can
- 12 Clear sky
- 13 "My Fair Lady" lady
- 14 Beyonce, for one
- 16 Shop tool
- 17 Cycle starter
- 18 Cinema snack
- 20 Long-winged seabird
- 22 Annual race, for short
- 23 Tie type
- 25 Halt
- 28 Regardless

DOWN

- 1 Zero
- 2 Barbecue receptacle
- 3 Multicolored
- 4 Zebra features
- 5 Tightfisted
- 6 "2001" computer
- 7 Menlo Park genius
- 8 Harry Potter, for one
- 9 Vitalize
- 11 Sandy
- 15 Kilauea, for one
- 19 Map dot
- 21 Captivated
- 24 Self-contained
- 25 Throe
- 26 Astaire movie
- 27 Go against
- 29 Must
- 30 Started the bidding
- 31 Dictionary fill
- 33 Tip over
- 37 Poet Khayyam
- 39 Darling of baseball

WRITE FOR US. SEND US YOUR OPINION PIECES TO dsopinion@gmail.com.

YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

W	A	S	H	E	S	A	R	R	S
A	S	H	E	S	L	E	A	P	T
S	T	O	R	E	L	A	C	E	R
P	R	O	A	M	E	R	I	C	A
S	O	T	O	S	A	Y	N	I	C
S	I	T	O	N	A	G	E	S	
N	I	N	I	R	N	S			
T	O	G	S	B	U	T	T	S	
O	P	S	W	I	N	T	E	R	E
R	E	T	O	R	T	S	I	N	A
I	N	A	W	E	U	P	P	E	R
C	U	R	L	S	P	I	E	C	E
P	S	S	T		P	S	A	S	

BEETLE BAILEY by Mort Walker

BABY BLUES by Kirkman & Scott