

Pathshala introduces their first bachelor's degree



PHOTO: COURTESY

ASHLEY SHOPTORSHI SAMADDAR

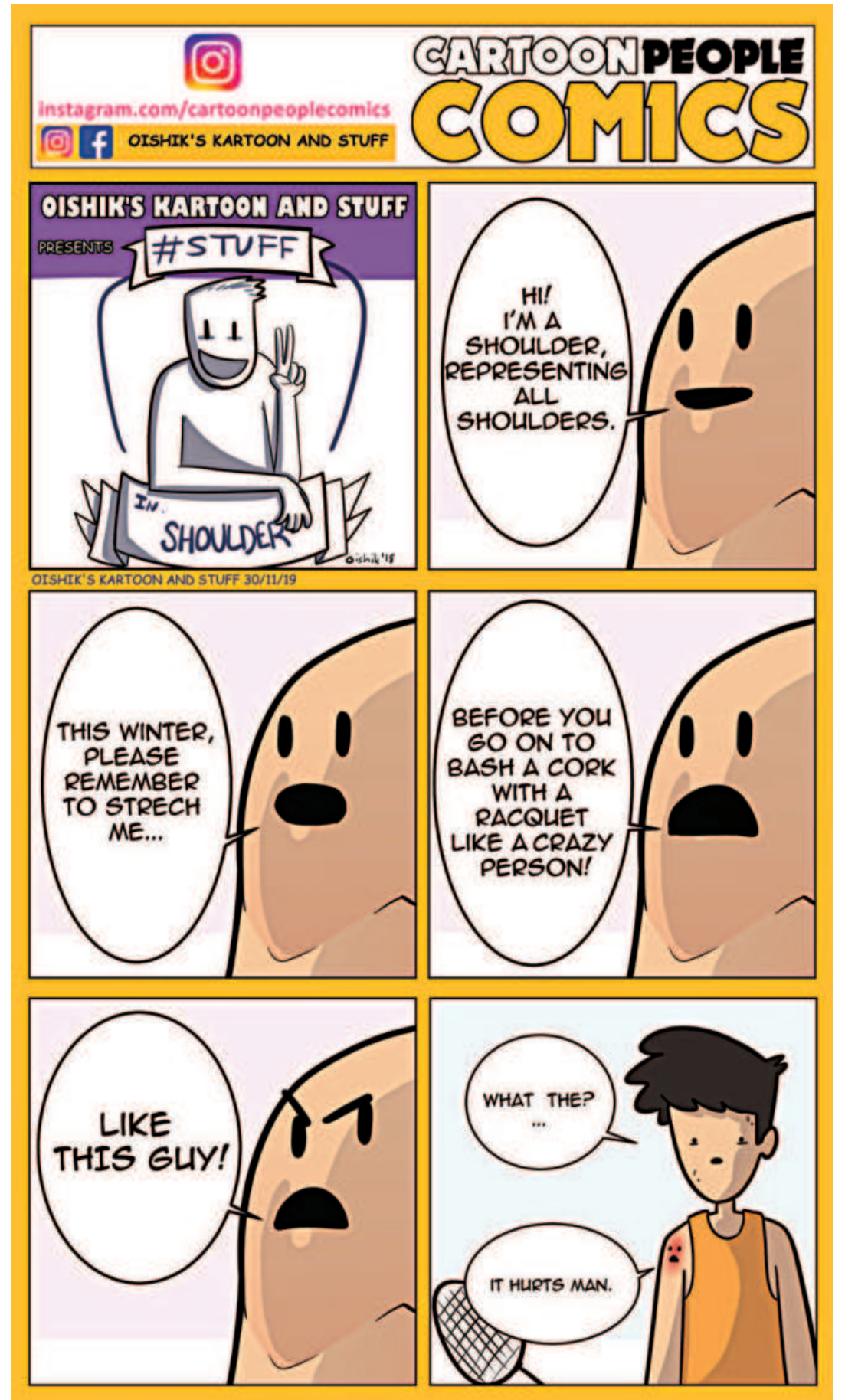
Pathshala, a South Asian media institute, started their journey in 1998, aiming to provide a platform to young enthusiasts who are interested to pursue a career in media. With its two departments being photography, and film and television, this institute offers basic, foundation, and long courses, along with residency programmes and workshops. For the first time since their establishment, Pathshala, in affiliation with University of Dhaka (DU), has introduced a Bachelor of Social Science (BSS) in Photography programme at their institute.

The BSS in Photography is a four-year undergraduate programme with 32 courses.

Each course has four credits. Students need to complete a total of 128 credits for graduation. "Many young and talented individuals want to pursue higher studies in photography. However, a one or two-year diploma does not suffice an undergraduate degree. As a result, many are unable to pursue their passion and turn towards other accepted academic subjects while pursuing an undergraduate degree," says Tanvir Murad Topu, Head of Photography Department at Pathshala. "Students who will graduate under this course will be eligible to apply not only in the development sector and art related fields, but also in government jobs, including BCS and bank jobs. They can also directly apply for a master's degree at both home and abroad."

This programme is especially designed for the youths who are passionate about photography. "Any student who has our required grades in their SSC and HSC, or O'Level and A'Level examinations, are eligible to apply for this degree," says Tanvir. Candidates need to appear for a written examination for evaluation first. Students who will pass the written examination will be shortlisted for a viva. "The certificate for this BSS in photography will be issued under DU," he adds.

Pathshala is waiting to transform promising young individuals into future photo journalists, documentary photographers and other creative professionals. Their ongoing intake session concludes on December 20.



Digital campaign 'Toilets Change Lives' launches



YOUTH DESK

In a world that is rapidly moving towards progress, thanks to all the technological advancements, sanitation remains a challenge for many. According to World Health Organization, "safely managed sanitation" is defined as the use of an improved sanitation facility which is not shared with other households and where excreta is either safely disposed in situ or

is transported and treated off-site. We are living in a time when 4.2 billion people live without safely managed sanitation.

The absence of safely managed sanitation accounts for more than half the population of the planet. Worse, the absence of proper sanitation is estimated to cause around 0.4 million deaths every year. If we get to the root cause of all these troubles, one key factor would be toilets that lack proper sewage facilities and are

far from ensuring hygiene for its users.

Bangladesh also faces similar problems. Despite the country making remarkable progress in eliminating the practice of open defecation, there is still a long way to go in terms of achieving total sanitation in all parts of the country. One of the key solutions is to raise awareness of the mass population regarding sanitation challenges so that they can take active steps in ensuring proper sanitation. With this in

mind, WaterAid and The Daily Star have jointly launched a digital campaign, named 'Toilets Change Lives'.

'Toilets Change Lives' is an interactive microsite that was launched on November 19 – the day which is globally observed as World Toilet Day. The microsite comprises of two components in particular. The first part delves into the five categories of toilets that are predominantly seen all across Bangladesh. The stories of the users, the challenges that they face as well the opportunities that lay in front of them have been depicted. Moreover, every category of toilets has a few components, underneath which readers can click to understand the things that must be present alongside each toilet to make it hygienic. Consequently, readers can not only read about the challenges and threats posed by each toilet, but also get to know how they can actively play a role in ensuring proper sanitation for each toilet.

The other part is a quiz where one gets to answer fascinating questions about sanitation and hygiene, within a time limit. The ones answering the questions correctly get to secure positions in the quiz leaderboard. "We planned to ensure as much interaction as possible. Embedding a gamification process in the microsite proved to drive a significant amount of traffic into the platform, and also helped generate awareness in a completely different manner. In this era of clutter, we wanted to make something that will break through the noise and engagingly reach the people," says Farhat Chowdhury, the coordinator of the campaign. As of yet, the campaign has recorded a total of 0.51 million impressions in the digital space.

Experts have also shared their insights and recommendations regarding the issue being highlighted. "Most of us do not have access

to toilets that are safely managed. Hence, the prevalence of diarrhoea and numerous other waterborne diseases is being observed," says Dr Md Mahbubur Rahman of icddr,b.

Dr Abdullah Al-Muyeed, who serves as the Head of Policy and Advocacy in WaterAid Bangladesh has offered his suggestions for ensuring total sanitation all across Bangladesh. "A recent survey has highlighted that if 5 cubic meters of faecal sludge is collectively exposed to the environment, then the damage or environmental risk is equivalent to the open defecation of 5,000 people. Hence, ensuring proper waste treatment facilities is something that is much needed in the days going forward," he explains.

"I loved how all the information was portrayed," says Omar Nasif, a lecturer at a private university. "Going through a large set of articles can be quite bland. Whereas, Toilets Change Lives have put all the content in a segmented manner, making it much easier to understand and take action. The click-able components with every category grabbed my attention as well."

Susmita Saha, a young professional working in a renowned multinational company, has been an avid player of the quiz. "The quiz not only challenges me to rapidly finish it and challenge my friends but also highlights some information that badly needed to be addressed," she says. "I mean, how often do you get to play a quiz and simultaneously learn that 31% of schools do not have access to clean water? It's high time everyone, especially the youth, take measurable steps to ensure proper sanitation for all."

Apart from WaterAid and The Daily Star, the campaign has been made possible by the active involvement of other organisations as well. Kimberly-Clark and Youth for SDG 6 have widely contributed in ensuring the proper launch and success of the 'Toilets Change Lives' campaign. Youth for SDG 6, the platform of WaterAid that aims to connect with the next generation of leaders to become WASH champions, have played a vital role in promoting this campaign to their peers all across the country.

Visit the Toilets Change Lives microsite: <https://campaign.thedailystar.net/toiletschangelives/index.php>

