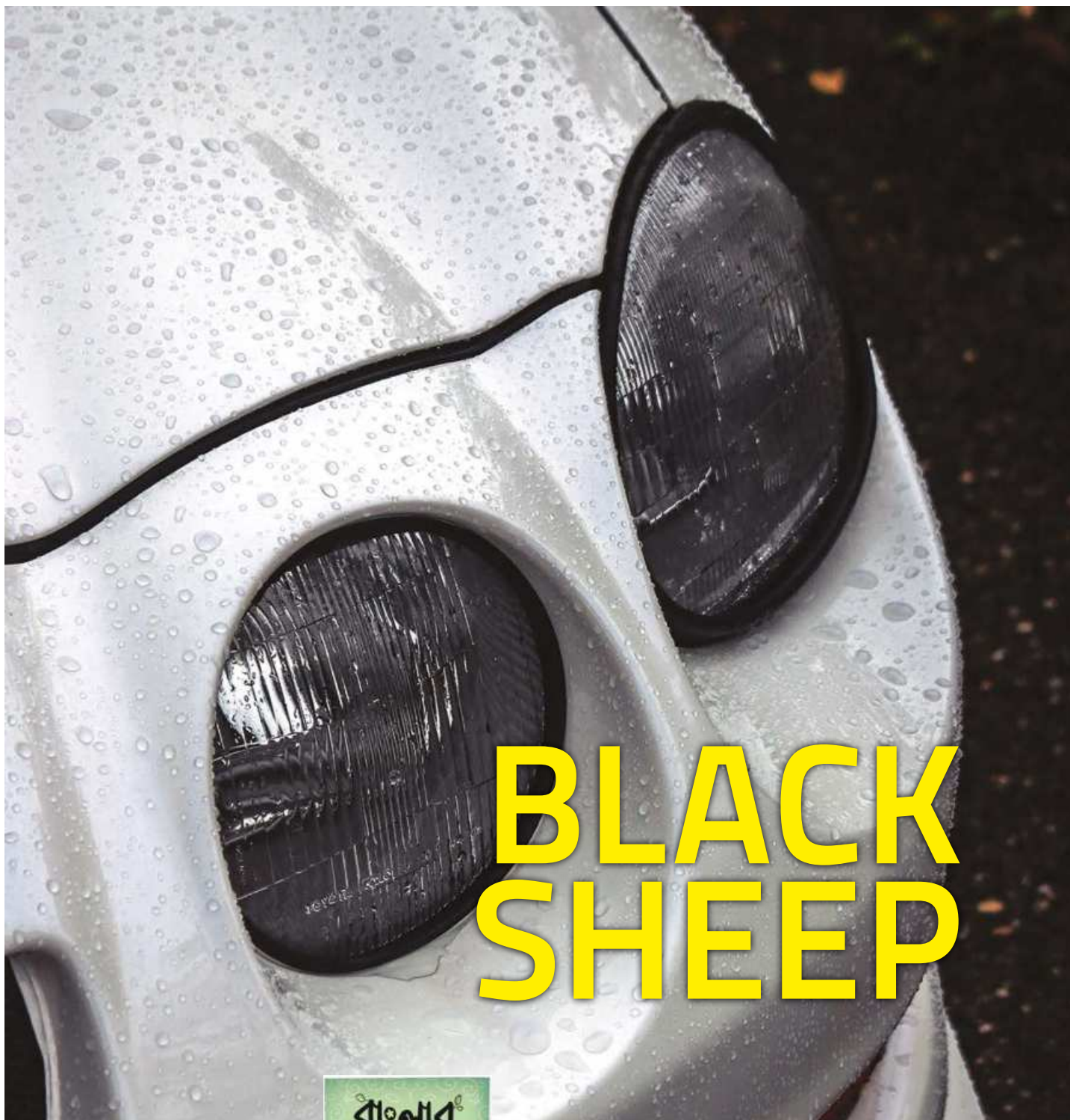


TOGGLE

A publication of The Daily Star

WEEKEND LIVING IN THE DIGITAL AGE



Know your history
with these free,
online books
- PG 8



● Coursera and
online courses
in Bangladesh
- PG 5

● Travelling
again: Local
legends
- PG 7

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China accelerates plans to put a leash on its internet giants

SHAHRIAR RAHMAN

It all started when China's poster boy Jack Ma, founder of Alibaba and one of the richest men in China, took a shot at the Chinese financial regulator at a global conference. Ma pointed out some risks and ill-practices of the Chinese financial system which the government did not take lightly.

Since then, the e-commerce is being shot one curved ball after another. ANT Group, the parent company of Ma's most prized ventures, was supposed to go public this month. But now the process of getting listed in Shanghai and Hong Kong Stock Exchange, according to several industry insiders, have been halted by the explicit directions of the Chinese premier.

Moreover, the Chinese government is fast-tracking a new legislation to curb the influence of internet companies after the Jack Ma fiasco.

So, what's in this regulation? In the guise of an anti-trust law, which the government has drawn inspiration from the west, the new regulation aims to root out 'monopolistic practices' of the big fishes in the

market. The State Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR), has already published the first draft of the rules for everyone. The draft legislation indicates several frameworks to allow small scale companies thrive in the market. It does so by penalising or adding the need of regulatory approval for any move that might seem monopolistic in nature. These monopolistic practises have also been vaguely outlined in the regulation i.e. forming of ventures or alliances; collecting, collating and sharing of consumer data; targeting consumers based on online behaviour, operating at below cost to curb out competition, specific guidelines when taking foreign investment, etc. Anyone violating these regulations will be facing dire consequences as well.

They would be forced to divest assets, tech infrastructure, IP rights; provide direct access to the legal books and infrastructure and, if required, make necessart changes as per government guideline.

According to Morgan Stanelly, this new regulation is going to hit Alibaba (e-commerce and payment), Tencent (videogames & social media) and

Meituan (food delivery) the hardest. However, international investors weren't totally surprised by this move of Chinese government. The Xi Jinping regime has been attempting to diminish the hold of Chinese internet giants for a while now. Tencent's music publishing subsidiary was subject to a lengthy investigation not so while back on grounds of predatory market practices. Some even guesses, Ma's statement was a good way to mount pressure on the government as these regulations were impending anyways. In addition to that, as the e-commerce scene is becoming fiercely competitive, some analysts of Wall Street are guessing the new regulations might now take long term toll on Alibaba after all.

Whatever the case might be, but Alibaba has already started to get its fair share of beating. Since the announcement of these regulation, stock prices of the internet giants have started to take hit as well. Despite having a \$56 Billion on sales in a single day during its 11.11-singles day shopping event, the shares of Alibaba took a nose-dive and lost around 10% of its total stock value.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Tired of it

I mean the virus. As the pandemic drags on for the 8th month now, for many of us, it's getting incredibly difficult to keep maintaining the health guidelines down to the last details. But if history and science taught us anything, it's that the night is the darkest before dawn. Okay, now I'm just quoting from The Dark Knight, but you get the idea.

In this issue, we talk to health experts to assess the current situation, 8 months on, to see if we can afford to relax a little. After ages, we return with a travel content, exploring the layered histories of Dhaka. We also try to explain the basics of money management to the Gen Z in Next Step.

And for Shift, we present a gorgeous ST205 Celica to take your mind off of all the grimness.

-Zarif Faiaz, Sub-editor

Dhamakashopping.com starts journey in Bangladesh

A new e-commerce platform, Dhamakashopping.com, has started its journey in Bangladesh. The e-Commerce has already created quite a fan-following thanks to its recently finished 'T-shirt for BDT 10/-' campaign.

Dhamakashopping.com is providing a number of special offers to celebrate the start of their journey. These offers include the exclusive upcoming launch of Walton Primo RM4, combo offer with Minister TV, discount on MacBook Pro etc. Brands like Bajaj, TVS, Lifan, Walton, Edison etc. have already joined this platform.

Customers will have the option of choosing to pay through account deposit, online payments, bKash etc. and can get products



delivered within 7 to 21 days.

"We are very excited to begin our journey in Bangladesh. We have bigger plans and with our platform we are, in a way, also serving the SMEs, marginalized population and disabled children." said Sirajul Islam Rana, COO of Dhamakashopping.com.

Sony's PS5 has encountered its first major bug

Less than two days after release, Sony's brand new gaming console has encountered a problem with its online download system.

According to a report by IGN, some of the users are experiencing a download queue bug which causes apps and games to get stuck in the queue or to error out. At the time of writing this report, the only to resolve this error is to perform a factory reset.

So far, the bug is only affecting the PS5 versions of specific games and apps, with Call of Duty: Black Ops Cold War being its main victim. All other PS5 exclusive games have also reportedly triggered the bug, as well as the Disney+ app.

Sony has yet to offer an official explanation or solution for the bug.



TOGGLE

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TechBits



Instagram add Reels and Shop tabs on their home screen

Google Photos to end its free unlimited storage



Python creator Guido van Rossum joins Microsoft

Honda to mass-produce Level 3 autonomous cars by 2021



Netflix experimenting with Fast Laughs, a TikTok like comedy feed

Money management basics for Gen Z

NOMROTA SARKER

Born between 1995-2010, Gen Z (also known as “internet generation” or “Post Millennials”) are now in grad school, college or have just entered the workforce. This particular generation had things easy, yet at the same time are exposed to more severe lifestyle conditions. In a world where ‘Newer is better’ is believed, this generation is designed to grind harder for the sweet fruit of satisfaction. This generational group’s views of money and how to tackle their finances differ from Millennials. Their experiences and tech prowess typically inform how they save, spend, handle debit and credit, retirement and other investments.

According to a study from 2018 by The Center For Generational Kinetics, 83% of the total Gen Z population identify themselves as conservative on money issues. As the consumption and expenditure patterns have changed over the years, money management for Gen Z



The undertaking of diligent financial planning is key at this early stage of this generation’s lives as they take on increased responsibilities. Studies show, however, they lack confidence in their personal finance management and can use some education.

As they are approaching the early stages of their careers, Gen Zers should have a financial plan to address their short term and long term financial goals. While they can design their own plan, it is a good idea to meet with a financial planner early on to get on the right path for success. Meetings with a planner at major inflexion points in their lives—when getting married, expanding their family, buying a home—can make the transition smoother.

According to financial planners, savings is a priority for maximum financial flexibility. That money should be allocated to an emergency fund, retirement savings and taxable investment accounts. Tracking certain key personal financial ratios to see how you stand and make adjustments is also a good idea.



has become a crucial factor to consider. Personal finance and relevant financial knowledge can save them the hassle of struggling with their budget constraints. But a sound plan for everything is what makes the entire process of money management success.

Having a sound financial plan

Gen Zers are aware of the impact that the severe recession and massive amount of student debt have had on the Millennials. Hence, they aim to be more frugal and avoid debt. This shift in tendency requires a planned approach with how their transactions are to be made.

should put aside at least 6 months of expenses for emergency funds, for any unforeseen circumstances, according to financial advisors.

This group is industrious at an early age compared to other generations given that the youngest of Gen Z in this study was 13 years old. So the habit of saving should be reflected from early on so that you can have your own back at a time of distress.

Avoiding Impulsive Buying

The upsurge of e-commerce and online shopping has altered consumer behaviour in ways where it is now more expense oriented. In the name of convenience, impulse buying is cluttering the rooms of consumers. According to Statista, in 2018, roughly half of the purchases carried out by 18 to 24-year olds in the United States were as a result of impulse buying.

But the Gen Zers have the option to read reviews and make an educated decision before buying a product. This habit of digitally accessing data to gain more information, seeking better deals and values could help wind down the impulse of purchasing anything that’s trendy.

Tracking savings and spendings

According to the 2018 EVERFI report on Gen Z, 90% of those surveyed had transactional bank accounts, that is, checking accounts, but only 60% were personal accounts with the remainder being joint or custodial accounts with their parents. A majority (59%) checked their account balances during the past year but only 40% of the respondents used or created a budget. The incorporation of tech in all the aspects of this generation’s lifestyle should also include making a budget. It is easier to set up a budget with fewer bills to pay, but the habit of creating one can save both time and money.

The need for an emergency fund

Gen Z’s typically have to adapt to a lot of uncertain scenarios as the world slowly moves to extreme conditions economically. With financial unpredictability derived from the recent pandemic shocked people from all generations, it was a great learning curve for everyone to understand the concept of an emergency fund. This is why, one

Preferring digital payments

Many Gen Zers will not apply for a credit card, and the Billtrust’s study found only 18% prefer cash for making payments. Instead, this generation’s digital lifestyle points towards digital wallets and mobile financial services being the norm for making payments.

According to Bluefin, almost 2.1 billion consumers used mobile wallets in 2020 and half of all payments were made on major digital wallets. Over half are using these electronic systems, and over 75% are using some digital payment apps in the same timeframe.

In Bangladesh, mobile financial services handle 97% of all transactions as of 2020. So it goes without saying that digital payment methods are faster, more convenient and it is easier for the Gen Zers to keep track of their transactions.

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TOGGLE 5

A white Toyota Supra (MK4) with gold wheels is parked on a wet, dark asphalt road. The car is positioned at an angle, facing towards the left. It features a black front grille with the Toyota emblem, large round headlights, and fog lights. The wheels are a distinctive gold color. The car is surrounded by dense, lush green foliage, including large-leafed plants and trees, creating a tropical or jungle-like atmosphere. The ground is wet, reflecting the light, suggesting it has recently rained. The overall scene is vibrant and scenic.



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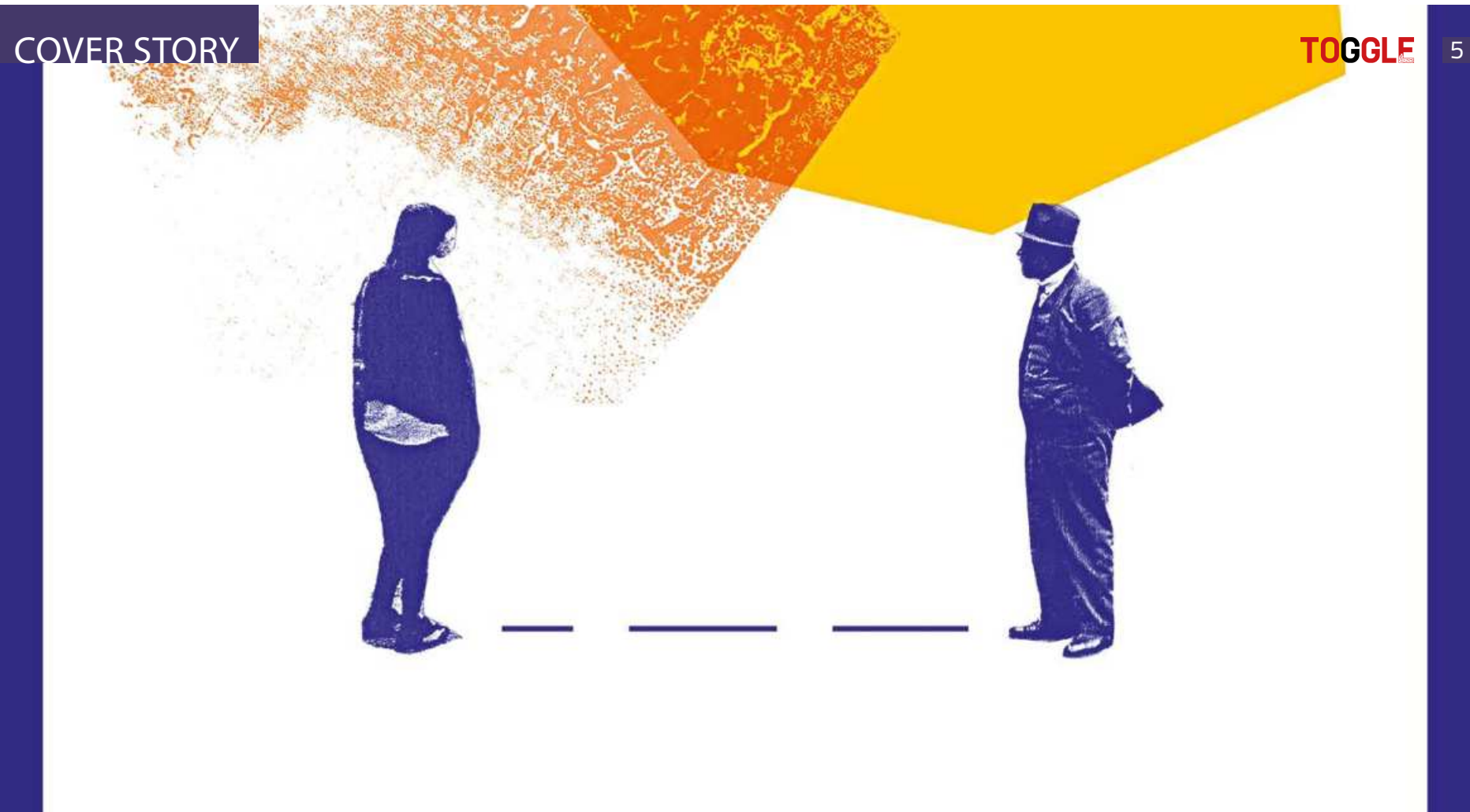
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TOGGLE 5



ZARIF FAIAZ

Suggesting expediting measures according to Bangladesh Preparedness and Response Plan (BPRP) for Covid-19 in Bangladesh, Dr Mushtuq said, “A clear-cut Incident Command system for a pandemic response should be set up, every laboratory-confirmed Covid-19 case must be in supportive isolation, their close contacts traced and placed into supportive quarantine, every citizen should be supported and empowered for maintaining public health and social measures (PHSM) and hospitals should ensure emergency oxygen supply is adequate for a surge situation and enforce functional, 24/7, Infection Prevention & Control (IPC) measures.”

Coursera builds online education in Bangladesh

With Raghav Gupta, Managing Director, India and APAC, Coursera

The traditional education models are not robust enough to impart the skills people need to thrive throughout their careers amid the fourth industrial revolution. Here, the online learning model offers much-needed flexibility and scalability to both the learners and the institutions. The pandemic made that a much needed requirement. Coursera is working to improve access to higher education across continents. As a global learning platform, Coursera is creating a shared ecosystem for universities, enterprises and learners to come together and create value for society, industry, and the economy at large.

How popular is Coursera in Bangladesh? With 482,000 learners, Bangladesh is in the top ten countries in APAC for Coursera, and the registered learner base is growing at 196% year-on-year. In the past year, learners from Bangladesh have enrolled in over 1.8 million courses on Coursera. Many universities and higher education institutions in Bangladesh are using the Coursera for Campus platform to impart high-quality education to their students.

What is Coursera for Campus? Any new features?

Coursera for Campus is designed for universities and colleges, enabling them to offer job-relevant online courses to their students and facilitating their faculty to author and scale online programs. Through this, universities have access to more than 4,200 high-quality courses they can use to integrate into their curricula, offer supplemental learning to their students, and use learning analytics to improve and track outcomes. The platform



was launched in October 2019 and has since served over 2.6 million students from over 3,700 campuses globally.

We have launched three offerings and a set of platform upgrades:

The Student plan gives every university student free access to unlimited Guided Projects for hands-on learning and one course annually.

The Basic plan provides up to 20,000 free student licenses to every university. Every license includes access to unlimited Guided Projects and one course annually*. This long-term free offering includes basic plagiarism deterrence features and access to the online help centre.

The Institution plan provides unlimited Guided Projects and unlimited course enrollments for each student license. It also enables universities to author, grade, and manage for-credit online learning programs with enhanced academic integrity.

The new features include integrated plagiarism detection through Turnitin

and online examination check through ProctorU. We have also rolled out new mobile and offline-learning features that will allow students to download courses, synchronise progress and quizzes, take notes with highlights, and calendar sync – all optimised for low data consumption.

Which Bangladesh universities have subscribed to Coursera for Campus and what are the modalities of the subscription?

Over 100 universities in Bangladesh have subscribed to Coursera for Campus. Among these are leading institutions like American International University- Bangladesh (AIUB), North South University, Daffodil International University, and Ahsanullah University of Science and Technology. In the past year, Bangladesh universities have served over 100,000 students with 1.2 million course enrollments, offering job-relevant and multidisciplinary learning.

What subjects are in high demand? Students in Bangladesh are learning

a variety of topics. However, the most popular courses on Coursera for Campus in Bangladesh are - Programming for Everybody (Getting Started with Python) by the University of Michigan, Excel Skills for Business: Essentials by Macquarie University, Write Professional Emails in English by Georgia Institute of Technology, Speak English Professionally: In-Person, Online & On the Phone by Georgia Institute of Technology and California Institute of the Arts' Fundamentals of Graphic Design course.

The learners have also shown great uptake for hands-on guided projects such as 'Build a Full Website using WordPress', 'Build Your Portfolio Website with HTML and CSS', 'Spreadsheets for Beginners using Google Sheets', 'Use WordPress to Create a Blog for your Business' and 'Create a Resume and Cover Letter with Google Doc'.

What lies in the future of education considering the 'new normal'?

Online learning was already changing the education sector; however, now, with the covid-19 pandemic, it is moving rapidly and efficiently. The current situation has forced education institutions worldwide to close campuses and go online completely, compelling them to upgrade their technical infrastructure. Campus are embracing new ways of learning, teaching, producing digital content and assessing their students.

There is a trend among online learners - they start but usually don't finish. How can/ do you encourage higher completion rates?

We see a 50-60 % completion rate among paid learners on the platform. Coursera has built a robust platform with technology integrations like live video sessions with instructors, slack integration for communication with peers and mentors, and remotely proctored exams, ensuring high learner engagement. The Guided Projects introduced earlier this year have been very popular. We've seen learners take these under 2-hour hands-on practical sessions and eventually apply learning in everyday work.

Will Coursera redefine its operational strategy for the Bangladesh market?

We are also putting our efforts to provide skill-building opportunities and tools to the unemployed through our workforce recovery initiative. We plan to expand our course catalogue, launching new Degrees, MasterTrack™ Certificates, Courses, Specialisations, and Guided Projects to help learners gain the necessary skills. We will continue adding tools to provide learners with a transformative learning experience.

Exploring the layered histories of Dhaka

ISRAR HASAN

Densely populated and a witness to centuries of Mughal, British, Pakistani rule and now, the capital city of Bangladesh, every nook and cranny of the city bears a strong link to the multicultural heritage of the city and the country at large.

Dhaka simultaneously blends the past, present, and the future in its unique transformation where every minutiae aspect of its culture is linked sharing an all-encompassing history and legacy of its yesteryear charm. This panoramic view of the city and its complexities of known and relatively unknown culture is shown by "Lost Panorama".

Lost Panorama is a historical research-based organization that commenced its journey in navigating pathways for Bangladeshis and foreigners alike in 2015 allowing history enthusiasts to eke out a lived historical experience.

Started in 2015 by Suman Kumar Roy who, spending his youth in *Puran Dhaka*, always had a beguiling interest in Dhaka and its complex history that harkened back to the 7th century, when Dhaka first got its name from Dhakeshwari.

"I would always have my friends call me when they come to Old Dhaka, where I would show them around famous landmarks such as Ahsan Manzil",



remarked Mr Suman "and slowly by slowly, I felt the need for the history of Dhaka needs to be institutionalized and organized due to the risk of being lost". It was this innate fear of Dhaka losing its centuries of history that animated his vision of presenting the history of the city linking the buildings, walls, alleyways, and objects with their shared historical resonance.

When asked about the vital role of history, Mr Suman said, "showcasing our history as Bangladeshis is important as it is an intrinsic part of who we are as a nation". While magazines and newspapers, in his opinion, do share snippets of history at times, there need to be more vigorous debates arranged and research conducted to get a sense of our identity.

Lost Panorama allows engagement with history in a number of ways. Its Heritage Walk Bengal tour allows you to rediscover the old city in enlightening ways as you learn the rich layered storied histories of each of the places. The alluring walks, which span 3 hours in total, bring to you fresh and hidden perspectives of historical



and aesthetical significance. One of their most famous walks is the Armenian Walk, which is a journey of self-discovery of a lost remnant of a people's heritage that many in Bangladesh either know little of or do not fully acknowledge.

Inquisitive research is carried out trying to weave out stories buried deep in books, archives and documents helping Lost Panorama personnel to highlight many new facts that many of us do not encounter on the internet. The layers of history are peeled off one by one helping to understand the significance and mapping of the locations covered. The Armenian heritage presented through the prism of their famous schools, such as that of Pogose School and their churches helps to widen contemporary knowledge of the great metropolis we today call our home.

In the time of a raging pandemic, the walk takes place through virtual reality technology and is screened on Zoom. Each place is carefully documented to give viewers the lively feel of being front and centre of the historical places. The virtual walk takes place for an hour covering every nook and cranny of historical value.



Lost Panorama also provides specialist archival research and media services to a varied number of clients ranging from organizations to institutions to heritage professionals to individual history buffs. It also plays an important part in tracing legacies of many people who have their ancestral roots in modern Bangladesh. Heavy archival research is carried out trying to stem out the linkages of historical living in what is today's Bangladesh.

For their future plans, they are currently working on product development through



collecting antique paints, books, and bindings which they hope to sell on their website. Heritage walk towns will be further developed with more in-depth research. Bangladesh, today, is one of the world's fastest-growing emerging economies and has seen the growth of many homemade brands such as Akij, whose brand histories is something Lost Panorama wants to focus on, as these brands too, are a paragon of the country's economic resilience.

One of the interesting stories

associated with Lost Panorama is their tracing of legacies across borders where many people of this part of the world fled from due to the socio-political turmoils of those days. A family in West Bengal with roots here had wanted to see their old temples and fields where Durga Puja would be celebrated with much pomp and gusto. The places would be shown virtually to those who desired to connect to their Bangladeshi roots and create a bond of hope and aspiration to one day be here physically.

One of the iconic moments of connection and self-discovery is the famed story of Jamie Henshall, an Englishman who was in search of his Bangladeshi father who left him and his mother very early in their lives. This "Lion-like" story was covered by many media houses in the country with Lost Panorama playing a vital role in connecting him with his extended family in Sylhet in 2017. From 2014-2017, the search went on resulting in the reunion of a family across borders and continents.

Over time, Lost Panorama has grown into a one of a kind institution in Bangladesh, perhaps, the only of one of its kind as it showcases a living and lived experience of history. With the help of cultural heritage consultants, Steven C. Dinero and Wolf Bowig, Anthony Loomans as the Strategic advisor, and Lopa Roy as the artistic director, the team brings to all of us, a truly refreshing overview of Bangladesh we only read in the textbooks, but never get to feel or experience. History after all is about living and persisting. That is, after all, the true legacy of Bangladesh and that is our story.

Amader Golpo: An initiative to revive cultural heritage and histories through comics

JINAT JAHAN KHAN

In the wake of this year, a triggering and misleading social media content on “Chakmas don’t like milk, instead, they consume alcohol” went viral reviving the old-age cultural divide and misconceptions among different communities in Bangladesh. This kind of conflict is not just between Bengali and different indigenous communities, but also between people of different regions or areas. In most cases, the knowledge gap regarding our cultural heritage and people is responsible for the harsh divide among communities. To let people know about the different colours of cultures and traditions, Quizards, one of the first edutainment websites in Bangladesh came forward. With the help of Life 101 Foundation and ‘Diversity for Peace’ initiative of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), it has planned to launch a website named ‘Amader Golpo’ to bring positive changes in people’s mindset and thought process by letting them know about the concepts of diversity. The website has been officially launched on 16 November 2020, on the International Day for Tolerance.

What is ‘Amader Golpo’?

To eliminate the cultural divide, we need to bring behavioural change among adolescents and youths of our society towards all the diversified communities by disseminating proper information. For that, there should be something which is both informative and attractive to the target groups. Here comes ‘Amader Golpo’ which is basically a collection of e-comics that are based on different folklores, myths, indigenous communities, stories of the cultural heritage of Bangladesh. With an intention to reduce the cultural gap, Aaqib Md. Shatil and his team from

Quizards started working to create this platform. This project was developed under the United Nations Development Programme’s Diversity for Peace Initiative. It is apparently the first-ever initiative to revive the cultural heritage and history of communities living in Bangladesh through free comics.

They have created storylines on 25 collected stories after verifying them through a team of experts. The team of ‘Amader Golpo’ has members of different backgrounds and cultures who have also contributed in designing the comic books besides collecting stories to ensure the visualisation suitable for particular stories or people. Mehedi Haque’s team from Dhaka Comics has helped them in this regard. The website contains 5 books and each of them contains 5 stories on a particular theme. All the books are free of cost and you can flip the pages of the books comfortably like real books on the website. The main target of ‘Amader Golpo’ is not just to make people read these stories, but also to nurture curiosity to learn more about various religious and ethnic groups and to be tolerant with them.

Know the real stories, remove the darkness of misconceptions

There are many misconceptions regarding traditional festivals and people in different regions. Each story of these comic books represents a beautiful message or important information that we should know. For instance, they have added a story of Sidhu and Kanhu in their ‘Paharer Golpo’ comic who led the



Santhal rebellion against both the British colonial authority and the Zamindar system. It is one of those historical stories that shows the contribution of ethnic communities to save our motherland from the British. This comic book also contains a story on ‘Boishabi’, the biggest traditional festival for indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This is to let people know what this kind of festival is about.

In every Pohela Boishakh procession, the old debate starts, over the effigies and this celebration are something related to the culture of the Hindu community. However, the actual story is nothing close to this. There is also a knowledge

gap regarding Ashura, Shia community, Jonmashtomi festival, Boi Mela and other significant celebrations which are also covered in this ‘Amader Golpo’ book series. In addition, there are some interesting and fascinating stories too, such as how ‘Kachagolla’ got its recognition, some popular folktales and many more. One can even get a short glimpse of 400 years of history of Dhaka. In short, ‘Amader Golpo’ is all about knowing important stories and facts briefly which will make people aware of diversity and promote tolerance nationwide.

‘Amader Golpo’ has planned to print 400 copies of each book and it means total 2000 printed copies of 5 books. The initial plan was to distribute these books among adolescents and youths of different regions and communities through some offline campaigns. But it is not possible due to the current pandemic. They are planning to donate these books to local school libraries of such regions and communities, NGOs who work with children in hilly areas and to voluntary organisations that carry out education projects. Initially, the objective is to donate 10 copies of each book and so total 50 copies of this book set to each library or organisation. In future, they have a plan to organise quiz competitions based on these books on the website of ‘Quizards’. It’ll inspire young minds to perceive knowledge about different cultures and traditions.

us on f /Sandalina

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ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

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