



## Covid-19 vaccine removes Bangladesh from its friendlist

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

Covid-19 has drawn all the attention since it broke out in China, or wherever the latest conspiracy places it. Since then, all the countries have been desperately looking for a vaccine, as was Bangladesh. But several fake IDs of vaccines left everyone confused and creating ample scope for catfishing.

But finally, Bangladesh found a Covid-19 vaccine profile with a seemingly real profile picture (Seemed to be real as its profile picture and other information were genuine) after months of searching and sent a friend request without further delays.

Yes! Then the Covid-19 vaccine accepted our friend request and all the healthy men clapped for the probable solution of this 'unhealthy' situation.

It can undoubtedly be said that Covid-19 vaccine was getting numerous friend requests from both known and unknown countries. Bangladesh was lucky as its request was accepted before the maximum limit was reached.

However, Bangladesh made sure to knock the profile on messenger and also sent a text message. No one likes random friend requests and Bangladesh had the courtesy to make an introduction first.

Then after several hours of chatting with Covid-19 vaccine, Bangladesh and Covid-19 vaccine reached an agreement that Bangladesh would get millions of doses of vaccine soon.

This most awaited news brought forth a celebration in the country. Public holidays were announced to celebrate the news. The day Covid-19 saw Bangladesh's message was announced as the 'Friendship Day' which is supposed to be celebrated every year. Politicians were delivering their TedTalks on 'how to select a true friend' on television.

Some were on the edge of developing a theory, named, 'A True Friend: Myth or Reality' based on their experience.

Unfortunately, everything didn't go well. To celebrate the public holidays, people gathered in huge numbers in various recreational and tourist spots. As a result, more people were infected and vaccine was in dire need. The spokesman of Bangladesh knocked Covid-19 in messenger again. But no reply came and the message wasn't seen either. While checking the ID of Covid-19 vaccine, Bangladesh discovered that its friend had suddenly removed it from his friendlist. Later, Bangladesh took several screenshots of the agreement with Covid-19 vaccine and posted those on 'Desperately Seeking Vaccine- DSV', an international group of unfortunate countries. But, no one gave a solution. Only a comment was made from a fake ID (Could be the Covid-19 vaccine's fake ID) mentioning that, "I heard that Covid-19 vaccine mistakenly accepted your friend request after reaching its friend-limit. It has more friends to send vaccine to. You don't have a chance as you are its 'accidental friend.'"

## BACK FROM THE BEACH



### ROOSTING DUCKS

## Confused Americans still wondering if that was a coup or not

OSAMA RAHMAN

The United States of America, a former colony of the United Kingdom, may not yet be ready for democracy.

Another disputed election, as has been happening in the country since before the George Bush fiasco, has once again alerted international election observers of possible foul play.

"The voting happened peacefully. Many people came, they voted and they left," Kajalie Ahmed, an election observer from Bangladesh, had said earlier. Yesterday, however, she sang a different tune.

"I felt watched when I was observing their election. Everything was tightly controlled. Our tours were guided. We couldn't walk into any centre we wanted," she told this newspaper.

Adiba Abbas, head of the World Democratic Association, believes the problem lies in America's nature of being a societal basket case.

"This is a country fraught with many different problems. Everything for them is a race issue. And it is a very individualistic society, which celebrates individuals more than the collective. So democratic values will be hard to instil here," Adiba said.

Benyayoun Hussien, a political observer, said this uniquely American problem can have global repercussions. "This is a nuclear-armed country we are talking about. It is also the only country in the world to have used nuclear arms. Maybe they are already producing more such arms. Such a country cannot be allowed to run this way, without the world finally interfering," he said.

"They need to have more transparency," he added.

"Yes. The ducks have come home to roost. But it's our problem. It's a white problem," an unnamed netizen said on a popular forum the day after protestors,

if we can even call them that, stormed the US Capitol Building and stopped the congressional certification of the electoral vote.

Their thoughts were echoed by others who felt the same, once again showing how divisive the supposed strong democracy is. Questions, however, are still being raised about what yesterday was all about.

"We know coups. We have done it many times over. We annexed Texas, invaded California, brought about regime change in Iraq, Afghanistan, all over Africa and even Europe," Bob Barker, an American citizen with the right skin complexion to make a statement, told this newspaper.

"This wasn't a coup. This was us exercising our democratic right to congregate and protest," he added.

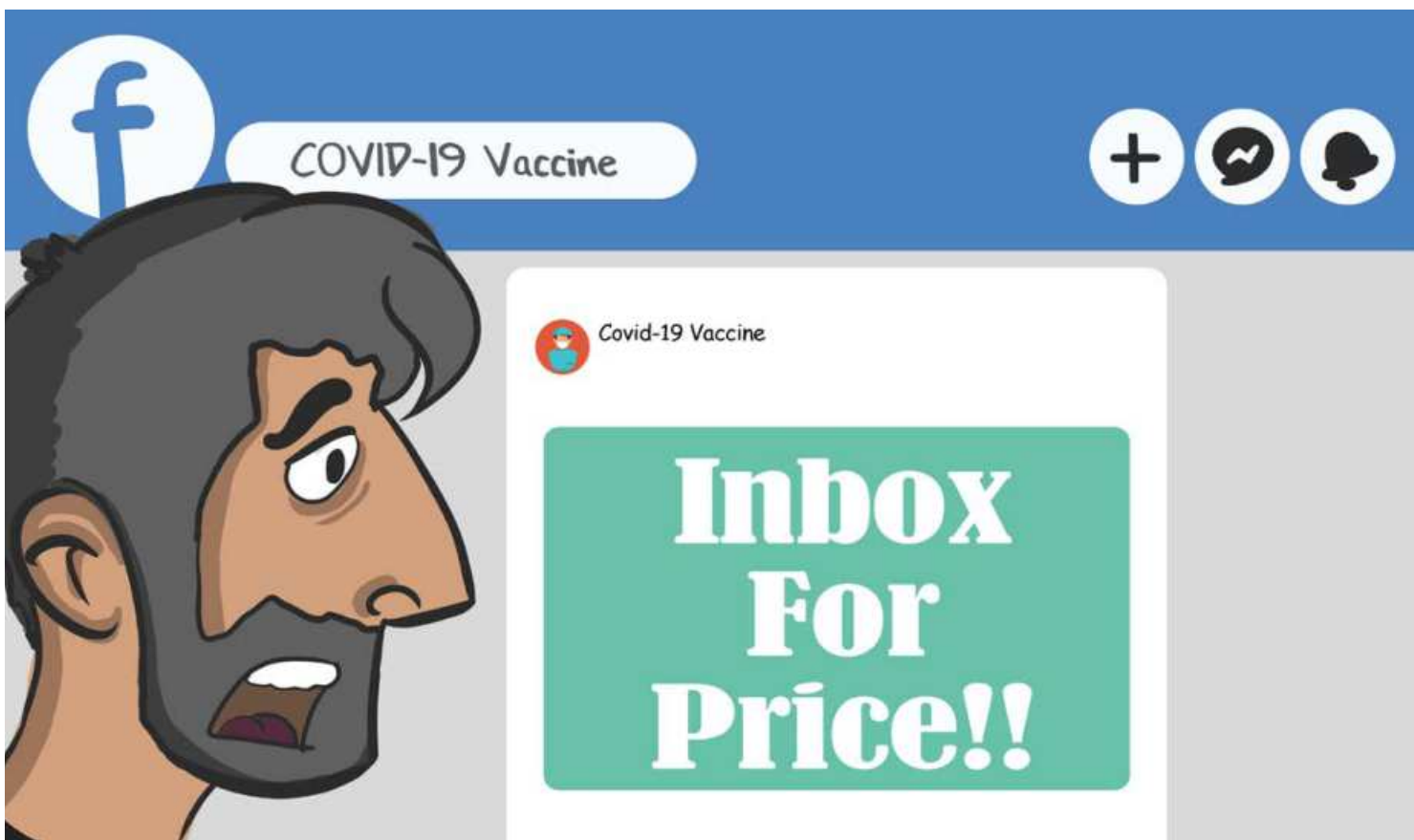
Those within the corridors of power also agreed with Bob's assessment. "This wasn't a coup. This was an attack on democracy, engineered by the Russians and the Chinese," a spokesman for The Whitest House, said.

Pointed out that not one of the protestors seemed to be Russian or Chinese, the spokesman retorted asking whether any of the Libyan supporters who overthrew Gaddafi looked American.

In certain sections, however, yesterday's events are still seen as an absolute coup attempt. "We are a first-world country. How can we behave like disgusting third world countries? Yuck. I want to throw up just thinking about that," Karen Armstrong, a progressive, said.

Meanwhile, heads of states are scheduled to meet in the upcoming week where they will decide whether the American elections were fair or not, regardless of how the voters feel.

"We need to give them some guidance. It is our responsibility as the world police," a spokesman for China said.



## Facebook shop goes bankrupt by not using 'Apu, inbox for prices' policy

LUBNAN KHALEESI

A Facebook shop, which became a disruptor-in-chief by listing the prices on the image of their products, recently declared bankruptcy.

Sweet Surprises, which sold the most random assortment of products ever, took the Facebook marketplace by storm when it launched earlier this year. Instead of having to inbox them for their prices, their page bravely displayed the prices right on the photos of their products.

This was an unprecedented move in the Bangladeshi market, where Facebook pages religiously maintained the "inbox for prices, please" message or the more annoying automated "check inbox" replies to price queries.

"Things were going well initially. People applauded us and we got the Trend-Setter of the Year during last year's Good Business Awards. However, since the pandemic, things started to shift," Mehnaz Milon, owner of Sweet Surprises, said.

"People had so much free time on their hands that they started coming to the page and commenting on pictures, saying 'We can buy this for Tk 50' on products listed at Tk 500 or more. They all began to demonstrate this weird bargaining power-trip, which drove away customers," she said.

In time, Sweet Surprises' Facebook posts became the brewing grounds of one of Bangladesh's most talked-about price wars of the year. Other companies also got in on the action, talking up their pages on Sweet Surprises' posts.

Sweet Surprises, at the advice of a marketer, decided to brave the storm by continuing with their posts unchanged.

Amin Bari, head of social media of Sweet Surprises, admits the decision back-fired but stands by it. "We had tremendous engagement in the first few months. Thousands of comments, likes and shares. And you know engagement means sales, right?"

When pointed out that engagement did not really mean sales and it was usually people

tagging each other and saying "for you" or "buy me this", with no one really buying anything, Amin said that was the whole point of social media.

"Listen. Engagements are all we care about. That is basically my job. To drive up engagement. Everyone does it by not listing prices. Well, we wanted to do something different," he said.

While the exercise has failed, Mehnaz feels it is not over. "We plan on coming back next time. This time, not only will we not list prices, we will also not even show the product's picture. This way it will be a real surprise when people buy something. They won't even know what it is that they bought! We will take the market by storm," she said.

Whether that works or not remains to be seen. For now, there are high hopes for Sweet Surprises V2.

Lubnan Khaleesi cannot stop eating. And it's not even hunger anymore; just the thrill of tasting all kinds of food.



A Trump supporter sits in the office of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who was forced to evacuate, in what was NOT a coup.

PHOTO: AFP