

# Post-Covid riches: CEOs hit record numbers paying employees pandemic-era salaries

## DISGRUNTLED CORRESPONDENT

Business owners and CEOs in Chapasthan have started dominating the Forbes Richest list after the end of the Covid-22 pandemic, and it has largely been because no one but the one-percenters know that the pandemic has ended.

CEOs, or bosses in general, realised the untapped potential for riches during the first wave of economic recovery during the pandemic.

"When the pandemic started and the country went into shutdown mode, most of our employees were just happy to have jobs," a CEO of a telecom giant said under condition of anonymity.

"We cut their festival bonuses by half, reduced their salaries, and also realised we did not need as many workers to function," he or she said.

But when the economy started recovering even with the pandemic going on, which involved the poorer people risking their lives by venturing out of home and earning their daily bread, the bosses realised that they could continue skimming on wages and bonuses.

"So, even when we were raking in the profits, we did not take salaries up to pre-pandemic levels. We continued paying festival bonuses that were a fraction of what we paid before," said the CEO.

"That, combined with the reduced

workforce, meant much more for us. Essentially, we employ fewer people and pay them even less," chuckled the CEO.

But this rosy state of affairs was threatened when the pandemic started to end. That would mean the excuse of economic slowdown would no longer work on workers waiting for the tide to turn so that they could finally resume their former lives. That is where the Chapasthan government stepped in.

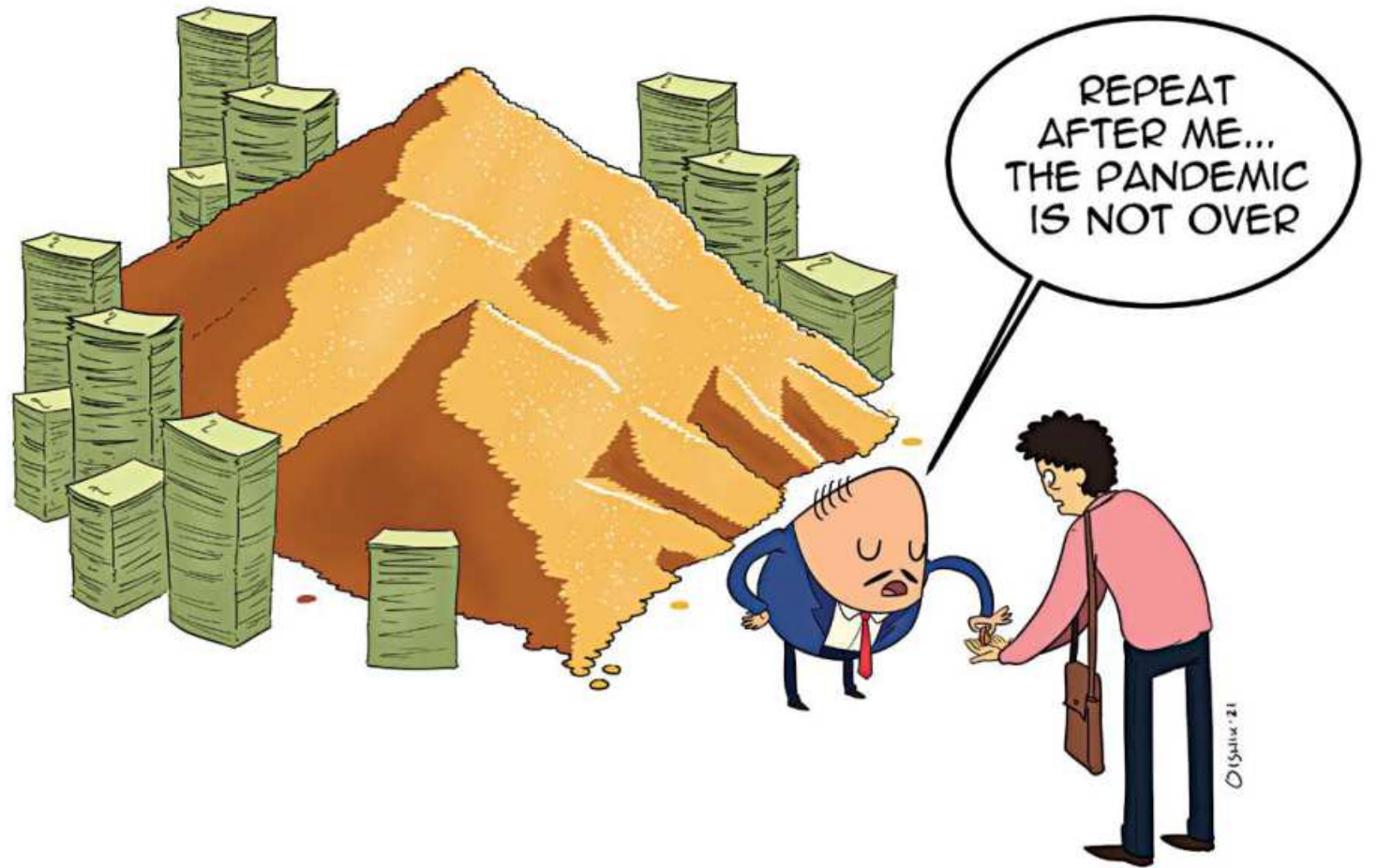
They started announcing new variants of the disease, even as the rest of the world were rejoicing in the end of the pandemic.

News organisations played their part too. Big companies started running advertorials and sponsored content on news outlets saying how bad the pandemic was and how the economy may never recover. Soon, the CEOs stopped paying bonuses.

The news outlets, meanwhile, were pleased with the revenue and happier still that they could continue paying their employees less.

A government official said the ruse was for the wider good.

"Look, if our CEOs and businesspeople are making waves around the world and entering top lists, it just translates to a good image for the country. That will invite foreign investment, and then maybe we will finally see the economy recover," said an anonymous official.



## DHAKA DIARIES

# Ultra-elite friend group at upscale eatery constantly apologising for privilege

STAR ALWAYS-SALTY REPORTER

*A dying industry means constantly looking for new ways to ensure survival. And in that attempt, we here at Satireday have decided to send our very angry, quite salty reporter in search of human interest stories that do not inspire, or invoke awe in any way.*

While I personally constantly strive for the good life, I can hardly afford the good life due to my profession and its limitations. But that does not stop me from trying. So for this first take on Dhaka diaries, I decided to draw up a hefty bill by going to Goley restaurant's bOro Cafe located in the heart of Gulshan. This is where the elite of Dhaka city roam around. Where they cruise their Porsches and cannot so much as open the car door themselves. That task, my friends, is reserved for the lowly driver.

I have tried multiple times to teach my Starlet driver to show me the same respect and hold the door open for me every time I get in or out, but alas the middle class can only ask for so much. And get just somewhat enough, I mean. Not abundant like having a Porsche, neither so little that they can complain openly about their lack of means.

I have been digressing. Anyway, as yours truly slowly made my way into the bOro cafe, I took in the decor and the crowd in one sweeping glance. And chose to sit next to a crowd of young women and a few men. The women are dressed snazzily in high-waisted pants and loose yet somehow fitted shirts, the men in tailored shorts and Hawaii shirts.

The group ordered generously with not a thought given to the hefty prices. And in between the courses arriving, I eavesdropped and learned that one of them was leaving Dhaka to work with underprivileged people. One of them is an artist who hates being associated with the rich and elite because his art is all about questioning the status quo.

"I cannot believe he is friends with a guy whose money comes from exploiting the poor. They have factories, you know where people toil day and night to make sure these guys have such cushy lives," said one group member.

"Mmm... this goat cheese and beetroot is really good. I would totally pay twice the exorbitant price I am paying now. Ugh! Self-awareness is a curse," said another.

As I watched in awe at the perfect balance of self-awareness and lack thereof I too found myself caught in their ways. Why, of course, I would sell my kidney for their risotto, and



This is a representational image from The Daily Star's Lifestyle's archive and has no resemblance/connection (fictional or otherwise) with the story

also shame myself for doing so but continue to do so.

Busy activity on the other table brought my attention back to the table in question.

I noticed the artist was angry. He was ready to complain. And nothing would stop him from doing so. Turns out the broth in his ramen "was not even a broth. They didn't use the right combination of ingredients. They didn't simmer it down for a long time as well. I mean the waiter has to answer for this. I am going to give him an earful for this behavior.

"Actually Bangladesh doesn't have any concept of a service industry, they will just open a store anywhere and think that's it, their job is done. Well their job is not done. I paid for this ramen and I should have gotten it. Not this sorry excuse. The prawns in the soup are overdone as well," said the visibly livid artist.

I unfortunately have to wrap up this diary way before I should have, because the food is here and I had to focus all my energy on how to appear like I can use the cutlery and behave appropriately at fancy restaurants.

# Country plans to hold its own Olympics to win medals

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

After every 4 years, Chapasthan wallows in the sorrow of not being able to win an Olympic medal despite partaking in the Games since 1984.

In those previous editions, the country successfully failed to win a medal, believing that participation is better than winning.

However, that attitude is hard on the ego.

So, Chapasthan decided to organise its own Olympic to win homemade medals and hold its head high in the international arena.

In keeping with the homemade nature of the Chapalymphics, there will be some new events such as, corruption, bribery, fraudulence, Chapabaji (a fully original Chapasthani event), and so on.

When asked about those exceptional and unprecedented events, the president of the Chapasthan Olympic Committee for Snatching Medals said, "Our target is to win medals. That's why we introduced those events at which we are good. Our players are confident

*In keeping with the homemade nature of the Chapalymphics, there will be some new events such as, corruption, bribery, fraudulence, Chapabaji*

enough to win all medals as they believe that no country will do better than them in those events. Let the show begin and let us show our latent talents!"

To choose participating nations, Chapasthan will refer to the report of Transparency International. "We checked multiple TI reports and found that a good number of countries has the ability and courage to participate in Chapalymphics. The nations with the highest corruption scores will gain automatic entry," he said.

