

How can today's graduates prepare for future jobs?

A growth mindset and self-learning could be the way forward in a fast-changing world



SAYEED AHMED

THE world has seen more changes in the last two years than in the previous two decades. The ongoing pandemic has taught us the hard way that everything we hold dear or take for granted is actually fragile and transient.

It has drastically altered our plans, actions and worldviews, causing a paradigm shift on a global scale. We are facing a future we can't foresee. Under such circumstances, what kind of jobs will the industry offer new graduates in the coming years? And how can today's graduates prepare for the future jobs and challenges?

The World Economic Forum's (WEF) 2020 report, "Future of Jobs", has given an idea of what to expect within the next five years. Not surprisingly, it forecasts an increase in technology adoption involving cloud computing, big data, encryption, surveillance, robotics, and artificial intelligence (AI). But more importantly, it has pointed to the increasing need for critical thinking and analytical skills, problem-solving attitude, self-learning ability, and flexibility. Almost 40 percent of today's workers will need to reskill themselves within the next six months. Employers' willingness to invest in staff training on new skills rose from 65 percent in 2018 to 95 percent in 2020. More employees than ever before are taking online self-learning courses to upskill themselves.

Other such studies have also reported similar observations. Last year, FutureLearn.com, a digital education platform co-founded by the British Open University, has conducted a global survey to determine the current trends in education. Its key findings are: 1) Self-education is getting popular, especially among younger generations; 2) Online learning can provide benefits similar to that of formal education; and 3)

Technology and inclusivity are the future of education. Such studies offer crucial insights and help understand the related issues in a country like Bangladesh.

Policy-makers in Bangladesh have been constantly debating how to prepare the graduates for the industry, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and—since the onset of the current pandemic—the post-Covid economy. Everyone realises that society's needs are changing at an exponential pace. Yet, there isn't any

Bangladesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) has highlighted the wide gap between graduates' present skills and industry needs. It's an untenable situation.

How can Bangladesh prepare its graduates for the industry and fill up this gap? BRAC University's Graduate School of Management (GSM) has recently organised a workshop to find an answer. The panelists' conclusions are: 1) Any curriculum review will take eight to 10 years to implement; 2) The method of

especially with the onset of the pandemic, it has become a necessity. With the large-scale change in the industry, every kind of existing work is going through incredible transformations. This process has eliminated the need for many manual jobs and several specialised professions. Every discipline is experiencing similar changes, and none will function in the way we know. Considering such rapid changes, continuous learning and upskilling is the only way for any graduate to remain in demand. It's a challenge but also an opportunity for those with a growth mindset.

In her book "Mindset: The New Psychology of Success", Carol Dweck, a Stanford professor, describes two kinds of mindset—fixed and growth. She has defined growth mindset in an HBR article saying, "Individuals who believe their talents can be developed (through hard work, good strategies, and input from others) have a growth mindset." Graduates having such mindsets, combined with self-learning and critical thinking skills, will be better prepared for the constant changes in the industry. Apart from university resources, such students will also benefit from the internet, which has made information and knowledge almost readily accessible.

Online educational platforms such as Coursera, Udemy, FutureLearn, and Udacity have brought education straight to our homes. Besides, Wikipedia, Khan Academy, YouTube, and many other platforms provide free information on wide-ranging subjects. Learning opportunities are available regardless of where we live, and it has never been easier to acquire a new skill and prepare for a new role. What can the universities do in the meantime? Let's take a cue from the French philosopher Rousseau's remark: "We should not teach children the sciences, but give them a taste for them." Given our context, we may paraphrase it as—"We should give the students a taste of learning and let them do the rest."

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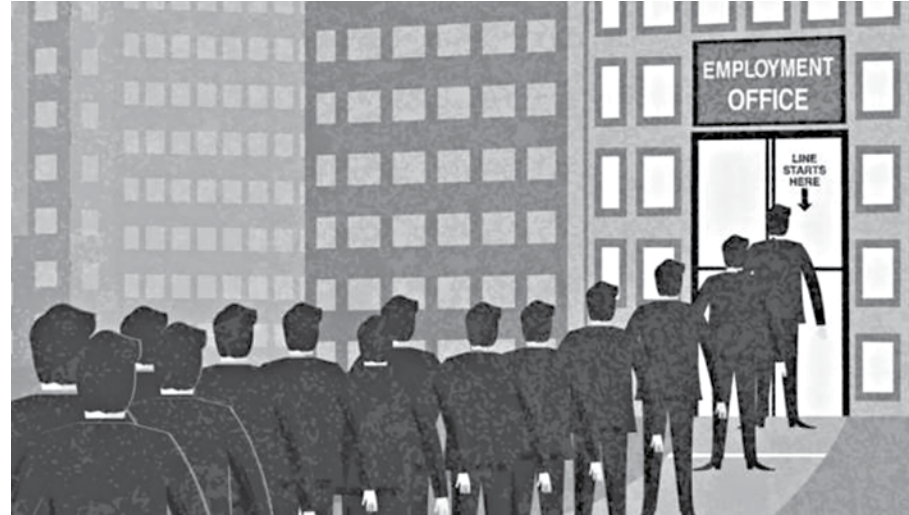


ILLUSTRATION: COLLECTED

policy or programme to address this matter, although some universities have initiated a review of curricula and education dissemination mechanisms. However, any significant change in these areas can take a long time to formulate and implement. By then, the industry may ask for an altogether new set of skills. The result? Education is years behind industry needs, graduates find it hard to secure a job, and the industry grapples with a shortage of qualified resources.

Among educated youths, 33 percent are unemployed, as the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) reports. This figure doesn't include the Madrasa graduates, for whom this number is a whopping 75 percent. On the other hand, the president of the Federation of

teaching and the skills acquired are more important than the content of the subject; 3) Self-paced online learning is getting more relevant; and 4) Awareness and curiosity as regards technology trends and the business world in general are essential. Everyone on the panel has agreed that the most crucial skill for any graduate is critical thinking. The panelists have also added that teachers can help students acquire the skills required for self-learning and raise their curiosity and awareness of the relevant disciplines. Once a graduate demonstrates these attributes, they are on good ground to start a career that will involve lifelong learning and upskilling.

In the past, upskilling was an option and not a requirement. But recently,

The no-risk, all-gain game of mortal prophecy



CHINTITO SINCE 1995

NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

YOU must have come across people, not necessarily ostentatious, who foretell the future, making a monkey out of the gullible with their forecasts. In the past, they were called soothsayers, but with the upsurge of various media, that role has been taken over by politicians, professors and the pompous. The wonderful advantage of being an expert adviser—free or otherwise—is that there is a bouquet of appreciation if the prediction turns out to be right, guaranteed publication and press conferences as perks. But there is no penalty, hardly a rebuke, if the guess turns out to be wrong.

For example, here's one of mine: 500 years from now, apples will taste like guava. While it may appear to be a thoughtful package of creativity and imagination, the truth is none of us living today and those we shall meet in the next hundred years will be around to pat my back or slap my behind.

Never make predictions to draw unnecessary attention.

Predictions fail, as can evacuation plans. Lately, no one has had to put up a brave face on camera and tear his hair in private more than US President Joe Biden. His made-in-China crystal ball seems to have been bought in Kabul's Pul-e Khishti Bazaar.

Never rely on your secret service; depend on the enemy's.

In the mid-1980s, even the casual acquaintances in the UK asked me with the air of a know-it-all, and perhaps unintended slight, why we had so many floods in Bangladesh. Sheepishly, I wanted to say it was not our fault. Experts did warn us after repeated deluges that three-fourth of Bangladesh—or was it one-third?—would be underwater in a few decades. There was no mention ever of London, Dagestan (Russia), Saga prefecture (Japan), or Merida (Venezuela)—all knee-deep in water. I believe the prophets of Bay of Bengal are revisiting their geography books.

Never sprinkle salt on an open wound.

No sooner had Covid-19 struck, experts became eager with their prophecies. Notably on April 22, 2020—about six weeks after Bangladesh was hit—a World Bank press release headlined "World

Bank Predicts Sharpest Decline of Remittances in Recent History." Elaborating, it said: "Global remittances are projected to decline sharply by about 20 percent in 2020 due to the economic crisis induced by the Covid-19 pandemic and shutdown." South Asia was flagged for over 22 percent regression. Astoundingly, Bangladesh received about USD 19.8 billion in remittance in 2020, compared to USD 18.4 billion it received the year before—a growth of 7.6 percent, according to a report by *The Daily Star* in February. The trend has continued to soar. In the first 11 months of the last fiscal year, the inflow of remittances reached

Cautioning about Covid spreading by touching, or handling bank notes. They said infected droplets could remain effective for two to seventy-two hours. The confines of lifts are hazardous, haven't you heard? As are air-conditioned cars. When one officer suggested that normalcy would not return within six months, he was fired. He is till date one-third right. Have this medicine, do not combine with that. Vaccines needed sub-zero temperatures to be preserved, but now we see otherwise. Someone said the virus would perish above 23°C temperature. Excuse me! The rumour-mongers are roaming freely under the very nose of the public, many

Guardian quoted the executive director of Dhaka-based think tank Policy Research Institute, who was livid: "We must not build a bridge to disaster." He feared severe austerity to balance the books. Predictive expertise from several other specialist panels and opposition politicians were similarly adverse. Not only is the bridge projected to open to traffic in 10 months, but Bangladesh's per capita income of USD 883 then has risen to over USD 2,000 now.

Never open your mouth to show off your shallowness; rivers are deep. I am all but pleased that a couple of my predictions, made in private,

were proven wrong. I am man enough to admit: given our law and order situation, and surveillance record, I thought ATM machines would not work here. I am eating my flexi card with a gulp of bottled water, which too I assumed was a laughable venture. And now we are inundated in sewage water because our drainage system and waterbodies are filled with PET bottles.

Never follow a one-track mind. Genuine forecasts, however, evolve from patriotism and are based on years of selfless sacrifice. March 7, 1971 witnessed the greatest public address in the history of this region.

It was sheer poetry. Building up the waves in the sea of people and quenching the thirst of an expectant nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared at the Ramna Race Course Maidan: "Now that we have given blood, we shall give more blood, we shall free this country, Insha'Allah." In less than three weeks, Bangladesh was declared an independent country, and was liberated within the year. That was mortal prophecy at its best.

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Everyone seems to be an expert on one thing or another these days.

ILLUSTRATION: BIPOLO CHAKROBORTY

nearly USD 23 billion, registering an increase of more than 39 percent despite the Covid-19 pandemic, *The Financial Express* reported in June. As it was, after its Padma Bridge *politi*, the World Bank lost substantial credibility. Never rely on history in an ever-changing world.

I particularly admire cricket pundits. Their number is worryingly on the rise—because no sweat in delivering the bouncers. Prior to any series, they are on TV, frown lines prominent on their foreheads, their voice thick as thunder: "If we can bat, bowl and field well, we have a great chance of winning." In cricket, there is nothing else, unless you want to consider poor umpiring or rain saving the day.

Never overestimate your limited knowledge.

Covid-19 has produced experts like no other. Designating safe distance to one metre, then two metres, then six,

of whom thankfully have a sense of smell.

Never repeat the unsubstantiated. Then there was the infamous calculation by Henry Kissinger. After Bangladesh emerged as a liberated country in 1971, the then US secretary of state unkindly stated that the new country was "a bottomless basket," suggesting that being dysfunctional, it would be begging to survive. His infatuation with the Pakistan-China corridor was blind. Well, that did not happen. On the contrary, Bangladesh's GDP has now overtaken that of Pakistan.

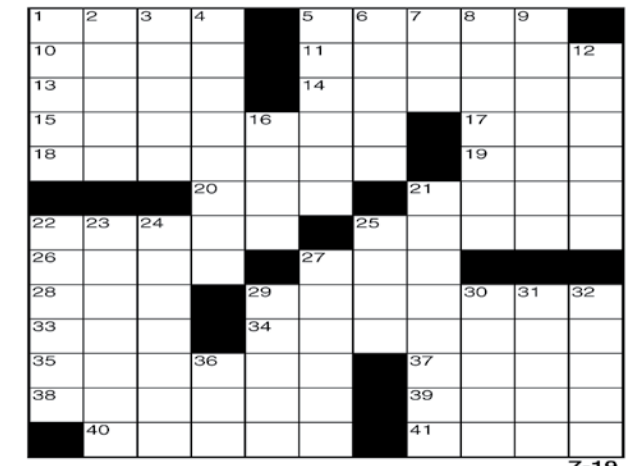
Never speak your mind when you are angry, hateful, and guilty of wrongly conspiring against a freedom-loving people.

Flashback to July 2012: In response to the Sheikh Hasina government's defiance of the World Bank's withdrawal of USD 1.2 billion fund for the Padma Bridge project, *The*

CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Sewer rodents
 - 5 Montana city
 - 10 Loads
 - 11 Ryan and Tatum
 - 13 Forbidden act
 - 14 Croquet hoop
 - 15 Dense group of bushes
 - 17 Australian bird
 - 18 Blitzers, at times
 - 19 Capitol Bldg. worker
 - 20 Music's Booker T & the —
 - 21 Ice cream buy
 - 22 Does some modeling
 - 25 Scout shelters
 - 26 Privy to
- DOWN**
- 1 Tirades
 - 2 Hilo hello
 - 3 Bar mixer
 - 4 Warehouse workers
 - 27 Golf goal
 - 28 Spectrum color
 - 29 Gender offenders
 - 33 Dr.'s org.
 - 34 Chirping insect
 - 35 Box office buy
 - 37 Turner of movies
 - 38 Galahad's mother
 - 39 School near Windsor
 - 40 Come in
 - 41 Dispatch
 - 5 Leafy retreats
 - 6 Fathom and foot
 - 7 Gumshoe
 - 8 Swindles
 - 9 Lead or lithium
 - 12 Publicity acts
 - 16 Gunpowder holders
 - 21 Shakespeare's prince of Tyre
 - 22 Buccaneer
 - 23 Eight furlongs
 - 24 Recyclable item
 - 25 City car
 - 27 More impudent
 - 29 Play part
 - 30 Flat fish
 - 31 Mortise's mate
 - 32 Position
 - 36 Young fox

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

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Office of the Executive Engineer
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Memo No: 46.02.1000.000.14.044.21.2300
e-Tender Notice No:04/2021-22

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following works are given below:

Sl. No	Tender Proposal ID & Upazila	Name of the Scheme with Package No	Last Selling Date and Time	Closing & Opening Date and Time
1	606674 (LTM) Kahaloo	Improvement of Samantaher - Dogachi Road at Ch.590-1012.00m & 1850-3200.00m. [Road ID # 110544005] Under Kahaloo Upazila District Bogura. [Total Cost of Salvage Materials Tk. 2,44,743.00]. (Package No: RDRIDP/Bogura/Kahaloo-04/21-22)	26/09/2021 Up to 17.00 PM	27/09/2021 Up to 13.00 PM
2	606675 (LTM) Sherpur	Improvement of Sonka - Binodpur Hat Road via Goaljani Satarra Road at Ch.1000-1700.00m. [Road ID # 110884020] Under Sherpur Upazila District Bogura. [Total Cost of Salvage Materials Tk. 5,69,698.00]. (Package No: RDRIDP/Bogura/Sherpur-12/21-22)		
3	606676 (LTM) Shibganj	Improvement of Juri Mashpara - Kristapur Road at Ch.00-1000.00m. [Road ID # 110944022] Under Shibganj Upazila District Bogura. [Total Cost of Salvage Materials Tk. 2,10,481.00]. (Package No: RDRIDP/Bogura/Shibganj-10/21-22)		
4	607304 (LTM) Dhunot	Improvement of Dhunot UP - Dighalkandi Hat Road Ch. 4430 - 5130m [Road ID #110273011] under Dhunot Upazila District Bogura.] (Package No: IRIDP-3/BOG/DW-57)		
5	607305 (LTM) Dhunot	Improvement of Rangamati Dhakil Madrasa -Taltola road Ch.1000-1400m. [Road ID #110275043] under Dhunot Upazila District Bogura. (Package No: IRIDP-3/BOG/DW-58)		
6	607306 (LTM) Dhunot	a)Improvement of Bubonganti - Joyngar road Ch. 00-1032m. b) Construction of 0.625mx0.600m 4-Nos culvert at Ch. 420m, 500m, 600m & 950m. [Road ID #110274109] under Dhunot Upazila District Bogura. [Total Cost of Salvage Materials Tk. 64,353.00]. (Package No: IRIDP-3/BOG/DW-59)		

This is an online Tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline / hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required. The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank's branches up to 17.00 PM on 26/09/2021

e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd) and also for e-mail: xen.bogura@lged.gov.bd or call to: 051-60096. Interested persons can communicate with the undersigned during office hours.

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