

MEMES more than just a laugh

ARAFAT RAHAMAN

Memes, often dismissed as mere humour, can be a powerful tool for depicting social and political issues with satire.

Sometimes memes are more than just a laugh; they serve as a significant means of addressing various societal and political concerns and engaging the younger generation with them.

Imagine entering a polling station with excitement, only to be told by someone, "Your vote has already been cast", or another person telling you, "We have two booths, one for daytime voters and another for nighttime".

This scenario isn't a political oddity but a clever meme installation at Meme Fest by "earki", a satire platform dedicated to posting and sharing memes.



The festival, held at Aloki Convention Centre yesterday, featured over 550 memes addressing a wide array of social issues.

"In times when voicing serious opinions feels risky, we're bringing memes to a bigger stage, proving they're not just funny -- they're a powerful new form of free expression," said earki founder Simu Naser.

"There's a generation gap between many of us now. We wanted this fest to bridge that gap, bringing citizens of all ages together," he added.

Filmmaker Ashfaque Nipun described the event as "soulful," saying memes have a shared language which connects people across political and social issues.

The festival featured meme exhibitions, live contests, stand up comedy, meme museums, cosplay, and a workshop conducted by Ashfaque.



KHORKHARIA RIVER IN NILPHAMARI

20,000 suffer for lack of permanent bridge

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

Construction of a concrete bridge over Khorkharia River, 12km from Saidpur in Nilphamari district, has been elusive for years, posing commuting challenges and risks for over 20,000 residents in 10 nearby villages.

There are around six schools in the affected villages -- Pramanik Para, Janer Par Telipara, Bala Para, Borodah, Pathan Para, Kangal Para, Togru Para, Kuthi Para, Kathari Para and Bosunia Para -- including a kindergarten, three government-run primary schools and two high schools.

Students have to wade through knee-deep water during dry seasons, while during the monsoon they use rafts made from banana plants to cross the river, putting themselves at risk.

The students and teachers raised funds to construct a makeshift bamboo bridge on the river about three years ago, said Nipa Rani Sarker, headteacher of Kalitola Adarsha High School in Telipara village.

"However, over time, the bridge has

The Local Government and Engineering Department conducted a survey in 2020 in this regard but there is no headway yet.

become vulnerable, posing constant risk of accidents," she added.

Feroz Ahmed, a fifth grader at Botlagari Govt Primary School, said, "We are scared of using the bamboo bridge as it moves when we walk on it." Local lawmakers had repeatedly

promised to construct a concrete bridge, but none kept their words, said locals.

A similar promise was recently made by independent candidate Moksudul Momin, also president of Awami League's Saidpur unit, while visiting the spot a week ago.

"We've little faith in leaders as they shed crocodile tears before every election for votes and later forget about us," alleged Md Mozahar Ali, a former member of Botlagari Union Parishad.

The Local Government and Engineering Department conducted a survey in 2020 in this regard but there is no headway yet, said Mominul Islam, a local.

Contacted, Ali Reza Razu, upazila engineer of LGED, said they have sent relevant papers to the authorities for construction of a 300-foot bridge and are waiting for their response.

TIB denounces

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infrastructure, or similar actions in the lead-up to the election cannot be justified as legitimate expressions of democratic rights or protests.

TIB Executive Director Dr Iftekharuzzaman said, "The act of burning people alive can never be a means of promoting political agenda. No political party should use such means at the expense of human lives. It is unjustifiable to try to serve a political purpose capitalising on violence that kills people."

"Using human lives as a means to achieve political goals has regrettably

become a prevailing political culture in our country. We urgently call upon all concerned to refrain from any use of force and abstain from politics that leads to loss of life, particularly in the run-up to the election. This is critical to prevent the rise of undemocratic forces."

"While the agitating political parties must bear responsibility for ongoing atrocities during protests, it is equally incumbent upon the government and relevant state agencies to transparently address any allegations of their involvement in such attacks," he added.

Stop ill-efforts

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Citing the recent incidents of arson attacks on vehicles and trains, they said the aim of these sabotage was to halt the democratic progress of the country.

They called upon the people to resist the arsonist and make the next polls a success by exercising their voting rights.

The signatories include former chief justice Hasan Foez Siddique, former vice chancellor of Dhaka University Prof AAMS

Arefin Siddique, former principal secretary Abdul Karim, Mahbub Uddin Ahmed Bir Bikram, Prof Muntassir Mamoon, former governor of Bangladesh Bank and Emeritus Prof Atiur Rahman, former IGP Muhammad Nurul Huda, former ambassador Munshi Foyez Ahmed, former ACC chairman Iqbal Mahmood, former principal secretary Dr Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, former DU VC Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman, and DU Prof Imtiaz Ahmed.

28 percent children

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for nutrition," said BSAF coordinator Shafia Sami.

She recommended revising the national budget, including the issue in election manifesto, further research and developing a malnutrition costing model, designing and conducting awareness campaigns, forming task forces and establishing monitoring mechanisms to combat the issue.

Speaking as special

guest, Shyamol Dutta, general secretary of Jatiya Press Club and editor of The Daily Bhorer Kagoj, emphasised the importance of ensuring maternal nutrition as the health of a child depends on the mother's well-being.

Parliament member Aroma Dutta said, "Instead of talking about including child nutrition in promises during electoral campaigns, we should actually walk the talk."

304 children living

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Both national and international laws mandate that states have a responsibility to safeguard the well-being of all children. The coalition pointed out that the existing legal framework falls short of adequately protecting the rights of children whose

mothers are convicted.

It urged authorities to take effective measures to safeguard their human rights and ensure their physical and mental health development.

It also called for urgent attention to the development of necessary infrastructure that fosters a conducive environment for

the well rounded growth of children within the confines of prisons.

The Child Rights Advocacy Coalition in Bangladesh comprises 10 organisations and networks, both national and international, dedicated to championing children's rights since 2013.

Not 21,000

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Streets in front of IEB, Matsya Bhaban, and the one leading to Shahbagh intersection were brimming with them, which caused vehicular movements on those roads to come to a halt, with commuters having to wait long hours stuck in their vehicles.

As the procession advanced through Mirpur Road towards Dhanmondi-32's Bangabandhu Bhaban, traffic congestion extended to adjacent roads.

The procession started from Suhrawardy Udyan around 3:45pm and ended at Dhanmondi 32 at 5:30pm.

Include CHT accord

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implementation process of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord" as the chief guest.

The dialogue was organised by Kapaeng Foundation in support of the Embassy of France to Bangladesh at The Daily Star Centre yesterday.

Mentioning that the state is repressing the indigenous communities, Mizanur said, "Democracy, a core element of a state, consists of two things. One is no discrimination against its citizens, and the other is effective inclusivity."

To end the repression and bring about effective inclusion of indigenous communities, the state must listen to the voices of indigenous people, he said. Prof Mesbah Kamal of Dhaka University said whenever the indigenous people wanted their constitutional recognition, they were labelled as

separatists.

Mesbah, also a coordinator of the Parliamentary Caucus for Indigenous People and Minorities, said, "Look at Canada, Norway, and other developed countries. They have recognised their indigenous communities. Were they termed separatists?"

He said the state is indirectly repressing the indigenous communities as the CHT Peace Accord is not fully implemented yet. The crisis in CHT will have to be solved politically through the lenses of plurality and democracy and by addressing the communities' deprivation, he added.

"The CHT Regional Council and Land Commission only exist on paper. As these institutions were not made functional and empowered, the indigenous people are deprived of their land rights," said Advocate Chanchu Chakma, a member of the CHT Regional Council.

Besides, an inter-ministerial committee was formed bypassing the three-member monitoring committee, which is a complete violation of the peace accord, he added.

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BANGLADESH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

National Science & Technology Complex, Agargaon, Dhaka 1207
Website: www.bas.org.bd

Academy Awards in Science and Technology

Bangladesh Academy of Sciences (BAS) announces the following awards in Science and Technology as stated below:

1. BAS Gold Medal Award 2023

Two awards, one for Physical Sciences including Engineering & Technology and another for Biological Sciences including Agriculture & Life Sciences, will be given in each of the following two groups:

- Senior Group for Scientists aged 40 or above on 30 November 2023
- Junior Group for Scientists below 40 years on 30 November 2023

2. BAS-Dr. Sultan Ahmed Choudhury Science & Technology Gold Medal Award 2023

For a distinguished scientist involved in research and development in the field of Medical & Health Sciences. There is no age bar.

3. BAS-Dr. M.O Ghani Memorial Gold Medal Award 2023

For distinguished scientists in the field of Physical, Biological, Engineering and Agricultural Sciences. There is no age bar.

4. BAS-National Professor Dr. M. Innas Ali Memorial Gold Medal Award 2023

For a distinguished scientist with outstanding achievement in any branch of Science and Technology. There is no age bar.

Bangladeshi scientists and technologists who have distinguished themselves by their outstanding scientific and technological work may apply for the above awards. Heads of research institutions/respective Deans of Universities/Fellows of the Bangladesh Academy of Sciences may nominate candidates for the awards or Candidates themselves may apply through their Heads of institutions directly. Each nominee/candidate is required to submit 7 copies of their bio-data, list of publications and patents and photocopy of 1st page of each of the important publications along with soft copy.

Note: Those who were awarded Gold Medal in any of the above categories earlier are not eligible for nomination for any of the categories. One can apply for only one of the above 1-2 categories. However, gold medal awardees in category 1 under junior group may be nominated for award in the senior group, if eligible. Any one candidate may apply for only one of the categories.

Application/nomination for the above awards must reach the Secretary of the Academy by 20 January 2024 at the latest.

Prof. Dr. Haseena Khan
Secretary

TENDER NOTICE

NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

Tender No. NSU/23-24/T11

Procurement of Stationery, Toners, Cartridges, and Cleaning items

North South University is inviting sealed offers from bona fide/ reputed organisations/ business partners/ agents for supplying the items as per the following Lots at the NSU.

- LOT NO 1-Stationery items.
- LOT NO 2-Toner and Cartridge for printer
- LOT NO 3-Toner for Copier
- LOT NO 4-Cleaning Items

Interested bidders may collect a schedule of tender from **Southeast Bank Ltd. Bashundhara Branch, Dhaka-1229**, within the banking hours on all working days till **Tuesday, January 16, 2024**, by paying non-refundable amount of Taka 2,000.00 (Two Thousand) in cash for each schedule. One Bidder can participate in more than one lot, and earnest money must be submitted for each lot separately per lot.

The bidders must submit **earnest money @ 2.5%** of the quoted price of each lot in the form of a Pay Order in favor of North South University along with their offer. The sealed offer must be submitted on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024, by 2:15 p.m.** at the office of the undersigned. The offers will be opened at **2:30 p.m. on the same day**. Representatives of the participating bidders may remain present at the time of opening the bids. NSU authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without showing any reason.

Director, Internal Affairs
NORTH SOUTH UNIVERSITY
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Phone: +88-02-55668200, Ext. 1204
Email: procurement@northsouth.edu
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Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Office of the Divisional Mechanical Engineer
Carriage and Wagon
Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No. 54.01.1500.265.05.016.2023-2024 Date: 18.12.2023

Sl No	Tender ID No.	Tender Ref No.	Name of the works	Tender closing date & time	Tender opening date & time
1.	925194	54.01.1500.265.05.016.2023-2024	Computer and others Accessories	03-January-2024 & 11:00	03-January-2024 & 12:00
	883512	54.01.1500.265.05.015.2023-2024	Office Furniture and others.	03-January-2024 & 11:00	03-January-2024 & 12:00

This is an online tender where only e-Tender will be accepted in e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>).

Md. Sajib Al Hassan
Divisional Mechanical Engineer
Carriage and Wagon
Bangladesh Railway, Chattogram

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