



Sixty-two percent of employed youth now feel unemployed because they need to take huge loans to buy depression medication.

PHOTO: TIM GOUW

# Organisations tackle inflation squeeze by introducing 'Pay-To-Work' policy

**"We are all in this together, everyone is impacted. The policy is aimed at reducing the inflationary price hikes. I myself have not bought any new car this year even after petrol prices dropped by Tk 4. Life is not a bed of roses for us CEOs."**

GOKHRA ANJAM

February has passed but employees at several major business firms have still not received any yearly increment or contract renewal. Employees are having difficulty making ends meet, what with rice and essentials doubling in price. Transport costs have gone up even though diesel price has been reduced by Tk 0.75.

"When we were children 75 paise could buy two goats, so I do not see why people are complaining," stated the State Minister for Growth and Sustainability Aajob Sikder. Goats everywhere are relieved that 75 paise, much like Bangladeshi rap music, is not what it used to be.

A new "Pay-To-Work" policy is currently being implemented by many organisations in the country. Employees will be charged a nominal fee to continue to work in the firm.

"Jobs are a commodity. You have to pay to keep them just like your Netflix account," weighed in Tanvir Sultan MPhil, a well-known marketing philosopher.

With the Ramadan price-spiral already in effect, many employees at a newspaper are resorting to eating office memos and the daily newspaper to stay alive.

"I saw on reels that paper is made from plants. Currently, our paper is cheaper than a half kilogramme of brinjal," explained a visibly distraught Hasan Mollah who works as a graphics designer at The Daily Everyday.

Some confused employees are not sure who and how this policy is supposed to help. "Of course, we are serving our core employees. When they pay to continue working, the job becomes that much more desirable," explained Shahzia Samreen, CEO of Dreary Straps Leather.

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impacted. The policy is aimed at reducing the inflationary price hikes. I myself have not bought any new car this year even after petrol prices dropped by Tk 4. Life is not a bed of roses for us CEOs."

Abida Harif, senior HR, explained, "Employees are sitting in an air-conditioned room. They use the elevator to go down one floor to the canteen. They are provided with computers and internet. Some even have windows to stare out of for hours to tackle existential dread. All this is a service they would not get otherwise. This has costs and the employees need to pay a small fee to avail this service."

Many organisations in Dhaka, Sylhet and Rajshahi are implementing this policy, but not in Chattogram. They refuse to accept high prices of essential food because they still have frozen leftover mezbani meat from last year to see them through.

## Seeking affordable dates, Bangladeshi opens Tinder account

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

A man from Basabo has opened a Tinder account after he learned from one of his friends that dates on Tinder and Bumble were more attainable than in the current market.

Amid the ongoing chaos of inflation, dates added insult to injury with a price higher than Mount Everest. Very confidential research shows that the only people who can afford to buy dates were the ones seen at the pre-wedding event of Anant Ambani.

Like millions of others, hammered by the unusual prices of dates, Tausif, our Basabo man, set out to find dates at a reasonable price. But everywhere he went, his fate cheated him.

"When I asked the price of one kg of dates, the seller quoted me the price of an iPhone 15," he recounted, astonishment still marking his face.

The man went to every nook and cranny of the city and left no stone unturned to find dates that were good and being sold at a price lower than the iPhone 15.

"I am all done already. Now I am only taking pre-orders for the next year," Tausif was told by one of the sellers, who allegedly became a billionaire overnight.

"My dates are sold out. All I have now is money, money and money. How much money do you want to buy, just tell me?" another seller said while counting long, wide and red notes.

"At best all I can do for you is give you some photos of dates we sold earlier. Don't worry. We charge 15 percent less than the actual price of the photo," said another seller.

Tausif was utterly bemused by the geniality of the third trader, and preserved this once-in-a-lifetime moment in his brain. Disappointed and disheartened after failing to find dates that are remotely affordable or available, he decided to give up and forgo dates.

"Just when I felt shattered and decided to return home a vanquished soldier, my friend appeared from nowhere and asked me why I, a date seeker, had opened a Tinder or Bumble account yet. He said dates were abundant on those platforms. So, I did what he said although I was totally unaware of those e-commerce apps," he explained.

One man's struggle to find dates at an affordable price piqued the interest of our Satireday correspondent, who was also clueless about whether dates were indeed available.

To know the aftermath of the story, when our correspondent asked Tausif whether he really found dates on those platforms, he said, "All I found there were people, most of whom are my neighbours. There were no dates, nor any option to add to the cart, let alone buy!"



PHOTO: ENGIN AKYURT

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## CHINTITO SINCE 1995

# Truth shall prevail

NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

And so now the Pope is wrong because he is calling for peace and trying to save lives. He advised Ukraine to show the "white flag", which other than meaning surrender is also a symbol of peace.

The Pope's critics are not for peace in this war with Russia, as apparent ever since his remarks surfaced in an interview last month with Swiss broadcaster Radio Television Suisse.

Usually, the Pope is widely revered and respected. His words are considered as flowing from the fountain of spirituality, and therefore must be abided by. But this time round, the righteous verse has gone down the drain with some.

Two years ago, Pope Francis told Ukrainian President Zelensky in a private meeting that he was "constantly praying for peace". The pontiff also stressed on the urgent need to help "the most fragile people, innocent victims" of the full-scale invasion launched by Russia. There was no criticism then.

Although relations between Ukraine and the Vatican have been uneasy, the leader of the Catholic faith was downright honest and unbiased. Ukraine demonstrably desires the Pope's support, and yet, knowing fully that the EU bloc will not be pleased, himself being cushioned in the continent and yes, friendly with the Russian Orthodox church, the Pope spoke his mind.

Two years ago, after his first private meeting with Francis, Zelensky was himself. Selfishly, he had said any peace formula "must be Ukrainian". In that there is no room for negotiations, the first step towards a peaceful solution. Pope Francis's suggestion of conciliations with Russia was vehemently rebuffed by Ukrainian leaders. The end of the war is not in sight. In Bangla we say, the palm tree is mine.

Politicians do not like neutrals, nor do they want to



PHOTO: MICHAEL CARRUTH

hear the truth. Wars are necessarily fought on lies. In 1971, during our war of liberation, even on December 16 the (West) Pakistani media were harping something like "hamara fuj aage baar rahe hain" (our soldiers are moving forward)". Not a shred of truth in that because they were in full retreat by then. In fact, they were surrendering to Bangladesh and Indian forces that very day.

As it was, the Pak junta, military and political, had commenced their Operation Searchlight, read genocide, with the catchphrase, "Islam khatre me hain" (Islam is in danger)". We Muslim Bangalees were

dutifully Islamic then and still are. The Fazr azan even then in Dacca would resonate at dawn for over half an hour. Ramadan Mubarak!

In another pack of blatant lies, Israel is continuing their Biden-backed war on Hamas, now Palestine, by hitting "terrorist targets". Children and infants are not terrorists, and yet Netan-yahoo's Israeli army is killing them in their hundreds every day. Labelling the entire Palestine population terrorists is unjustified and unacceptable by any definition. Given the accusations of age and "dementia" against him, is Biden per chance thinking that the Israeli army is fighting the war in

Ukraine? In his defence, President Biden last February fiercely defended his cognitive abilities. "My memory's fine", he said. You got to believe one side.

In political wars too, lies are foolishly considered weapons. They only appease the supporters of the respective parties. It is for the people to discern the truth. And they do.

The government obviously will say that despite the rise in commodity prices, people are happy. The opposition will counter that there is severe food shortage. While a minister will sing songs of praise for the new curriculum, the grim opposition spokesperson will declare that Bangladesh's education system is being destroyed in a planned manner.

"The global community now sees Bangladesh as a subject of mockery after a sham election that witnessed an illegal government ascend to power" is what the opposition deems as the truth. The fact however is that almost a hundred countries have not only congratulated Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for her party's election victory, but many have expressed their willingness to work with the government towards the prosperity of the people.

Nowadays, it is so easy to hide the truth. You can sing in somebody's voice. One can have his thesis written by someone else. No wonder we see PhDs in every profession, whether they need it for their career or not. It is a status symbol, they think, but it's a lie.

Sport is one arena where one cannot fake the result if the contesting individuals or teams are sincere about winning. But occasionally bribery comes into play, or a strategy is compelling. Under those circumstances an opposing party loses intentionally or performs poorly. Rules are in place to take punitive measures against those diabolical partakers.

Falsehoods and dishonesty, sham and trickery have their place, but in time their temper wears out. They must make way for the truth.

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