



EdTech platforms offer courses on PROTESTS AND MARCHING

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JEAN PAUL SATIRE

In a move that has left both educators and politicians scratching their heads, EdTech platform 7-Minute Pathshala has launched a new course on organising protests and marches. The course, launched by Bebsachandra Biddapukur, a business graduate turned EdTech mogul, promises to revolutionise the way citizens engage in democratic demonstrations.

Biddapukur, known for his previous ventures into short-term educational content, claims that his new course will offer "quick and effective" strategies for organising protests.

"In just seven minutes, students will learn everything they need to know about rallying support, planning routes, and crafting the perfect slogan," said Biddapukur. "After all, who has time for long lectures when there's a government to topple?"

The course comes at an ironic time for Bangladesh, where protests have been frequent and intense since the government was recently ousted, causing chaos and confusion throughout the country. Critics argue that Biddapukur's timing might be a tad too opportunistic, but the platform's supporters believe it's a necessary innovation.

Biddapukur is not alone in this new educational endeavour.

Competitor Laser, a platform known for its "intense and immersive" 5-minute modules, has also jumped on the bandwagon. Laser's latest offering, "Protest Planning in a Pinch", promises to teach users how to stage effective demonstrations in a format even more condensed than 7MP's.

"We believe in efficiency," said Laser's founder Olpohshikka Ohonkari, yet another business graduate.

"Why spend 7 minutes when you can do it in 5?" he asked, winking.

Meanwhile, Shikhbi na, mane? (which translates to "What do you mean you won't learn?") has introduced their own course titled "Protest 101: The Essentials". This course prides itself on its no-nonsense approach, focusing on the bare basics of protest organisation and emphasising "learning by doing".

"We've cut out the fluff," said their founder Pikachu Electra, "and provide actionable strategies that you can apply immediately. Perfect for when your country is in turmoil and you're fresh out of ideas."

Despite the proliferation of protest-focused courses, not everyone is convinced of their value.

"It's a troubling trend," said Dr Jawaharlal Jinnah, a political science professor. "While these platforms might be tapping into current events, they're reducing complex social

movements to mere checklists. Protests are about much more than efficient planning -- they're deeply rooted in societal issues that these courses overlook, and they're also about going viral on Facebook."

In response to the criticism, Bebsachandra Biddapukur defended his course, arguing that it was not meant to replace in-depth political education but to offer practical, immediate solutions for a highly volatile situation.

"We're just responding to market demands. Our course doesn't pretend to solve all the problems," he said. "It just helps people get out there and make their voices heard quickly. We even have a vibrant digital marketing course to help young budding politicians, and everyone knows how useful those are. We want to help create a whole new category of politicians who are entrepreneurs. Politpreneurs, if you will."

As Bangladesh navigates its political upheaval, the surge in protest-oriented EdTech courses underscores a curious convergence of technology and activism. Whether these short-form educational tools will genuinely impact the country's tumultuous landscape remains to be seen, but for now, they provide a snapshot of how modern technology intersects with age-old struggles for democratic change, and how some people will do anything to sell a course.

Hibernating influencers awakened as flood visits Bangladesh

MAHBUB ALAM MUNNA

"Please send money to my bKash and Nagad accounts (bKash 01*****, Nagad 01*****)," was how Superstar Kumon, one of the country's unrivalled social media legends, finally broke his silence on social media since the student movement began.

"I have 14 cows. If needed, I won't hesitate to sell them and stand by the flood-affected people. Remember, it is what I do," Superstar Kumon posted again after realising that his previous plea went in vain as people weren't responding and the accounts were yet to hit the Tk 1,000 mark.

Like Kumon, hundreds of other influencers stormed the internet as the flood hit the country. They were previously thought to have retired from social media and helping people in front of a camera, as their presence for the past few weeks was as rare as an Olympic medal in Bangladesh's trophy cabinet.

Naaraaz Cream Bahaduri, a prominent influencer who likes to work in water, took it to heart and raised his voice against all odds.

"Listen, you might think I am just a regular human being, but deep down, I am a fish. I

"Listen, you might think I am just a regular human being, but deep down, I am a fish. I cannot function unless there's enough water to paddle around in a boat. Flood is a wonderful phenomenon that finally lets me do something for the people I love."

cannot function unless there's enough water to paddle around in a boat. Flood is a wonderful phenomenon that finally lets me do something for the people I love," he said.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, some bankers from several banks reported a sudden influx of influencers rushing to open new bank accounts.

"I have opened five such influencers' accounts today," one of the bankers said. The account names were something else -- Manobotar Feriwala, Humanity First, Bonna Ebong Bonna, Mayer Doaa Fund and my personal favourite was Bonna Hole Amake Daiken. It's more of a naming competition to tug at heartstrings than actual bank accounts."

"Today Slowman Dukhon showed up at my branch to open a charity account. I asked him where he had been since I had been missing his life-changing words so much on social media, especially during the recent protests. He smiled and said he was enjoying a gadget-free life and preparing for a motivational session on that. So, he couldn't say anything on social media regarding the ongoing issues, but he outcome of the protests were exactly what he wanted," another banker said.

Our Satireday correspondent wanted to collect at least one such influencer's opinion. We confronted the country's veteran influencer Noheed Zafriidi about how he managed to end his hibernation. "Water! Yes, water is life. See how these waters brought me as well as my other fund-seeking brothers to life from a deep hibernation."

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Salman caught while pretending to be garden gnome

AAQIB HASIB

Following another escape attempt, Salman F Rahman was once again foiled from fleeing the country while still on remand. He was caught while pretending to be a garden gnome on the lawn of a residential house in Gulshan.

This was his sixth escape attempt after he was originally arrested from a boat in Sadarghat on August 13, while attempting to flee the country and simultaneously participate in a photoshoot dressed as a fisherman.

Unlike the previous five jailbreak attempts, Salman was caught within a matter of only a few hours and did not immediately soil himself upon being captured.

Speaking to The Daily Star, police personnel at the scene said, "Our efficiency is through the roof. This time we only took three hours to catch the rat. I think we should be given an award for this record."

Asked how Salman had managed to flee police custody in the first place, one officer spilled the beans, saying, "We believe some corrupt officials aided him in the escape. Currently, we believe there is some spiritual aura left over from when

"Even after we captured him, he kept asking us for a loan. He was desperately trying to reach into our pockets and take out our wallets."

Harun bhai was chief, so you cannot stay in that building for too long without engaging in some kind of corruption."

Another officer echoed him, saying that he too felt the urge to start taking bribes whenever he was

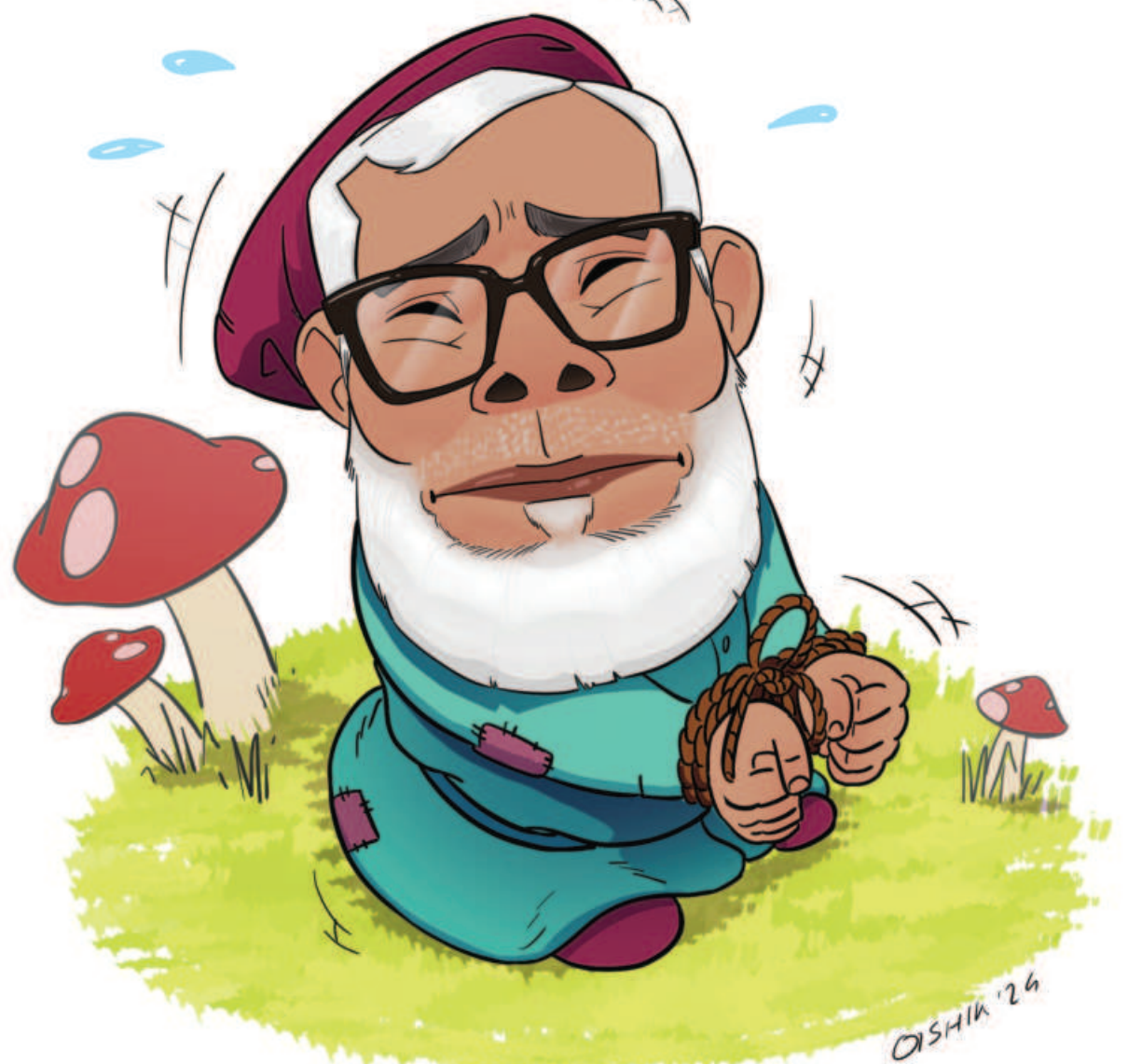
in the building.

"That is why I avoid staying there for too long. It's real spooky how Harun bhai's spirit just lurks there in that building," he said.

The first officer on the scene explained that they received a tip-off via 999 that Salman was originally asking passersby for loans near Shahabuddin park, which is when they rushed to the area.

"Even after we captured him, he kept asking us for a loan. He was desperately trying to reach into our pockets and take out our wallets," he explained.

Speaking to the officers in charge of prisoners at the interrogation centre regarding the jailbreak, they proudly exclaimed, "Well Salman sir offered us around Tk 2 crore each to allow him to escape. We thought we should take the offer and keep his money within the country's economy."



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