



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

How the youth is contributing to flood relief in unique ways

From doing charity livestreams to selling SEO backlinks, the Bangladeshi youth is finding interesting avenues to generate funds for flood victims

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AYAAN SHAMS SIDDIQUEE

If the month of July taught us anything, it was unity. Likewise, within a matter of days, it was as if the entirety of Bangladesh came together to stand beside those affected by the recent floods. Young people, especially, have once again been at the forefront, raising BDT 5.23 crore for flood relief at the TSC area of Dhaka University alone as of August 25.

And that isn't all. Besides being vocal about the crisis on social media and going door-to-door to collect donations for flood relief, the youth have also figured out unique ways to contribute from their own positions.

Sarika Saiyara, an A level graduate from Academia who has been tutoring students for the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) for a while now, took the initiative to raise funds for sanitary napkins that would be included in flood relief packs. Alongside Azneef Ahammed Chowdhury, an A level student from Chittagong Grammar School who is also an SAT tutor, the two plan to host an SAT masterclass with a small registration fee of BDT 200.

“The masterclass will cover a 360-degree overview of the Digital SAT, including, but not limited to, a timeline for taking the test, resources to ace the test, and section-wise strategies,” says Sarika. “I am pleased to say that we've already raised Tk 11,000.”

A similar initiative was taken by Edbridge Scholars, an education consulting agency specialising in helping students get into US colleges. The agency has offered a series of ten different workshops covering topics like SAT preparation, profile building, essay writing, etc. at a cost of just BDT 2000.

Tanvir Thamid, CEO of Edbridge Scholars and a junior at Bates College, says, “We have ten instructors from some of the best institutions in the world aboard for this project and they are the ones who should be thanked for making this initiative a success. The Edbridge Scholars team is just extending its hand in a collective cause.”

Thamid further projected that the fundraising project will likely attract around 50 participants, thus raising approximately BDT 100,000. Afterwards, all the funds will be forwarded to credible organisations working towards providing relief materials in flood-affected areas.

Gamers have also been raising funds for flood relief from their positions, notably in the form of charity game livestreams. Arghya Joseph Das, a student of BRAC University (BRACU) and CEO of Dead3Ye Esports, an esports and gaming organisation, shared how his team was doing their part through gaming, expecting to reach an overall donation sum of BDT 25,000.

“We've done charity livestreams in the past to raise funds for Palestine. So, when we saw the entire nation coming together to support the ones affected by the floods, we decided to engage our content creators to show support from our end,” he said.

To maximise the donations, they have also planned out certain steps. In that regard, Arghya said, “Our primary focus will be streaming *Valorant*, where we'll invite viewers to join custom matches. Involving viewers in the stream increases the likelihood that they'll share it, helping to attract more donations. Additionally, we have plans for collaborative streams with various streamers from other

organisations, which will automatically boost the viewership and engagement. And lastly, along with the donations we receive, Dead3Ye Esports will contribute BDT 5 for every reaction on the streams.”

Iftekhar Ahmed, 20, also a student of BRACU, took another unique approach to raising funds from his side. Being in the search engine optimisation (SEO) industry for a while, Iftekhar decided to sell SEO backlinks to clients, with all the proceedings going towards flood relief.

Sharing the idea behind this initiative, he said, “There are a lot of people in my friend list who share a similar background in SEO and software as a service (SaaS). Therefore, I decided to offer backlinks at different price points and domain ratings, and I will donate the entire amount sold from here to flood relief funds. As of now, I am aiming to raise approximately \$1,000 through this initiative.”

Even in the face of one of the most overwhelming calamities in recent memory, the unity and creativity demonstrated by the youth have been nothing short of inspiring. From educational initiatives to gaming fundraisers and professional services, they have proven that this new Bangladesh is one marked by collective effort and impartiality.

Reference:

The Daily Star (August 25, 2024). *Over Tk 5.23 crore collected over four days at TSC*

Ayaan immerses himself in dinosaur comics and poorly-written manga. Recommend your least favourite reads at ayaan.shams@gmail.com

Doing household chores is the secret to adulting

ALLIN MOHANA BISWAS

Do you ever feel overwhelmed by the sheer amount of responsibility you have as a young adult? Paying bills, cooking, cleaning – it's a lot to handle. Nonetheless, there's a secret weapon to conquering the entire adulting conundrum: doing household chores.

It might sound counterintuitive but doing dishes, sweeping the floor, and taking out the trash isn't just about keeping your living space clean. It's actually a crucial part of becoming a self-sufficient and responsible young adult.

Beyond the practical benefits, there's evidence that chores can help protect the health of your brain. A study published in *Neurology* in 2022 found a link between ordinary household chores and a lower risk of dementia. Researchers followed over half a million adults for an average of 10 years and discovered that those who regularly did housework were 21% less likely to develop dementia.

When you're responsible for keeping your room clean or helping with preparing meals for your family, you're learning to take ownership of your actions. By completing chores, you understand that your choices have consequences which help you develop a strong sense of responsibility. In addition, chores can help you become a better



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

time manager. Ever noticed how so many of us are able to binge-watch an entire series but struggle to find time to do laundry? Chores can help you balance your time more effectively. By breaking down tasks into smaller steps and setting deadlines, you'll improve your ability to manage your schedule. By doing household chores, you're building the essential skills that you need to survive independently or otherwise. With every chore you complete, you get one step closer to becoming more self-sufficient.

Problem-solving skills are another key benefit. Ever faced a clogged drain or burnt-out lightbulb? These challenges, while frustrating, are opportunities to learn how to find solutions. Over time, you'll become better at thinking critically and finding creative ways to overcome obstacles.

A clean and organised living space isn't just aesthetically pleasing, it's also essential for mental and emotional well-being. Studies have shown that clutter can contribute to stress and anxiety. By pitching in with chores, you're creating a healthier environment for yourself and everyone who shares your space.

Additionally, working together as a family or with roommates to maintain a clean home builds a sense of teamwork and cooperation. Everyone benefits from a shared effort, and it can strengthen relationships.

The skills you learn from doing chores are directly transferable to the adult world. Whether you're heading off to university, joining the workforce or living on your own, you'll be grateful for the ability to cook, clean, and manage a household. And let's face it, being able to take care of yourself saves you money in the long run.

While chores might not be the most exciting part of your life, they're definitely an investment on yourself. So, the next time you think of skipping chores, pick up that mop, dust that shelf, or load the washing machine.

Should young commuters get a metro pass?

MEHRAB JAMEE

The country's first-ever overhead metro line, MRT line 6, was opened to the public in December 2022 and all stations became operational from December 2023. The line spans 21 kilometers and has 16 stations. The public was jubilant at the inauguration and soon MRT-6 was hauling thousands of people every day across this north-south corridor of Dhaka.

The superior speed and service of the metro put the old and worn-out bus services running along this route in a passenger crisis. People were choosing to take the metro even if they had to walk a certain distance from a station to reach their destination. Perhaps the company operating the metro lines, Dhaka Mass Transit Company Limited (DMTCL) expected popular demand. But they couldn't have anticipated the pressure MRT-6 was about to face.

After the metro became fully functional, the floodgates opened. People started to cram onto the trains during rush hour. But to get on the train you first need a ticket. The way to get a ticket is the same for all stations. There is a manned counter and about two or three automated machines. Yet both manned counters and automated machines are inundated, with lines twisting and turning three or four times over. The machines being out of service is not uncommon. People are left waiting for hours on end. The frustration of passengers in key stations of Motijheel, Secretariat, Mirpur-10, and Uttara North which face the

heaviest congestion is palpable.

Saima, a student of Dhaka University (DU) shared her experience saying, “When the metro was new, I used the single-use tickets a couple of times. The wait time wasn't so long. However after the DU station opened, the wait time gradually increased. One time it took me one and a half hours to get a ticket from Uttara North Station. I had a friend with me. So, we both stood in different lines. I stood in line for the automatic machines and my friend stood in line for the manned counter. The mental math required was so stressful. My friend made it to the counter first and bought the tickets for us. We missed two lectures that day. From then on, I always suffered from anxiety about using the metro. I used to go to the station with time in hand to wait in line to get a one-time-use ticket. Then I got the Rapid Pass and it has made my life so much easier. I don't have to stand in line anymore nor do I have to suffer from the anxiety that I will miss class. I put some money into my card and just forget about it for the rest of the week.”

Another University student Shimanto* said, “I take the 7.10 AM or 7.20 AM train to get to my morning classes. These trips are only accessible for MRT pass holders. Besides, during exam season, I don't have to worry if I'll get to reach the exam hall in time or not which is a tremendous help in exam season. After classes all day, I used to stand in line at the overcrowded Motijheel station for 20-30 minutes to get a ticket. With the pass, I zoom right in”



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

According to a statement given to The Dhaka Tribune by MAN Siddique, the Managing Director of DMTCL, “The Metro now carries some 250 thousand passengers every day, 52 percent of them use personal passes and the remaining 48 percent use one-time tickets.”

The MRT pass and Rapid Pass are the two reusable personal passes on offer for passengers. The cards themselves cost BDT 200. But the MRT pass retails for BDT 500 and the Rapid Pass for BDT 400. The passengers can use the remaining balance to ride the metro. The MRT pass is issued by DMTCL themselves and the Rapid pass is sold by Dutch Bangla Bank. Although actual paper money has to be loaded into both

and mobile banking services have not been initiated yet, the passes have become very popular among students.

Abeer, a student who uses the metro almost every day said, “Attending classes at Muggda Medical College from Uttara was a challenge. The metro rail was a blessing for me, allowing me to bypass the congestion on the roads. But without the MRT pass, even the metro became a source of frustration. Long queues at ticket counters and vending machines were nearly unbearable. My pass is a lifesaver. It saves me a significant amount of time on a daily basis. Many people prefer single-use passes as the MRT pass has an issuing fee. But this is one of the best investments I've made. I can use it for getting

BRTC bus tickets as well. And it saves me 10 percent on every trip. I can't even put a price tag on the time it saves me.”

When asked if the metro pass substantially changed his metro experience, Protyush*, a university student said, “It seems to me the MRT pass is rather a necessity than a convenience for daily commuters using the Dhaka Metro. At this point, I can't imagine using the metro without it. One of the drawbacks of the ticketing system was the long wait time to get a single-use ticket. This would basically waste the same amount of time if I took the bus.”

Because of the hassle-free experience and peace of mind it offers, metro passes have become essential to commuters, especially students. Access to early and late trains enables students to attend their classes on time and the 10 percent discount adds up for students on a budget. The adoption rate should go up if new features are added and the current features are advertised more by DMTCL and Dutch Bangla Bank. The addition of mobile banking services would make these cards truly cashless. As other metro lines open up in the future and the congestion expected to increase further, personal passes like MRT pass and Rapid pass are only set to grow more popular.

*Names have been changed upon request

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