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ENHANCING VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Will it solve our youth unemployment crisis?

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

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MOVIES

SALAAM BOMBAY!

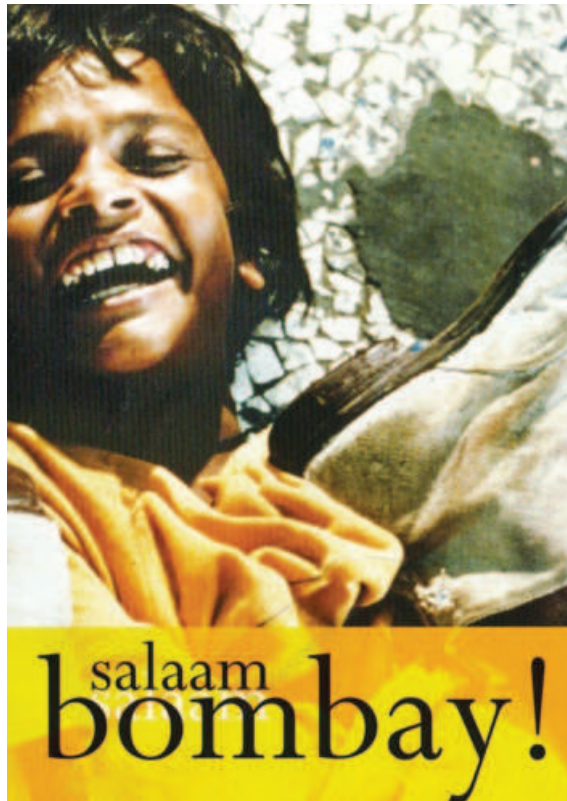
Raw, rambunctious, and real

ABIR HOSSAIN

Set in the sprawling metropolis of the largest city in India, *Salaam Bombay!* (1988) directed by Mira Nair, personifies the grit, grotesqueness, and grime of Mumbai. It follows the story of Krishna, who in his quest to earn five hundred rupees to go back home to his family, is yanked into a literal corner with little respite.

In the small spaces that he is forced to occupy, Krishna is plagued by the heartbreaking realisation that the setting he is relegated to is just as relentless and unforgiving as the circumstances that led him to Bombay. While his naivety spurs him on, it is the city's negligence that truly thwarts whatever little hope he has.

The negligence is at the heart of the narrative and takes on many different forms, but it is persistent. At every turn, the characters, both directly and indirectly, are at its mercy because if they don't conform to how they "ought to be", then they are simply unwanted and thus, insignificant.



This is perhaps best realised through Krishna who is abandoned by his mother in a circus and later, the circus itself. Eventually, he finds himself in a youth detention centre after an unfortunate run-in with the law. The film doesn't force the audience to acknowledge the fact that there is no place for innocence, love, or warmth – even for children.

The cinematography also feels like it doubles down on the plight of the characters. There is a subtle shade of pastel in every frame but in essence, the palette can only be characterised as being washed out. Yet, it doesn't compromise how good the film looks and even elevates the feelings the story is trying to depict. The performances, especially from the child actors, are exceptional. Despite the heavy roles that they picked up, at no point do they deliver a substandard scene.

Salaam Bombay! is pulsating with energy. It strips back the layers and lays bare an unflinching narrative complete with technical mastery and a lot of heart.

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■ EDUCATION ■

Transitioning back to academic life after **THE JULY REVOLUTION**

BIPRA PRASUN DAS

The resignation of Sheikh Hasina on August 5, following widespread protests, marks a pivotal moment in Bangladesh's history. The movement, largely driven by students, led to the ousting of the former regime, but not without heavy sacrifices. Over a thousand students lost their lives and many more were wounded. At the time of writing this article, many students had still not recovered. In the chaotic aftermath, the nation witnessed widespread vandalism and disorder, with minority communities being particularly vulnerable. While all the academic institutions were closed during this period of unrest, most have welcomed their students back. However, this return to academic life must be approached with care, compassion, and a deep understanding of the trauma that students have endured.

"I think we need some time to move on from everything, we have been through a lot, mentally, and physically," said Anushila Siddique, an undergraduate student from North South University who actively participated in the movement.

In a newly rejuvenated country, with the winds of change blowing through every corner, it is understandable that universities, colleges, and schools want to resume operations with newfound energy. In addition, the weeks lost from the academic year have created a sense of urgency to make up for lost time. However, it is crucial to recognise that rushing into a full-scale academic schedule, complete with quizzes, term exams, and heavy workload, may not be the best approach. While the drive to move forward is commendable, the well-being of students must remain a priority. The academic pressure of a typical school year, if reintroduced too quickly, could overwhelm students who are still grappling with the emotional and psychological aftermath of recent events.

A more measured approach will allow students to re-engage with their coursework without feeling burdened by expectations. Recognising this is essential for educators and administrators. If the well-being of the students is not accounted for, it could negatively impact their academic performance, resulting in lower grades than expected.

Simin Sorowar, an undergraduate student at BRAC University, shared her concerns about the state of her peers, "Many of my classmates are still physically injured, and countless others are mentally disturbed. The violence that happened on our university premises has had an effect on all of us. Even those who couldn't join the protests in person but were closely involved online are still struggling. It's clear that most of us are

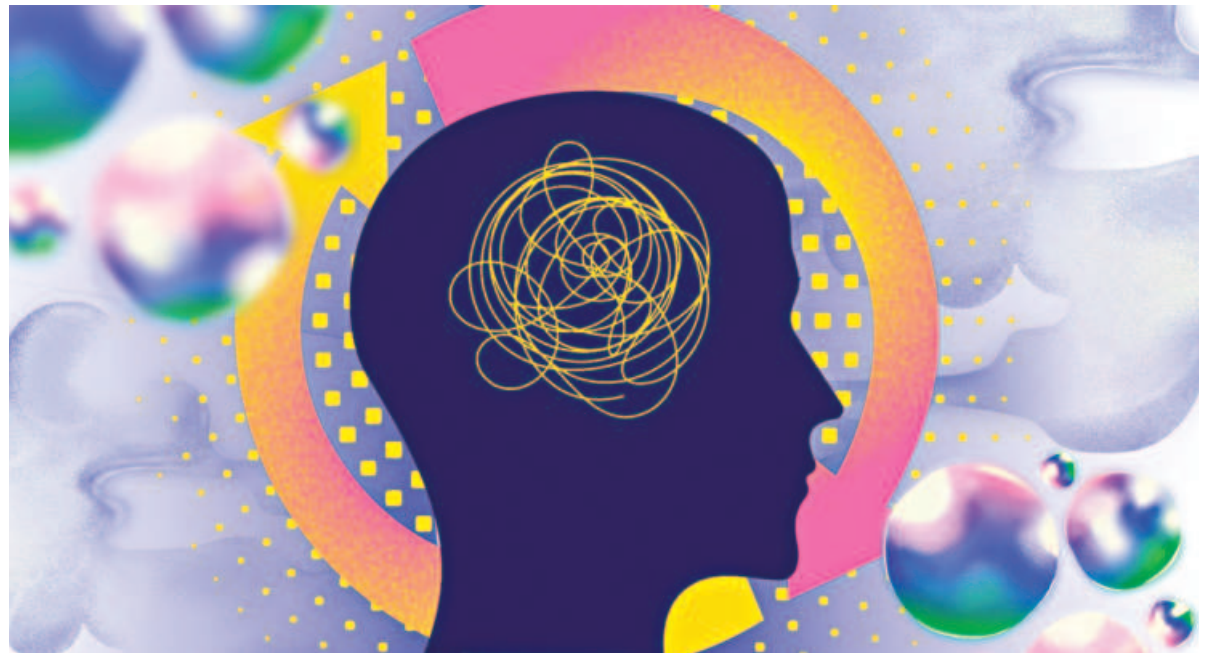


ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

not mentally equipped to dive back into our studies just yet, let alone sit for exams."

Nubah Nanziba, a student at Dhaka University, expressed her concerns about returning to classes, "I'm not sure how much our safety can be guaranteed, as the political situation in the country is still quite volatile. Personally, I'll be extra cautious because there's always the fear that something could go wrong. While it's reassuring that we can now speak openly about our political views, there are troubling rumours about certain people enforcing rules, and the thought of potentially facing that when I return to campus is really frightening."

Farhan*, who is currently an undergraduate student at a private university, shared, "Many of us are excited to go back to university with a renewed sense of freedom and happiness, but it cannot be forgotten that a lot of our peers have been injured, educational institutions should take into account students' mental and physical health before starting academic activities in full swing."

As academic institutions reopen, there is a pressing need for a shift in mindset. Students must be given time to process what they have experienced and heal before they can be expected to fully re-engage with their studies. Educators and administrators have to play a crucial role in this process. Understanding and empathy must be at the forefront of all their decisions, rather than rigid adherence to academic schedules.

Additionally, mental health resources should be made readily accessible, and seeking help should be encouraged.

"It's crucial that universities step up and provide the support we need during this time. Many of us are still dealing with physical injuries and mental trauma. With the right care and understanding, we will be better prepared to succeed academically and achieve better results," added Simin.

Labib Rahman*, an undergraduate student at Rajshahi University, shared his hopes for reopening academic institutions, "I want the return to be smooth and thoughtful, not rushed. It's important that universities focus on creating a safe and supportive environment, where students can take their time to adjust. There also needs to be a serious effort to put an end to aggressive student politics on campus, so we can finally feel safe and focus on our education without the constant fear of violence or unrest."

The process of rebuilding Bangladesh, including its academic institutions, will take time. Rushing this process could do more harm than good. Recovering from the recent turmoil is not a journey that students should navigate alone. A supportive academic community, built on mutual care and understanding, is essential for fostering healing and resilience.

**Names have been changed upon request.*

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SKILLS

Will enhancing technical and vocational education solve our youth unemployment crisis?



A significant opportunity to enhance TVET quality and build stronger industry engagement lies in upgrading and expanding practical skills training.

ALLIN MOHANA BISWAS & JUI CHAKMA

Imagine graduating with a degree, only to find the doors of the job market firmly closed. This is the harsh reality of youth unemployment – a global crisis affecting millions of young people. In Bangladesh, this challenge is particularly pressing, creating a generation with untapped potential.

"The curriculum was outdated, focusing more on memorisation than practical skills. Job prospects were slim, with only one person from my batch landing a relevant job," shared Turjo Barman, a former Computer Engineering student at Daffodil Polytechnic Institute. His experience reflects the struggle many young graduates are facing these days.

Global youth unemployment figures for 2024 stood at an estimated 67.7 million individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, with emerging economies experiencing disproportionately higher rates. A report on the World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2024 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) states that youth unemployment rates are nearly 3.5 times higher than those of adults.

A session at the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting of the New Champions 2024, titled "Generation Stagnation: Tackling Youth Unemployment", highlights the disparity between those who have access to quality education and strong professional networks and those who do not. As per the report, the job market favours those from privileged backgrounds with access to quality education and strong professional networks.

Students in Bangladesh face a much more difficult reality as not

everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources. This creates a barrier for students, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds who struggle to find meaningful employment. To make matters worse, many students are forced to leave their education early to work and support their families.

But could technical and vocational education and training (TVET) offer a viable solution to this crisis?

The Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) 2022 Bangladesh Education Statistics report highlights the existence of 7,819 TVET institutions across Bangladesh – 691 public and 7,128 private institutions. Together, these institutions serve over 1.22 million students, but the urban-rural divide is clear. About 60.1 percent of TVET institutions are located in urban areas, and 68.7 percent of students come from cities, while rural students make up only 31.3 percent of the total enrolment. Regions like Rajshahi have the most TVET institutions, while areas like Sylhet lag behind.

Despite the availability of TVET programmes, international organisations like the European Union and World Bank, which fund skill development programmes in Bangladesh, face challenges in ensuring that these programmes meet global industry standards.

Lotte Kejser, Chief Technical Advisor of the Skills 21 project at the ILO says, "There is insufficient relevance [of the programmes] to the industry in Bangladesh and abroad. In Bangladesh, practical skills training makes up less than 10 percent of the total training hours in TVET programmes, compared to similar programmes in Northern Europe.

Most TVET programmes in Bangladesh do not include work-based training or apprenticeships."

Lotte suggests that international organisations can better support TVET programmes in Bangladesh by familiarising the government and industry with global best practices. This would enhance the relevance of TVET programmes and encourage a greater focus on practical skills.



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

However, students enrolled in TVET programs typically face challenges, such as needing to attain specific certification levels before securing paid employment, which limits their earning potential during training. While this is the norm, institutions like UCEP – Underprivileged Children's Educational Programme – Bangladesh offer a distinctive model where students can both learn and earn.

"There is no alternative to technical and vocational education and training to turn the country's vast workforce into skilled human resources," emphasised Md Abdul Karim, Executive Director, UCEP Bangladesh.

He adds, "UCEP Bangladesh is playing a tremendous role among the NGOs in expanding technical education and transforming skilled human resources in

Bangladesh."

Another challenge facing TVET is the underrepresentation of women. According to BANBEIS, male students significantly outnumber their female counterparts, with



only 333,409 women enrolled in technical and vocational institutes compared to 895,794 men. Deep-rooted gender stereotypes, limited access to quality education, and societal expectations discourage many girls from pursuing TVET careers. Economic pressures, such as early marriage and lack of childcare, further widen the gender gap.

Moreover, the quality of TVET education in Bangladesh depends heavily on the availability of skilled teachers. With more than 55,304 teachers across public and private TVET institutions, the need for ongoing professional development is critical.

Md Quamruzzaman, Teacher and Principal of the Manikganj Government Technical School and College said, "We must implement mandatory professional development programs focusing on emerging 4IR – Fourth Industrial Revolution – technologies and industry trends to ensure TVET teachers are

well-prepared. There is also a high need for online platforms that allow teachers to access courses on the latest technical advancements and teaching methodologies at their convenience."



He urges, "Creating a pool of master trainers and the strengthening of industry collaborations is necessary to elevate the quality of education and better align with labour market demands."

Given these challenges, how can TVET evolve to meet the demands of today's job market?

A significant opportunity to enhance TVET quality and build stronger industry engagement lies in upgrading and expanding practical skills training. Public sector TVET centres alone lack the capacity and resources to provide the up-to-date practical skills and advanced technology required for modern industries.

For example, culinary practices serve as an excellent form of vocational training, offering practical skills that are essential in today's global job market. Mst Kashmiri Sultana, Senior Lecturer of Tourism and Hospitality

Management at UPDATE College and Institute, and Certified Trainer and Assessor, National Skills Development Authority (NSDA) and Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), said, "Food-related subjects like hospitality, tourism, and culinary courses are in high demand globally, providing opportunities for those who may not pursue full-time degrees and are not from economically sound backgrounds. A diploma in culinary arts can give them valuable skills, enabling them to secure jobs and earn an income."

She further added, "Culinary education offers both theoretical knowledge and industry training, preparing individuals to follow industry standards and even pursue entrepreneurship for a fulfilling career."

To realise the full potential of TVET, collaboration between the public and private sectors is crucial. As Lotte Kejser points out, countries like Germany and Belgium successfully integrate work-based training with theoretical education, a model Bangladesh could follow. Private sector involvement in practical skills training would ensure that TVET graduates are better prepared for the modern workforce.

As Bangladesh struggles with high youth unemployment rates, enhancing the TVET and skill development system holds the key. The answer lies in the choices we make today – decisions that could either drive industrial growth and economic transformation or leave a generation behind.

Note: We would like to extend our gratitude to UCEP Bangladesh for allowing us to use their premises to take photographs used in this article.

The authors are working at an international organisation in Bangladesh.

■ OFF CAMPUS ■

MIST secures first place in Formula Bharat 2025 Engineering Design CRM

FATIMA ASHRAF

MIST Blitz – the Formula student team from the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) – has made its remarkable debut in motorsport engineering. In just a few months since its formation, the team has already achieved two significant milestones: securing the first position in the qualifying quiz for Formula Bharat 2025 and also the first place in the Engineering Design Concept Resources Management (CRM) Combustion Category for the same event.

Formula Bharat is the premier student engineering competition in India, modelled after the global Formula Student series. University teams design and build small-scale formula-style race cars, competing in categories like engineering design, cost efficiency, marketability, and so on.

MIST Blitz now operates with 38 dedicated members, divided into four key technical sub-teams. Tahmid Muntasir leads the suspension, steering, and brake systems team; Iram Mustavi Chowdhury and Tausif Nawaz head the chassis and aerodynamics team; Sakin Islam leads the powertrain team, and Adnan Shahriar oversees the electronic control systems team.

Four managerial sub-teams – management and outreach, finance, logistics, and documentation – also work alongside the technical teams to ensure smooth operations. Maliha Farhin and Nazifa Rafa lead the documentation team.

The members expressed their gratitude to the Chief Patron of the team and MIST Commandant, Maj Gen Nasim Parvez, BSP, ndc, afwc, psc, and Head of the Mechanical Engineering Department Brig Gen Md Anisur Rahman, for their invaluable support. They also expressed their gratitude to Maj Md Anisur Rahman, GSO-2 of the Mechanical Engineering Department, for his mentorship, and Lecturer Shah Md Ahasan Siddique for providing resolute guidance and essential resources.

“We are proud of how this team has quickly added two feathers to our automotive crown. MIST Blitz is vital for our department, providing Mechanical Engineering students with hands-on experience, building practical skills, and collaboration which are essential foundations for future challenges in the automotive field,” said Ahasan.

After competing in Formula Bharat 2025, scheduled at the Kari Motor Speedway, India, from January 22 to 27, 2025, MIST Blitz aims to target the Formula Student UK, hosted by the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, further expanding their global presence in motorsport engineering.

Fatima Ashraf is a Campus Ambassador for The Daily Star from Military Institute of Science & Technology (MIST).



■ OFF CAMPUS ■

DUBOTECH

BRACU alumni-led startup redefining possibilities underwater

RITTIQUE BASAK

DuboTech – a deep tech startup led by a group of BRAC University alumni, specialising in cutting-edge underwater technology – has developed ground-breaking ideas that will shape the future of underwater technology and bring innovative solutions.

DuboTech aims to provide innovative solutions by commercialising the use of underwater automated technology or autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), which are unmanned and thus, safer and more convenient for staying underwater for prolonged periods.

The Managing Director and CEO of this venture is Nayem Hossain Saikat. DuboTech remains at the centre of innovation due to the technological expertise of its Chairman and Chief Technology Officer (CTO), Sayantan Roy. Abrar Ehsan Nihal, Chief Designer; Simanto Shahriar Dhruvo, Chief Procurement Officer; Soumik Hasan Shrantto, Chief Operating Officer; ATM Masum Billah, Chief R&D Officer; Zihadul Karim Xenon, Chief Business Officer; and Motaqabbir Rahman Efti, Principal Software Developer, are also working on the team, committed to expanding the boundaries of what is possible underwater.

The goal of DuboTech is to make life efficient, safer, and easier, especially when it concerns underwater research and other industrial purposes. DuboTech offers services that include ship

inspection – where the AUV can quickly check ship hulls for damage and enhance port efficiency, pipeline inspection – where the AUV can detect leaks or damages in underwater pipelines to keep critical infrastructure safe, and infrastructure inspection to examine underwater supports for signs of erosion or damage, ensuring the stability of vital structures.

DuboTech offers rapid, live reports for quick decision-making through its seamless control panel. The panel also gives users access to past reports and project data. Clients can double their inspection speed, reduce expenses by up to 60 percent, and put safety first with DuboTech.

DuboTech has also recently appeared on *Shark Tank Bangladesh* – the Bangladeshi instalment of the Shark Tank franchise – where they managed to reach a wider audience by showcasing the AUV’s expert solutions. DuboTech ended up securing a massive investment of BDT 50 lakh and even got access to more resources and facilities in exchange for 10 percent equity.

More than just a business, DuboTech is a brilliant example of efficiency, safety, and innovation. They are redefining the future of marine exploration and truly finding underwater possibilities with their in-house technologies and unwavering pursuit of excellence.

Rittique Basak is a Campus Ambassador for The Daily Star from BRAC University.





PHOTO: COURTESY

■ INTERVIEW ■

In conversation with DR JAMES ABDEY

ABIR HOSSAIN

Dr James Abdey is an Associate Professor at the Department of Statistics, London School of Economics (LSE), and the Associate Academic Director for the University of London (UoL) international programmes. Campus sat down with him in an interview where he reflected on the international programmes offered by Universal College Bangladesh (UCB) in collaboration with LSE-UoL, the state of higher education in Bangladesh, and where UCB and LSE fit in within the existing framework.

Campus (C): Can you elaborate on the collaboration between the London School of Economics (LSE) and Universal College Bangladesh (UCB), and its impact on higher education accessibility in Bangladesh?

Dr James Abdey (J): One of LSE's current strategic objectives is to educate for global impact. The UoL programme is LSE's way to reach a far greater number of students at the undergraduate level than we could ever hope to teach exclusively in London. The LSE campus itself has about four thousand students but through the programmes, we have about 10,000 globally. All of them are studying at recognised teaching centres, of which UCB is the only one in Bangladesh. We are very passionate about the programmes because they give students the opportunity to pursue an LSE-designed degree at a far lower cost as opposed to studying in London. Despite it being a great city, London isn't cheap. You're also having to pay a higher amount as an international student and the costs are prohibitive for many. Having UCB here in Bangladesh allows students to experience an LSE curriculum closer to home at a much lower cost and enables them to graduate with an LSE degree. It could benefit them in a number of ways, perhaps in pursuing postgraduate studies abroad or even in terms of employment.

C: What advantages can students gain by studying

the LSE curricula in Bangladesh instead of directly moving abroad?

J: The academic rigour of LSE courses underlies the value of the academic degree certificates which the students are awarded. These, of course, are highly valued by employers all across the world. I always tell prospective students that not all degrees are equal. It varies depending on the degree-awarding institution, how well regarded it is, the academic content within the degree, and also how they're assessed. All of the students at UCB will sit for exams that LSE academics prepare. While students sit for their exams locally in proctored exam hall conditions, the exams themselves are graded back by LSE-appointed examiners. So, there's a strong quality assurance process at play. I think it's important that students, parents, prospective employers, master's admission officers, and faculties have confidence in the academic rigour of the programmes which reinforces the value of the degree.

C: How does the Certificate of Higher Education in Social Science (CHESS) programme bridge the gap for HSC graduates aiming to enrol in LSE programmes?

J: We operate in many countries around the world where the school education system varies a great deal. So, prospective students come in with different levels of qualifications – some of whom don't immediately meet the standard entry criteria. Rather than outright rejecting them, we want to offer an alternative pathway. CHESS is essentially year one of the three-year degree. If you're doing standard degree entry, you're already in the degree. Whereas for CHESS, to progress to year two, you need to attain a minimum level of academic performance. CHESS provides more flexibility to accommodate different potential applicants' needs. It's all about reducing barriers, not creating them.

C: What career prospects and international exposure do UCB-LSE students receive during and

after their studies?

J: In terms of international experience, one option available to students is the LSE summer school which involves spending some time at LSE. I believe we are the largest summer school programme of its kind. We welcomed about 6,000 students in 2024 from all over the world. If a student were to take two summer school courses at LSE, sit for the exams, and pass them, they can actually use it for credit back towards their UoL degree. If they do that, they can just take one fewer subject in the final year. As for employability, UCB has career placement schemes with six leading companies to help students get internship placements. It is a great opportunity for students to tap into. In fact, within the degree programme, we've had a much stronger focus on employability skills. There are about ten core employability skills some of which include adaptability, resilience, complex problem-solving, communication skills etc. When students study their individual modules, we identify – for each one – three of the ten skills which that module will seek to develop.

C: What steps is UCB taking to integrate LSE's rigorous academic practices while maintaining local cultural relevance?

J: We are very much a global programme. So, while the curriculum is set in London, the LSE examiners welcome more local examples. The faculty at teaching centres have complete autonomy in giving more of those examples. Our motto is to understand the causes of things. That's what LSE has always been about. I always think an examination is a student's opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the course materials. It's about their thought process and showing how they're getting to that answer which is really the hallmark of the LSE approach to teaching through these programmes.

Abir Hossain is a sub-editor at The Daily Star.

CAREER

Exploring Chartered Accountancy

Is it the right career choice for you?

FATEMA TUZ ZOHORA

In Bangladesh's ever-changing career landscape, Chartered Accountancy (CA) is becoming increasingly popular among the youth. The consistent growth of the economy of Bangladesh has further fuelled the need for chartered accountants. Also considering the lucrative career opportunities and various benefits CA offers, it is leading many undergraduates and postgraduates to consider shaping their career in this field.

A Chartered Accountant (CA) is a highly skilled professional, qualified to offer various services in accountancy, including auditing, taxation, finance, and general management to individuals and businesses. ICAB (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh), notably the only national professional accountancy body in Bangladesh, offers a degree of proficiency in the field of accounting.

According to the official website of the ICAB, students who have completed their SSC and HSC, O and A level or the equivalent exams can start their CA journey. Also, undergraduates, postgraduates, and students who have Associate Cost and Management Accountant (ACMA)/Fellow Cost and Management Accountant (FCMA) and Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)/Fellow Chartered and Certified Accountant (FCCA) are allowed to join as CA students.

Even though chartered accountants mostly specialise in auditing and taxation, they are also able to provide services regarding finances and other managerial aspects of institutions. They get exposure to diverse career opportunities, not limiting themselves to particular job sectors. Apart from working for various companies, a Chartered Accountant can pursue entrepreneurial paths by starting a firm to provide consultations to others.

Nafisa Lubaba, a graduate student from American International University of Bangladesh (AIUB) and currently an articled student at T. Hussain & Co. mentioned, "As a business student, teachers always encouraged us to pursue CA degree and I was also interested to explore this profession, which further motivated me to choose this path. Given the respect and diverse opportunities this career offers, the challenges and risks are well worth taking on."

Additionally, Chartered Accountants are often known to be able to enjoy higher job salaries due to their consistently high demand in these sectors. Sakhawat Saberi Deen, a student currently studying in the Department of Finance at the University of Dhaka, and also a CA aspirant, has stated, "The worst thing that can happen to someone pursuing CA is that they may not be able to clear the final level. Still, it is possible to get a salary ranging from Tk.50,000-Tk.60,000 if one can complete the second level."

He further added, "In the early days of your career, it is likely that you will get the opportunity to be in one of the top positions of any company if you have a CA degree beforehand."

Beyond the higher salary potential, Chartered Accountants are required to be updated on industry trends and changes in taxation laws. This assists them

to be in a state of continuous learning which provides them with a competitive edge, as they generally lead in terms of financial knowledge.

One of the major constraints in pursuing CA is the rigorous structure of the exams. The three levels consist of several papers to be completed alongside the Articleship period of three to four years which poses a challenge to the CA aspirants. Dealing with long hours of studying and balancing work and life can be taxing, and requires extreme hard work and dedication.

The total cost of pursuing CA comprising all three levels leads up to BDT 1,42,400 according to the official website of ICAB. Admission to the CA programme takes up to BDT 30,000.

Silbia Rahaman Setu, an undergraduate student from the University of Dhaka, when discussing the



challenges in the journey of CA, mentioned, "Apart from study and work pressure, the allowance given during the articleship period is comparatively less than pursuing any other jobs in the corporate sector, so there exists the financial barrier. Also, family support is quite essential during these times to cover up the costs."

The CA examinations are greatly difficult to pass and have higher failure rates as a result. Experiencing failure repeatedly can hurt students' self-esteem and motivation. During this journey, many students often feel discouraged to stay in this field and change their career path to pursue something else.

For Chartered Accountancy aspirants, the terms "articleship" and "pre-articleship" refer to distinct phases of their training journey.

Articleship is a mandatory, structured internship period that lasts for three years under a practicing

Chartered Accountant. It is a critical part of the CA curriculum by ICAB. During this time, students gain practical experience in auditing, taxation, accounting, and finance while working in real-world scenarios. Articleship usually begins after a student clears the Intermediate level of the CA course. The experience acquired during this period is essential for developing the professional competencies required for becoming a CA.

Pre-articleship refers to any training or work experience that a CA student may undergo before starting the official articleship. This phase is not a formal requirement under ICAI guidelines but might involve activities like part-time jobs, internships, or preparatory work before clearing the CA Intermediate exams. The aim is to provide a foundational understanding of business environments or accounting principles. Under the CA Pre-Articleship, undergraduate and graduate-level students of colleges and universities can sit for certificate-level exams.

Nabil MD Irfan, an undergraduate student of the Department of Accounting and Information Systems from Dhaka University (DU) stated, "I have completed the CA Certificate level under pre-articleship programme. It is essential to take advantage of pre-articleship opportunities. Many CA courses align with our undergraduate programme, with some departments following ICAB guidelines in their syllabus. Consequently, ICAB offers some exemptions at the certificate level. So, pursuing CA studies alongside the undergraduate program will not be an issue."

While considering whether to pursue a CA degree, MD. Mahfuzur Rahman ACA, Manager at Snehashish Mahmud and Co. has recommended, "Always research before entering this field as it requires a lot of hard work, dedication, and time commitment. In addition, during the pre-articleship period, try to cover as many courses as you can before joining the articleship. Try to develop an in-depth concept instead of just memorising."

He also added, "For the articleship period, it is crucial to join a good firm. Before joining any firm, it is advised to consult with the seniors working in the firm about the work culture and environment."

As students often struggle with balancing work and studies when pursuing a CA degree, Md Gulam Kibria ACA, a Manager at Eastern Bank PLC, has suggested, "Treating the Articleship period as a learning opportunity is vital. Try to relate your work experiences to your CA curriculum for better understanding." He further added, "Joining or creating a study group with peers with similar mindset to yours who are also preparing for CA exams can help to better navigate the vast range of subjects in CA."

Overall, like any other professional degree, a CA qualification has its unique set of benefits and drawbacks. The future of this career option is undoubtedly bright. However, a proper understanding of what to expect in this field, including all its challenges, is essential for effective career planning.

Fatema Tuz Zohora is a 3rd year student in the Department of Finance, Dhaka University.