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CAMPUS

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PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

ANIME

HOPE, HORROR, AND INTROSPECTION IN

Re: Zero - Starting Life in Another World

MD. NAYEEM HAIDER

Imagine this – you have betrayed every expectation you ever set for yourself. And then, by some miracle, you are given the chance to begin anew in a fantasy world. Not only that, but you are also able to return to fixed points in the past, even the moment you die.

All of it looks to be the very essence of a dream come true. However, much to his shock, Natsuki Subaru, our protagonist in *Re: Zero - Starting Life in Another World,* learns that unlimited chances in this new world also bring an infinite potential for untold despair and just a sliver of hope. The story is set in a typical medieval fantasy setting with characters that seemingly fit hand-in-glove into one archetype or another. But things are hardly as they first appear to be.

Subaru's nightmarish cycles of death and return, the trauma and shock of it all, and the intrigue of the subsequent circumstances don't fall short of the riveting enigmas – the crescendos of which are as brilliant as they are morbid. They envelop the viewer in the heavy shrouds of tragedy and mystery, keeping them waiting with bated breath to see the veils being lifted, even if only a little. The music and the voice acting – intense, powerful, and made to reflect each beat of hope, horror, and everything in between – only serve to immerse them deeper into the blood and water of this tale.

But to imply that Subaru's 'return by death' is simply a plot device meant for gore and shock would be selling this story short. At its core, *Re: Zero* is a story about exploration, introspection and success.

With the third season having concluded a couple months back, the one thing that can be said definitively about *Re: Zero* is that it keeps getting better with each season. The world-building has gotten richer, the fog of mystery has thickened, and layers of personality have been explored for the characters, with signs of a lot more development to come.

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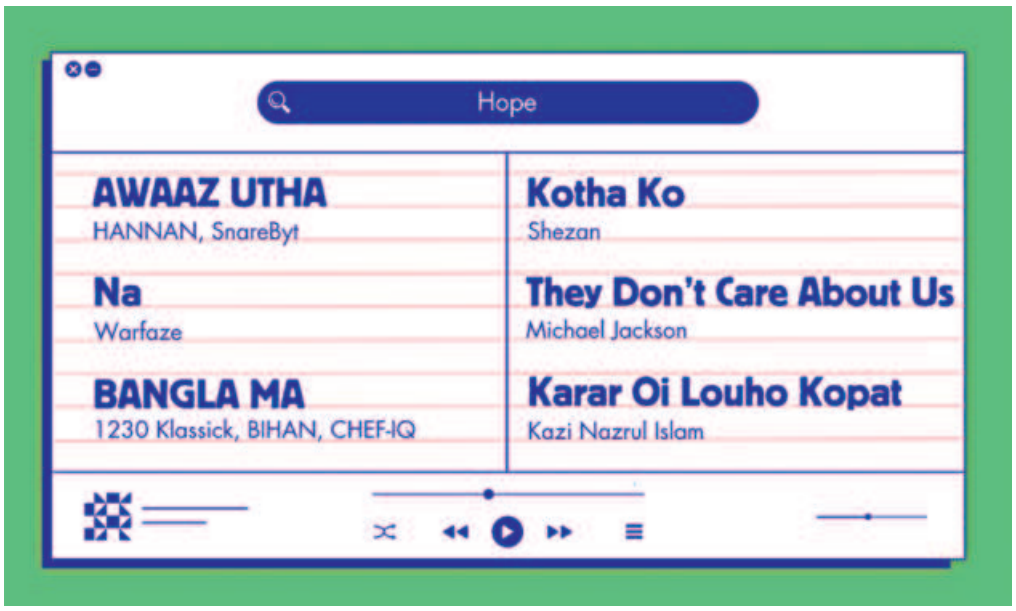

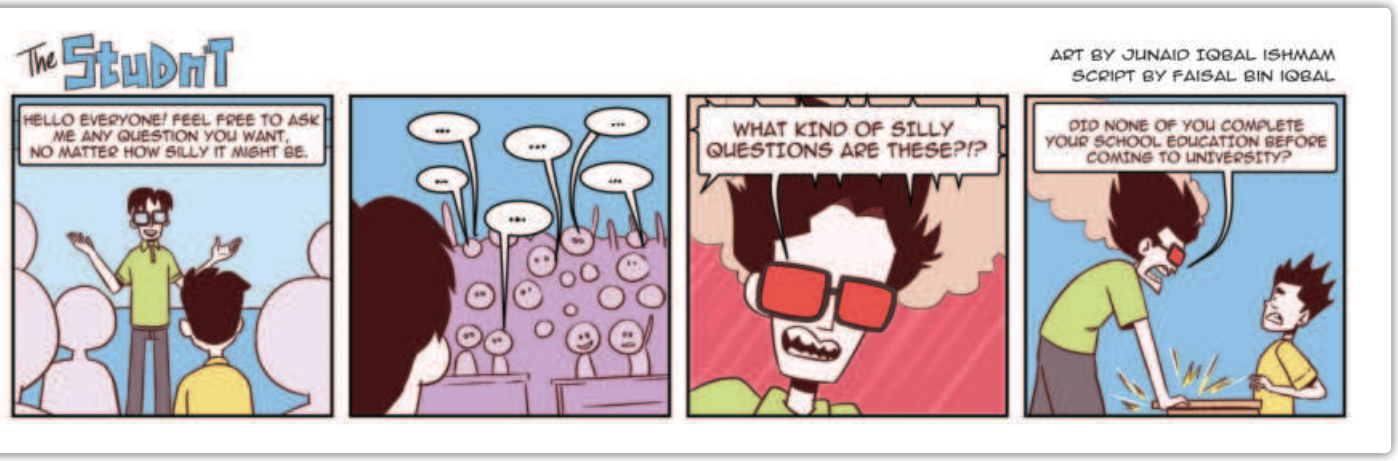

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The scholarship is worth GBP 5,000 in the form of a tuition fee reduction.

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How play-based learning is the key to your CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

Today's children are growing up in a rapidly transforming digital era. From an early age, they're exposed to digital stimulation. It means their way of thinking is developing differently from that of their parents and grandparents. While previous generations may have thrived under rigid, lecture-based instruction, in 2025, children tell a different story. These digital natives show greater enthusiasm, an ability to retain information, and think creatively when they learn through newer, innovative approaches, compared to the more traditional teaching methods of previous generations.

International School Dhaka

However, the unfortunate reality is that our existing education systems often overlook the holistic development of a child across all developmental domains--cognitive, physical, social, emotional, and creative. This produces graduates with stellar grades but who lack the essential competencies for a life and career beyond school.

Schools play a pivotal role when it comes to the holistic development of children by creating environments that nurture all aspects of a child's growth simultaneously. Through education, exposure to different cultures, and fostering a sense of empathy, schools help children develop a strong moral compass, respect for others, and an appreciation for cultural diversity.

Interactions with peers from different backgrounds enable them to gain a broader perspective, develop cross-cultural communication skills, and become more open-minded. At the International School of Dhaka (ISD), this principle guides every aspect of early childhood education. ISD Early Years integrates these elements into its daily routines through a thoughtfully designed play-based approach. This ensures children grow not only as learners but as individuals. As an International Baccalaureate World School, ISD offers the IB curriculum comprising IB Primary Years Programme (PYP), IB Middle Years Programme (MYP), and IB Diploma Programme (IBDP).

Play-based learning is a method that focuses on the use of play in promoting multiple areas of children's development and learning. Of all the approaches available to early childhood teachers, play-based learning stands out as a highly effective method.

During these early years, a child's brain is extremely sensitive to new experiences, so it is the optimal time to establish habits that will define their life beyond the classroom.

This style of learning builds problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication skills and increases emotional intelligence by working together and through empathy. Children learn language, motor skills, and creativity through telling stories, active play, and role play. When children control their play activities, they gain confidence and self-esteem, while children learn flexibility when they encounter surprises. Above all, play builds intrinsic motivation: children learn because they want to, not because they're told.

Play-based learning in ISD Early Years operates under the Primary Years Programme (PYP) framework, providing "an inquiry-driven, play-based programme where children are free to be active participants in their learning." Through play, children wonder, question, and theorise about the world, others, and themselves.

ISD's Early Years also has a sensory room, which is a space that supports children to regulate their mind and body by creating a calming environment as a response to and prevention of sensory overload. The area supports children by encouraging sensory stimulation, supporting emotional well-being, and providing a safe space to practice coping skills and emotional regulation strategies. This space invites children to sit on cushions or in the darkened tent while listening to gentle music, breathing in calming aromatherapy scents, and engaging their sense of touch with a variety of tactile materials. After working through their emotions and focusing on themselves, children are better prepared for learning and interacting with others. For parents, this model gives them the confidence that learning can be productive as well as enjoyable.

To thrive in our rapidly changing world, children must have more than textbook knowledge. They need flexibility, creativity, emotional intelligence, and collaboration skills. Playful learning develops these competencies organically, preparing students to handle challenges we cannot yet anticipate. Children explore ideas, develop problem-solving abilities, and acquire the resilience to learn throughout life through purposeful play. They learn to take thoughtful risks, develop self-confidence, and maintain intrinsic motivation--qualities that will serve them well throughout life and learning.

To know more about ISD's early years programme, please visit www.isdbd.org/learning.

JULY UPRISING

ONE YEAR POST- UPRISING

How do students view Bangladesh today?

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

Last year, Campus reached out to students after the July uprising to learn about their expectations for the future of Bangladesh. Many people believed that uprising would usher in a new era of inclusivity, transparency, and substantial reform. Students who were members of different marginalised communities, ethnicities and beliefs, all demanded an administration that listens, represents, and acts. Now, with a full year behind us, we return to the same voices – and some new ones – to ask: How much of their expectations have been fulfilled?

AZRA HUMAYRA, ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA, RAIAN ABEDIN, AND HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

Between populism and reform

Afzal Haque*, a 24-year-old who recently graduated from Dhaka University (DU), lamented that the hopes he had after the uprising remain unfulfilled. He says, "A year ago, we had hoped for a Bangladesh free from fear, class oppression, and systemic discrimination. In place of mature governance, there has grown a ridiculous culture of mobocracy." Afzal feels that justice is being replaced with indignation, and the eerily similar trend of self-censorship of the past persists.

Afzal notes, "For most of those who had harboured hopes of a new progressive dawn, it now looks little more than a shiny twist."

The rise of populism and the state of law and order add to Afzal's worries. "Law and order hangs on a scale of doubt," he observes, "While policy initiatives in favour of substantial reform are being constantly overruled by those in favour of populist demands."

An indigenous student who resides in Bandarban shares the same sentiment as Afzal. She says, "As a member of an indigenous community, we didn't feel safe during the previous regime, nor do we feel safe now. No one thought about us before the uprising; it feels like no one thinks about us now. There are no changes; I have no expectations," she says with a heavy heart.

"I expected the three branches of government to be strengthened, along with sweeping political reforms," said Tasfia Tarannum Ridita, an undergraduate student at BRAC University. "When constitutional, judicial, and anti-corruption reforms were announced, I was genuinely excited. But it soon felt like the efforts were falling short. The electoral commission made a lot of recommendations regarding the reforms. In fact, I was part of one of the conferences held in the National Parliament. But I, along with most other people, don't think the commission has any real autonomy."

But there are voices of people such as Nabila Rakib, a fourth-year student at the Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET), who see improvements. Nabila notes, "The ongoing political unrest and clashes instigated by various parties are deeply concerning and undermine the democratic process. However, there have been some notable improvements in administrative efficiency and foreign reserve management, offering a glimmer of hope for economic recovery."

Sadiq Mahmood, a recent graduate from the economics department at DU, expands on the economic progress made during the past year. He states, "Amid the economic turmoil, the interim government's continuous efforts balanced the dollar rate, recorded higher remittance, and turned up the debt repayment massively. The mandate for economic stabilisation is on point, but a general lack of transparency in the whole mechanism still persists."

While some of the students spoke of the economic recovery, many of the students we interviewed discussed how the public is frustrated by the democratic institutions' lack of enforcement. Their worries are heightened by the administration's failure to take initiative on reforms.

Volatile political landscape, side-lined women, and underrepresented minorities

Growing up, we had reconciled ourselves to the notion that the politics in our country was a lost cause. Between corruption, illegitimate regimes, and an overall lack of agency for the average citizen, it felt as though we had little choice in political matters, hence, it was simply better to not concern ourselves with them. The youth had a profound lack of knowledge on political history and current affairs, which in turn, enabled the political landscape to remain unchallenged by them.

Last July, amidst the uprising, the youth had finally broken the curse, taking the initiative of breaking this vicious cycle through gaining knowledge. Resources on different eras of political histories were being shared, and productive discussions were commonplace. Following the events since August 5th, however, the blazing streak eventually died down.

Anika Hasan*, a final year student in DU, shares her disappointment regarding the continued lack of political awareness in the youth. "I had expectations regarding people in general as I felt they were becoming more politically aware. People are generally taken advantage of by the ruling regime, and as students were protesting, becoming more aware of our rights— we had broken some stereotypes. Eventually, the new government took over and gave us some hope about a new Bangladesh, but this too turned out to be a dystopian nightmare as minorities and women were politically side lined. Political parties are arguing about elections without any visible signs of reform. Better policies must be adopted to ensure fundamental rights of citizens."

Meanwhile, the formation of a robust political opposition—especially a youth-led student party—was one of the central hopes that emerged post-August. However, public trust has eroded over the past year, according to Rezwana Saima, a graduate from DU, "Right after the uprising, the student leaders of the National Citizen Party (NCP) enjoyed overwhelming support from young people. However, there have been allegations of corruption and favouritism against quite a few members of the party. Whether or not these allegations were true, these have managed to hurt their public image, and to some extent the support they had initially gathered."

"Putting the accused Awami League leaders and members on court and bringing them to justice was long overdue and I believe that is something the interim government has shown some progress in," added Saima. "But after years of farcical elections, the promise was to establish a true multi-party democracy, which we are yet to observe."

Maria Gomes, a graduate from BRAC University shares similar frustrations regarding the political landscape. "There has been a rise in anti-women rhetoric and fundamentalist ideologies, and it's partially due to limiting education that may allow people to change their views or have discussions that don't necessarily align with their own ideologies. I am not very optimistic about reviving democracy as the government hasn't done anything to enforce that parties adhere to the standards expected by those who took to the streets to begin with."

Anika and Maria are both of the opinion that marginalised communities had been underrepresented in the current political landscape, and allies of said communities hadn't made many moves to improve their plights. Anika expresses that dealing with issues as they come up and not getting to the root cause of widespread violence in our societies have been a major failing.

When asked how things can start looking up from here on out, Maria says, "The interim government should advocate for free speech and ensure none of the parties engage in hateful, corrupt rhetoric or campaigns and essentially make sure July isn't needed again. We need tangible results, and not hollow promises."

Progress in women and children's affairs has also been underwhelming. While several policy drafts have been introduced—such as mandating that investigations of crimes involving women and/or minor victims be completed within 15 days and trials concluded within 90—many remain just that: drafts.

"They've added new sections on defining rape, addressing sexual intercourse under false promise of marriage, and forming a dedicated tribunal for child rape cases," Ridita noted. "But marital rape remains legally invisible under Section 375. Conviction rates are still abysmally low, and unless a case gets massive media coverage, justice remains elusive. Furthermore, when the Women's Affairs Reform Commission delivered 443-point reform suggesting uniform family law and scrapping male-favouring inheritance laws, it was met with severe backlash and outright stalled."

An uncertain future

For many of our youth who played an active role in the protests, stood front and centre, and bore the brunt of the horrifying attacks laid out against them, the landscape today has little to offer beyond the optics and the big looming question of 'what does the future look like?' begins to leave a strange taste in the mouth.

Tasneem Zaman Labeeb, a 23-year-old student at the Institute of Business Administration, DU, discusses how his views have shifted in the past year. Spending much of the time during the protests on the streets, Labeeb risked his safety to stand for a cause he wholeheartedly believed in. "I genuinely hoped for a new system," he shares with Campus, "Something built from the ground up, for the people. While removing an autocrat from power was an incredible feat, I believe our efforts following the uprising should have focused more on restoring democracy. Some might say we have done that, but to me, the same old tunnel-visioned, partisan politics, mixed with rising fanaticism, is dragging us toward something dangerous."

Aonkita Dey, a 24-year-old studying Economics at BRAC University, who was also majorly involved in spreading awareness and raising their voice during the protests, finds little reason to celebrate. "All around me, people keep talking about equality and justice for all, but at no point has this equality and justice reached women or any of the minority communities across Bangladesh."

Uprooting fascist powers and maintaining democracy is a long-term process. While the situation today leaves a lot of room for improvement, whether or not things actually get better depends more on effective policy drives and ensuring something like the previous regime never occurs again and less on lip-service.

Labeeb ends his statement on a bittersweet but ultimately hopeful note, "It's honestly shameful that we still haven't managed to properly support the families of the July martyrs or those who were severely injured. There's also very little being done to actually pass justice to the Awami League members. But even still, I want to stay hopeful. I hope this country can finally move out of survival mode and start building something better."

** Names have been changed upon request for privacy.*

NOTICE BOARD

IUB'S AMIT AND JUSTIN PLACE 2ND AND 3RD IN JULY MEMORIAL FIDE CHESS TOURNAMENT

Amit Bikram Roy, a student of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), and Justin Matthias Baroi, a student of International Business, at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), have clinched the second and third places, respectively, in the "July Memorial FIDE Chess Championship – IUB 2025". Organised by the IUB Chess Club on July 25, the tournament, which followed the FIDE rapid format—10 minutes plus 5-second increment—featured 140 participants from 64 institutions across Bangladesh.

FIDE Master Subrota Biswas from Dhaka University secured the championship with eight points from eight rounds. Amit placed second with seven points, followed by Justin, who also finished with seven points. Bangladesh Chess Federation supported the event, and International Arbiter Harun-ur-Rashid served as Chief Arbiter.

Seven IUB students earned their first FIDE international rapid rating through this event. They are: Aiman Saad Hamid (CSE), Simantha Barua (Accounting), Abdullah Hossien (CSE), Tammem Ibne Tozammel (CSE), Rafi Abdullah (CSE), Nijum Barua (CSE), and Minhajul Miraj (Law). With their inclusion, IUB now has 20 internationally rated rapid chess players.

The total prize pool of BDT 50,000 was distributed among the top scorers. Winners received crests and cash awards based on their ranks, including special categories for IUB rated, IUB unrated, school, college, and U-14 divisions.

Grandmaster Niaz Murshed, South Asia's first Grandmaster and advisor to the IUB Chess Club, attended the prize-giving ceremony as the Chief Guest. Professor Daniel W Lund, Pro-Vice Chancellor of IUB, handed over the prizes to the winners.

Exhibition on recycled and innovative denim garments held at Shanto-Mariam University

In the visionary eyes of artists, nothing is truly waste; everything holds value. This philosophy resonates strongly with fashion designers as well, who have transformed discarded fabric scraps into high-quality, contemporary clothing. These innovative denim creations are not only wearable but also advanced and economically viable.

Renowned painter and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, Prof. Mostafizul Haque, shared these sentiments during the inauguration ceremony of the university's first-ever exhibition titled "Zero Wastage Denim Exhibition", organised by the Department of Apparel Manufacturing Management and Technology (AMMT).

The unique exhibition showcased environmentally friendly denim garments created and presented by students using old, discarded, and waste materials sourced from the garment industry. Held throughout the day at the Creative The Art Gallery, located in the Shanto-Mariam Foundation Building in Uttara, the exhibition aimed to promote the concept of sustainable fashion in Bangladesh's education sector and to encourage eco-conscious fashion practices among youth.

Distinguished guests attending the event included denim expert and Co-founder of Ruhrose RBT Arif Labu; Managing Director of Saudan Clothing Tanvir Ahmed; BGMEA-SCICIP Chief Coordinator Munir Chowdhury; Registrar Dr Par Mashiour Rahman; Artist Professor Shishir Kumar Vattachachga; Dean, Design & Technology Department to SMUCT and Head of the AMMT Department, Farzana Mita. Assistant Prof. Rajib Das, course module instructor, played a vital supervisory role in coordinating this hands-on initiative.

In the second session of the exhibition, a panel discussion was held, during which invited guests provided valuable insights and recommendations on the current challenges and future directions of the apparel industry, especially regarding student engagement in the sustainable denim sector.

The guests lauded the exhibition as a forward-thinking and sustainable initiative. They praised the students for showcasing creativity, technical skills, and environmental awareness, and remarked that such efforts mark a new chapter in integrating artistry and innovation into Bangladesh's apparel education.

UIU students take part in day-long AI t-shirt design bootcamp

On July 28, 40 students from United International University (UIU) took part in a day-long bootcamp titled "T-Shirt Design Using Creativity & AI" at the Creative IT Institute (Uttara Campus).

The interactive session provided hands-on experience, equipping participants with modern skills in AI-driven design and fostering a blend of creativity and technology. This unique opportunity allowed students to explore innovative design tools and techniques.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN POLICY AND POLITICS

Are we utilising the unique perspectives our youth has to offer?

MEHRAB JAMEE AND RAIAN ABEDIN

PHOTO: **AMRAN HOSSAIN**

The fight to free ourselves from a fascist autocracy was inseparably linked with freeing campuses from student politics – especially from the almost paramilitary student wing of the ruling party, the now banned Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL). Agitated by years of oppression and pushed to a breaking point, the students residing in different halls in public universities ousted the BCL leadership and their henchmen. Alongside the demands of the quota reform movement, the students' wish to free their campuses from student politics also gained momentum, which saw the protests take on a new form.

The frustration against the idea of student politics on campus comes primarily from how it tends to function as lackeys of their mother party. Tasneem Zaman Labeeb, a 22-year-old student at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Dhaka University (DU), vents his anger, "Very early on, the protests in July morphed into protesting against an unjust system that allowed these goons to terrorise our campuses. As a student, I witnessed too many instances of them getting away with horrendous crimes. There had to be an end to it."

The truth of the matter surfaces in the cycle of violence that has been continued by representatives of student wing parties. After the fall of the Awami League regime, campuses were free from the tyranny of student politics (for a few days at least). Students were hopeful that the situation would stay that way. In their stead, methods of self-governance and judicial methods of student representation would be established. The future of Bangladesh, much like its history, would have students' voices guiding it. At least, that was what many of them hoped for.

A year after the movement, however, grassroots demand for politics-free educational institutions – which appeared to be intertwined with the ethos of the July uprising itself – was forgotten. From public to private universities, it seemed like the idea of entertaining student politics anywhere would only invite violence and chaos.

Mysha Ahmed*, a student at the Department of Statistics at DU, says, "The issue isn't in students engaging in politics. The issue comes from the fact that when we have student politicians, oftentimes their agenda has nothing to do with the students themselves or any real political change. It always ends up being a ploy to establish and maintain power through oppression."

Shaheen Alom*, a third-year student at Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET), sheds light on the brutality brought forth by student wing party members, describing how their actions influenced the recent situation at KUET. He alleges that a particular political party has a stronghold over the areas surrounding the campus.

Prominent political parties tend to have vested interest in student politics continuing in its old ways. Considering the reality that emerges due to the functioning of these parties and their wings in areas surrounding campuses, how can students move forward in realising their dreams?

Reform as an idea has garnered a significant amount of popularity since August of last year. In fact, among the many changes to have come out of the uprising, one that is prominent is the increased awareness among the youth regarding politics. Following the uprising, many have taken the opportunity to educate themselves and others. As such, enthusiasts of reform did not just include those who follow political developments closely, but members of current student wing parties as well.

Sheikh Tanvir Bari Hamim, a member of the Bangladesh Jatiotabadi Chatradal, Bangladesh Nationalist Party's (BNP) student wing, shares his vision. "My dream is to rebuild the culture of political literacy and participatory democracy among students. We must go beyond slogans and create spaces where students can debate policies, draft reforms, and influence national conversations on education, freedom, justice, and the economy. We want solutions, not mere slogans. To get to the solution, there needs to be platforms to establish dialogues."

He says, "Organising workshops and seminars on democratic rights, leadership, and political ethics can help students become active citizens. Opening decentralised complaint platforms, where any student can report harassment, financial hardship, or academic injustice – these are all mechanisms we can employ to help our students. Currently, none of these things really exist at any capacity."

Globally, one solution that has been provided by countries includes platforming student voices at a parliamentary level to come up with policies and solutions that may end up affecting national policies. Youth Parliaments in the United Kingdom, for instance, have hosted debates at the House of Commons to advocate for reforms in education in 2014, which have had a profound impact on national policy. Similar examples are seen in countries such as Finland and the Philippines, showcasing the potential these youth parliaments led by student councils have.

However, given Bangladesh's political climate, will such a thing even be feasible?

Kazi Mohammad Mahbobor Rahman, a Professor at the Department of Political Science at DU, shares his expertise regarding the matter. "The root of this issue lies in how political parties treat their student wings. Is it wrong to have student wings to mother parties? That's very debatable because clearly there's a lot of value in it. But throughout history, the way our major parties have consistently neglected our students' needs and have used these student wings for wanton violence is exactly what must be stopped. The real reform needs to happen here, and it has to be carried out by the students. It is up to the students to ensure secure platforms for themselves so that their needs can be heard."

What specific actions are students expected to take, though?

Redowan Sikder, an Office Secretary at Bangladesh Chhatra Union and a third-year student at Jahangirnagar University (JU), shares his ideas. "We need to promote the independent growth of organisations filled with students involved in politics. The other major development that needs to occur is the cultivation and promotion of student councils. The practice of student councils is a very healthy way to practice democracy. Dhaka University Central Students' Union (DUCSU), for instance, is currently holding elections, but most of the students are not taking it seriously, assuming that power will be handed to someone from a student wing of a major political party. A student council is a healthy way to ensure that unlawful seizure of power does not occur and a great way of restoring faith in the democratic process."

The July uprising was the fight to free ourselves from the shackles of an autocracy. But the absence of an autocracy doesn't guarantee a democracy, neither on a national level nor within campuses. The path to reforming campus politics may take time. But incremental changes towards the right direction are worth fighting for. Will we do what's required and push for continuous reform despite the structural difficulties, though? The question remains to be answered.

IN-FRAME

REMINISCING A NEW BEGINNING

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**