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August is when thousands of students across Bangladesh get their O and A Level results. It is a crucial and potentially life-changing moment when students face big decisions about their future academic journey, which eventually shapes their professional career too.

Getting an international degree makes one stand out in the competitive job market and opens many career opportunities. An international degree provides a global perspective, cross-cultural knowledge, and the world-class skills top employers want. However, going overseas to study for a degree is becoming harder as fees go up, travel and living costs rise, and getting a visa becomes more difficult. This is why Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD) is pioneering the new approach of helping Bangladeshi students to stay local and go global.

Many students and parents are looking for alternative routes to international study and world-class qualifications. UCBD offers clear-cut and direct pathways to studying abroad or completing international degrees in Bangladesh. At UCBD, students can complete two outstanding foundation courses that lead to studying at world-class universities abroad or completing international degrees at UCBD. These courses take less than a year, they are very cost-effective, and they offer direct access to some of the best universities in the world.

Monash University Foundation Year (MUFY) is perfect for students who want to study at one of Australia's prestigious Group of 8 universities. Students join Monash University from the very first day. They follow the same syllabus and use the same online systems as students in Australia. Once they complete MUFY, they are guaranteed a seat at Monash University Melbourne or Monash Malaysia without going through the highly competitive external application process. The entire MUFY programme is completed in Bangladesh at the UCBD campus, enabling students to avoid high living and travel costs, while still receiving the same high-quality education and top passing rates as students in Australia.

Those students who want maximum flexibility can choose the UCBD International Foundation Year (UIFY). This programme connects students to a wide range of over 70 institutions worldwide, including many in the UK, USA, Canada, and other popular destinations. UIFY is perfect for those who want to study overseas but want to have lots of choices. After completing UIFY, students can apply to multiple universities in different countries. UIFY is designed to meet international academic standards and prepares students for both university life and life abroad. It takes a multidisciplinary approach that includes preparing for cultural differences, building confidence, and offering academic support at every step.

What makes both MUFY and UIFY special is how simple and effective they are. Students study in a familiar environment, close to home. They get top-quality teaching from internationally trained and approved faculty, they follow world-class syllabuses, and they are on track for global university admission. This means less stress, fewer risks, and better results.

Parents also benefit. These programmes cost much less than studying a foundation year overseas. Families can save on rent, food, travel, and tuition. At the same time, parents can give their children a world-class education and a clear, proven route to a respected international degree. As an added bonus, parents can also choose to enrol their son or daughter in one of the three-year international degree programmes offered at UCBD. Choosing this option allows students to stay at home longer, saves a lot of time and money, and means that students have more master's degree options if and when they go abroad.

In today's world, an international qualification is more than just a certificate. It shows you can think globally, adapt to new cultures, and work in any environment. These are the qualities that employers value most. With UCBD, students can gain all of this—without delays, without stress, and without spending many more lakhs than they need.

UCBD has an international programme for every student who is completing their O, AS, or A2 Levels in August. Come to UCBD for advice about the next steps to an international education, and it could be the starting point to a great future.

UCBD is currently onboarding students for the next MUFY and UIFY intakes. For more information, please visit – ucbd.edu.bd or call at +880189013882 or +8801844277343.

CAREER

The crises facing young artists in Bangladesh

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

AFRA ANIKA NAWAR KHAN

Bangladeshi people have always been known for their resilience, but we are also known for our culture, art, and literature. Since before the independence of Bangladesh, and even after its liberation, our people have always expressed themselves with pen and paper, paint on canvases, and with strings of words often expressed in rhythm.

It is, therefore, essential to understand that when we talk about revolutions, the only medium to commemorate such events is through art and literature. However, when it comes to giving due diligence to the words on the placards or the paint on the walls, we somehow forget to remember our artists and writers – the creators, and chanters on the streets, stirring up a movement, serving as the face of the uprising of the people. If we take into consideration how many artists have gone without credit all these years, we will also realise that not much has changed in recent times either.

Amit Das*, 32, a visual artist based in Dhaka, notes how Bangladeshi artists not only struggle in terms of receiving recognition. He highlights how artists are not necessarily always allowed to be blatantly expressive, given how, at times, they are faced with censorship, which, in that way, takes away from their creative freedom. He recounts, "As artists in Bangladesh, we often face challenges like limited funding, lack of institutional support, and restricted access to international platforms. There are also struggles with censorship, social conservatism, and the pressure to conform to commercial trends rather than creative freedom."

According to Amit, commercialisation can serve as a limitation for the arts, as mass media play a powerful role in shaping public taste by promoting certain trends, styles, and narratives that are easily marketable. However, there are positive sides to commercialisation as well, as he says, "While this can sometimes limit diversity in artistic expression, it also has the potential to popularise art and bring it to a wider audience when used thoughtfully. At least in recent times, many young artists lack access to quality training, mentorship, and exposure to global art practices. Strengthening art education, creating more public art spaces, and offering structured platforms for emerging talents would empower sustainable growth. Financial support is also important, but it becomes far more effective when backed by strong institutions and informed guidance."

Abdullah Al Mukramin, 22, an online-based artist, popularly known as *Kawaiikhoka* on social media, agrees with Amit's sentiments, as he notes how commercialisation has rather helped him in advancing as an aspiring artist. He notes, "In my case, it worked out in my favour. As the concepts I work with are mostly based on folklore characters, such as *Thakuma'r Jhuli*, or the children's show, *Sisimpur*, which are well known in the mass media, but this might not be the same for everyone. So, I definitely do think the art and culture scene is in crisis. Although art is a very integral part of our traditions, with the changing times, along with the mass use of AI, art has come to a critical stage."

Another issue artists come across is copyright and intellectual property theft. Abdullah further adds, "The main challenge I face is most likely people trying to steal intellectual property. As a small artist, the new ideas often get copied or passed off as inspired work without any proper crediting. For people who see the copied work first, they mistake it as the original work."

Like visual artists, writers too are facing setbacks in expressing their work, often being unpaid by publishers, or at times facing censorship in their craft. Shamsuddin Khan Rajit, 23, an aspiring writer who recently published his book, *Tears of a Menace*, highlights the difficulties he encountered during his journey as a budding author.

For Shamsuddin, it is not only the hindrances that the society imposes on artists that trouble him, but he also highlights how, at times, the difficulties begin at home. "We live in a capitalist society, where surviving and earning are more valued and respected than artistic expression and culture. Even at home, we are raised in a survivalist mindset, where children are often brought up with no sense of individuality or artistic expression. Hence, art or cultural activities are frowned upon in Bangladesh as it is seen only as a means of amusement, nothing more."

Shamsuddin further notes how, while there are more opportunities now for writers to get more exposure by participating in the many cultural activities, there is still a lack of support, given how art, at times, may seem elitist, belonging to a certain group of people. "I believe there is a certain disparity in the connectivity of such communities. These communities that hold such festivals and events attract a niche crowd that they cater to and market to. This can change if these festivals and events can successfully attract and include artists from all walks of life, by taking initiatives to discover them and including them to build a stronger community that will also attract consumers from all walks of life. There is a certain remoteness when it comes to accessibility to such festivals or events."

He also emphasises how it is ultimately how economic privilege may determine creative expression. Shamsuddin says, "As far as I can tell, if you have money to publish and carry out everything on your own, I would say you are unlikely to face any barriers to entry. The deep-rooted corruption that has been so evident for so long has prevented a number of books from being published that may, as it would encourage the reader to think for themselves. These restrictions have raised a generation of people who are afraid to question, think, and take charge."

Shakila Khan, 53, a senior artist and writer, however, argues that Bangladeshi artists have never been afraid to express themselves, and it is through the hands of such brave artists that our culture has been uplifted globally. She says, "The world is recognising and appreciating our art and culture. I believe that as our country continues to develop economically, we will receive even greater recognition here at home. Because, no matter the state of the country, in terms of quality, our art is already at a high level."

Shakila recounts her fair share of struggles as an artist, while noting how it has become more difficult for the new generation of artists. She states, "For visual artists nowadays, the scope of work has shrunk. During my time, at least we got to nurture our interests and learned everything hands-on. We received help from our teachers. If we didn't understand something, they would patiently teach us over and over again. In contrast, this generation relies more on devices. Yet it's also true that with more access to information, they are better able to keep pace with the world."

Shakila further adds, "Even institutionally, the arts have fallen behind. Schools no longer have dedicated Fine Arts departments. The art market has stalled. Financially, artists are not doing well. Art camps aren't happening. Some galleries have closed down. Even those who run art businesses are falling behind. Freedom of expression has become a relative concept now."

It has become essential to understand that despite all the challenges we as a country collectively face, we must not forget those who elevate and preserve our culture and our language. In the time of crisis, it is our artists and writers who give us a voice when words fail, and they stand as an emblem of our red and green flag. It has become crucial that we honour the legacy of those who came before, and even more paramount that we nurture the new generation of artists.

**Names have been changed upon request for privacy*

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NOTICE BOARD

AIUB ARTS CLUB ORGANISES DAY-LONG EDUCATION AND ART TOUR PROGRAMME

A day-long education and art tour programme organised by the AIUB Arts Club of American International University-Bangladesh (AIUB) was held in Panam Nagar. On July 19, the students of the AIUB Arts Club started the journey of this programme in groups. The tour was led by the AIUB Arts Club mentor Niaz Majumdar. He was present as a guide and inspiration for the students.

Architecture creates a sensation when a mere structure becomes a living entity engaged in dialogue. Panam Nagar is an ancient and historical city located in the Sonargaon Upazila of Narayanganj district of Bangladesh. From the 16th to the 19th century, Panam Nagar was the heart of the muslin and other textile industries, trade, and administrative activities. It was known as one of the richest and most populous business cities of undivided Bengal. There are ancient buildings all over the area, which include a unique blend of European, Mughal, and traditional Bengali architectural styles.

The live art session was a wonderful part of the day where the students drew live and sketched the old houses, which are one of the scenes of the colonial architecture and cultural history of Bangladesh. Each student celebrated the day by drawing pictures in their own sketchbooks with paints and brushes. The old buildings, the cracks in the walls, and the wooden crafts of the ancient windows all came to life in the colours of their imagination. This experience of touching the tradition and practising art on the spot was unique in the minds of each participant.

At the end of the session, the students visited the Bara Sardar House, where, once again, they got the opportunity to witness a different dimension of architecture. The day ended with a group photo and a souvenir photoshoot with a warm and proud feeling.

After visiting Panam Nagar and witnessing its architecture, the students shared their experiences. According to them, the art and craftsmanship of architecture and painting in Panam Nagar not only fascinated them but also ignited interest in the establishment among everyone. Such educational tours not only teach the students history and heritage but also give a new dimension to their creativity.

UAP hosts UAP-LEB-BSIL International Law Conference 2025

The Department of Law and Human Rights, University of Asia Pacific (UAP), successfully hosted the UAP-LEB-BSIL International Law Conference 2025 on August 2, jointly organised by the Legal Empowerment Bangladesh (LEB) and the Bangladesh Society of International Law (BSIL).

The conference, centred on the theme "The July Uprising/ Revolution and International Law", provided a timely academic response to global political transitions and movements for justice. Following a rigorous double-blind peer review, 20 research papers were selected from 71 submissions and presented across four thematic panels.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by Prof. Dr Qumrul Ahsan, Vice Chancellor of UAP, as the Chief Guest, with Dr M A Baqui Khalily, Acting Dean, School of Law, as the Special Guest. Md Asaduzzaman, Head, Department of Law and Human Rights, chaired the session.

The closing session featured Architect Mahbuba Haque, Chairperson, Board of Trustees, UAP; Prof. Dr Borhan Uddin Khan, Former Dean, Faculty of Law, Dhaka University; Dr Aziz Ahmed Bhuiyan, Registrar General, Supreme Court of Bangladesh; and Barrister Sara Hossain, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of Bangladesh, as Special Guests. Justice Moyeenul Islam Chowdhury, Chairman, Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances, attended as the Chief Guest.

UIU Mars Rover secures 3rd place globally and 1st place in Asia at Anatolian Rover Challenge 2025

The UIU Mars Rover team from United International University (UIU) has made the nation proud by securing the 3rd place globally and the 1st place in Asia at the Turkey-based Anatolian Rover Challenge (ARC) 2025 – one of the most prestigious international robotics competitions in the world. The competition was organised by the Space Exploration Society (UKET) between July 23 and 27 in Ankara, Türkiye.

Apart from being 3rd in the world and 1st in Asia for the second time, the UIU Mars Rover team was also awarded as the Best Autonomous, Driving & Control System Team and also the Best Science Team, which showcases the spectacular knack for innovation, determination, and engineering excellence the UIU students have.

The Anatolian Rover Challenge attracts university teams from around the world to design, build, and operate Mars rovers capable of performing complex tasks that simulate the challenges of extraterrestrial exploration. ARC attracts international minds with its narrative-driven missions, transporting participants into the realms of the Moon, Mars, and Earth, and is an initiative of UKET.

CAREER

HOW TO MAKE YOUR RESUME BYPASS ATS

ANICA BUSHRA RAHMAAN

The job market, with each passing day, is becoming more competitive. As if that wasn't making things difficult enough for job seekers, the inclusion of Applicant Tracking System (ATS) software in recruitment practices is making the feat of landing a job even more difficult.

An ATS is a recruitment software that streamlines the hiring process by storing, organising, and filtering job applications. Today, companies have increasingly started using ATS tools to quickly identify qualified candidates based on keywords, skills, or experience, saving recruiters time and reducing manual workload.

ATS also automates routine tasks like sending acknowledgement emails, scheduling interviews, and tracking candidate progress through each hiring stage. As competition for talent increases and hiring timelines tighten, businesses are growing dependent on ATS technology to improve efficiency and make faster, data-driven hiring decisions.

One of the primary tasks of the ATS is to screen potential candidates and compare how suitable they are for the job by comparing their resumes with the job description. Under this new hiring practice, no matter how relevant your skills, qualifications, or experience are to the job at hand, if your resume is not ATS-friendly, you are automatically dismissed from qualifying for the next stage of the hiring process. This happens before a human actually gets to see your resume.

However, if you know the right tricks to make your resume more appealing by ATS standards, you have nothing to worry about. Here's how you can do that.

Use the right keywords

ATS's main screening technique is to extract key details, such as the applicant's skills, educational background, etc., and use them as keywords to see if there is a match between the job description and the resume being checked.

So, if the job you are applying to has role-specific terminology, whether it's "data analyst", "proficiency in Excel", or "content management", naturally incorporate these keywords into every section of your resume. However, don't overdo this. You don't want to just stuff keywords in your resume, as it will look and read a bit weird. Instead, maintain a balance and make sure that their placement makes sense.

Proper formatting

ATS-friendly formats follow the reverse-chronological format. You will start with your most recent job experience and then proceed backwards. This outlines the overall progress of your career and enables the system to detect any relevant details.

Go for traditional headings like "Work Experience", "Education" and "Skills" and keep one-inch margins on all sides to ensure a neat look. To make things easy for you, you can use ATS-friendly templates that are available online instead of starting from scratch.

Keep dates consistent

ATS scanners analyse dates to calculate your overall working experience. Hence, inconsistent dates are at greater risk of being misinterpreted, ignoring crucial work records, which may lead to unfair filtering. Pick one format, such as month, year (November, 2024) or MM/YYYY (11/2024) and stick to it.

Use bullet points

To include more information without cluttering the page, use bullet points for better organisation. ATS programmes struggle to parse large chunks of information, meaning crucial details might get overlooked just because of the wrong structure. Thus, try to sprinkle bullet points throughout, especially in the work or experience section.

Go for three to five bullet points for each job, accentuating key responsibilities, skills and any relevant achievements. If possible, incorporate numbers to signify impact, such as "Increased customer engagement by 25 percent".

Keep it simple

Anything complicated will confuse the ATS. To ensure readability, keep your resume minimalist.

Go for fonts like Arial, Times New Roman, or any other traditional fonts in 10 to 12 point size. Avoid flashy graphics or overtly colourful templates as they make parsing difficult. Don't use multiple columns, as it will muddle your overall layout.

Remember, less is more. Try to use simple language throughout. A clean-looking resume makes it easy for the ATS to scan your resume.

Test your resume

After finalising all the details of your resume, test your resume to ensure that it is ATS-compliant. There are online tools such as Jobscan, Enhancv and Resume Worded, which will not only pinpoint places you went wrong but also offer comprehensive solutions.

If accessing such tools is difficult or expensive (as some of them do not offer free plans), you can also ask ChatGPT or Gemini to guide you by inputting ATS-specific prompts.

Ultimately, an ATS-friendly resume prioritises simplicity and relevance. As long as your resume consists of the right keywords, organised details, and a clean layout, you will have better chances of your resume not being guarded by a software and actually reaching the hands of a human recruiter.

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ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

EDUCATION

There is more to data and numbers than meets the eye

BIPRA PRASUN DAS

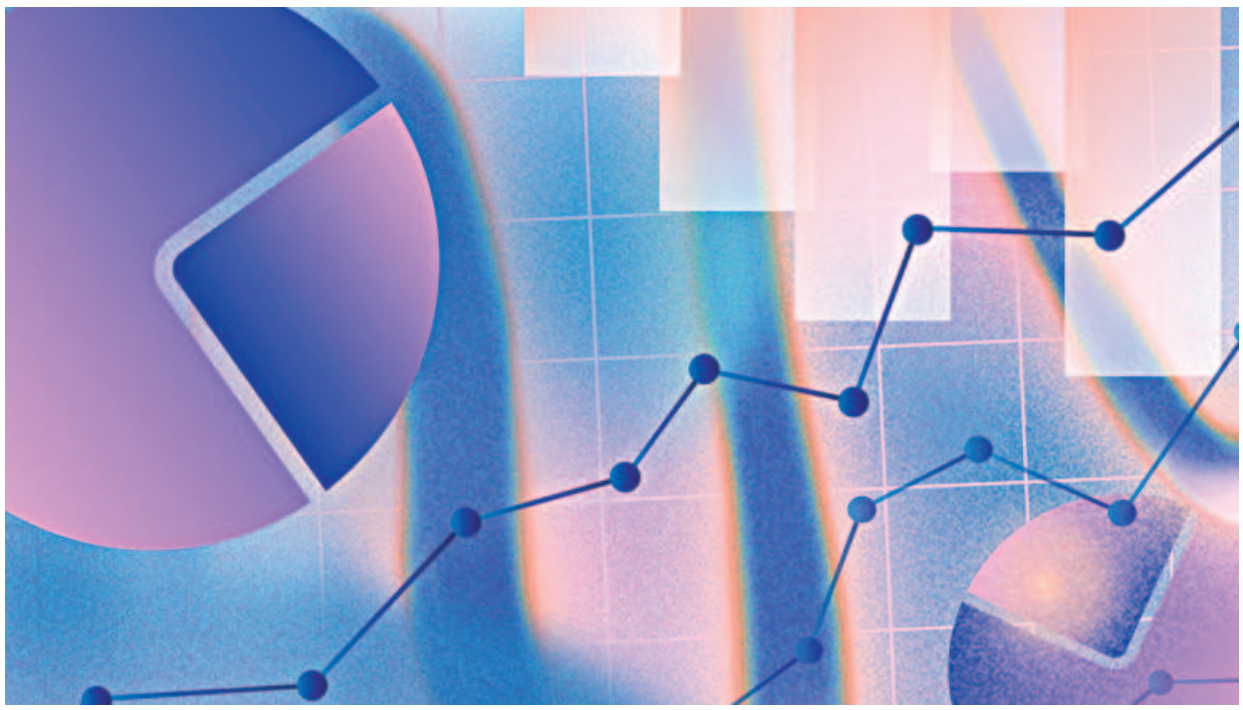

ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

How often do we pause to think about a statistic on a report or a figure someone mentions during a debate on the talk shows that we regularly consume?

Seventy percent of people support this or *one in five people suffer from that*, these numbers shape how we think about the world, and help us form opinions. Nonetheless, how often do we ask ourselves: *Who collected this data? How was it measured? What's missing from the picture?*

We, generally, trust numbers and charts, assuming that data must be the result of rigorous analysis, however, numbers carry an element of subjectivity due to the techniques used to collect, frame, and display data, often revealing biases.

How data is presented visually can play a huge role in determining the narrative the data intends to convey. One of the simplest yet most effective tricks is the manipulation of graph axes. When a chart's vertical axis does not start at zero, small changes can be made to look dramatic. Data can also lie by omission. For instance, presenting a smaller time frame, for a statistic of long-term decline, can make it seem like the phenomena is a short-term surge.

Similarly, political campaigns often highlight month-to-month swings in approval ratings or economic indicators without acknowledging that those fluctuations fall within normal statistical noise. By choosing the "right" start and end points, a relatively flat trend can be recast as evidence of sudden success or failure. In addition, usage of an inappropriate graph type can be deceiving. A notorious case is drawing a line chart (which implies continuous data) for unrelated categories, connecting points that shouldn't be connected. For qualitative categories (like regions or sectors), a bar chart is usually correct. A stacked pie chart or area chart with too many slices can also exaggerate differences, since human eyes struggle to comprehend the true scale of the data with slices alone.

> In a world where data is everywhere, on the television, in our feeds, in the mouths of politicians and pundits, it is easy to mistake numbers for truth. However, statistics are not just neutral facts; they're shaped by how they're gathered, framed, and shared.

The process of collecting data itself can have flaws in them too. For example, surveys can be misleading if their design is not transparent or inclusive. The sample of a survey is important. If it over-represents certain groups (like young, urban, tech-savvy users in online polls) and under-represents others (like rural or older populations), the results will be skewed. Privilege bias also plays a role: those with more time, education, or internet access are more likely to participate, meaning marginalised voices often go unheard. Even the way questions are worded in a survey can subtly skew the results in the favour of a particular outcome.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, misleading graphs and statistics flooded social media, some of which was fuelled by a mix of public anxiety and a desperate search for answers. Platforms like Facebook, which rewards content based on likes, shares, and comments, were a part of the problem.

Research from Yale School of Management has identified how social media platforms inadvertently encourage the spread of statistical misinformation through their reward systems. This research also shows that frequent users, driven by habit rather than critical thinking, shared false and true headlines at almost the same rate. This shows the issue isn't just individual gullibility, but a deeper flaw in how distribution channels such as social media are designed. Posts about unproven remedies went viral not because they were accurate, but because they were engaging. In dire situations, the compounding effects of fear and flawed tech design become a perfect storm for spreading statistical misinformation.

Bangladesh itself has seen several troubling cases where official statistics were manipulated for political gain. Reports revealed that during the Sheikh Hasina regime, key economic data were distorted. One major example came from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), which reported that unemployment fell from 2.61 million in 2022 to 2.43 million in 2023, which was the lowest rate since 2002. This was surprising because the country's economy was clearly struggling at the time, with falling industrial output, imports, exports, and remittances. Economists later discovered that the BBS had changed how they measured unemployment. Instead of counting people who lost their jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic as unemployed, they were labelled "out of the labour market."

So, how can we protect ourselves from being misled by statistics? It starts with asking the right questions. Checking for the source is a good place to start. Reliable statistics should come with clear citations or links to the original data. If a claim doesn't say where the numbers came from, that is a red flag. Next, when there's a chart, it is useful to examine them carefully. Ask yourself: do the axes start at zero? Are the time periods complete and consistent?

A bar chart that starts mid-way up the scale or skips years can completely change the story. It also helps to understand whether or not the variables are correlated. Just because two lines on a graph rise together doesn't mean one caused the other. And when it comes to polls, it is important to ask: *Who was surveyed? How many people? Was it a random sample or just a group of internet users?* Without taking these factors into account, numbers can easily be manipulated.

In a world where data is everywhere, on the television, in our feeds, in the mouths of politicians and pundits, it is easy to mistake numbers for truth. However, statistics are not just neutral facts; they're shaped by how they're gathered, framed, and shared. This doesn't mean we should stop trusting data altogether, rather it shows how important it is to engage with data thoughtfully. With the current saturation of information, we only stand a better chance of understanding it by slowing down, asking questions, and critically engaging with the information presented to us.

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