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CAMPUS

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ILLUSTRATION: **MONG SHONIE**

MOVIES

The Immortal Man

A bleak and rushed ending to the Peaky Blinders series

FAISAL BIN IQBAL

Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man arrived on Netflix on March 20, and the audience reaction was mixed, with many, including myself, feeling that the film fell just short of the grand farewell the series and Cillian Murphy's Tommy Shelby deserved.

The Immortal Man opens with Tommy already deep into his self-imposed exile. In his absence, Tommy's son Duke Shelby, played by Barry Keoghan, has taken over as the leader of the new generation of the Peaky Blinders. However, due to certain circumstances, Tommy has to return to his old life and confront Duke, who seems to have taken a brutal approach in leading the Peaky Blinders gang as if it were 1919.

Let's start off with the movie's strongest point – the actors. Being the leads, both Cillian Murphy and Barry Keoghan delivered stellar performances. While Cillian has been doing this role for a while now, Barry is new to this role, yet he manages to deliver a performance that's on the same level as his counterpart. The writing and plot of the movie are also exciting in their own right. The plot has the Birmingham Blitz — the bombing of Birmingham and surrounding towns in central England by Nazi Germany — as its backdrop while Tommy attempts to knock some sense into Duke regarding running the family business and handling a few other matters on the side.

As for the film's negatives, there are plenty. Without spoiling anything, let's just say it could've done a better job at managing a few of its character absences. After all, Tommy isn't the only character in the series who deserved a proper sendoff. Pacing was another issue that bothered me. *The Immortal Man's* plot would've fitted in nicely into *Peaky Blinders'* six-episode season formula. But the film's two-hour runtime wasn't the best medium to deliver this story. And while viewers did have room to process the various events unfolding in the film, it still felt rushed.

The Immortal Man arrives not as a disappointment, but as a series that never quite justifies its own existence. The show had found its natural conclusion with season six. Instead, in what reads as a bid to clear the decks for a planned *Peaky Blinders* sequel, the creators have rushed through the motions, and in doing so, denied Tommy Shelby the farewell a character of his stature deserved.

OPPORTUNITIES

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Building job-ready graduates: inside UCBD's tech partnerships

The expectations from a technology graduate have shifted decisively in recent years. Employers are no longer looking for potential alone; they are looking for proof of skills, familiarity with real systems, and the ability to contribute from the outset. Responding to this shift, Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD) is rethinking how students are prepared for the workplace by embedding industry exposure into academic life.

Through collaborations with leading technology firms including RiseUp Labs, Bdtask, RoseTech Solutions Limited, and Bondstein Technologies Limited, UCBD is building a model where learning extends beyond the classroom. These partnerships are structured to align academic knowledge with the practical demands of the IT sector, ensuring that students graduate with both theoretical grounding and applied experience.

This approach is reflected in how students engage with the industry during their studies. They are placed in live project environments, guided by industry mentors, and introduced to professional tools and workflows that shape modern software development. The aim is to reduce the disconnect that often exists between graduation and employment.

"Our focus is to ensure that students do not encounter the workplace as something entirely new after graduation," said Kingshuk Gupta, Chief Operating Officer of UCBD. "When they have already worked on real assignments and understood how teams operate, they transition into professional roles with far greater clarity and confidence."

The structure of these partnerships supports that transition in practical ways. Students gain access to internships, job placement pathways, and professional training aligned with current industry standards. Regular knowledge-sharing sessions led by practitioners also expose them to evolving trends and expectations within the sector.

From the industry's perspective, this early engagement helps address a long-standing challenge. Many companies invest significant time in training new recruits before they become fully productive. By working with students earlier, that adjustment period can be shortened.

"Graduates often have strong academic foundations but limited exposure to real delivery environments," said Sumch Mohammad Tarek, Managing Director of Bdtask. "Through this collaboration, students begin to understand timelines, client expectations, and problem-solving in real contexts, which makes them more effective when they formally enter the workforce."

Other partners view the collaboration as an opportunity to contribute to a more capable talent pipeline. Md. Imran Hossain, Managing Director of RoseTech Solutions Limited, pointed out that practical exposure helps students develop a clearer sense of professional responsibility. "When students work on real projects, they start to understand accountability, communication, and consistency. These are critical in any technology role but are difficult to teach through theory alone," he said.

A similar emphasis on adaptability was highlighted by Mir Shahrukh Islam, Managing Director and CEO of Bondstein Technologies Limited. "The pace of change in technology requires professionals who can adjust quickly. Early exposure to real work environments helps students build that mindset before they begin their careers," he noted.

For students and their families, the result is a more direct pathway from education to employment. For the industry, it ensures access to graduates equipped with relevant, job-ready skills. UCBD's model reflects a growing recognition that meaningful collaboration between academia and industry is essential to building a competitive and future-ready technology ecosystem.

ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

CAREER

WORKING WITHOUT BORDERS

The rise and risks of working for foreign companies remotely

After graduation, opportunities to meet university friends became limited, and meaningful social interaction became harder to come by. With family members often belonging to different age groups, the chance to engage in heart-to-heart, relatable conversations diminishes.

TAZRIN RASHID PRITHA

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about dramatic changes in work environments across the globe. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), remote work increased significantly across all major industries between 2019 and 2021. In response to these global shifts, Bangladesh has also kept pace with the rapid adoption of remote work practices.

However, work-from-home opportunities at companies operating in Bangladesh remain limited. As a result, a large proportion of remote workers in Bangladesh today are choosing to work at foreign companies over domestic organisations.

Some, like Mohsena Akter Drishty, an independent legal researcher, had embraced remote work even before it became widespread during the pandemic. "I got my first remote job back in 2018, when I was just a third-year university student," Mohsena shares. "I needed a side hustle to support myself, and the only employment opportunities typically available to students were tutoring, which felt very monotonous and exhausting. I was fortunate enough to secure a UK-based remote position with a professor, where I was able to make use of my passion for research and writing."

Having a similar experience, Rakib*, a marketer, says, "I got my first remote job as a student. I had the opportunity to work full-time during the gap between my HSC exams and starting university. In Bangladesh, there are very few opportunities for students to secure such roles, ones that allow them to sharpen their technical skill sets and gain relevant work experience to strengthen their CVs. Remote work helps to fill that dire gap."

For others, such as Subash Richard Soren, remote work has created opportunities to apply their academic knowledge within multinational organisations while working from the comfort of their homes. Subash holds a master's degree in accounting, so he found it quite easy to become certified as a virtual bookkeeper by both Xero and QuickBooks, leading cloud-based accounting platforms. "The study materials are readily available online, and one simply must sit for an online exam to obtain certification," he says.

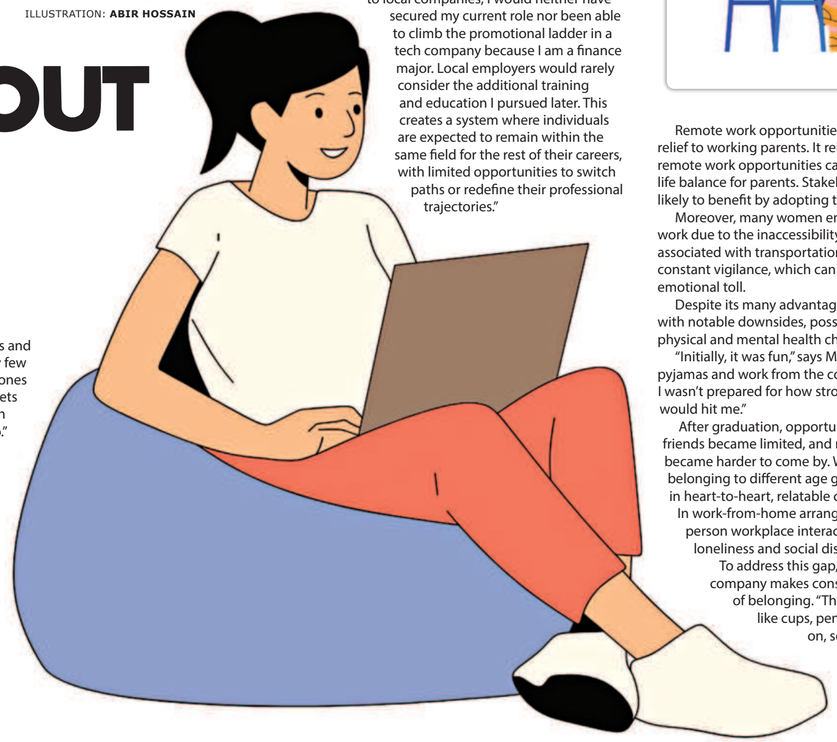
Obtaining such certifications can open lucrative career pathways with competitive compensation across the globe, made possible by the flexibility and accessibility of remote work. However, the most prominent reason many choose to work remotely for foreign organisations is the opportunity to earn at an international pay scale while working from the comfort of their homes. Higher compensation, when adjusted to the local cost of living, can significantly improve financial stability and quality of life.

Md Mahabub Alam, a senior operational analyst at Dependable Solutions, Inc., based in California, explains: "I now earn three times more than I would have if I were employed at a local company. This is partly because I am paid in US dollars, which translates into a substantial amount in Bangladeshi taka. More importantly, US companies tend to value their employees and make an effort to retain talent by offering attractive compensation packages."

Hiring processes at foreign organisations often differ significantly from those of domestic companies. These employers tend to focus less on formal credentials and more on practical competence and cultural fitness.

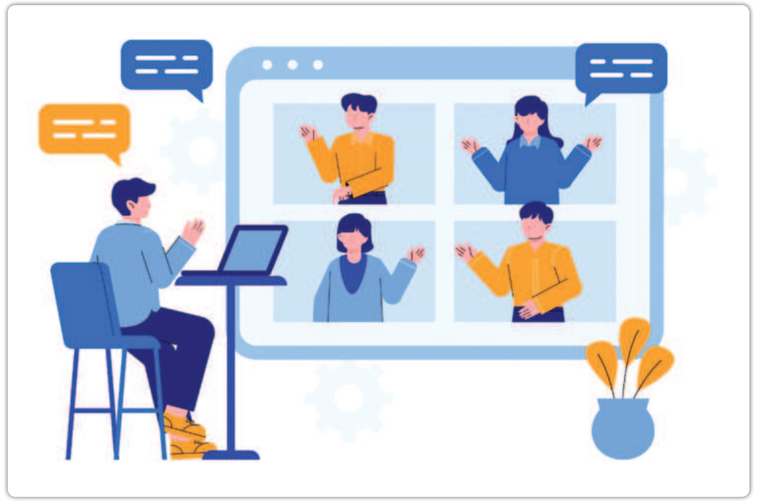
Mahabub shares: "Foreign companies assess whether a candidate possesses the specific skill sets required for the job and whether they align with the organisation's overall culture. In fact, I had to go through several rounds of interviews, including a technical viva. The aptitude test was based on a real-life case study where I had to analyse the situation and synthesise appropriate solutions to the problems presented. They also asked broader questions, such as how I view a case, how I view my life, and how I have risen above past failures. Not a single question was raised about my certifications or alma mater, which significantly reduces potential biases in the hiring process."

He further adds, "In Bangladesh, it is rarely possible to switch domains. Job circulars often require academic degrees that are directly relevant to the role. Even when companies do allow some flexibility, career progression is typically limited to junior positions, making it difficult to advance to senior roles. Thus, if I were restricted to local companies, I would neither have secured my current role nor been able to climb the promotional ladder in a tech company because I am a finance major. Local employers would rarely consider the additional training and education I pursued later. This creates a system where individuals are expected to remain within the same field for the rest of their careers, with limited opportunities to switch paths or redefine their professional trajectories."



Beyond flexibility, many remote employees report enjoying a healthy and empowering work culture at their respective workplaces. "From my experience, workplace culture is better, as foreign companies tend to treat employees with respect regardless of their designation," says Mohsena. "It helps with one's self-esteem and empowers them to speak their mind."

Mahabub echoes the same sentiment: "This is definitely one of the biggest perks that remote work has offered me. I have had the opportunity to work with both internal and external stakeholders. I can enjoy this responsibility because of the decision-making power and autonomy that my company entrusts me with."



Remote work opportunities have also brought significant relief to working parents. It reinforces that giving access to remote work opportunities can potentially support work–life balance for parents. Stakeholders in Bangladesh are also likely to benefit by adopting the same route.

Moreover, many women employees prefer remote work due to the inaccessibility and safety concerns associated with transportation. Commuting often requires constant vigilance, which can take a significant mental and emotional toll.

Despite its many advantages, remote work also comes with notable downsides, possibly instigating different physical and mental health challenges.

"Initially, it was fun," says Mohsena. "You get to be in your pyjamas and work from the comfort of your bed. However, I wasn't prepared for how strongly the wave of isolation would hit me."

After graduation, opportunities to meet university friends became limited, and meaningful social interaction became harder to come by. With family members often belonging to different age groups, the chance to engage in heart-to-heart, relatable conversations diminishes. In work-from-home arrangements, the absence of in-person workplace interactions can intensify feelings of loneliness and social disconnection.

To address this gap, Mohsena shared that her company makes conscious efforts to foster a sense of belonging. "They send us office merchandise like cups, pen drives, notebooks, and so on, so that we feel that we are part of the organisation," she says.

"It is a small gesture, but it means a lot to me."

Mental health experts suggest that taking time out each week to socialise with friends and family members should be made a priority if one wants to survive in this domain with good mental health. However, this poses a challenge, as remote workers must adjust to different time zones and often have routines that run in opposite directions to those of their loved ones.

Mohsena shares that she sadly missed out on recent social events with her loved ones. Working overnight left her utterly exhausted, forcing her to spend the daytime hours catching up on sleep just to function. She informed that this is a regular occurrence for her.

The cost of functioning against the body's natural circadian rhythm is rarely acknowledged. Consistently working during the night and sleeping during the day can cause long-term irreparable impacts on the body's functionality.

Lastly, remote workers are left in a vulnerable state as labour laws of both Bangladesh and the respective foreign countries can be bypassed via this arrangement. Rakib shares: "My payment terms were not communicated clearly to me. I was given the idea that I would be salaried monthly, but 20 days into my work, I learned from my colleagues that this is a commission-based job."

Apart from a lack of clarity observed in some instances, many foreign companies prefer to hire remote employees on renewable contracts rather than offering permanent positions. Mahabub shares that he has been working under such an arrangement for the past four years. While this provides continuity, it also means that employees like him often miss out on benefits typically available to full-time staff, such as paid leave, health insurance, retirement contributions, structured career progression, and bonuses. Over time, this contractual model can create a sense of uncertainty despite long-term service.

However, the most concerning issue is the absence of an entity for remote employees to report grievances in case a mishap occurs. This is alarming given the fact that remote workers across the globe have seen a 30 percent increase in digital harassment as this job modality grows more popular.

Rapid expansion of remote work in Bangladesh, while being beneficial mostly, has also exposed significant regulatory and structural gaps present today. Meaningful reforms are necessary to ensure that the future of work is not only flexible and profitable, but also fair, secure, and sustainable for those who power it.

*Name has been changed to protect privacy

Tazrin would probably not say no to a remote work side-quest. Reach out to her at rashidtazrin1@gmail.com

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

HUMOUR

AN INTROVERT'S GUIDE TO SURVIVING CLASS REUNIONS

TASFIAH LIAKAT

How you will feel at reunions wholly depends on your personality type. For extroverts, it's an opportunity to celebrate old friendships, but for introverts, it's an unwanted confirmation that the people they avoided in high school are exactly as exhausting as they remember.

DON'T GO

You certainly don't want to go. But you do so anyway, because people you barely remember keep reaching out, and you don't have the emotional fortitude to say no.

QUESTION ITS VALIDITY

Five years ago, you made questionable decisions on purpose. Now you've wised up a lot and only make questionable decisions by accident. Why on earth is there a reunion already?

The implied "We made it" makes no sense. Made it where? Made it to midterm trauma, last-minute submissions, and explaining your major to relatives who still believe engineering is the same as fixing computers?

REVISIT THE PAST

Rationally, you are aware that everyone is busy with their own lives and no one, but you, is still obsessing over that thing you did back in 2019. No one cares; it's more than likely that no one even remembers. But your brain strongly disagrees, swears up and down that the moment was far too embarrassing to ever fade, and promptly begins to show you the highlight reels of your most humiliating high school experiences (like the time you waved back at someone who was waving at the person behind you).

BADGER A FRIEND

Villains aren't born; they are made by the trauma of attending reunions alone. So, you immediately try to rope your friend into it, starting with the "We're a team" speech. If that doesn't work, you try flattery, bribery, begging, and guilt-tripping until they agree.

RECONNAISSANCE

You need to gather intel to avoid making a social faux pas. You need to know which topics are off-limits, who hates whom, who's dated or is dating whom, whose names must never be mentioned to whom, what to ask or not ask, and what to answer or not answer. Moreover, you must know who has done well for themselves, because nothing makes you spiral faster than unexpected success. So, you channel your inner Joe Goldberg and scroll through Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

PICK A PERSONALITY

Your real self hasn't been trained for public use, so you choose a persona that would invite the least amount of follow-up questions. Pick traits that are enough to survive small talk without sounding interesting. Piquing someone's interest, even accidentally, will land you in a lengthier conversation.

DRESS PROPERLY

Since you're already mentally distressed, no need to also subject yourself to physical discomfort. Comfort should be your primary concern, but not to the extent that it appears you are going through something and can't be bothered to take care of yourself.

ARRIVE LATE

Show up after the initial greetings are over, everyone has paired off, and is in mid-conversation. Slip in quietly to ensure you will be neither noticed nor acknowledged.

STAY TOGETHER

Separating would invite conversations you're not ready for. So, you stand angled towards each other, and try to project that you're in the middle of something important. If some misguided extrovert still breaks through and starts talking to one of you, the other should be ready to cause a diversion when the interaction turns weird, boring, or worse, about their startup.

LAUGH

When people tell stories you have no memory of or remind you of something embarrassing that you had successfully forgotten until that moment, you must laugh anyway because this is not the hill to die on. Reminiscing, you'll notice, is a communal activity designed to humiliate the weakest participant.

BE NORMAL

When someone asks how you've been, they are being polite. Do not overthink what to say and answer perfunctorily. If someone starts bragging, try to look suitably impressed and offer a compliment.

LOW-KEY EXIT

During goodbyes, people indulge in unnecessary public displays of affection. Leave without fanfare. By the time others deign to take notice, you're already home and finally happy.

LET IT HAUNT YOU

Later, you'll replay every moment, second-guess every action, and come up with witty, clever responses you could have given. It's imperative that you overthink the entire ordeal.

An allergic-to-small-talk and addicted-to-heart-to-hearts engineering student. Contact her at: tasfiahliakat007@gmail.com

OPINION

THE OUTRAGE MACHINE

How social media profits from fake literacy panics

NUZHAT TAHIYA

Every few weeks, the same performance unfolds across social media: a screenshot appears – usually from TikTok or Instagram – showing a comment so breathtakingly ignorant that it defies belief. The responses are swift and predictable: thousands of shares and quote-retweets lamenting the death of education, bemoaning Gen Z's supposed illiteracy, and declaring that humanity is doomed.

There's just one problem: most of these comments are jokes.

The practice of cherry-picking obviously facetious comments to manufacture outrage has become an industry on social media. Content creators will screenshot deliberate absurdities, strip away all context, and present them as genuine evidence of intellectual decline. The result is a self-perpetuating cycle of moral panic and fearmongering that generates clicks, engagement, and ad revenue, while telling us absolutely nothing true about young people's literacy or intelligence.

Anyone who has spent ten minutes on platforms dominated by teens and young adults will understand their particular brand of humour, where deadpan absurdity and deliberate obfuscation reign supreme. Comment sections are filled with people pretending to misunderstand basic concepts, making intentionally ridiculous statements, or committing to elaborate bits. "Shakespeare should've just used Grammarly" isn't a confession of ignorance—it's a joke that assumes everyone knows Shakespeare predated spell-check software by several centuries. The humour lies in the deliberate anachronism and obtusity.

But nuance doesn't generate engagement like outrage does. And so, these comments get screenshotted, stripped of their context, and presented to older audiences on other platforms as "Exhibit A" in the case against modern education. The people sharing them either don't understand the joke or, more cynically, understand it perfectly and don't care. A viral post lamenting youth stupidity can generate hundreds of thousands of interactions, while a post saying "This was obviously sarcasm" receives virtually none.

This mirrors older moral panics and fearmongering about new media. Comic books were supposed to rot children's brains. Television was blamed for shortening attention spans. Video games were accused of destroying empathy. Each wave of panic used selective examples to stand in for an entire generation's cognitive capacity. The current phenomenon of hand-wringing about generational decline is more of the same, perfectly adapted to the economics of clicks and popular internet discourse.

The irony is rich. The same people sharing these screenshots as evidence of deteriorating reading comprehension are demonstrating a failure of reading comprehension. They cannot recognise obvious satire, nor do they pause to consider context. They only see something that confirms their pre-existing biases about "kids these days" and immediately hit share, abandoning critical thinking.

What's especially cynical is how often these posts frame themselves as a defence of intellectual rigour. The caption mourns "declining literacy" or "the death of reading comprehension", positioning the poster as a beleaguered defender of knowledge, but the method of cherry-picking jokes and presenting them as representative is profoundly anti-intellectual. The very skills being lamented – contextual reading, inference, and charitable interpretation – are the ones being discarded.

There's also a generational narrative at work. Older users repost these comments as evidence that "Gen Z can't read", even though ironic illiteracy jokes have existed as long as comment sections have. The difference is scale: what once stayed in a niche forum now becomes a screenshot circulating far beyond its original audience. As a result, the humour collapses when removed from its native environment, and the misreading is then blamed on the younger generation rather than on the act of decontextualisation itself.

There's another layer to this genre of social media outrage: it flatters the viewer. To laugh at a screenshot of someone "missing the point" is to implicitly place oneself on the right side of intelligence. The post doesn't ask *why* someone might be joking, or *how* online humour works. It simply invites the audience to feel smarter than a caricature. That feeling is addictive, and it keeps people scrolling.

None of this is to deny that literacy gaps exist or that educational systems face real challenges. But serious issues don't reveal themselves through viral screenshots chosen for maximum ridicule and content farming. They require data, a longitudinal study, and an understanding of how people actually communicate online. Treating irony as evidence of ignorance doesn't diagnose a problem; it creates one by training audiences to read in the least generous way possible.

In the end, the real decline isn't in literacy but in interpretive charity. When jokes are routinely reframed as proof of stupidity, we lose the ability to distinguish between bad faith, humour, and genuine misunderstanding. And that flattening of meaning, ironically enough, does more damage to critical thinking than any misspelt comment ever could.

Nuzhat is a compulsive doodler and connoisseur of bad early aughts television. Send her recommendations at nuzhat.tahiya@gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: **ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA**

OFF CAMPUS

What about our parents' screen time?

ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

TINATH ZAEBA

There's a TV blaring loud enough to be heard from all corners of the house, and a phone in my father's hand. Two different screens with two distinct things playing on each of them. My mother, on the other hand, averages 12 hours of screen time. What does she do on her phone? She sends me AI generated reels, which I always have to remind her aren't real.

This entire ordeal makes me feel more like a parent, one who has been tasked with the insurmountable task of reminding my parents to put their phones away during dinner, except I continue to be reprimanded like their child.

It's strange growing up in a time when children are warned about screens, yet somehow, it's the parents who seem just as glued to them, if not more. When we were younger, it was us who were warned about how much time we could spend in front of the TV, urged instead to focus on books instead of devices. Now the TV runs in the background while they watch videos on their phones.

What worries me isn't just the time they spend on their phones, but the fact that they were suddenly exposed to the internet without ever really learning how it works. We grew up alongside it and learned what spam looks like, what fake news sounds like, and what not to click. To various degrees, we learned to scrutinise what we saw online, to double-check headlines, and to assume that not everything that is on the internet is true. For our parents, the internet arrived all at once: fully formed, overwhelming, and so very interesting.

Another thing that makes all of this harder now is how difficult misinformation and AI content have become to detect. Videos have realistic voices, clear visuals, and confident narration; nothing immediately feels suspicious. AI can generate faces, news clips, and even "expert" explanations that seem completely real at first glance. For someone who didn't grow up closely analysing online content, it's easy to get swept up by how pristine and professional something looks – signalling its authenticity and thus, how much it can be trusted.

Naturally, for my parents, who are already trusting by nature and not used to double-checking sources, it's even harder to tell what's real and what's made up.

They're also the perfect target for ads. Advertisements don't even look like advertisements anymore. Instead, they're disguised as normal videos, recommendations, or someone casually raving about a product. At that point, it feels more like advice than marketing, which can potentially take away some of the scepticism that consumers usually reserve before making any purchases. This is especially true for my parents who might not even question why something is being shown to them or who is trying to sell it.

If a video confidently says a gadget works or a supplement fixes everything, they're more likely to believe it. Sometimes they'll show me products they're thinking of buying that clearly came from a sponsored post, which they don't even realise is an ad. The algorithms quickly learn what they click on and continues to feed them similar content, keeping them in a loop. The more they watch, the more the algorithm realises what works, and the easier it becomes to retain their attention.

What is particularly concerning is that this doesn't necessarily bother them. In fact, I am starting to suspect that it might be somewhat enjoyable for them. The phone has become more than just a device; it's entertainment, connection, and comfort all wrapped up in one. It's how they relax after a long day, how they keep up with relatives, and how they escape boredom. So, when I try to say anything against their phone habits, it feels hypocritical. After all, I use my phone too. I scroll, watch videos, and text my friends. Who am I to lecture them about screen time when I'm not exactly screen-free myself?

While I may have learned how to navigate the tricky terrains of the internet, I haven't exactly learned how to go about my way without it. And maybe that is what I can teach them: not to completely forego their devices but to help them figure out how to use them more mindfully. The roles may have reversed but the sentiment that compels us to care for each other perseveres. No amount of blaring of television sets nor mind-numbing reels can take that away.

Tinath Zaeba is an optimistic daydreamer, a cat mom of 5, and a student of Economics at North South University. Get in touch via tinathzaeba25@gmail.com.