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# the ULABian

A Student Mouthpiece



Mobile Journalism... Page 4

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# Dhaka Media Summit

WHITHER JOURNALISM?

The ULABian Desk

The Department of Media Studies and Journalism (MSJ) at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) organised a summit on the future of journalism last March. The flagship event was intended to create space for multi-sectoral dialogues on the very decisive, seminal and timely theme. A series of dialogues and deliberations mainly focused on the four major aspects of journalism: audience access, agenda setting, sustainability or viability and safety concerns.

The four-day Dhaka Media Summit-2022, hosted in the cyberspace from March 10-13, featured 10 associate partners, presentations of 58 papers by researchers and academics from as many as 10 countries, five roundtable discussions, three master classes and the promotion of a book.

The associate partners included LSPR Communication and Business Institute, Indonesia; Walisongo University, Indonesia; Pelita Harapan University, Indonesia; Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti



Members of the organizing committee of the Dhaka Media Summit 2022.

Photo: MSJ-ULAB

Language University, India; Miriam College, the Philippines; Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, Thailand; Media Action, Nepal; Dhaka International Mobile Film Festival, Digital Transformation Centre, and Axis Media and Information Literacy (MIL).

### Day-one activism

ULAB Vice Chancellor Prof Imran Rahman inaugurated the programme co-hosted by MSJ Department and the International Association of Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) Bangladesh. MSJ Department Head Prof Jude William Genilo, IAMCR President Prof Nico Carpentier and vernacular Daily Prothom Alo Special Correspondent Rozina Islam attended the inaugural session.

Addressing the opening programme, Prof Rahman said, "We are trying our best to promote the best-quality journalism in the

country by preparing skilled, savvy and future-ready journalists at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism."

In his speech, Prof Carpentier said journalism is a multidimensional profession. There is not a single form of journalism. He said, "We are at the juncture of transformation of the profession. Hence, we have to be prepared for the future using our past experiences."

Speaking at the session, Prof Jude said, "No one can say for certain how the future of journalism will unfold. More such conferences are needed to understand the future better."

In her keynote, journalist Rozina Islam said Bangladesh is a difficult place for journalism, especially for women Journalists.

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## CJEN NETWORKING CONFERENCE AT ULAB

### Journalism education should be bespoke to meet current trends

The ULABian Desk

Communication and journalism educators at a conference on media and journalism education have said journalism education must adapt to the changes to bring out the essence of journalism and suggested that it remain relevant and be acclimatised to feed the growing demands of time in this cut-throat world of competition.

The Department of Media Studies and Journalism (MSJ) at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) hosted the two-day specialised programme styled 'Communication and Journalism Educators Network (CJEN) Bangladesh Fifth Networking Conference- 2022' from May 13 to 14.

ULAB Vice Chancellor Prof Imran Rahman inaugurated the conference which was organised in association with the Germany-based Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie. Journalism educators from top home-grown universities took part in the event.

In his inaugural speech, VC Prof Imran said the university authorities have a high commitment to promoting the mass media in the country. So, the Department of Media Studies and Journalism at the university always attaches great importance

to prepare its graduates by updating its courses and curriculum in consultation with stakeholders from the media industry on a regular basis.

Dr Joey Alagaran, Asia Pacific Regional Representative of UNESCO-Media Information Literacy Alliance, gave the keynote speech on the occasion.

### What's on first day?

The first day's action-packed schedule of the conference covered the presentation of three research papers and the organisation of two roundtable discussions. Later in the day, a cultural event was organised to cheer up the audience and breathe new life into the event.

Addressing the session, MSJ Department head Prof Jude William Genilo said the

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Participants of 5th CJEN Networking Conference posing for a group photo after the formal opening session.

Photo: DW Akademie

## CJEN NETWORKING CONFERENCE...

[Cont. from Page 1]

media and journalism education institutions must think critically about their roles, and know their strengths and weaknesses today. “We at the ULAB try to prepare our graduates who are equipped with knowledge and skills needed in their real-life professional work,” he added.

In a plenary session styled ‘What is Wrong with Journalism Education in Bangladesh’, Prof Jude called for building a strong network of media and journalism educators in the country to share experiences and expertise, and to enhance research and scholarships in the field.

In the session, Dr Abdul Kabil Khan, assistant professor at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, ULAB, presented the findings of a study on ‘What I wish My Faculty Would Do and Would Not Do for My Career Development?’

A roundtable discussion titled ‘The Future of Media Industry—New Approaches and

Business Models’ was held in the second plenary session. Bangla Daily Somoyer Alo executive editor Harun Ur Rashid, Jamuna TV special correspondent Mohsin Ul Hakim, and lead mobile journalist of online news portal Bangladesh Times, took part in the discussion moderated by MSJ Department’ senior lecturer Nandita Tabassum Khan.

Deutsche Welle (DW) Akademie Media Services GmbH program manager Dr Esther Dorn-Fellermann and DW Akademie Program Director (Bangladesh) Priya Esselborn also attended the event.

### Second day

The second day’s plenary session kicked off with Dr James Gomez, Regional Director, Asia Centre, Thailand, as a speaker who delivered a lecture on ‘Media and Journalism Schools: Best Practices, Lessons Learned’.

Dr Sarkar Barbaq Quarmal, assistant professor of the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, ULAB, and also convener of this networking conference, presented the research findings on Media and Journalism Education: Challenges Ahead, Response Needed’. Both of them hammered home the importance of networking and ways to prepare for a new industry environment. The session was

moderated by Aminul Islam, lecturer of the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, ULAB. A question-answer (Q&A) session was held after the presentation of the findings of the study.

Later in the day, a workshop for MSJ students was organised on ‘Mobile-first Journalism: Creating Native Content for Social Media Platforms’. The instructors were Dr Kabil of the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, ULAB, and Assistant Professor Rajib Nandy, the Department of Communication and Journalism, University of Chittagong.

At the closing speech, Dr Esther Dorn-Fellermann, conference program manager at the DW Akademie Media Services GmbH, says, “We at the DW Akademie are happy to support you in this [programme]. We create the platform for exchange, we see ourselves as a catalyst.”

Prof Jude, who was also the chairman of the CJEN Bangladesh Fifth Networking Conference-2022, said, “May CJEN keep us connected and make our community stronger. The topics we discussed in the conference made us reflect on ourselves.” Khulna University will host the next CJEN Bangladesh Sixth Networking Conference in 2023.



A lively session of roundtable discussion being moderated at the 5th CJEN Networking Conference

Photo: DW Akademie

Women in the workplace often tend to take on an extra workload than their male counterparts. Alongside managing the family and household chores, working ladies are lumbered with emotional and relational labour within the workplace. Women with a job career always hustle with social expectations along with maintaining a delicate balance between family and lives of their own. Often there are times when women have to choose between their career and family or social life. The quandary ends through sacrificing any one of the options. Men do not face such dilemmas as women do in the drudgery of their life.

Ms Shabiba is a case in point here. She is the face of the struggling female careerists in Bangladesh. She is a working woman who has struggled with such dilemmas since her early age. She is currently working as a young professional on the government's a2i (aspire to innovate) project. At the same time, the spirited Shabiba has enrolled in a master's program in development studies at BRAC University.

Ms Shabiba shares the experience of an everyday struggle she has been undergoing in juggling her home, education and work life. Having done these things, she barely has any time left to dedicate to herself in a world of her own. "If I neglect either of these three," she says, "I feel unaccomplished. There is always a need to create a fine balance between these things." Ms Shabiba also shared the troubles she faces in her everyday life as a woman. She had been working small part-time jobs from home and outside since 2016, but started working full time back in September 2019. Her first job was as a freelance writer.

Ms Shabiba said, "I always enjoy writing. Keeping this in mind, I started hunting jobs for myself and trying to find my own path. Since I started doing small jobs from an early age, I learned to try to maintain a balance between my dual lives—one as a part-timer and another as a student." This is how Ms Shabiba learned at an early age that she needed to dedicate time to juggle everything—her home and her life outside. In the beginning, things went frantic as she

## WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION A Myth

Sadia Mahboob

was studying while doing all these small jobs. It was indeed tough for her to manage proper time for both, casting aside her social expectations.

At times, more than often, Ms Shabiba says, her key challenge was to set her priorities right between work and home, which the bosses, especially the male, simply failed to understand. The pandemic made the balance quite blurry as everything was in remote-work mode staying at home. Before the outbreak of Covid-19, office hours would mostly end by 5:00 o'clock, and the bosses would believe that one would not work properly from home. But the circumstances have changed now. There is no proper time to work from home. "This one time, my immediate boss called me at 6:00 in the morning asking for a change in the report as they think they can work anytime since they are home all day," shares Ms Shabiba. There were times when she was in the middle of a family programme and suddenly she had to entertain a call from work. That did not turn out too good as her family did not appreciate it that much. "According to them, I was too much of a workaholic and did not appreciate family time. I failed to make them understand that I could lose my job if I did not pick up the phone timely." In the midst of straddling her work and home, Ms Shabiba constantly struggled night and day to stay fit and sound both physically and mentally. From not eating enough to grazing wrong foods and not taking care of her health, there were bouts of sickness that Ms Shabiba had to go through.

The work environment here seems to have changed over time in a good way. In the beginning, Ms Shabiba was underestimated by her co-workers, especially by her boss, as a newbie since it was her first job. Later, she discovered that the attitude was different

towards another fellow male newcomer. "Work came easily to him," Ms Shabiba uttered. Some days they would pile too much pressure on her, taking advantage of the fact that she could not say 'no'. Most of her seniors were men. Oftentimes she had a lot of work, but they did not ask her to stay back as she was a woman.

But the situation changed with the passage of time as they realised that Ms Shabiba was willing to work and that she was more than capable of doing the work they wanted to assign her. However, there are still instances that she felt like they let her off very easily and did not criticise her so strictly unlike her male counterparts, which kind of slows her down. She has been dealing with this since the beginning of her career, and this can be tiring and demotivating. Even though there were times she felt like just completely giving up, Ms Shabiba did not tread that way. She stayed strong and determined, and eventually she overcame the troubles. Along with facing the hardships on her own, Ms Shabiba also had to make choices that were not easy and she ultimately made sacrifices. "Making sacrifices was tough, but I took them as an opportunity cost to keep myself going because, in some cases, I had to give up my social life occasionally. Because of work, I had to give up spending time with my friends and family, and there were times that I had to give up spending time on myself because I had to prioritise my work."

Keeping a work-life balance for women in their mid-30s is as close to a myth as it can be. In the coming months, Ms Shabiba is going to tie the knot, and she expresses that it will bring a whole new dimension to her home. The dual role of managing and giving more time to both sides of the family will befall her. As Ms Shabiba says, "Some days are bad, but now I have found a way out, thanks to my incredible support system, both at work and at home." Ms Shabiba has learned instead to consider work among a host of responsibilities that life throws one's way. So, when this scribe asked Ms Shabiba if she was performing all her roles perfectly, she said, "No". And that's okay. We're already doing our very best, and that's enough.



# MOJO

## MOBILE JOURNALISM TOMORROW'S JOURNALISM?

Mahzabeen Yousuf & Abid Hasan

Good news is two Bangladeshis have made it to the list of top 40 mobile journalists, trainers and content creators in the world, making the nation elated with their success. One of them is Dr Abdul Kabir Khan, who is better known as Dr Jamil Khan. On September 2 last year, the UK-based popular news portal 'journalism.co.uk' published the names of the people picked from around the world. With mobile journalism specialist Dr Jamil Khan, Sabbir Ahmed from Bangladesh was also included in the list.

Dr Jamil Khan, who also teaches journalism as an assistant professor at the Media Studies and Journalism (MSJ) department at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), recently sat with Abid Hasan and Mahzabeen Yousuf in an exclusive interview to give his insights on the latest trend of mobile journalism globally. The interview is as follows.

You are one of the top 40 mobile journalists in the world. Can you please share how you feel about this?

**Dr Jamil:** On September 2, the UK-based Journalism.co.uk published a list of the top 40 mobile journalists, trainers, and content creators from around the world. Sabbir Ahmed and I were included from Bangladesh. Undoubtedly, this is a great achievement, but I do not want to stop here. I want to achieve something even better through my work.

How did you get into mobile journalism?

**Dr Jamil:** Well, I went to study journalism at People's Friendship University in Moscow, Russia, in 2006. Then, in 2008-09, I opened a YouTube channel and uploaded photos and videos of various events hosted in the Bangladeshi community in Moscow with my mobile phone. Gradually, I became obsessed with making videos using my smartphone. Ever since I was a student of journalism, I always harboured an idea about news casting. Later, when I was writing a thesis in my honours final year, new media and online journalism came to the fore and I became interested in this particular subject. I tried to contemplate the future of this form of journalism. From that moment, I started showing my interest and then eventually practising it. When I was in my master's programme, I was introduced to mobile journalism back in 2013. I was studying for

my PhD in 2015 when I discovered that there would be an international conference on the world's first mobile journalism in Dublin, the capital of Ireland, and that journalists from the BBC, CNN and Al Jazeera would come under one roof and discuss mobile journalism for two days. I got the opportunity to go there as the only Bangladeshi. There, I learned extensively about mobile journalism. Talking to Glenn Malachi of Ireland, Ibobrum of Australia and Mark Satley, a trainer at the BBC College of Journalism, who has contributed the most to mobile journalism, I have learned the basics of mobile journalism. Later, I made an initiative to make my own content taking help from various online websites and reading books. That's the beginning of my journey as a mobile journalist.

Mobile journalism gains wider currency all over the world, but it is still being neglected in Bangladesh. Will you tell us the whys and wherefores?

**Dr Jamil:** You see, its importance is not being given at all. The way we want, those who have been familiar with or working with mobile journalism for a long time want this journalism to be studied a little more openly. It's not just person-focused, it's institutionalised. Overall, we can say that no such aspect is being called for and that all the media outlets in Bangladesh should practise mobile journalism. People who are researching it are quite concerned. If I give a reason for not giving it any importance, I have to say that there is a distinct lack of knowledge of mobile journalism. Also, the lack of skills and access to instruments or tools needed to do this has created some obstacles. Now, the issue of instruments is very much within reach here.

What is the most important lesson for a mobile journalist?

**Dr Jamil:** You need to know the norms and the "core" skills of journalism. Besides, you have to know a little about the DOs and DON'Ts while you are telling your story live. One must have the ability to increase his/her communication with other people from different platforms. Besides, you have to go to the field with all the instruments properly to capture a live moment.

It so happens that live viewers give wrong information at times. What can be the solution?

**Dr Jamil:** If a viewer has given wrong information in real life, then the information has to be corrected by itself. And for that, you have to listen to what the audience says. Besides, the mobile journalist should read a little about the specific subject that is being broadcast live.

How are mobile journalists viewed in other parts of the world?

**Dr Jamil:** Mobile journalists or TV journalists are not looked upon differently around the world. The quality of work is seen there. Nobody ever says, "This story should be videotaped with a mobile, not with a separate camera." Since there is no major programme coverage with mobile phones in Bangladesh, the practice of interviewing someone with the help of a mobile phone has not started yet. Therefore, mobile journalists in our country do not get this facility like their counterparts do in other countries.

What is the future of mobile journalism when TV and print media are gaining ground globally?

**Dr Jamil:** As all the media in the world is now leaning towards digital platforms, I think they will give more priority to those who know about multimedia when publishing recruitment notices for journalists in future. In the next five to six years, mobile journalists will be at the forefront of getting jobs in the media because a mobile journalist understands both traditional and digital platforms. So, I see a lot of possibilities for mobile journalists in the future.

Could you please briefly describe the 'Introduction to Mobile and Online Journalism' course?

**Dr Jamil:** It is an academic course that allows you to study more about technology. First, you have to love and learn technology to understand it. The purpose of this course is to teach you how to use your mobile phone for gripping storytelling. Thank you.





*New students and apprenticeship program members gets captured in a single frame at the ULAB permanent campus.*

*Photo: PR4U*

ONE STEP AT A TIME

## MSJ Orientation and Apprenticeship Day

Wasima Ullah

As the people of Bangladesh have heaved a sigh of relief from coronavirus and are bidding farewell to the Covid-19 pandemic with signs of abatement in the bite of the pathogen, thousands of educational institutions across the country are also trying to get back on track with students. Our dear campus of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), a nerve centre of higher studies, is also abuzz with hundreds of pupils. Now is time for in-person presence in the classroom. Time is now to be attentive to studies!

After two long years of online education, the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh has hosted its first offline orientation for its Media Studies and Journalism (MSJ) department recently. The programme kicked off around 10 in the morning. I reached the hall around 9:30 am and, to my utter surprise, the auditorium was almost filled with freshers from Fall 2021, their eyes gleaming with excitement as they were the first batch after the pandemic to get an offline orientation. It was really a big DO after our “enforced disappearance” from the campus.

In the very beginning, the hosts of the event invited the head of the Media Studies and Journalism department, Prof Jude William R Genilo, to introduce himself and share some inspiring words with the freshers. His ice-breaking speech was then followed by other teachers of the department. They all gave their introduction and uttered some useful tips

for the freshers. Later, Ms Nandita came on stage to explain the mission and vision of the MSJ department, and narrated its golden journey to impart journalism lessons and churn out grads of the first grade with an eye to serving the nation in the mass media.

Ms Nandita shed the spotlight on the success of the ULAB’s MSJ department as it is not just recognised in Bangladesh, but also by international organisations. She



*Freshers getting demonstrated in the promotional booths by different apprenticeship programs*  
*Photo: PR4U*

narrated how the department clocked this feat. This achievement made all the people linked with the MSJ department and the freshers proud. After that astounding speech, Prof Jude William presented awards to the participants of the apprenticeship programmes whose performances were outstanding in 2021 and 2020. The awardees all came on stage to pose for a group picture with him along with their crests and certificates.

Next, a group of volunteers took the freshers to their advising session for a while. From there, they were led towards their media lab on Campus B. After that, the freshers were brought by ULAB bus to the permanent campus (Campus C & D) as a big thing awaited them. Department seniors entertained them with a musical performance. Then came the lunch hour. Following snacks and refreshments, the freshers then headed towards the booths of the apprenticeship programmes where they heard what each programme had in store for them and signed up for the one that appealed to them the most. A tour of the green campus was a big treat!

To wrap things up, the MSJ department organised an eventful orientation for the freshers. The ‘meet and greet’, for my money, was necessary after two consecutive years of online education that had already played a lot of mind games with the students. The apprenticeship day’s gala will boost their energy and enable them to start their journey in the ULAB with a fresh mind.



While inaugurating and celebrating International Women's Day to the fullest in 2021, Bangladesh's education minister, Dr Dipu Moni, made a commitment and reassured a host of domestic feminist and activist networks of the nation's integration of sex education into the national curriculum after facing a lot of pressure from students and anti-rape activists backed by local human rights organisations. They demanded that the government vouch for the feminist cause and catalyse an end to the rampant rape culture after the word of the gruesome Begumganj sexual assault case came to light, triggering a storm of protest nationwide.

The government has succumbed to the demand for incorporating sex education into the textbook, but there was no explicit mention of the inclusion of any sexually transmitted disease (STD) or sexually transmitted infection (STI) as it was not a pressing issue at the moment. The amount of shame shrouding this conversation makes sure that it almost always remains in the shadows. In an attempt to search for previous scholarly articles on this topic, it was surprising and deeply concerning to gauge the level of our ignorance and understanding of this issue in our country's context, especially when it comes to the youth, because ignorance is not bliss in this case. There is little awareness or collective idea among students with regard to any STD or STI, nor do we know how they cope with the disease if they ever come into contact with themselves or one of their peers.

Take a closer look at the available data, and topics of discussion on social media and other platforms apropos sex education in Bangladesh, you will find little or no space reserved for conversation centring sexually transmitted diseases and infections. In any way, our talks regarding sex education have practically been stuck between consent and the importance of wearing a condom. Apparently, the worst outcome of any consensual intimacy is a positive pregnancy test, and our definition of "unsafe sex" is largely

defined by this view. However, we are yet to fully understand and disclose the extent of physical and mental health risks encompassed by unsafe sex and why this term demands critical importance in our collective awareness.

Closely studying a 2014 article, "Knowledge and awareness of STDs among women in Bangladesh" published by BMC Public

Health, it has become clear that knowledge and awareness of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) has become a burning issue in our relatively conservative society. Although sexually transmitted diseases pose a serious health and safety risk, there is little literature to quantify knowledge and awareness of these diseases and their major impacts on young adults in the context of Bangladesh. The study behind these questions was an attempt made to quantify and measure a student's level of awareness through their knowledge of health and safety in response to STDs and STIs as well as their access to information. The qualitative portion of this study will take into account knowledge of available medical services and whether or not they have taken any thus far, if they have faced stigmas in such an environment, and how they were treated based on gender and sex/sexuality.

Students in Bangladesh have not been taught en masse about the high risk factors surrounding sexual intimacy, let alone about the differences between STDs and STIs. To fight this taboo, there should be an open segment on STDs and STIs for university students to become aware of the consequences of risky sexual practices. Moreover, people should be encouraged to engage in dialogue regarding sexual health and safe sex at regular intervals. Clichés like "treating one's own body like a sacred temple" should also come with the social responsibility of teaching people how to maintain sexual and personal hygiene. It is important to develop students' perceptions towards STDs and STIs in an effort to humanise and empathise with people whose lives have been affected by such diseases. Let us all plant a seed for the normalisation of a culture that prioritises safety over taboo.

# STDs

## ARE THEY TOO BLINDSIDED?

Mondrila M Huda

# ULAB'S SUSTAINED CONTRIBUTION TO SDGs

Sadia Mahboob

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), set by the United Nations for its member countries to achieve by the year 2030, are critical for overcoming the world's current environmental, political and economic challenges. The attainment of all SDGs can help the world sustain and survive the worst of poverty, carbon emissions and unemployment, among other goals like green growth, zero maternal and neonatal death, and child marriage. The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) is doing its best to contribute largely to achieving these goals. The ULAB has been trying to achieve the goals even before they were officially established. ULAB founder and president Kazi Shahid Ahmed always aspired to create a knowledge hub where stakeholders could contribute to making society a more sustainable place.

ULAB Vice-chancellor Professor Imran Rahman is working tirelessly towards achieving the sustainable goals. The first thing that the ULAB is focusing on is making the campus green by reducing the use of plastics on the ULAB compound, using as little electricity as possible, recycling as materials like paper as possible and, of course, having to plant more trees to reduce the amount of carbon dioxide on the campus. The ULAB is currently working on reducing carbon footprint on the campus. When asked about how students can contribute to achieving these goals, Professor Imran Rahman said, "Good work starts right from you. You play your part and don't wait for anybody else. Start using less plastic materials in your daily life, try to keep your surroundings clean, and DON'T waste water or electricity."

The ULAB, a centre of excellence in pursuing liberal arts, is currently the only university in our country that offers sustainable development as an individual subject (as a minor). We even have our own sustainable development centre, and it is operated by Dr Samiya Selim. Dr Samiya is an associate professor and the director of the Centre for Sustainable Development (CSD). The CSD is the only research institute in Bangladesh dedicated solely to the sustainable development dilemma. The centre moves ahead with a threefold mission—doing original research on SDGs, making sustainability leaders and acting as a regional hub of academics, scholars and researchers.

The ULAB has put a lot of effort into achieving 17 sustainable development goals. The university, for example, is making every effort to ensure equal rights for all students regardless of their gender, family, financial or educational background. As part of making a green environment, the ULAB sends out all its used paper to Bashundhara Group's newsprint unit in order to recycle the stuff into tissue papers. The university's most recent work is the establishment of a green campus. Dr Samiya says the ULAB's CSD is trying to collaborate and create a strong link with national and international non-governmental organisations for greater development causes. What is more, the sustainable goals are being embedded in the education system so that students can learn to make their fair share of contribution and also get first-hand experience. The ULAB's sustainable development club is open to all. Welcome on board!

*ULAB Vice-Chancellor Prof. Imran Rahman  
Source: The Daily Star*



# PANDEMIC MUSINGS

## EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN A POST-COVID WORLD

Tahmina Khatun Fahima

It is the time for thanksgiving for the fastest developing situation in the abatement of coronavirus in Bangladesh when we are seeing deathless days and the infection rate is near zero. But what was the situation even a few months ago? The writer seeks to travel to a time in the past two years when the entire country, including the educational institutions, was on lockdown for a longer period of time with intent to contain the pandemic. This narrative reflects on her pandemic musings.

It may take us weeks, months or even years to get back to campus, but in some ways, we will appear out of our cocoons like newborn butterflies. We will meet and greet each other as we walk across the hall, attend department meetings, grab books from the library and head into our labs. And for the first time after this Covid-19 situation, we will not be feeling the need to bring out wipes, sanitiser or regret wondering if we really made the biggest mistake of our lives by not maintaining the social distance! We, the students, unlike other people, are heavily shaken by the current situation and how it may cost us our education significantly. There are clear indications of how Covid-19 turned things topsy-turvy—be it international cooperation or a global crisis. There will be seemingly no changes to Covid-19, which will be a watershed in history.

In terms of the university experience, I was unable to encounter any of it as I was just a newcomer. Before I could roam around the whole campus and take my interests and socialise with my surroundings, the pandemic broke out. Personally, I am an introvert, yet this lockdown was not a happy experience for me. The tunes of guitars and people singing still echo in my mind. Friends were laughing and enjoying their moments. We just came out of our comfort zone and made new

friends. But now we are unable to make it stronger like it could be if it was on the campus. I visited campus during the Covid-19 situation due to some official work. It was an unlikely environment to look at for obvious reasons.

Across the empty corridors, the classrooms look as if they have stopped breathing for long. Once we are allowed to do what was once normal and allowed to go to our institutes, we will do those all over again, but with a difference! We will value our human contact more than we used to. We will acknowledge the importance of learning while being together. Nowadays, we have exposure to online learning on a global scale. We have spent many months engaging ourselves with many advanced tools on our devices. It is inevitable that we could use those skills for our practical activities. It will not be as effective as it would be if it was on-campus learning.

There will be challenges to work and pour our abilities into getting it going. There will be great opportunities as well. We need to remember that, with the passage of time, universities will bring about changes needed to survive in such delicate situations. Over time, reforms like this will be universally accepted. Even if we return to the campus and classrooms, we will fall back into old habits. However, certain precautions will be preserved after saving the situation during the Covid-19 pandemic. As soon as our life resumes functioning like before, it won't simply resume working as normal operation machines that are on hold for the time being. It is also a new beginning. Things could either put our education system at risk or maybe be the beginning of the new era of modernity. In any way, things should be rolling in the 'new normal' situation.



*A partial view of the ULAB campus*



# CLIMATE IMPACTS

## How Long Was Winter In 2021?

Wasima Ullah

Some may call it the season of love while others may refer to it as a ray of hope. Winter comes in the northern hemisphere with all its attributes--holidaying, camping, travelling and what not! As winter comes at the end of the year, people get a chance to bask in winter, take a look back and learn from their past experiences. The question is: "Did the winter in 2021 give them the scope to reflect on their actions? How was the winter in 2021?"

Usually, winter starts from November and ends in the middle of January. But that time winter came in a group of inconsistent waves. All through November, there was no sign of any chilliness of winter but only a bit of fog seen at night. Other days it almost felt like we were in the middle of hot, dry summer days. The days in November bore no sign of winter approaching and the countrymen were confident that that time the season of cold would cut its stay short.

After a bit of wait, winter finally arrived in December. However, the wait was not worth it as it was hardly that cold that year. The chilliest days during the winter time consisted of gloomy days and nights with a bit of fog but those only lasted for three to five days. Normally, we could see the sun rising brightly during the daytime and people did not require putting on winter wear during the period in question. Since the nights include no sun, naturally the nights remain a bit colder. But why was the

winter the shortest last year? Let us try to dwell on the issue to get the answer.

The abnormality in the year-round seasons and freakish weather have been quite common this year. The monsoon, the season of rains, was quite long and people were kind of annoyed as it came in the way of all of their plans. The heavy rains almost flooded the Chattogram district and the landslide was posing a threat to the hilly areas. Some rainy days were also seen in November. This irregularity in the seasons was due to a change in the weather patterns as predicted by climatologists in the 20th century. The continuous emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases into the earth's atmosphere are causing the temperature to increase at an alarming rate.

Too hot, too dry, too cold and too rainy are the extremes of weather. Why are things abnormal in climate? The answer is the anthropogenic emissions of culprit gases and pollution of the environment, biomass and the natural ecosystem. The cost of this human damage being done to the environment is simply horrendous. At the current rate of climate change due to global warming propelled by carbon release and other pollutants, scientists sound a note of warning that things might get worse if the emissions are not being controlled immediately. Reasonably, we can conclude that the coming winters might be even shorter and less chilly than it was last year.



Dhaka Media Summit 2022 on  
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However, it is a place for best journalism also. She said, "As journalists, we mustn't stop. We must persist despite countless barriers that may stand in our way."

The inaugural event was followed by IAMCR Ambassadors' session on the future of journalism and its implications to journalism education, and two master classes on 'social media and mobile journalism' and 'media-ethics cauldron: myths, realities and futures'.

#### Day two

A galaxy of speakers during different thematic sessions on the second day of the summit observed that new information and communication technologies have unfolded new opportunities as well as threats for journalism around the world. A close collaboration among media education institutions, media academics and news media organisations can find ways to tap the potential and tackle the challenges. They also accentuated the importance of promoting media and information literacy among young people so that they can be sophisticated media consumers and be able to navigate both virtual and real worlds.

Speaking at a roundtable styled 'Communication Modalities and Audience Engagement in the Networked Environment', Ruchita Sujai Chowdhury, assistant professor at Khwaja Moinuddin Christi Language University, called for harnessing the talent of today's youth, saying that young journalists are equipped with vast new technologies. So, they must take advantage of this technological boom to churn out quality news items in order to satisfy the fast-paced digital audience in a networked environment.

At another roundtable titled 'Citizens of Today and Tomorrow: Digital Literacy and Digital Etiquette in Secondary Curriculum', Prof Md Moshiiuzzaman, member of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, said the Bangladesh government is working hard to incorporate media and information literacy into the national curriculum so that

new generations can brace themselves for the challenges of fourth industrial revolution.

Addressing the same programme, Joey Alagaran, Asia-Pacific regional representative of Global Alliance for Partnership on Media and Information Literacy (GAPMIL), said digital literacy is not about only using digital tools, but it is also about creating and using digital content ethically upholding social mores.

On the other hand, Laxman Datt Pant, chair of Nepal Media Action and co-chair of Media Freedom Coalition-Consultative Network, at a roundtable styled 'Media Sustainability and Safety Concerns for Journalists in Nepal and Beyond', said it is high time for South Asian countries to protect journalists by implementing new laws. In two other research panel sessions, a pool of researchers from Indonesia presented eight articles on the second day of the summit.

#### Penultimate day

On the third day of the summit, experts from Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh presented research papers in different panel sessions. They observed that new information communication technologies have transformed the functions and process of content creation, distribution and consumption. But the role of the media remains almost the same as it was in the past, and it will remain equally significant. They emphasized the media's role in producing quality content with social responsibilities by adapting new technologies to ensure their sustainability in the transformed media ecology.

Speaking at a discussion on 'Media and Identity Construction', Dr Gitira Nasreen, a professor at the Department of Mass Communication and Journalism at Dhaka University, said the media plays an influential role in the construction of diverse identities. So, journalists must be careful when creating their content.

#### Final day

On the fourth and final day, the conference ended with a clarion call for doing

journalism by, for starters, adopting latest information technologies, crafting new business models and gaining public trust. The closing ceremony of the event was attended by Prof Jude, Jamuna Television special correspondent Mohsin Ul Hakim, eminent photographer Dr Shahidul Alam, Mae Ann Chua, Lynda Catindig-Garcia, Therese San Diego Torres and Janess Ann J Ellao, among others.

Thirty scientific papers were presented and a roundtable discussion was held on the last day of the event. Presenting a paper on factors affecting trust in news media, MSJ lecturer Aminul Islam said the level of trust of young people in the news media of the country is at low ebb, at its nadir, to be precise. The erosion of ethics and ethical journalism is thanks to the owners' fawning flattery with the persons in positions of powers.

At the programme, Dr Alam said journalists often face tyranny from various social-economic and political stakeholders. "Tyrants will be tyrants. Our collective silence gives space for the authoritarians to oppress us... It is our responsibility to speak for the people."

According to TV journalist Mr Hakim, news media organisations and journalists are going through an anarchic situation. But he is upbeat about a new dawn in journalism, a bright future of the profession with brighter, motivated, skilled and talented young people coming with brilliant new ideas.

In sum, journalism is the first draft of history. It is a challenging profession that combines with passion. Hard-nosed and diligent journalists race against time to look for scoops and exclusives. They face acid test of their taste in reportage, judgment and presentation as per merit of the stories. That's the story of journalism even a decade ago. But today's journalism is a tectonic shift in the aeon of infobahn, in the era of digital journalism, especially through your smartphones. The mainline mass media is fast giving place to social, mobile or citizen journalism. It will take more time to gauge the current trend of journalism.

# SPENCER

A FACT-FICTION BLENDING

**Fabiha Jabin**

The 2021 British royal drama ‘Spencer’, directed by Pablo Larran and written by Steven Knight, describes itself as “a fable from a true tragedy”. Diana, the Princess of Wales, is portrayed by Kristen Stewart and her husband Prince Charles by Jack Farthing in the film. It is a psychological drama that depicts the mental instability of Princess Diana prior to the end of her marriage with Prince Charles. The movie is more of a creative interpretation of a number of real-life events and experiences of Diana than a biopic.

The movie sheds light on how Princess Diana shows emotions during her time with the British royal family during a Christmas weekend. The juxtaposition between how lonely and claustrophobic Diana feels at the dining table among the members of the royal family and the joy she experiences with her two children is striking. The awkward silence she shares in the company of her husband Charles contrasts her comfort with that of the royal dresser, Maggie, played by Sally Hawkins.

Spencer is entirely about Princess Diana’s perspective that drives its storyline. Thus, a sense of disconnection is

felt with the other characters throughout the movie so that the viewers can understand why Diana feels detached from these characters. She takes the audience through an emotional journey from oppression to freedom. All the events in the movie are a combination of real-life tragedies and the director’s blinding imagination. It is a movie that blends facts with fiction.

The movie uses multiple literary devices like metaphors and symbols to convey the feelings of isolation and suffocation experienced by Princess Diana. A subtle sense of horror is evoked through the movie’s storyline and cinematography. It can be seen as an artistic expression of director Pablo Larran in terms of how he conceptualised the royal journey of the Princess of Wales.

Spencer is brilliantly shot by cinematographer Claire Mathon with 16-millimetre Kodak film, adding to the 90s vibe. The close-up shots of

Princess Diana reveal her emotions of hesitation, fear, sadness, pain and comfort. The editing of the movie communicates the situation in each scene. The distance shots enhance the viewers’ understanding of Diana’s relationship with the other characters. She shares the same frame only with those characters she feels comfortable with, and she is alone in the frame the moment she feels detached from others.

As the title implies, Princess Diana attempts to return to her former self in the movie. It dawned on her how she was losing her identity and a sense of agency in the process of fitting into the high-profile royal family. Throughout the entire movie, Princess Diana tries to escape the captive situation she was trapped in that led her to depression, delusion and bulimia. It was only by breaking her marriage with Prince Charles that she was able to fly like a free pheasant.

Spencer is a story about Diana as seen through the lens of Larran, giving the viewers a different perspective on the life of the late princess. The movie utilises many metaphors, personifications, and horror and thriller impressions that allow the viewers to interpret and perceive the story however they like. As you watch the

movie, it is up to you to decide whether you believe the termination of the marriage was the end of Diana’s declining mental health or whether her sudden death was the result of the break-up.





## FEMINISM AND CULTURE INSEPARABLE BEDFELLOWS

Thousands of immigrants took part in a rally for International Women's Day to express their solidarity with girls and women who face injustice.

Photo: Pablo Cuadra/Getty Images

### Nahian Jamal Joyeeta

“In Bangladesh, our women are empowered; we don't need feminism.” What do you think when I hear this? On a daily basis, I hear the tense voices of news readers and agitated reporters broadcasting a series of dismal stories about sexual violence in Bangladesh. I hear the shattering of dreams when a girl is forced to wear a wedding veil before finishing her education, and even if she does, she is constantly crushed under the boulders of dowry, domesticity and abuse. I hear every patriarchal man, woman and the authority telling a girl to stay within her limits for simply being a girl.

There are myths galore surrounding gender equality, feminism, and the empowerment of women that have retarded our country from achieving equal rights for women. Feminism is thought to be something Westernised, or rather borrowed from the West, because many people associate it with cultural, religious and social beliefs. Being a feminist is often considered a taboo because misandry, or man-hating, is frequently confused with feminism despite the fact that it has nothing to do with it and would still be classified as sexism. Here's why: the oppressor is troubled by the fear of oppression. This reminds me of a very famous quote by Emma Watson during her debut at UN Women: “Everyone who is not a feminist is a sexist.”

The thing about charity and misogyny, or hatred of women, is that it begins at home, and very early. In some households, being

born as a female or giving birth to a female is still considered an unspoken sin because, by law and social norms, women cannot be the heirs to a legacy. This, however, is not a product of culture, but rather a mixture of flawed explanations, some propagated by the many colonisers of our ancient subcontinent. Predominantly, many of the indigenous people (namely Marma and Khasia) are practising matriarchs, which had been the norm in the land's cultural history.

Begum Rokeya is considered an icon of feminism in Bangladesh, but how much of her ideology has been upheld since she vouched for rights of education for women? Despite her great efforts, the majority of Bangladeshi females complete only pre-primary, primary and secondary education before they are married off. On the other hand, eight to 10 men receive a full high school education and women here rarely opt for tertiary education. We now praise female leadership in Bangladesh, but we hardly acknowledge that we still criticise the female classmate who excels in her class, the female teacher who takes her job seriously or the female-led team, dismissing their efforts and talents and reducing their contributions to “opportunities”, rather than “abilities”.

Most women are, by default, expected to give up their education or jobs after marriage in order to focus on “family” responsibilities. Girls can be legally married off at the age of 18 while boys must be 21. Even if women earn money, they are never considered the heads of the family. Men are typically viewed as the family's “breadwinners” or “providers”, which is a conventional stereotype for both genders, as women become dependents and men shoulder all of the financial burden. In a country like Bangladesh where the poverty rate is 13 per cent, women make up only about 36 per cent of the labour force in low-paid jobs in ready-made garment factories, households as domestic helps or day-labourers due to these limiting beliefs.

To sum up, what we must understand at this point is that women are not inferior, but they are rather denied basic opportunities imperative for their empowerment. Gender inequality in Bangladesh will persist as long as women are treated as second-class citizens and hate crimes threaten their safety. We will continue to propagate patriarchy as long as we criticise our female peers for dressing however they want, belittle our female colleagues to suit our egos and insecurities, and regard “feminism” as an act against culture, rather than a movement towards it.

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