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Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)

UPDATES

Issue: 188 | July 2023



EEE students win Gold in UK design challenge
Page 5

Melodies Beyond Sight
Page 8

Learning to Ask the Right Questions
Page 12

Promoting Collaboration and Diversity
Page 6

COVER STORY

Becoming Valedictorian

Go Green, IUB!



Let's not pollute the air inside the campus for everyone.



Let's use reusable water bottles.



Stop using straws every time we buy a soda.



Stop littering, especially in the elevators and the stairs.



Let's pick up any trash we see and put it in a bin.



Let's buy only as much as we can eat and not waste food.



Let's walk two flights from ground floor to 2nd floor instead of using the lift.



Let's spread awareness.

Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of IUB Updates!

As we launch into this new experience, we are reminded of the importance of giving our students the platform to share their voices. One of the most remarkable aspects of our university is the diverse range of talents that our students possess. From budding entrepreneurs to space scientists to talented artists, our campus is brimming with individuals who are not only academically accomplished but also driven by a passion to make a difference. This newsletter aims to capture their inspiring stories and shed light on their achievements, serving as a source of motivation for both current and prospective students.

Creativity is a cornerstone of the IUB experience. Our students possess an innate ability to think outside the box, challenging conventional norms and pushing boundaries. Through this newsletter, we celebrate their ingenious ideas, innovative projects, and artistic expressions. We believe that by highlighting their creativity, we inspire others to explore their own imaginative capacities. From outstanding athletes to gifted musicians, we are dedicated to recognizing and nurturing exceptional skills. By acknowledging their accomplishments, we encourage students to pursue their passions and strive for excellence in all areas of their lives.

We hope that you find this edition of the newsletter both informative and inspiring. Join us in celebrating the the creativity of our students, and supporting their exceptional talents. Together, let us continue to showcase the remarkable quality of student life at IUB and inspire others to dream big and make a difference.

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Message from the Vice Chancellor

Widening Horizons



Tanweer Hasan, PhD

As we continue our journey towards academic excellence and fostering a global outlook at IUB, I am thrilled to take this opportunity to share with the readers some exciting developments and opportunities that lie ahead of us.

One of the distinguishing aspects of IUB is our commitment to cultivating an international outlook among our students, faculty and staff. We firmly believe that exposure to diverse cultures and ideas is crucial in shaping well-rounded individuals who can thrive in an interconnected world.

To achieve this, we have been actively forging collaborations with esteemed universities in Japan, Republic of Korea, USA, Europe, Australia, India and greater South Asia, and beyond. These partnerships open up a world of opportunities for our students, allowing them to study abroad, engage in research projects with international experts, and participate in enriching exchange programs. As part of our vision, we are also looking to expand our existing facilities to better accommodate international students and faculty members who choose IUB as their academic home.

We are proud to announce the resumption of several successful exchange programs, in addition to introducing new ones including Erasmus+, Fulbright Vising Specialist, Oxford University Summer Program, US State Department's Community College Initiative, and so on. These programs serve as bridges, connecting IUB with leading institutions around the globe. They enable our students to understand global trends, gain cross-cultural exposure, and foster mutual respect, which is an integral part of the four pillars of IUB's educational philosophy.

As a university, we stand firm on our four pillars: a strong liberal arts foundation, technological proficiency, global consciousness, and environmental responsibility. These pillars are the guiding principles that shape the education we provide to our students. Our commitment to an international outlook aligns seamlessly with these pillars, as it empowers our students to excel not only academically but also as responsible global citizens.

The results of these efforts have been evident in the participation and remarkable success of our students over the last few years in the international arena. Whether it's academics, research, or extra and co curricular activities, our students have consistently made us proud on the global stage. This success is a testament to the quality of education and the diverse opportunities that IUB provides.

As we move forward, let us continue to embrace the spirit of internationalism and collaboration, celebrating diversity and fostering understanding. Together, we will create a learning environment that empowers our students to thrive, not only locally but also on the global stage.



Becoming Valedictorian

Born in Ukraine to public health expert and historian parents, Andrianna Bashar, the Valedictorian of IUB's 23rd convocation, and her story are nothing short of inspirational. She graduated from IUB with a perfect 4.00 CGPA from the Department of Sociology, won the Vice Chancellor's Gold Medal, founded the IUB Sociology Club and was involved in extensive research almost throughout her entire undergrad tenure. Currently, she is pursuing a master's degree in Education at the University of Oxford, UK. From honour roll to inspiring souls, here's an attempt to unveil the mind of a university valedictorian



Q: When did you come to Bangladesh?

I was born in Donetsk, Ukraine – a beautiful city that is now terribly destroyed. In 2016, my parents started working for an organization in Bangladesh. This transition caused a slight delay in my plans to enroll at a university in the United States. In the midst of the chaos that ensued from the war that had engulfed my region since 2015, I found myself travelling back and forth. It was a period of uncertainty, as the conflict's impact rippled into every aspect of life. However, in 2016, I finally began my university journey at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).

Q: Tell us about your parents.

My mother, a historian and professor, worked within the academia in different capacities and is now an independent researcher. My father works with international NGOs in the public health sector, specializing in communicable diseases. My mother's passion for academia inspired me to pursue a similar path. From a very young age, she would take me to theatres and libraries in Donetsk to ensure I develop the curiosity for learning. It was through these captivating experiences that I was instilled with a deep appreciation for the pursuit of academia.

Q: Why did you choose to IUB?

During that period, I had already taken a gap year and secured admission to universities in the United States. Unfortunately, the intensifying bombings in our area forced us to make decisions that involved sacrifices. One of those decisions was to bring my grandfather to live with us for his safety. In light of these circumstances, I made a resolute choice to seize the opportunity without delay. Several of my friends were also considering admission to IUB, and so I followed and embarked on my undergraduate journey at IUB.

> **"Sociology is the golden middle of history, culture, social theories, and human behaviour.**

Q: Why did you choose sociology as your major?

Since I was a teenager, I was always interested in studying human behaviour. Sociology was not only the closest available option, but also the golden middle of everything I was interested in – history, culture, social theories, and human behaviour. I chose English Literature as my minor because it complemented sociology well, which eventually helped me develop my passion for research. Sociology taught me how to see things from different perspectives and understand others at a deeper level. The Sociology program at IUB is very well curated. It helped me discover theories that resonated with my inner self and also challenged me. Moreover, the professors possess extensive first-hand international research experience and were able to guide me through my academic journey.

Q: How did you adjust with the transition from offline to online education during the pandemic?

Luckily, I was done with my courses when the pandemic hit. I was only writing my thesis. It did prove to be a challenge because the method for my data collection was in-person interviews. Hence, I had to take some time to overcome numerous obstacles while battling depression, which had gotten worse during the lockdown. I also began teaching online at Canadian International School. Balancing all of this

was not easy. But it taught me to be strong and persistent.

Q: Tell us about your research work.

While working as an educator during the pandemic, I became aware of the shortcomings that exist within the education system, especially when it comes to digital learning and the widening of the inequality gap. As a student, I also realised that learning online was not an engaging experience. Hence, putting all of this together, I was motivated to look deeper into existing theories and technologies and tried to research the gaps that we had in addressing the pressing issues in digital learning.

Q: Is Bangladesh a part of your postgraduate study and research?

My dissertation is on the Role of EdTech in Decolonising Global Higher Education. I was surprised to see the way in which discourse on Decolonisation were welcomed in Oxford. Having learnt the history of the region and the impact of colonisation on India, Bangladesh and Pakistan I was made more aware of its long-lasting influence on the education system. This prompted me to explore how we can use new technologies to shift the narrative from a Western centric global knowledge creation to that of the 'Global South'. I believe it is important for initiating the decolonial discourse in South Asia, including Bangladesh.

Q: Tell us about your research work in Bangladesh.

In 2020, I went to Modhupur in Tangail to study the costs of living and income in rural Bangladesh through structured interviews of families living in the villages. In 2019, I went to Cox's Bazar to collect qualitative data by Interviewing the Forcibly Displaced Myanmar Nationals (FDMNs). I travelled to Sreemangal in 2018 for a comparative study on two ethnic communities living in the hilly areas. In 2017, I went to Gazipur to collect qualitative data on the living conditions of the old age homes. In 2016, I conducted a survey in Dhaka to study the impact of globalisation on the lifestyle preferences of urban youth, especially students from the private and public universities. Many of these field works have been organized by our respected IUB faculty members and the IUB Sociology Club, of which I was the founder. These research trips played a significant role in shaping my understanding of my own positionality and ensuring the ethical execution of the interviews. The knowledge and experiences gained from these excursions went beyond what could be acquired from books. Undoubtedly, these research trips hold some of my most cherished memories, as they broadened my perspectives on life in profound ways.

Q: What are your future plans?

The initial plan was to work towards a PhD, which is still highly likely. However, I realised that for me as a person, it is really important to make an impact. I aspire to look back on my life and feel a sense of fulfilment, knowing that I initiated a venture that would grow into something positive and meaningful. With this in mind, I am particularly drawn to areas such as digital learning, inclusivity, and accessibility, envisioning them as avenues where I can contribute and create a lasting difference. Whether this journey unfolds at Oxford or elsewhere is something I am yet to determine.

Q. Do you want to come back to Bangladesh?

I feel like I can really use my experiences and knowledge to contribute to Digital Education in Bangladesh. So many startups and projects have become successful in Bangladesh. But there is still a lack of theorisation, pedagogical implication and question of ethics. With the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) , this will be a big thing in the future if not addressed now. I hope to do my part by initiating conversations with stakeholders. ●



Andrianna receives the Chancellor's Gold Medal at the 23rd Convocation of IUB, March 19, 2023.

A Pioneer in Education and a Champion of Change

Dr. A Majeed Khan, the founding president of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), passed away on April 26, 2023, leaving behind a legacy of immense contributions to education and the development of higher learning in Bangladesh. He breathed his last while undergoing treatment at the Evercare Hospital in Dhaka, leaving the IUB family in mourning for the loss of an extraordinary individual.



Born in Faridpur in 1929, Dr. Khan's insatiable thirst for knowledge led him on an illustrious academic journey. He pursued his education in prestigious institutions in Kolkata, London, and Minnesota. Notably, he became the first recipient of a PhD in sociology and anthropology from Bangladesh.

A former cabinet minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Khan's dedication to education and academic excellence was recognized internationally. He became a member of the esteemed Phi Beta Kappa Society in the United States, an honor reserved for those who display exceptional intellectual prowess. Furthermore, his contributions to the field were acknowledged by Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he was awarded the distinguished Doctor of Humane Letters.

Throughout his career, Dr. Khan held significant positions at renowned institutions such as Hamline University in Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin. He generously shared his knowledge and expertise with universities in the Netherlands, Sweden, and Jordan, leaving an indelible mark on the global academic community.

His commitment to promoting education extended beyond national borders. Dr. Khan served as the Ambassador of Bangladesh to France, Spain, and Morocco, acting as a bridge between cultures and promoting bilateral cooperation. His profound impact was further recognized by the Officier of the L'Ordre des Palmes Académiques in France, an honor bestowed upon him in appreciation of his contributions to the field of education. He was also a member of the Executive Board and Permanent Representative to UNESCO.

In 2013, IUB honored him by naming him President Emeritus in recognition of his invaluable role in the development of higher education and for pioneering the concept of private sector tertiary education in Bangladesh. His visionary leadership and unwavering commitment to quality education laid the foundation for the growth and success of IUB.

Dr. Khan's influence reached far beyond IUB. He played instrumental roles in the establishment of the Education, Science, Technology and Cultural Development Trust (ESTCDT), Chittagong Independent University (CIU), the Academy for Rural Development in Comilla, the College of Social Work at Rajshahi University, and the University of Information Technology and Sciences (UITS). His contributions to these institutions transformed the landscape of education and opened up new opportunities for countless students.

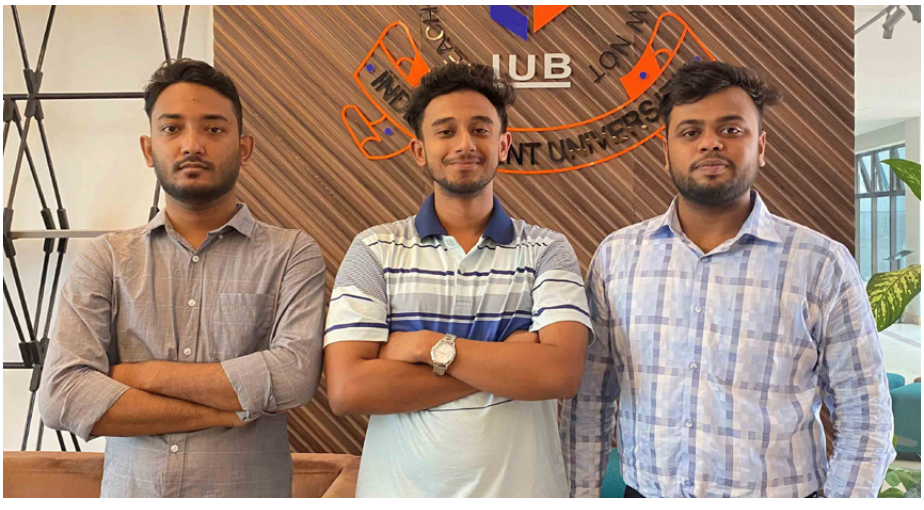
As news of Dr. Khan's passing spread, the IUB campus became a gathering place for those who had been touched by his presence. The first Namaz-E-Janaza, held in the afternoon of April 27, 2023, drew a somber crowd consisting of IUB trustees, the vice chancellor, registrar, deans, staff, faculty members, and current and former students. The atmosphere was filled with a profound sense of loss, as mourners reflected on the immense impact Dr. Khan had on their lives.

The second Janaza was held at the Baridhara Jame Mosque and Islamic Centre following Jumma Prayers on April 28, 2023, where friends, colleagues, and individuals from various walks of life came together to pay their respects. He was laid to eternal rest in Boalmari upazila in Faridpur district the same day.

Dr. A Majeed Khan will forever be remembered as a visionary and an advocate for education. His life was dedicated to expanding the horizons of knowledge, fostering intellectual curiosity, and empowering future generations. The loss of this exceptional individual leaves a void that will be difficult to fill. ●

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
IUB UPDATES

EEE students win Gold in UK design challenge twice in a row



Eazaz Ahamad, Siam Ibne Masud and Tarikul Islam Shaikat

A joint team of engineering students from Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) and Makerere University, Uganda, has won Gold in the Efficiency for Access Design Challenge 2022-2023 for their solar-powered automated anaerobic digestion system, which produces cooking gas and crop fertilizers from food waste.

The announcement came on June 15, 2023, at the grand finale of the competition held virtually from the UK by the organizers, Efficiency for Access Coalition and Engineers Without Borders, UK.

The team comprised Siam Ibne Masud, Eazaz Ahamad and Tarikul Islam Shaikat, all students of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) at IUB. The other members of the team were Proscovia Amviko Adrabo and Mark Mutenga, students of Mechanical Engineering at Makerere University, Uganda.

They proposed an optimized Bio Digester to produce affordable commodities which is fully powered by an 85-Watt solar panel. They were supervised by Dr. Khosru Mohammad Salim, Professor at the Department of EEE and Director at IUB's Green Energy Research Centre.

"Our journey began when our supervisor rejected three of our proposals for the final year design project, who later suggested that we should look into gas emissions from waste landfills. Our research then led us to a project that could improve air quality by reducing greenhouse gas emissions of kitchen waste landfills and produce organic fertilizer. It has multiple benefits: help people and farmers have easier access to cooking gas and crop fertilizers; prevent trees from being cut down in rural areas; and encourage farmers to use organic fertilizers instead of chemicals, which may result in crop degradation," said team leader Siam Ibne Masud.

> **"They proposed an optimized bio digester to produce affordable commodities.**

"This is a particularly proud moment for me. Winning Gold in this prestigious global competition two years in a row is a massive achievement. Hats off to our students for not just bringing this honor to IUB with their renewable energy-based design, but also for showing full commitment towards IUB's strategic goal of developing every student into environmentally responsible citizens," said Tanweer Hasan, PhD, Vice Chancellor of IUB.

Last year, the team of Md Sadik Abdal and Tashfiah Tahsin, both students of EEE at IUB, and Ali Ahmed and Nour Ben Gaied, both students of City, University of London, UK, won Gold in this competition for their solar-powered cold storage system to preserve fish and other perishable goods.

Funded by UK Aid and IKEA Foundation this year, The Efficiency for Access Design Challenge is a global, multi-disciplinary competition that empowers teams of university students to help accelerate clean energy access. The Challenge invites teams of university students to create affordable, high-performing, off-grid appliances and enabling technologies.

Efficiency for Access is a global coalition that promotes affordable, high performing and inclusive appliances that enable access to clean energy for the world's poorest people. It is a catalyst for change, accelerating the growth of off and weak-grid appliance markets to boost incomes, reduce carbon emissions, improve quality of life, and support sustainable development. It is co-chaired by UK Aid and the IKEA Foundation. Over 100 students, divived into 21 teams from 14 universities in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Senegal, Sweden, Uganda, the UK and Zimbabwe took part in the competition this year.

Internationalization of IUB

Promoting Collaboration and Diversity

Internationalization has become a key priority for educational institutions around the world, and IUB is no exception. The process involves four strategic factors: academic excellence, enhanced campus life, student mobility, and faculty collaboration. By focusing on these themes, IUB aims to create a global learning environment that prepares students to thrive in an interconnected world.

IUB encourages academic collaboration with international institutions, promoting joint research projects, faculty exchanges, and consultative curriculum development. There is an emphasis on student and faculty mobility through short-term study programs. In the first half of 2023 alone, six students were supported to participate in exchange programs and summer courses in four different countries. Notably, a Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) student received a prestigious HUMAP grant for a full-scholarship towards a one-year research exchange program at the University of Hyogo, Japan. Another CSE student was selected for the US Community College Initiative (CCI) to the College of DuPage, Illinois, for a year-long program. Additionally, five IUB students are currently attending summer school at Oxford University.



IUB Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD, and Dr. Syoji Kobashi, from University of Hyogo, exchange an MoU on behalf of their respective organizations.

IUB is actively involved in incoming mobility, hosting international students and scholars on campus. Recently, the university hosted 10 international students as part of a short certificate course on Locally Led Adaptation (LLA). IUB has attracted prominent visiting fellows and scholars from various fields. Professor Dr. Syoji Kobashi from the University of Hyogo, Japan, and Professor Kanti Prasad Bajpai, Vice Dean of Singapore National University, have provided workshops and public lectures at IUB. The commitment is also reflected in the conferences and symposiums hosted by its schools, institutes, and centres. Notable conferences include the Eastern Himalayan Naturenomics Forum, which focused on the ecology of the region, and the international colloquium on the implications of climate change on human rights.

The university has also reinvigorated its international student recruitment policy. We have opened an online undergraduate application page and created publicity materials for Autumn 2023. Scholarship opportunities of up to 75% are available for students from regional neighbours such as Bhutan, Nepal, India, and Sri Lanka.



The 10th Balipara Foundation Awards was held on December 11, 2022 at IUB.



Professor Kanti Prasad Bajpai

In terms of research, IUB has experienced a significant increase in funding grants in recent years. The university received BDT 70 million in research funding grants in 2022-23, following previous grants of BDT 31 million in 2021 and BDT 32 million in 2022. Additionally, foreign research grants totaling BDT 298 million have been pledged between 2021 and 2023.

IUB's commitment to internationalization is evident through its strategic long-term planning and involvement of multiple stakeholders. By actively fostering academic collaborations, promoting student and faculty mobility, hosting distinguished visitors, organizing conferences, and investing in research, IUB aims to enhance its reputation and ranking status. These efforts contribute to the development of globally competitive graduates and serve to create diversity and inclusiveness on campus.



Masuda Alam Moutushi, a 5th Semester of CSE, went to USA in July 2023 for a one-year CCI program



Farzeen (second from the left) poses for a photograph in the USA alongside her fellow exchange program participants

Farzeen attends prestigious ESPN sports exchange program in the USA

Farzeen Ghani, a 4th semester student of Media and Communication at IUB, attended the prestigious 2-week ESPN Sports Mentorship Program of the U.S. Department of State from June 20, 2023 to July 6, 2023. This highly coveted fast-paced Youth Sports Exchange program, fully funded by the U.S. Department of State, brought together athletes from 11 countries, with the support of major sports franchises like ESPN and the NBA.

Her journey began when she became a part of Deshi Ballers and got nominated by it's founder Ashreen Mridha for this program. Set in Princeton, New Jersey, the program aimed to foster international understanding and collaboration among aspiring athletes. Farzeen, along with only one other athlete from Bangladesh, had the privilege of participating in this transformative experience.

During her stay in the USA, Farzeen had the opportunity to meet professional football players from the renowned Miami Union team, attended a leadership workshop and training camp led by Olympic Gold Medalist Julie Foudy. However, the highlight of Farzeen's experience was the intensive basketball training she received under the expert guidance of Rod Raines, a coach with experience in both the NBA and WNBA.

Upon the conclusion of the program, Farzeen was certified as a Sports Visitor Alumni under the United States Department of State. This prestigious certification not only recognizes her outstanding performance and commitment but also paves the way for her to become a catalyst for change in women's sports in Bangladesh.

With this newfound recognition and expertise, Farzeen aspires to leverage her certification to promote and develop women's sports in Bangladesh.

"I envision a future where there are more opportunities for women athletes, enabling them to compete at both national and international levels. Using the knowledge that I gained from the training in the USA, my immediate goal is to help my alma mater, IUB, encourage more female students to participate in sports, especially basketball. Eventually, after I graduate, I want to start my own sports academy dedicated for women," Farzeen said.

Melodies Beyond Sight

The Extraordinary Journey of a Sarod Virtuoso



Amidst the customary cacophony of a bustling Dhaka, there resides a young musician who captivates audiences with his remarkable talent. Abul Kasem Ashikur Rahman, a sarod player in his early twenties, has been defying the odds and enchanting listeners with his soul-stirring melodies. Despite being afflicted with a rare condition called nystagmus that severely impairs his vision, Ashikur's unwavering passion for music has propelled him to conquer the barriers placed before him.

Born in 2002 in Brahmanbaria, Ashikur was surrounded by music from a young age. His father, the late Maestro Afzalur Rahman, was the world's first sarod player with a visual impairment, and his mother, Maestro Anwara Rahman, is Bangladesh's first female sarod player and a music teacher. Growing up in such a musical household, it was inevitable that Ashikur would be drawn to the harmonious world of melodies. He started playing sarod at the tender age of 11.

"Sarod is different from sitar, which is more widely known. Unlike sitar, there is no fretboard in a sarod. The absence of frets on the sarod makes it necessary for a blind player to rely almost completely on the sense of touch and muscle memory to find the correct positions for the notes," said Ashikur.

Like his father, he embraced the Maihar gharana of classical Indian subcontinental music, a tradition founded by Ustad Allaudin Khan, which traces its roots back to the legendary Mia Tansen.

> **"I yearn to enhance my musical abilities by studying at the prestigious Berklee College of Music in USA.**

"I don't have a favourite raga. In fact, I don't perceive music that way. For me, music is divine. So, it is impossible for me to have a greater or lesser liking for any particular melody," said Ashikur.

Ashikur's eldest sister Mohua Rahman Ruba is visually impaired and excels at playing the sitar and tabla and singing in multiple languages. Antara Rahman Tungtang, Ashikur's other elder sister, who also has a visual impairment, primarily plays the violin but also lends her creative touch to song composition. They have a family musical group called the Inner Eyes Family Orchestra, which can be found on YouTube.

Currently a 6th-semester student of Global Studies and Governance at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), he has achieved a remarkable 75% scholarship. He chose IUB due to its liberal, secular, and politics-free educational environment, which aligns with his values and aspirations.

Ashikur plans to pursue higher studies abroad, including a master's and Ph.D. in International Relations, focusing on policymaking theories. He envisions a career as a diplomatic adviser, leveraging his knowledge and experiences to contribute to global matters.

"I also yearn to enhance my musical abilities by studying at the prestigious Berklee College of Music. While I couldn't attend Berklee earlier due to the absence of a sarod program, I am eagerly awaiting the launch of a specialized course on sarod at Berklee which will enable me to pursue my musical dreams," Ashikur said.

The young man's talent has garnered several recognitions. In 2022, he won the "Channel I Music Award" for his exceptional creation of a new raga called "Raga Bangabandhu." He was an integral part of the Brahmanbaria District team that clinched the championship at the Shilpakala Nandan Mancha Music Festival in 2018. His musical prowess was acknowledged with the National Children Award in 2014 from the Bangladesh Shishu Academy, and in 2018, he received the professional musician certificate from the Shikpakala Academy.

Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB)
IUB UPDATES

IUB alumnus wins NASA grant for next gen space tech battery research



IUB Alumnus Md. Wahidul Hasan, a PhD candidate and Research Assistant at the South Dakota Mines, USA, and his team have won the prestigious USD 750,000 NASA EPSCoR grant to fund research into the next generation of lithium-sulfur batteries for use in space technology. The grant follows an innovation leading to the use of corn stalk residues to stabilize battery chemistry and nearly double charging capacity of current technology.

Wahid, who obtained BSc degree in 2013 and MSc in 2016 in Electrical and Electronic Engineering from Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) and also taught Computer Science and Engineering at IUB, specializes in solid state lithium sulfur battery and electrochemical energy storage. In 2021, Wahid won the prestigious Elsevier Foundation Chemistry for Climate Action Challenge for his project on generating electricity from cattle urine.

The Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) establishes partnerships with government, higher education and industry that are designed to effect lasting improvements in a state or region's research infrastructure, research and development (R&D) capacity and its national R&D competitiveness.

According to a NASA press release issued last month, the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology will look to create a new lithium-sulfur battery technology that is superior to existing lithium-ion batteries. Improving the power capacity and life of batteries could help NASA power rockets, spacecraft, and habitats on the Moon, and eventually, Mars.

> **"This technology can be used in transportation to cut pollution in a developing country like Bangladesh.**

"Lithium sulfur battery is a relatively new type of battery that is still in the development and testing phase but it has already shown promise as a next generation energy storage technology. Sulfur is abundant in nature and we got the carbon from Corn stalks, making it a bio product, which means it is going through a renewable process. Therefore, we can definitely say that this battery is a source of renewable energy," said Wahid.

"In recent times, the USA is focusing on promoting electric vehicles because they suit climate goals and help protect the environment. This technology, once fully matured, can be used in transportation and thus immensely help in reducing pollution in a developing country like Bangladesh," said Wahid.

Apart from pursuing PhD and research on lithium-sulfur battery, he aims at doing further research on developing carbon emission free renewable energy and battery storage. Wahid, whose father is a businessperson based in Chittagong and mother a homemaker, also plans to set up a research facility in Bangladesh for young scientists to develop new technologies. ●

The 23rd Convocation



From the right, IUB Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD; Education Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, MP; Convocation Speaker Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud; IUB Board of Trustees Chairman Mr. Abdul Hai Sarker; and IUB Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Niaz Ahmed Khan, PhD sing the National Anthem at the 23rd Convocation of IUB.

Faizaa Fariya Hridi, top performer from the School of Environment and Life Sciences, receives crest from Mr. Abdul Hai Sarker, Chairman, Board of Trustees, IUB.





Hon'ble Members of the IUB Board of Trustees attended the 23rd Convocation Ceremony.



Convocation Speaker Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmud delivering speech to the graduates.



Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD, delivering his speech to the graduates.



Chief Guest Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Hon'ble Minister for Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, delivering her speech at the 23rd Convocation of IUB.



From the left, Prof. Dr. Meherun Ahmed, Dean, School of Business and Entrepreneurship; Dr. Mahady Hasan, former Interim Dean, School of Engineering Technology and Sciences; Prof. Dr. Shah M Faruque, Dean, School of Environment and Life Sciences; Professor Dr. Bokhtiar Ahmed, Dean, School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences; and Prof. Dr. J.M.A Hannan, Dean, School of Pharmacy and Public Health.



A cross section of the graduates who attended the 23rd Convocation Ceremony.



Tahsan Rahman Khan performed at the cultural event that followed the convocation ceremony.



To Master Problem Solving, Learn to Ask the Right Questions First

NASIF RASHAD KHAN

MPA Class of 2024 (Mason Fellow), Harvard Kennedy School
Head, Strategic Partnerships, BRAC (currently on study leave)
IUB Batch: Spring 2008, Major: Finance

Q. Tell us about your journey after graduating from IUB.

After completing undergrad in 2011, I joined a start-up called Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) to work on youth leadership development. I switched to BRAC in 2015. As one of the largest and most renowned non-profit organizations in the world and the only one of its size to have originated in the global south, BRAC offered me opportunities to learn about scale, organizational change, and innovation. In the past seven years or so at BRAC, I got the opportunity to work in the operations of different development programming at the strategic level in areas such as youth development, inclusive financial services for marginalized communities, mobilizing resources for emergency humanitarian response for the Rohingya refugees, championing gender mainstreaming, and drafting BRAC's strategic plan. Most recently, I have been heading multilateral strategic partnerships for BRAC. At this point, I decided to take a pause in my career to further enhance my leadership skills and pursue a Master in Public Administration (MPA) degree.

Q. Did your time at IUB have an impact on how you turned out in your professional life?

I believe that it did. IUB had a unique environment that allowed its students to be independent and provided a platform that was both intellectually stimulating and conducive to personal growth and development. It helped me broaden my perspectives about the world and develop critical skills to navigate my career. In fact, one of the faculty members shared two pieces of advice with me that helped me steer my work life: (1) experiment with your career early, preferably in the first two to three years, and (2) as much as salary is important, it is more important to find the right mentor early in your career. To this day, I find those advices very helpful and try to pass it on to other young people whenever I get a chance.

> **"IUB helped me broaden my perspectives about the world and develop critical skills to navigate my career.**

Q. Would you recommend the development sector as a career option for IUB students?

Why not? In fact, I would even go further and advice them to broaden the scope and recommend that students should consider public service as a career option. In that way, graduates can work not only in government agencies, but also in NGOs, global development agencies, and the corporate sector. I strongly believe that having a public service lens to your career will serve as a good yardstick for measuring your impact and contribution to society. Our previous generation – our parents and grandparents – brought the country to where it is today. Now, it's our responsibility to take it to the next level. For that, we need more competent and morally conscious people working in public service across all sectors.

Q. How should an IUB student prepare for a meaningful career in the development sector?

First, get your academic foundations right in economics, finance, accounting, communications, and climate change. Second, don't remain superficial in your areas of interest. Instead, dive deep and gain a thorough understanding. If reducing extreme poverty is something that you want to work on, try to learn what the government is doing, what's the role of UN agencies, what other actors are doing, what's not working, what are the emerging challenges in poverty reduction, and so on. Do not limit yourself only to university resources and academic courses. Go out and try to expand your network and engage with organizations through research projects or internships or volunteering opportunities

Third, use the time at the university to develop the skills and competencies to ask the right questions when it comes to analyzing a situation or solving a problem.

Q. Tell us about the transformation that Bangladesh is going through right now.

Bangladesh is now standing at a critical juncture. Over the past five decades, the country has made exceptional progress in reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Yet, inequalities are at an all-time high. We are yet to fully recover from the Covid losses. Climate change poses an existential threat. Emerging challenges around youth unemployment, urban poverty, the new poor, and mental health make things more complicated. On top of that, the impact of Ukraine war is making things more difficult for us, especially on the macroeconomic stability standpoint. There's a lot that needs to be done, both to ensure that we achieve SDG targets on time and to address the emerging challenges effectively. We need to acknowledge the fact that we will probably have fewer resources to tackle the challenges of today and the future. The development organizations mainly complement the government. However, I don't want to generalize this statement for all development organizations. I would say that there's more room for concerted and coordinated efforts among the government, NGOs and development agencies to work together in order to avoid duplication of efforts and resources, to scale successful models, and to be able to do more with less collectively.



Nasif Khan receives the Minister of International Development and Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada, Harjit S. Sajjan, at Korail Slum in Dhaka on Feburary 27, 2023, along with other BRAC senior leadership members.

> **"Having a public service lens will serve as yardstick to measure your impact on the society.**

Q. What was your experience of applying for and getting selected in Harvard?

It was a great experience, one that made me reflect a lot. My two cents for current undergrad students who are considering pursuing a graduate degree, especially if it's a professional one like MBA/MPA/MHA would be: (a) do not jump on to doing a master's right after your undergrad. Focus on getting enough professional experience and building your professional skills. This will give you clarity on which subject and graduate degree suits you best. (b) Do not rush into it just because the society is pushing you or the conventional wisdom tells you to take that route.



The Debater's Edge: Inside Competitive Debating

AHMAD TOUSIF JAMI
Department of Global Studies and Governance
7th Semester

Engaging in various forms of debating is an enriching experience that holds tremendous benefits for university students. Beyond its reputation as a co-curricular activity, debating fosters the development of crucial skills that will prove invaluable in their future professional lives. From enhancing critical thinking and communication abilities to honing academic prowess and interpersonal skills, debating offers a plethora of avenues for growth and self-improvement.

Debating is a mental workout that challenges participants to think critically and analytically. Students must research extensively, gather evidence, and construct well-reasoned arguments to support their positions. This process cultivates the ability to examine complex issues from multiple perspectives, evaluate evidence objectively, and make informed decisions.

Building Knowledge, Shaping Opinions

Competitive debating provides students with valuable opportunities to stay informed about current events and trends and develop their own opinions on important issues. It nurtures public speaking skills and boosts confidence, benefiting students academically, personally, and professionally. As their understanding of diverse subjects broadens, so does their ability to express themselves.

The Art of Eloquence

Participating in competitive debating requires extensive research, analysis, and logical argumentation within a given timeframe, all while maintaining composure and eloquence. This demanding yet rewarding pursuit captivates individuals, providing a unique platform for personal growth and intellectual development.

> **"Debating fosters development of crucial skills that prove invaluable in professional lives.**

Understanding the World, One Debate at a Time

By delving into current events and contemporary matters, debaters gain profound insights and become well-informed citizens capable of critical thinking. Moreover, competitive debating hones public speaking skills, enabling participants to present their arguments persuasively and sway opinions. The refined communication abilities acquired through practice and feedback empower debaters to confidently express their ideas in various contexts.

Skills for Life

Beyond immediate intellectual growth and improved communication, competitive debating cultivates invaluable life skills. The rigorous research involved develops critical thinking and analytical abilities, essential for navigating information and constructing coherent arguments in academic pursuits. The competitive nature of debating also fosters resilience, adaptability, and teamwork, shaping debaters into well-rounded individuals who can handle pressure and collaborate effectively.

Pathway for Personal Growth

In essence, competitive debating offers numerous opportunities for personal growth and intellectual development. By engaging with current events, refining public speaking skills, and cultivating critical thinking abilities, debaters emerge as well-rounded individuals equipped to succeed in various aspects of life. As the popularity of competitive debating continues to rise, the young generation of Bangladesh and beyond can embrace this transformative activity to broaden their horizons, challenge their perspectives, and make their voices heard in an increasingly interconnected world.

Transcending the Sixty-four Squares



AMIT BIKRAM ROY
Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE)
5th Semester
Member of the IUB ARROWS Program

In a world where success is often measured by tangible achievements, it is crucial for everyone to strike a balance between inner and outer growth. For me, the ancient game of chess has been a source of inspiration, resilience, and personal growth.

My tryst with chess began in my childhood when I used to observe my father and sister engage in intense battles of strategy and intellect. Captivated by the complexity of the game, I decided to take up the challenge. My father, who was my first mentor, patiently guided me through the rules and tactics of the game.

In sixth grade, I participated in my first chess tournament and became runner-up. However, life's unexpected turns forced me to take a hiatus, temporarily diverting my attention away from my passion. It wasn't until ninth grade that I rediscovered my love. I became runner-up in the "National Sub Junior" championship, which paved the way for me to represent Bangladesh in an international tournament in China. Competing against players from diverse backgrounds and cultures broadened my horizons and enriched my understanding of the game.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, when the world seemed to halt, chess became my refuge. I participated in online tournaments and emerged victorious in several. A few months after I joined IUB, I clinched the silver medal in the Bangabandhu Inter-University Sports Championship 2022. I also went on to defeat several Grandmasters in the prestigious Chessable Masters tournament.

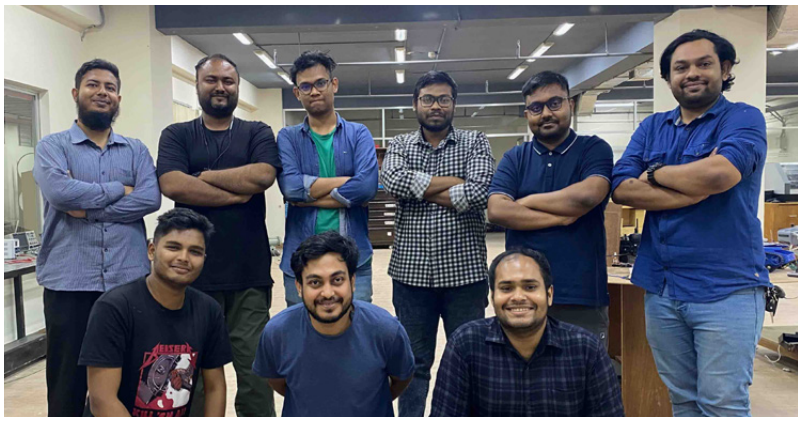
> **"I wish to return the favour to my alma mater by bringing success in prestigious tournaments.**

I draw inspiration not only from legendary players like Mikhail Tal but also from the contemporary greats, who continuously redefine the boundaries of the game. Chess has instilled valuable life lessons in me, teaching me the importance of concentration, critical thinking, adaptability, planning, patience, and resilience and I am determined to achieve the title of International Master.

As a student of a tough and taxing discipline like Computer Science and Engineering, the challenge of managing academic commitments alongside chess endeavors is daunting. To strike a balance and achieve success in both realms, I have always received immense support from my alma mater, especially the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, who himself is a massive chess enthusiast; the Division of Student Activities (DoSA); the IUB Chess Club; and last but not the least, our coach, the legendary Grandmaster Niaz Murshed. I wish to return the favour to my alma mater by bringing success in prestigious tournaments.

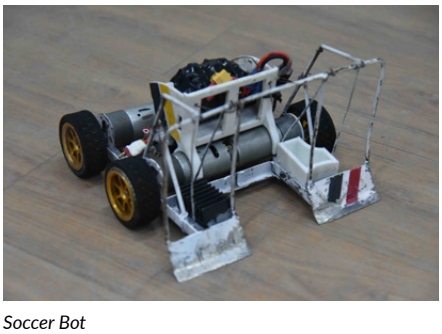
My chess journey has been an intriguing one with lots of highs and lows, triumphs and setbacks. Throughout it all, I remain grateful for the unwavering support of my family, especially my father, who introduced me to the game. Looking ahead, I embrace the future with excitement, acknowledging the opportunities that lie ahead and the adventures awaiting me on and off the sixty-four squares. ●

CSE Students Shine Bright in Robotics Competitions



The students of the Computer Science Engineering (CSE) Department of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) have been making waves in the world of robotics, achieving remarkable success in recent competitions. The teams, known as "Fabber's AFK Hoonigan" and "IUB Fabsat," have consistently demonstrated their expertise and passion for robotics, securing top positions in various national and international events.

The journey of Fabber's AFK Hoonigan began on January 20, 2023, when the team emerged as the runner-up in the highly competitive BUET Robo Carnival Soccer Robot competition. Their exceptional performance and dedication to their craft set the stage for future triumphs.

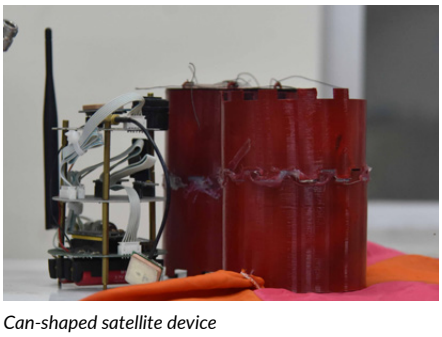


Soccer Bot

On February 11, 2023, Fabber's AFK Hoonigan claimed the championship in the prestigious AUST Mechcellence 1.0 competition. Their outstanding soccer-playing robots outshone the competition, leaving their opponents astounded. The team's relentless hard work and unwavering focus on innovation and excellence were clearly paying off.

Continuing their success story, Fabber's AFK Hoonigan secured the runner-up position in the BUET EEE Day 2023 competition on February 16, 2023. Their consistent performance in the Soccer Robot category propelled them forward, further cementing their reputation as a force to be reckoned with in the robotics community.

The team's winning streak persisted on March 4, 2023, as they clinched the championship in the NDC NDITC Init 3.0 competition. Their triumph showcased their ability to excel across different platforms, proving their versatility and expertise in the field.



Can-shaped satellite device

March 15, 2023, marked yet another significant milestone for Fabber's AFK Hoonigan. The team emerged as champions in the IUBAT Technocrats V.1 competition, further solidifying their position as frontrunners in robotics. Their consistent performance in the Soccer Robot segment was a testament to their talent, dedication, and relentless pursuit of excellence.

In another remarkable achievement, the other CSE team, "IUB Fabsat," became the first Bangladeshi team to be selected for the prestigious CanSat competition hosted by the American Astronautical Society (AAS). The fact that they belonged at this highly regarded international competition was evident in their impressive scores. In the first preliminary design review round, they achieved a remarkable score of 92.49% for their "can-shaped" satellite device that can be deployed in the upper atmosphere by a rocket to gather environmental data, take pictures from high altitudes for surveillance and other purposes. They further excelled in the critical design review round, earning an impressive score of 96.64%. These outstanding marks reflect the team's meticulous planning, innovative design, and exceptional problem-solving abilities.

The success of the CSE Department's teams in recent robotics competitions demonstrates the remarkable talent and dedication of its students. Their consistent top-ranking performances on national and international stages highlight the exceptional quality of education and training provided by the university. As the department continues to nurture innovation and creativity, it is poised to make even greater strides in the realm of robotics, solidifying its position as a leader in the field. ●

IUB accords reception to sports stars, opens renovated sports complex

IUB organized the Day of Champions and Inauguration of IUB Sports Complex on February 7, 2023. State Minister for Youth and Sports Mr. Md. Zahid Ahsan Russel, MP, inaugurated the sports complex and presented crests to the students, who have achieved significant success in sports, extracurricular and cocurricular activities in the past one year.

Md. Zahid Ahsan Russel said, "I congratulate IUB and hope that the students of this university will secure the top spot in the future major championships by leveraging the facilities of the news sports complex."



Mr. Md. Zahid Ahsan Russel, MP, State Minister for Youth and Sports, inaugurated the reconstructed IUB Sports Complex on Feburary 7, 2023.

Mr. Utpal Shuvro, Chief Sports Editor of Prothom Alo, attended the program as Special Guest. IUB Board of Trustees (BoT) Chairman Mr. Abdul Hai Sarker; BoT Member Mr. Rashed Chowdhury; Dr. A Majeed Khan, Founder Presiden of IUB; Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD, and Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Niaz Ahmed Khan, PhD also spoke at the program. In 2022, IUB students won 9 medals in the Bangabandhu Inter-University Sports Championship organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The medals tally include 4 gold medals in table tennis, one gold in cycling, one silver and one bronze in chess, and one silver and one bronze in basketball.

In addition, Aditya Parvez, a student of Marketing at IUB, recently became the national powerlifting champion for the 5th consecutive time. Another student, Kazi Zarin Tasnim Raisa from Computer Science and Engineering, emerged 3rd in the Sultana Kamal 41st National Women's 'B' Chess Championship 2022.

110 institutions participate in Career and Networking Day 2023



Deputy Minister for Education Mr. Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury, MP, visited the stalls at the Career and Networking Day 2023.

The Career and Networking Day was held on February 8, 2023 amid participation from 110 companies and institutions from different sectors. Deputy Minister for Education Mr. Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury, MP, visited the stalls and spoke in the closing ceremony as the Chief Guest. The event was organized at the Bashundhara R.A. campus of IUB in Dhaka by the Office of Career Guidance, Placement and Alumni Relations Office (CGP&AR).

Mr. Mohibul Hassan Chowdhoury, MP, said, "No matter what their majors are, there is no chance of remaining unemployed after graduating if students do various skills training."

Mr. Abdul Hai Sarker, Chairman, Board of Trustees, IUB, said, "Our students should be developed in a way so that they can be successful in their work life after they complete their studies."

Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD, said, "Having an event like this helps students network and explore, and helps us tailor our students to the companies' needs. We are also calling it the 'friend-raising' day because this also is an opportunity for IUB to build sustainable relationships with participating institutions which will eventually benefit the students in the long-run."

Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Niaz Ahmed Khan, PhD, said, "In addition to establishing a connection between our students and their future employers, this event is also a celebration of diversity. The 110 institutions that participated in this event represent very diverse sectors including intergovernmental agencies, NGOs and CBOs, banks and financial institutions, telecom, IT and ITES, and so on. It is a truly remarkable congregation, not just for our students, but for IUB as well."

IUB unveils Bangladesh's first Deep-sky imaging telescopes

IUB unveiled the first ever state-of-the-art deep-sky imaging telescopes in the country during a program on the campus on March 9, 2023. IUB received two Unistellar Equinox Telescopes as a gift from the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy & Astrophysics of University of Toronto (U of T), Canada. Renowned writer and physicist Dr. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal officially unveiled the telescopes and. Dr. Lamiya Mowla, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Dunlap Institute for Astronomy & Astrophysics delivered a special public talk on "Ancient star clusters through James Webb Space Telescope". The telescopes will be part of the Astronomy Lab under the Department of Physical Sciences of IUB.

Dr. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal said, "I am extremely happy to know that IUB has taken this initiative to teach astronomy at the university level."

IUB Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD, said, "This project is a major milestone. Creating new knowledge is one of the most important roles of a university. It is also crucial to impart that knowledge among not only students, but spread it beyond classrooms. This project will be open for every one interested in astronomy."





Mr. Anisul Huq, MP, Hon'ble Minister for Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs (in the picture on the left) and Senior Advocate AM Amin Uddin, Hon'ble Attorney General of Bangladesh (second from the left in the picture on the right) attended the 7th Bangladesh Qualifying Rounds of the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition 2023 held in February 2023 at IUB.



IUB students brought out a candlelight vigil on the campus on the eve of the National Martyrs' Day and the International Mother Language Day on February 20, 2023.



An IUB delegation, led by Pro Vice Chancellor Prof. Niaz Ahmed Khan, Ph.D, laid a floral wreath at the mural of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Dhanmondi on April 17, 2023.



An IUB delegation, led by Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD, paid homage at the Mausoleum of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman at Tungipara, Gopalganj on January 14, 2023.



On December 19, 2022, the Kazi Nazrul Islam and Abbasuddin Ahmed Research Center of IUB organized a program titled "One Hundred Years of Nazrul's Bidrohi and Eliot's The Waste Land".



Professor Dr. Md. Sazzad Hossain (second from the left), Hon'ble Member, University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, attended the National STEAM Olympiad Bootcamp at IUB on July 13, 2023.



IUB Theatre staged the 20th production of "Tairalir Buke Miju Munshir Pao" at the IUB Auditorium on June 21,2023.



The IUB Football Club and the Division of Student Activities (DoSA) jointly organized the Intra-IUB Departmental Futsal Fest Season 1 on June 15-19, 2023.

Sameen sets Guinness Record for Fastest to tie a Windsor Knot



Md Sameen Rahman, student of Marketing at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), has set the Guinness World Record (GWR) for the Fastest Time to Tie a Windsor Knot. He set the record for tying the knot in 10.92 seconds, beating the previous record of 12.89 seconds. Sameen applied online with the claim in August 2022. In November 2022, GWR authorities asked for evidence behind his claim, in response to which Sameen uploaded a video of him tying the knot in 10.92 seconds on the GWR website. In February, GRW gave him confirmation via email and Sameen received the official certificate one month later.



Aditya lifts national powerlifting title for the 5th time

Aditya Parvez, student of Marketing at Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), has become the national powerlifting champion for the fifth consecutive time. He has also been adjudged the Best Overall Lifter for the 4th time. The Bangladesh Bangladesh Powerlifting Championship 2022 was organized by the Bangladesh Powerlifting Association on January 18, 2023 at the Sheikh Russel Roller Skating Complex in Dhaka. Aditya came out on top in his favourite 93+ weight category. Before this year, Aditya has been the national powerlifting champion for four consecutive times from 2018-2021 and the Best Overall Lifter of the country in 2018, 2019 and 2020.

Powerlifting, which is different from weightlifting, is a strength sport that consists of three attempts at maximal weight on three lifts: squat, bench press, and deadlift. In powerlifting the focus is to lift as much weight as possible in a single plane of motion. In weightlifting, on the other hand, there are two movements: snatch, and clean and jerk.

Siam Named Captain of National Arm-Wrestling Team



Sheikh Arafat Siam, a 6th semester student of Computer Science and Engineering at IUB, has been honored with the the captaincy of the Bangladesh Arm Wrestling National Team following his exceptional performance in the Indo-Bangla Arm-wrestling Championship held in May 2023. Bangladesh Arm Wrestling Association (BAWA) announced his captaincy on June 13, 2023. Siam, who is also the current National Arm-wrestling Champion of Bangladesh, emerged victorious in the Indo-Bangla Arm-wrestling Championship by sweeping through all the matches with sheer dominance on his way to glory. Earlier in May 2023, Siam became the National Arm-Wrestling Champion of Bangladesh in the 100 kilogram weight category. The national championship was held at the gymnasium of the Bangladesh Weight Lifting Federation in Dhaka.

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