



**Office
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Affairs**

THE BRIDGE

The Official Newsletter of the Office Of External Affairs

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Editor's Message

Welcome back to The Bridge, which is the official newsletter of the Office of External Affairs at North South University. This issue (#10) includes articles about recent delegation visits to NSU, the Macquarie University Study Tour and the hugely successful Rohingya Conference as well as other interesting events. In addition to the International Faculty, International Student and Alumni features, we have a Special Feature about a talented ISD student on full scholarship at NSU. As the summer semester ends, the OEA looks forward to supporting lots of exciting events at NSU in Fall, 2019.

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Study, Research & Student Visa Requirements for Japan, 3rd July 2019

The Office of External Affairs of North South University organized an information session called "Study, Research & Student Visa Requirements for Japan" in association with the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh on Wednesday, 3rd July 2019. Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, North South University was present. Dr. Ayesha Akter, (Assistant Professor, Department of Pharmacy) addressed the opening session. She did her Ph.D. at the Graduate School of Medicine, Nagoya University - 名古屋大学. The Keynote Speaker was Ms. Machiko Yamamura (Head of Cultural Affairs, Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh) and showed a video called "Bridges to Japan".



A presentation was given by Dr. Hasan Mahmud Reza (Professor, Department of Pharmacy) who did his Ph.D. at the Nara Institute of Science and Technology. A presentation was also given by Dr. Khasro Miah (Director, Career Placement Center (CPC) and Professor, Human Resource Management) who did his Ph.D. from Nagoya University - 名古屋大学. Dr. Kaosar Afsana (Education Advisor, Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh) talked about Japanese Government Scholarships. As Bangladesh and Japan share a strong and peaceful diplomatic relationship, the Japanese government is interested to support educational exchange and research-based programs with Bangladeshi students and researchers through the Japan Embassy with the acknowledgement of the Bangladesh government.

The seminar was initiated to let the students and faculty members of NSU know about the higher study and research opportunities available to them through Japanese universities. While sharing her experience of applying and studying in Japan, Dr. Khondokar especially mentioned the fairness and clarity of the student and researcher selection procedure of the Japan Embassy. She spent 4 years in Japan working in Nagoya University - 名古屋大学. The vibrant culture and strong security system amazed her. She feels that Japan is one of the safest countries in the world and assured the audience that language isn't a huge barrier for studying in Japan, as the Japan Embassy arranges short language courses for foreign students for free. Dr. Khondokar recommended Bangladeshi students to consider Japanese universities for higher degrees without hesitation.

The second speaker, Ms. Machiko Yamamura mentioned that Bangladesh and Japan have shared a wonderful diplomatic relationship since before 1971 and will be celebrating 50 years of their diplomatic relations in 2020. Ms. Yamamura mentioned that about 120 Bangladeshi students were currently pursuing their higher studies with scholarships in Japan.

Collaboration Meeting with Macquarie University, 16th July 2019

The Office of External Affairs of North South University hosted a collaboration meeting with Macquarie University, Australia at North South University on Tuesday, 16th July 2019. Professor Atiqul Islam (Vice-Chancellor), Mrs. Rehana Rahman (Member, Board of Trustees), Mrs. Yasmin Kamal (Member, Board of Trustees), Professor Gias U Ahsan (Dean, Health & Life Sciences), Professor Jashim Uddin Ahmed (Acting Dean, NSU School of Business and Economics), Professor Javed Bari (Dean, School of Engineering & Physical Sciences), Professor Abdur Rob Khan (Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences) and Dr. Katherine Li (Director, Office of External Affairs) were present along with the delegates from Macquarie University. Macquarie University delegates included Dr. Philomena Leung (Associate Dean and Professor of Accounting & Governance), Dr. Peter Busch (Deputy Teaching Director, Computing, Faculty of Science & Engineering), Dr. Nazmul Huda (Program Director, Engineering Management, Faculty of Science & Engineering), Mr. Tanveer Shaheed (Associate Director, Global Engagement & Business Development), and Ms. Habiba Kibria (Country Manager, South Asia & Middle East, International Office).



The purpose of the program was to have a bi-lateral collaboration meeting about Research opportunities, Faculty Exchange and Student Exchange. Dr. Katherine Li welcomed all the delegates with utmost enthusiasm. The meeting started with a formal introduction of the delegates.

During the discussion, the delegates from Macquarie University identified potential areas for collaboration with North South University and proposed their full cooperation in all aspects. North South University was delighted and promised full collaboration as well. The meeting was followed by a lunch break. After that, there were meetings with the Dean of Business School, Dean of Engineering and Associate Director, Global Engagement & Business Development, Mr. Tanveer Shaheed. Finally, a discussion and pre-departure presentation for the participants of the Macquarie University Study Tour took place.

Chinese Enterprises-Bangladesh Universities Cooperation Fair, 19th July 2019



The Overseas Chinese Association in Bangladesh organized the 2019 Chinese Enterprises-Bangladesh Universities Cooperation Fair on 19th July. OCAB invited universities to join. It was an opportunity to build up a linkage between NSU students and Chinese companies.

The Chinese Association in Bangladesh (OCAB) is the first legally registered non-profit service and public welfare organization in Bangladesh. According to the information provided on their invitation, *"the mission of OCAB is to establish platforms to unite overseas Chinese, to promote Chinese traditional culture, to propagate the Chinese latest development policies and cooperation status of China-Bangladesh, to protect the rights and interests of overseas Chinese in Bangladesh, to participate in public affairs in Bangladesh, to communicate between Overseas Chinese and Bangladesh government/civil society, to express opinions of Overseas Chinese in Bangladesh, to strengthen the communication with China and other countries/regions, and to promote economic cooperation. OCAB offered an opportunity to promote idea exchange between Bangladesh universities and Chinese entrepreneurs."*

Representatives from BRAC University, University of Dhaka, Daffodil University, Islamic University of Technology, Islamic University of Kushtia, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh and North South University set up their information booths to provide information to the prospective Chinese companies and answer questions. Regarding this fair, Dr. Katherine Li, Director of Office of External Affairs seemed enthusiastic. She, along with Prof. Dr. Mohammad Khasro Miah, Director of Career & Placement Center and Dr. Zhou Weiwei, Director, Confucius Institute, NSU attended from North South University.



The students attending the fair had the opportunity to submit their résumés directly to the companies present and also sit for an On-Spot Interview. This fair takes place annually, so Dr. Li hopes more NSUers will turn up for the next one.

And after witnessing the success, Dr. Li expressed her enthusiasm about the possibility of hosting this fair next at NSU in the Plaza Area. She hopes to discuss the idea with Prof. Atiqul Islam, Vice Chancellor of North South University, Dr. Mohammad Khasro Miah and Dr. Zhou Weiwei, Chinese Director Confucius Institute at North South University.

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Khasro Miah shared his experience of participating in the fair by saying that 20 odd companies were present. North South University had the highest participation.

The Confucius Institute of North South University played a big role coordinating the participation of the Office of External Affairs and Career & Placement Centre of North South University. Prof. Dr. Miah gave a speech during the opening session on behalf of North South University. Career Directors of different universities also attended the fair. Some companies also looked for students with knowledge of the Japanese language. Even Prof. Dr. Mohammad Khasro Miah is very enthusiastic about proposing that the OCAB fair be hosted at NSU next year.

“The 8-Hour Day” Interactive Grooming Session with S. M. Parvej Islam, 21st July 2019

Office of External Affairs organized an Interactive Grooming Session called, “The 8-Hour Day”, on Sunday, 21st July 2019. The Guest Speaker for this session was S. M. Parvej Islam, NSU alumnus. He has had a remarkable career so far with Grameenphone, GPIT and RobiAxiata Limited.

He is currently heading the Project Management Office of BRAC Bank Limited. During his tenure with these giants, he managed the largest projects for them as a project manager which brought back significant returns to those businesses; hence, this experience is reflected in his later international publications. Besides being an NSU graduate, he pursued various additional certifications from IBA, University of Dhaka, Boston University and University of Virginia.

Students who were interested in knowing the benefits of discipline in everyday work, attended this session and were provided insights on:

- * Attire,
- * Discipline,
- * Communication, and
- * Interpersonal relationships.



This session gave participants an overview on how to "Dress right" as a corporate professional, and enrich interpersonal relationships between team members and how to consider the importance of stakeholder management. It was helpful to students to get tips about respectful, simple, yet effective ways of communication. This session provided insights from the recruiters'/supervisors' point of view. Hence, it helped students to prepare themselves for the upcoming corporate journey right after graduation. The closing note was given by Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs, North South University.

OEA Meets Goethe Institut, 23rd July 2019



Dr. Katherine Li, Director of Office of External Affairs and Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer of North South University attended a meeting at the Goethe Institute Dhaka on 23rd July 2019. The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany’s cultural institute, which is active worldwide. They promote the study of German and encourage international cultural exchange.

According to their website, The Goethe-Institut Dhaka fosters knowledge about Germany by providing information on German culture, society and politics. This includes the exchange of films, music, theatre, and literature. Goethe cultural societies, reading rooms, and exam and language centers have played a role in the cultural and educational policies of Germany for more than 60 years. The Goethe-Institut is the Federal Republic of Germany’s cultural institution operational worldwide. They also foster knowledge about Germany by providing information on its culture, society and politics.

Dr. Li and Ms. Alam had a meeting with Dr. Kirsten Hackenbroch, Institute Director of GIB, along with Dr. AQMA Rahman Bhuiyan, Associate Professor & Chairman of Department of English and Modern Languages of North South University.

This meeting was initiated to open German languages classes at North South University. It is a perfect time for students to go to Germany now. Hopefully, an MOU will soon be signed between NSU and the Goethe Institut.

OEA Visits Australia, 26th July-15th August, 2019

Macquarie University, which is one of the best partner universities of NSU, has an MOU which was formed on 24th April 2015. As part of the MOU, a student delegation team from School of Business of North South University went to MQU for the second exchange program of 2 weeks (the first one took place in 2017.) The International Office, OEA started ground work for this program from the second week of November, 2018 and finally ended up successfully departing for Australia on 29th July 2019.

The Study Tour consisted of 8 Business students in the 4th year of their BBA along with the two staff members from the Office of External Affairs. The purpose of the trip was to introduce the visiting team to the Australian education system, teaching methods and finally to experience a global approach to tertiary education.

The tour had two components: student exchange and staff training. The Business students of NSU who visited MQU attended two classes every day in courses on Business, while the OEA staff members received training from the MQU International Office. The staff members were Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer and Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer. This tour helped to strengthen the relationship between the two universities.

The students of NSU gained new insights about global education and teaching methods through this tour, and the staff of NSU got new ideas about how to serve the faculty and staff of NSU.



This trip helped the personal development of the students and staff as well. Moreover, this international tour will also help to boost the QS ranking of NSU by contributing to the creation of pleasant student experiences, which is an important aspect of internationalization, reputation build-up and increasing popularity of a university.

International Affairs Officer invited to UniSA

North South University (NSU) and University of South Australia (UniSA) signed an MOU on 23rd February 2018. Under that MOU, both universities started work on different aspects of academic collaboration like degree articulation, seminars, case completion, etc. Based on the MOU, UniSA arranged a tour to their campus 1st & 2nd August for NSU students along with Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer from OEA, NSU. UniSA's School of Commerce (SC) shared their plan to host a minimum of 15 students from NSU on September 2020 as a student exchange program/study tour.

International Conference on “Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh: Challenges & Sustainable Solutions”, 27th-28th July 2019

North South University hosted possibly the largest conference on the Rohingya Crisis in Bangladesh on 27th and 28th July, 2019 in collaboration with UNHCR. The Department of Political Science & Sociology and the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), North South University were the key organizers. The NSU Departments of English and Modern Languages, Law, Public Health, Environmental Science and Management (ESM), and the Office of Research were among the partners of the conference organizing committee.

Mr. HT Imam, Political Affairs Advisor to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, inaugurated the conference. Dr. Tan Sri Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Former Minister, Foreign and Home Affairs, the Government of Malaysia was the keynote speaker in the inaugural session. Dr. AK Abdul Momen, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh was also present at the closing ceremony.





The influx of a large number of Rohingya people into Bangladesh over the last few years has become a critical concern for both the host and international communities. Many of the incidents of forced displacement and migration remain underexplored or understudied, leaving research on sustainable solutions to those issues at a dearth. The multifarious issues associated with the Rohingya influx into Bangladesh include social, cultural, political and legal, health and environmental require a comprehensive understanding to develop a durable solution to overcome the crisis.

From both the humanitarian and national security perspectives, it is imperative that the on-going mechanisms function properly so that the displaced Rohingya people get their rights back. The rights don't necessarily mean only the repatriation of those who have been displaced but also the assurance their citizenship rights and life on their land includes all fundamental rights and dignity. On the other hand, Bangladesh has been bearing a heavy burden of sheltering this huge Rohingya population.

In such a context, the questions remain:

- How long will these displaced and stateless people stay in temporary shelters in Bangladesh?
- What are the prospects of a safe repatriation of Rohingya people?
- Will Myanmar take them back and give them their rights and allow them to live with dignity?
- How significant is the local and global response to this crisis?
- Does the Rohingya crisis pose a direct threat to national and regional security?
- What are the socioeconomic challenges that both the host and Rohingya communities face in the shelter areas?
- What types of health hazards may arise in the Rohingya camps?
- How vulnerable are the women and children in these camps?



There were 185 papers presented at the conference by researchers from India, Canada, the United States, China and Australia. Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs was the Convener of the Conference. The Office of External Affairs of North South University is proud to have been a partner of this International Conference.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Das from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) Visits North South University, 4th-5th August 2019



The meeting with Dr. Ashok Kumar Das and the North South University (NSU) authorities started with a video presentation about NSU. The Vice-Chancellor (VC) of North South University, Professor Atique Islam commented on the good living conditions and living standards in Hawai'i. Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs showed her gratitude for support of the pending MOU.

Several NSU faculties including Dr. Li did their Masters or PhDs from UHM, so they expressed their support about having an MOU with UHM. Dr. Saiful Momen, Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Science and Management, NSU shared his experience as a Masters and PhD student of UHM. He believes, the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at UHM is very strong and engaged in active research.

The Vice-Chancellor (VC) of North South University, Professor Atique Islam said that NSU is only 26 years old and interested in MOUs that are beneficial for both parties. NSU is looking for ideas and very eager to develop its liberal arts departments.

NSU encourages its faculty members to do joint research programs with other universities and is ready to provide funds. It has an adequate research budget and is ready to fund joint research between NSU and UHM. It also encourages faculty exchange programs and is ready to give support.

Prof. Dr. Javed Bari, Dean, School of Engineering and Physical Sciences (SEPS), talked about the diverse departments of NSU. He believes the collaboration would widen our reach. Associate Professor, Dr. Muftaba Ahsan, Department of Architecture, NSU thinks UHM is a great place for networking. He said that the School of Architecture, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa is very unique; it blends both eastern and western patterns of architecture. They also take a very practical approach to research in architecture.

Dr. Sonia Amin, adjunct faculty, Department of History & Philosophy, NSU talked about her experience as a guest lecturer at UHM. UHM has incorporated the history of Bangladesh into their syllabus. Moreover, UHM is culturally appropriate and the students and faculties of NSU would benefit from the experience.

Dr. Shireen Huq, Department of English & Modern Languages thinks the ESL Department of UHM is very strong. It attracts students from both East and West. In addition, the Multicultural and Cultural Studies programs are also impressive. One can find diversity at the University. Dr. Katherine Li shared experiences as an undergraduate student of Asian Studies at UHM where she had to take four courses in Chinese and another two in Japanese as part of the Area Studies program requirement. Dr. Ashok Das, Assistant Professor, Department of Urban & Regional Planning (DURP), shared that he felt very excited to be at NSU and thanked Dr. Katherine Li and Prof. Denise Konan, Dean, College of Social Sciences, UHM for creating this MOU. It was his first visit to Bangladesh and he was very grateful for the hospitality.

Director of OEA Visits Bhutan, 9th-15th August, 2019



Dr. Katherine Li, Director of Office of External Affairs of North South University had an unofficial trip to Bhutan from 9th to 15th August 2019 during which she went to Royal Thimphu College and the Gross National Happiness Centre to learn more about GNH, which is a holistic and sustainable approach to development that balances material and non-material values with a conviction that humans want to search for happiness and that the economic factors are only part of the picture.

Then Dr. Li visited Royal Thimphu College. Royal Thimphu College (RTC), Bhutan's first private college, which according to their website, "offers general degree programs under the auspices of the Royal University of Bhutan and the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan. Their objective is to contribute to educational excellence in Bhutan and to become an institute of international repute attracting outstanding students from Bhutan and abroad."

Dr. Li met with Professor Professor Shiva Raj Bhattarai, Dean of the College and Dr. Samir S. Pater, Dean, Development & External Relations to explore possible areas of academic collaboration with NSU.

(Photo and description from RTC website, <https://www.rtc.bt>)



Techno India University Visits NSU, 28th August 2019



Delegates from Techno India University visited North South University on Wednesday, 28th August 2019. The purpose of the visit was to explore opportunities for collaborative high-end research. The delegates from Techno India University were:

1. Prof. Dr. Goutom Sengupta, Vice Chancellor of Techno India University
2. Prof. Shyama Prashad Bapari
3. Mr. Shariful Alam, Director
4. Mr. Biprodash Kumar Ghosh, Executive

The agenda included:

1. Collaborative education in fields of mutual expertise and mutual fee sharing
2. Collaborative Student Exchange Programs
3. Collaborative Edu-tourism for staff and students
4. Other collaborative activities for mutual branding and fund development

According to their website, “Techno India University, West Bengal was conceptualized under the aegis of the Techno India Group and was established by virtue of the WB State Legislature Act in the year 2012. It has been one of the dream projects of the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Smt Mamata Banerjee. Standing tall as the first private university of West Bengal, Techno India University, West Bengal is an institute of world-wide repute in the field of education, research and technology. ”

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The delegates representing North South University were:

1. Prof. Atiqul Islam, Vice Chancellor
2. Md. Ismail Hossain, Pro Vice Chancellor
3. Prof. Dr. Jashim Uddin Ahmed, Dean (Acting), School of Business & Economics
4. Prof. Dr. Javed Bari, Dean, School of Engineering & Physical Sciences
5. Prof. Dr. Abdur Rob Khan, Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences
6. Prof. Dr. Sharif Nurul Ahkam, Director, Graduate Studies
7. Dr. Norman Kenneth Swazo, Director, Office of Research
8. Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs

A follow-up meeting is planned for November, 2019 during which an academic collaboration MOU will be signed.

Special Feature

Abraar Ahmed Tariq came to NSU to do his undergraduate studies in Economics (BSc.). He completed his schooling from International School Dhaka, where he had the opportunity to do the International Baccalaureate program. He attained his degree in 2018 with an overall score of 34.

This, alongside a strong performance on his admission tests, helped him secure a full scholarship for his undergraduate studies. Using his experience from the IB program, he continues to try his best in his studies which could allow him to secure a brighter future. Abraar enjoys sports and music especially because he has been playing the violin from a young age.

Interviewer: Being from International School Dhaka, which follows International Baccalaureate curriculum, why did you choose NSU?

Abraar Ahmed Tariq: I was in ISD my whole life. This means I knew I would be doing the International Baccalaureate as my diploma studies for my final two years. However, I was not certain if I would study abroad or in Bangladesh.

It is no secret that the majority of ISD students do their undergraduate studies abroad, which is a big reason for why they go through the IB program. IB is not recognized or well known by most universities in Bangladesh, especially because it is tailor-made for specific foreign universities. However, NSU is one of the few universities that does recognize and even appreciate the program, to my surprise.

Furthermore, it always seemed like the most comprehensive and advisable option for me, since I knew my experience from the IB would be of great value here. I knew I could get the best education in Bangladesh from here.

Interviewer: : Based on your result on the NSU Admission Test, you were offered a scholarship. Were you surprised and why do you think you did so well?

Abraar Ahmed Tariq: As I mentioned, I was very surprised because I never thought my IB background would be recognized by the honorable panel that chose scholarship students. Perhaps that is why I did so well, as there was no pressure on me. The thought of a scholarship never came in my mind, so I was able to give an admission exam without too much pressure.

I also worked very hard to get a decent score for my IB results, which as I am told, helped me attain the scholarship.



Interviewer: You mentioned that your hobbies include sports and music. Can you tell us a little bit more about that?

Abraar Ahmed Tariq: I have been playing the violin since my childhood and I am still learning even today. This is why I had the opportunity to play in our school graduation ceremony and other places. For sports, I enjoy cricket, badminton, table tennis, and sometimes football. I especially like watching cricket and I am known as a rather judgmental spectator.

Interviewer: : Why are you majoring in Economics? What plans do you have for the future?

Abraar Ahmed Tariq: Economics is one of the more interesting subjects I have come across in my academic life. Even though I did not choose it for the IB, I still was very interested in it. I also felt that making friends in the Economics department would be easier because there would be fewer people who I could interact with and have closer bonds.

I am not entirely sure what I will do in the future, but graduate studies are definitely on my mind, alongside expanding my father's business.

Interviewer: How is your experience at NSU so far? Would you recommend NSU to other ISDians?

Abraar Ahmed Tariq: The students are known as the ISD hawks, at least during my time there. ISD does not have too many students, which made it a little difficult for me to adjust here [NSU], but I have been quite pleased with my experience so far. The teachers I have had so far have been great which really has made my adjustment period much smoother. I would definitely recommend NSU, especially if any ISD student decides to stay in Bangladesh for any level of studies.

International Faculty Feature



Dr. Zhou Weiwei completed her Bachelor and Master degrees in Chinese Language & Literature and Cultural Studies at Yunnan University and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. She obtained a Ph.D. degree in Cultural Studies from the Chinese University of Hong Kong in 2012. Her dissertation is *Cultural Imagination and Cultural Production in Cultural Tourism: A Case Study of Woodcrafts and Paintings as Tourist Arts in the Old Town of Lijiang*.

Lijiang was her first research field, and she spent six years there to work and conduct fieldwork during her doctoral study period. After graduation, she went back to her hometown, Kunming and joined the School of Ethnology and Sociology, Yunnan University. She undertook several research projects on tourism arts, culture heritage, and visual culture studies when she worked at YNU.

In 2015, Dr. Zhou was recommended to join a South Asia research project and applied for the Confucius Institute program as well. After that, she began her new teaching life at North South University, Bangladesh. Till now, she has worked at the Confucius Institute at North South University for more than three years.

"It was a unique experience," Weiwei said. She changed her role and became a Chinese language teacher, a culture communicator. There were opportunities full of magical changes for her in these three years.

She tried a lot of different things, teaching, managing, and also faced many challenges, but the understanding, respect, support, friendship, and love she gets from the students, colleagues, and friends in Bangladesh are the most cherished things for her. "Although you have to learn every minute here, each moment brings you new experiences, passion, and hope to explore more.

That's interesting," She said.

Interviewer: What is it like to be an international faculty member at NSU? Can you share some anecdotes?

Dr. Zhou Weiwei: NSU has a very friendly environment. When I enter the campus, the security guards might say Nihao (hello) to me in Chinese. Sometimes they stop me and show me their Chinese textbooks and ask me questions about how to read this or is that right and so on.

That makes me happy. And in the canteen, I tried some localized Chinese food, such as fried rice and noodles with Bangla style. Sometimes it makes me crazy and inspires me to want to open a Chinese food stand somewhere on the campus.

Interviewer: From your bio, we can see that you are very interested in Chinese Language and Culture. What made you pursue this interest so deeply?

Dr. Zhou Weiwei: I love Chinese literature and once dreamed of being a writer. I chose Chinese Language and Literature as my first major when I entered Yunnan University, and I always thought it was right. The Chinese language is not only a language, but it is also a tool to describe and create this world to me.

I feel happy and creative when I use this language to write, to express my feelings. So teaching Chinese language and culture is a beautiful thing to me.

Interviewer: Your Ph.D. degree is from the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Why Hong Kong University?

Dr. Zhou Weiwei:

When I planned to study abroad, I wanted somewhere that not too far. I searched for a place that was close to Yunnan, but different. If I had known that it only takes two hours from Kunming to Dhaka at that time, I could have come to Bangladesh.

Finally, I decided to go to Hong Kong, which is a place just like a corridor between East and West. The major I applied for was Cultural Studies, which is an interdisciplinary subject for which I could combine my previous knowledge and research with a new angle. I was very lucky, and I appreciated those years that I studied in Hong Kong, especially in CUHK.

Interviewer: What is your vision for the Confucius Institute of North South University for the next five years?

Dr. Zhou Weiwei: I think CI at NSU should set a long term and bigger goal both in Chinese language teaching, learning, and Chinese-Bangladesh bilateral research. To integrate CI's development into two host universities' development plan is very important. CI would like to improve the current Chinese teaching quality and open new Chinese culture-related courses at NSU for students and also forge the links between two universities' scholars and students.

A high-level Chinese learning and China-Bangladesh research center should be our goal.

Interviewer: What would be your advice for your future students?

Dr. Zhou Weiwei: Choose your favorite subject or topic to learn and put your efforts into it, and you will never regret it. If we meet in Chinese class someday, I hope you study Chinese Characters (Hanzi) from your first class. Because Hanzi is the essence of Chinese language rather than a language symbol, and it contains Chinese civilization, history, art, and philosophy.

Any language is an alternative way to know the world, the same is true of the Chinese language. Hope CI can be your friend along with you to discover China.

NSU Alumni Feature

***Zia Ashraf** is Chief Operating Officer of Chaldal.Com and Co-Founder of Chaldal Incorporation in San Francisco, USA. He started the journey of Chaldal from March, 2013. He also served Bangladesh Association for Software & Information Services as Co-Chairman from August 2016 to April 2018.*

Mr. Ashraf has served as a member of the Executive Committee of Bangladesh Association for Software & Information Services for SoftExpo 2017 and Digital World 2016. He has been the Advisor to Bit Body, Inc - MTailor.Com from May 2016 to September 2016. He was the Officer-In-Charge for Dawn Garments Limited from October 2010 till October 2012. We are very proud to feature Zia Ashraf in our Alumni Feature as one of our successful Alumni. He attended North South University from 2004 and graduated in 2009. He pursued a Bachelor of Business Administration in Management. It would not be wrong to call Mr. Ashraf the pioneer of Online Grocery Service in Bangladesh.



Interviewer: While growing up, what did you want to do?

Zia Ashraf: While growing up, I dreamt to be an engineer, but while pursuing my education I realized that it was not my cup of tea. I pursued my second dream and pursued a BBA and became a business graduate. First, I wanted to work in a bank, then ended up in the RMG sector and eventually founded Chaldal.

Interviewer: What made you think of such an innovative startup?

Zia Ashraf: I always felt that grocery shopping was somewhat of a repeated event in all our lives, and it also takes significant amount of time to do grocery shopping. For a country like Bangladesh, where people are beginning to value time, I felt that a startup like Chaldal could save a lot of time if the service could be rendered properly and with quality.

Interviewer: What made you become an entrepreneur from a service holder?

Zia Ashraf: My friend Waseem Alim, who is also a founder of Chaldal, played a significant role in inspiring me to become an entrepreneur from having been a service holder. The change triggered when I was looking for a job and the push came from Waseem to come with an innovative idea and Chaldal was formed.

Interviewer: What are your plans for the future? What is your vision for the future entrepreneurs?

Zia Ashraf: My plan for the future is to expand the horizon of Chaldal beyond Dhaka city, and eventually internationally, and to make sure that we have done enough to the contribution of bringing a change to our society. The vision for the future entrepreneurs is that they will learn the good practices from Chaldal and use the knowledge to empower their businesses. They should also have the internal urge to be honest all the time and give back to the nation.

Interviewer: How has NSU contributed to your growth?

Zia Ashraf: Since I am a BBA graduate from NSU, having my major in Marketing, so most of the marketing and managerial decisions I make are a reflection of the learning and education I have received from NSU.

International Student Feature

Syeda Shaista Al Quadri is a citizen of India, born and brought up in the metropolitan city of Kolkata. She was strongly determined to continue her higher studies in English as her subject after having married a Bangladeshi.

Interviewer: Tell us something about yourself.

Syeda Shaista: I am a citizen of India, born and brought up in the metropolitan city Kolkata. Currently, I am a student of Masters in English or more specifically in TESOL at North South University. I have completed my graduation in English Literature from the University of Calcutta two years ago. Towards the end of that same year, I got married to a Bangladeshi citizen because of whom I came here to Dhaka.

Interviewer: What made you choose NSU as your alma mater?

Syeda Shaista: I was strongly determined to continue my higher studies with English as my subject. But, I had no idea about the universities here and was totally confused about which one would be the best for me. Then, I came to know about some private universities which are doing well here and NSU was among them. I got many positive reviews from people about this university and its efficient faculty members who have their degrees from different parts of the world. This convinced me about the quality of education provided here so, I chose NSU to be my alma mater.

Interviewer: Can you share some early stories from when you first came to Bangladesh or NSU?

Syeda Shaista: When I first came to Bangladesh, I had a language issue because I could not speak Bangladeshi Bengali properly. But with time I managed learning the dialect.

Interviewer: As an international student, do you see cultural diversity in NSU? If yes, can you illustrate it a bit?

Syeda Shaista: Yes of course, I can see cultural diversity here in the university. Even though I did not take part in them, I saw cultural functions being organized here. That's really a good sign, as the university is acknowledging other cultures and its festivals and making students acquainted with them. As it is, the university has students and faculties from around the world coming from different cultural backgrounds. In that way also we get to know about their culture and lifestyle.

Interviewer: Where do you see yourself in the future?

Syeda Shaista: That's a nice question. Most probably after completing my Master's degree from here, I would like to join any reputed school as a teacher or any good university as a lecturer. I might also go for higher education.

Interviewer: Anything you wish to tell the future applicants of NSU?

Syeda Shaista: Yes, I would like to tell them that they can study here, as hopefully they won't be disappointed. The quality of education is good. They just need to know Bengali to communicate with people in Bangladesh.

Interviewer: What will be your contribution to NSU after completion of your degree?

Syeda Shaista: After completing this degree, if I get a chance I would surely like to be a part of this university by teaching here.



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