



**Office  
of External  
Affairs**

# THE BRIDGE

## The Official Newsletter of the Office Of External Affairs

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### Editor's Message

The OEA continues its mission to build and maintain strong partnerships across the globe. In this issue you will discover more examples of successful careers of our brilliant alumni, words of wisdom from Bangladeshi educators abroad and facilities available from our partner institutions. Please take some time to go through the opportunities that such collaborations make available to faculty, staff and students of NSU.

Special in this issue are glimpses into the **exchange experiences** of our students as they partake in such opportunities.

Finally, we are always delighted to feature our alumni, international students and respected faculty members in the Bridge.

Happy reading!

*Editor*

Dr. Katherine Li

*Reporter*

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### Congratulations NSU on the latest MoUs



NSU has signed the following 8 new and renewed MoUs in the last two months: Institute of Epidemiology Disease Control And Research (IEDCR), Bangladesh (renewed), Hiroshima University, Japan, Padakhep Manabik Unnayan Kendra ( PMUK), Tunku Abdul Rahman University, Malaysia, University of Malaya, Malaysia, BML Munjal, India (renewed), Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF), Bangladesh, Uttaran, Bangladesh.

To learn more about these partnerships, please visit <http://institutions.northsouth.edu/oea/international-affairs/partnership/list-of-mous/>, which is located on the front page of the NSU website under Int'l Partnership.

### Professor Rahat Munir Visits NSU from Macquarie University, Australia



**MACQUARIE  
University**

*On July 31, 2023, an enlightening academic rendezvous took place as Professor Rahat Munir, the esteemed Head of the Department of Accounting and Corporate Governance at Macquarie University, Australia, visited North South University (NSU) in a distinguished capacity. His visit was marked by a special session dedicated to NSU students, where he generously shared valuable insights into the myriad opportunities offered by Macquarie University and also conducted a meeting with SBE faculty members.*

During this illuminating session, Prof. Munir provided an extensive overview of the application process for prospective students aspiring to join Macquarie University. He delved into the specific requirements and prerequisites for admission, ensuring that students were well-informed and prepared to embark on their academic journeys. Furthermore, Prof. Munir enlightened the students about the diverse range of courses and programs available at Macquarie University, giving them a glimpse into the world-class education they could access. He passionately discussed scholarship schemes and financial aid options, underlining the university's commitment to supporting deserving candidates in pursuing their academic goals.



In summary, Prof. Munir's visit left an indelible mark by simplifying the application process and opening doors to a world of educational possibilities at Macquarie University, Australia. It was a momentous occasion that strengthened the bonds between NSU and Macquarie University, fostering an environment of international academic collaboration and personal growth for NSU students.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/1784558398614002>



## NSU Alumni Talk Show 122

*In July 06, 2023, the NSU Alumni Talk Show aired the one-hundred-and-twenty-second episode featuring the accomplished Ms. Mansurin Khan Choudhury from the 1994 batch. Ms. Choudhury completed her Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Engineering. She pursued a Master of Business Administration (MBA) at Monash University, Australia, where she earned the prestigious Australian Commonwealth Scholarship in 2014. In 2006, she joined the Bangladesh Civil Service as the Deputy Chief Accounts Officer in the Department of Audit and Accounts, Government of Bangladesh, and held various significant positions throughout her career, including serving as a Counselor in the Consulate General of Bangladesh in Toronto. Notably, she is the first to join the Bangladesh Civil Service from NSU and an O'Levels curriculum. Presently, Ms. Choudhury holds the esteemed position of Chief Accounts and Finance Officer in the Economic Relations Division, Ministry of Finance, under the Government of Bangladesh.*



Ms. Mansurin Khan Choudhury was asked about her current role and journey during the interview. She shared that her father was a significant inspiration for her, particularly in pursuing a career in the civil service. With a family history of civil service, she took it as a challenge and successfully passed the BCS exam, entering the audit and accounts department as her first choice. Throughout her career, she worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Ms. Choudhury served in various positions at the Consulate General of Bangladesh in Toronto, Canada, eventually joining the foreign service on deputation. These experiences provided her with valuable opportunities, exposure, and learning. Currently, she holds the esteemed position of Chief Accounts and Finance Officer in the Economic Relations Division (ERD) of the Ministry of Finance. In this role, she serves as a financial advisor, overseeing budget management and authorizing disbursements from organizations such as the World Bank, IMF, and ADB. She also manages payrolls, pensions, and General Provident Fund (GPF) allocations.

During her tenure as a diplomat in Canada, Ms. Choudhury served as the First Secretary and Head of Chancery, working closely with the Consul General. Her responsibilities extended beyond governmental affairs to assisting the community, including diaspora members, with visa, passport, and international student-related matters. Notably, during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, she played a pivotal role in arranging a chartered flight to Bangladesh for stranded international students, ensuring their safe return. Her dedication and commitment to helping others made this experience a significant highlight of her time in Canada, which she found immensely fulfilling.

Transitioning from an O-level curriculum to joining civil services posed challenges for Ms. Mansurin Khan Choudhury, particularly in navigating the preliminary exams conducted in Bangla. Despite enrolling in coaching centers, she faced difficulty understanding the terms and concepts presented. However, her determination and resourcefulness led her to devise a unique study method using a whiteboard to write down and memorize Bangla terms and grammar. This diligent preparation allowed her to pass the exams successfully. Furthermore, the subsequent written exam, which offered Bangla or English questions, proved more manageable, enabling her to perform well. Her perseverance and adaptability in overcoming language barriers serve as an inspiration to others.

Ms. Choudhury highlights essential skills and characteristics for diplomats, emphasizing the significance of articulation, good negotiation skills acquired through experience and guidance, and proficient writing abilities crucial for civil service roles. When asked about women's leadership in civil services, she observes significant progress, citing examples of women holding prominent positions, such as the finance secretary and ERD secretary, indicating the government's commitment to empowering more women. However, Ms. Choudhury emphasizes the need for increased representation of women in the civil service. Offering advice to private university students aspiring to join civil services, she asserts that the key is an assertive determination from the outset, emphasizing that private university students can thrive in this competitive field by combining knowledge with a deep understanding of the BCS system. Ms. Choudhury's journey is an inspiration, showcasing the importance of ambition and resilience in pursuing a fulfilling career in civil services.

Ms. Mansurin Khan Choudhury reveals that her reason for choosing NSU stemmed from her desire to study at an American university, inspired by her readings of Archie comics and Enid Blyton books. However, upon joining NSU, she instantly fell in love with the campus environment, supportive faculty, and close-knit community. She cherishes the friendships she made at NSU and remains in touch with them, as they provide a sense of familiarity and connection. NSU profoundly impacted her higher studies abroad, instilling confidence and providing a network of support. In her advice to current NSU students, she encourages them to hold their heads high, emphasizing that being from a private university does not diminish their capabilities. She highlights NSU's preparation for the job market and reminds students of their potential for success with confidence and motivation. Ms. Choudhury's journey exemplifies the transformative power of NSU's nurturing environment and inspires current students embarking on their paths.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

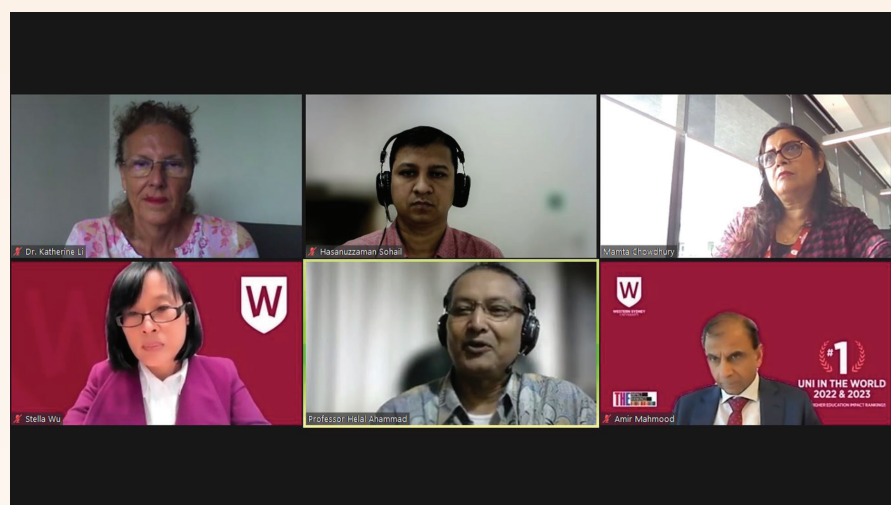
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/622134553020152>

## Collaboration Meeting with Western Sydney University, Australia

*In a virtual meeting held on July 6, 2023, via Zoom, North South University (NSU) and Western Sydney University (WSU) continued their collaborative journey. This follow-up gathering stemmed from the recent visit of NSU's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Atiqul Islam, to WSU, culminating in the renewal of their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their partnership.*



Distinguished attendees from NSU included Professor Helal Ahammad, Dean of the School of Business and Economics; Dr. Katherine Li, Director of External Affairs; and Dr. Hasanuzzaman, Assistant Director of External Affairs. Western Sydney University was represented by Professor Amir Mahmood, Dean of the School of Business; Professor Stella Huiying Wu, Associate Dean of International; and Dr. Mamta Chowdhury, International Academic Lead for Bangladesh. The focus of the meeting revolved around collaborative initiatives, including research collaborations, organizing research symposia, conducting specific workshops, faculty and staff capacity building, scholarship opportunities for NSU faculty, and curriculum alignment between the two institutions. A notable development was the generous scholarship offer in the field of accounting extended by WSU's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Barney Glover AO, to a faculty member from NSU, fostering research and professional growth.



Additionally, the Indo-Pacific Consortium, aimed at promoting academic and research partnerships among regional universities, was highlighted as a valuable platform for collaboration. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to productive cooperation and optimistic anticipation of the positive outcomes of this strengthened partnership between NSU and WSU. This collaboration promises to be a significant stride in the advancement of education and research in the Indo-Pacific region.

## What's Your Story? (Episode 17)

*The seventeenth episode of What's Your Story was aired on Facebook Live, on July 12, 2023. The spotlight was shone on Dr. MD. Sahadat Hossain, Ph.D., P.E., a distinguished professional in geotechnical and geoenvironmental engineering. Currently serving as the Director of the Solid Waste Institute for Sustainability (SWIS) and a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at The University of Texas at Arlington, USA, Dr. Hossain is renowned for his extensive contributions to sustainable waste management.*

SWIS, under Dr. Hossain's leadership, is dedicated to fostering clean and healthy cities through sustainable waste management practices. Dr. Hossain's commitment to this mission is exemplified by initiating the sustainable waste management and landfill training program, ISWS, since 2016. With over 25 years of research and professional experience, he has been involved in more than 150 geotechnical design and construction projects spanning countries such as Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and the United States. Dr. Hossain's expertise extends to innovative solutions, notably in recycling plastic bins for slope stabilization, a subject on which various news channels have interviewed him and for which he even authored a book. His pioneering work also includes the development of plastic roads, utilizing recycled plastics as a substitute for conventional asphalt pavement roads. As a recognized landfill expert, he has conducted investigations of recent dumpsite failures in Odis Aba, Ethiopia. His invitations underscore Dr. Hossain's global influence as a keynote speaker and technical expert in numerous countries, including Ethiopia, Tanzania, Brazil, Nigeria, Belgium, Serbia, India, Bangladesh, and Thailand.

Beyond his extensive contributions to the field, Dr. Hossain is a prolific author of four books, over 200 journal publications, and more than 100 technical reports to his name. His dedication to education is evidenced by his supervision of 36 Ph.D. and 45 M.S. students and his current mentorship of 9 Ph.D. and 12 M.S. students. Dr. Hossain's academic journey began with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from IIT Bombay in 1994, followed by a Master's degree in 1997 at AIT, where he earned a prestigious scholarship among 150 students. He completed his Ph.D. at North Carolina State University in 2002, solidifying his status as a respected authority in the field of sustainable waste management and geotechnical engineering.

Dr. Hossain, hailing from Vikrampur, faced early life challenges as his father passed away when he was merely three years old. Raised by his single mother, he drew strength and guidance from his sisters, who played a pivotal role in shaping his life. His enduring motivation to study civil engineering was deeply rooted in his childhood desire to build a bridge, significantly reducing the arduous six-hour journey to his village. Financial constraints initially hindered his dream of pursuing education in the United States. However, his unwavering commitment led him to decline a Ph.D. offer at the University of Cambridge in favor of realizing his lifelong dream. Before embarking on his journey to the U.S., he gained valuable experience in Singapore while dedicating himself to preparing for the GRE and U.S. university applications from the moment he arrived. Despite receiving numerous offers from top U.S. institutions, Dr. Hossain chose North Carolina due to the allure of full funding. Reflecting on his early inspiration, he recalled reading a newspaper article about Ronald Reagan, a movie star turned U.S. president, which ignited his fascination with the United States. From a young age, he recognized America as a land of boundless opportunities, a belief that continues to drive his unwavering pursuit of his dreams.





Two profound motivations propelled Dr. Hossain's journey into solid waste management. Firstly, this field offered abundant funding and opportunities, which kindled his interest. Secondly, a heartfelt concern for the health of his childhood friends, who lived near an open dumpsite in Bangladesh and frequently fell ill, ignited his passion to uncover the reasons behind their vulnerability.

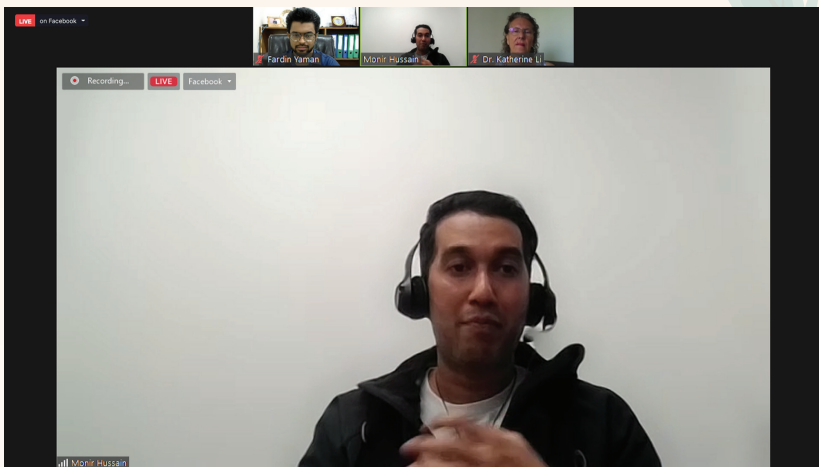
His aspiration to become a professor in the United States encountered initial setbacks, as all five universities he applied to post-PhD declined his applications. Undeterred, he embarked on a mission to bolster his academic profile. Driven by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, he engaged in waste management projects across different cities. During this time, the call from UT Arlington, which would alter the course of his career, came.

Recognizing the recurring challenges various cities face, a friend's advice prompted him to establish an organized research centre of excellence (ORC). However, meeting the university's stringent requirements, including securing a \$1 million grant for three consecutive years, was no small feat. His relentless dedication culminated in the approval of the centre in 2015. Dr. Hossain's commitment to networking saw him venture to international conferences, where serendipity led to his fortuitous meeting with David Bitterman, the President of the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA). Their connection was instant; together, they embarked on a four-year journey, attending conferences and meeting country leaders, laying the foundation for the international program. This remarkable odyssey demonstrates the profound impact of relentless determination and hard work. Dr. Hossain's journey is a testament to the fact that dedication and unwavering perseverance pave the path to success, making him an inspiration to students and aspiring academics alike.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/297959232680515>

## NSU Alumni Talk Show 123



*The one hundred and twenty-third episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show aired on July 16, 2023, featured the accomplished Mr. Monir Hussain, an alumnus of NSU from the Bachelor of Business Administration batch 2003. He pursued his passion for Accounting and completed his Master's at the University of Technology in Sydney in 2009. Currently, Mr. Hussain holds the esteemed position of Marketing Manager at The Institute of International Studies in Australia. Throughout his career, he has gained valuable experience working at prominent organizations such as Sunrise International and Study Group. Additionally, he showcases his creative talent as a Photographer & CEO at MNR LOVE PHOTO, further emphasizing his diverse range of skills and passion for photography. Mr. Hussain's journey inspires aspiring professionals, showcasing the rewarding blend of expertise and passion in his successful career.*

Mr. Monir Hussain shared valuable insights about his background and career journey during the live talk show. Relocating to Australia in 2013 brought about significant changes, and he emphasized the importance of independence in navigating such transitions successfully. Immersed in a new culture, he embraced the opportunity to learn about diverse traditions and relished exploring different cuisines. As a Marketing Manager, Mr. Hussain highlighted the significance of effective communication and exceptional writing skills. Moreover, he stressed the value of connecting with the audience, a skill he has honed over the years. Embracing adaptability and staying abreast of dynamic marketing changes have been essential to his successful career. Mr. Hussain's inspiring outlook reminds aspiring professionals of the significance of being open to change and the importance of continuous growth in one's professional journey.

In a display of wisdom and expertise, Mr. Monir Hussain emphasized the paramount importance of continuous skill development after graduating. Highlighting the significance of professional growth, he shared his proactive approach to completing free courses from various esteemed universities. Mr. Hussain further elaborated on how he successfully acquired digital and social marketing skills through online classes, showcasing his dedication to staying up-to-date in the dynamic job market. Emphasizing the significance of bridging study gaps, he advised fellow graduates to actively pursue new skills and knowledge to enhance their professional profiles. With a wealth of experience under his belt, Mr. Hussain's advice resonates with aspiring professionals, inspiring them to seek opportunities for personal and career development. His proactive attitude and commitment to continuous learning are a testament to his expertise and qualifications in the field.

Reminiscing about his undergraduate days at NSU, Mr. Monir Hussain fondly shared how NSU stood out as the pioneer among private universities during that time. Coming from an average school and college, he appreciated the notion of studying in an environment where all students were treated equally. The support of his seniors further cemented his decision to choose NSU. Embracing the competitive atmosphere, he actively engaged in extracurricular activities, becoming the President of NSU Earth Club despite his non-environmental science background and serving as the Treasurer of NSU Arts and Photography Club. These experiences left an indelible mark on him and filled his heart with cherished memories. Recollecting his first marketing teacher, Mr. Hussain expressed how the engaging classes sparked his passion for marketing, ultimately influencing his career path. He also acknowledged the impact of another marketing teacher with whom he presently collaborates on Social Marketing initiatives. In his words, NSU instilled in him the ability to adapt to various situations and enabled him to embrace change confidently. In conclusion, Mr. Hussain's recollections underscore the invaluable role NSU played in shaping his character and professional path, leaving an indelible mark on his journey to success.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/3542154739443781>



## Coordination Meeting with the Special Branch Police



attended the meeting.

*On July 23, 2023, a meeting took place in Malibagh Special Branch of Police involving officers from the Special Branch, the Assistant Superintendent of Police and the Superintendent Police from the Security Control Office (SCO). This gathering convened with representatives from 23 public and private universities to address the legal intricacies associated with international students coming to study in Bangladesh. From North South University (NSU) Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer,*



The primary agenda of this gathering was to address the legal complexities surrounding international students' enrollment in Bangladeshi universities. During the meeting, it was emphasized that universities must diligently verify the solvency of overseas students and maintain a record of those who may transfer abroad, graduate or discontinue their studies. It was stressed that students must complete their studies and return to their home countries, as certain institutions have encountered difficulties in repatriating students, leading to various legal issues.

In a significant development, plans are underway to create software automation linking the Special Branch office and universities to monitor the students closely. Strict adherence to regulations was emphasized, emphasizing that students must possess a valid study permit, particularly when on a business visa. Those already employed are only permitted to attend evening classes. Ensuring the accuracy and regular updating of students' residential addresses to the universities and the Special Branch was also highlighted as a critical measure. NSU was commended for its exceptional cooperation, serving as a positive example in promptly resolving any issues contributing to its well-regarded status.

## NSU Alumni Talk Show 124

*In the one hundred and twenty-fourth episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show, which aired on July 23, 2023, the spotlight was shone on the accomplished Mr. Farihan F. Rahman, an alumnus of the 2005 Bachelor of Business Administration batch, with a major in Marketing and International Business. His journey of excellence commenced with an internship at Grameen Bank and a remarkable tenure as an Operations and Project Assistant at the esteemed International Organization of Migration (IOM) for two years. Displaying his dedication and expertise, he served at the Swedish Embassy as a Migration Officer for nine years. Currently, Mr. Rahman has added another remarkable feather to his cap, being the Founder and Chairman of InveStar BD, an innovative full-spectrum digital investment and AI-based learning platform in Bangladesh. His commendable achievements reflect his talent, qualifications, and dedication to making a significant impact in various fields.*

In his captivating discussion, Mr. Rahman shared his journey and background, shedding light on his passion for investing and the inception of his groundbreaking venture, InveStar. Recognizing a void in the market, he realized that there was no app or open platform for people to buy shares, leading him to conceive the groundbreaking idea of InveStar. Despite initial discouragement from skeptics, Mr. Rahman's determination drove him to take the plunge, co-founding InveStar with his friends. Their efforts garnered attention and support from renowned international company Microsoft, proving to be a significant milestone. Overcoming challenges common to startups, he emphasized the importance of persistence and a resilient mindset to navigate the uncertainties of entrepreneurship. Embracing the inevitability of setbacks, Mr. Rahman urged aspiring entrepreneurs to view failures as stepping stones for learning and growth, highlighting the essential trait of continuous education in the dynamic world of startups.

When asked about advice for fresh graduates aspiring to venture into entrepreneurship, Mr. Rahman emphasized the significance of health and time as their prime assets. Encouraging early experimentation, he highlighted that starting early allows for the opportunity to fail and learn quickly. This agile approach to learning from setbacks enables budding entrepreneurs to adapt and grow rapidly. Moreover, he suggested that graduates seeking more experience should consider working in the international business sector before embarking on their entrepreneurial journey. By gaining valuable exposure in a professional setting, they can further refine their skills and knowledge, setting a solid foundation for success in the world of entrepreneurship. His counsel highlighted the importance of seizing opportunities, taking calculated risks, and embracing the learning journey to pursue entrepreneurial success.

When reflecting on his decision to choose NSU, Mr. Rahman fondly remembers how NSU stood out as his top choice, and he never explored other universities. The excellent courses and remarkable faculties at NSU captivated him from the start. His involvement with AIESEC further enriched his university experience, as he served locally and nationally as Vice President. The international exposure offered by AIESEC took him to conferences in Brazil and Hong Kong, leaving him with cherished memories and invaluable learning experiences. Mr. Rahman's time at NSU holds a special place in his heart, and the university's enriching environment played a crucial role in shaping him into the successful and accomplished professional he is today.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/3426514634231064>





## Delegate Visit from Brunel University, UK

*On July 23, 2023, an enriching academic exchange occurred as Ms. Dilruba Karim, a Senior Lecturer from the Department of Economics and Finance at Brunel University, UK, visited North South University (NSU) as part of a collaborative outreach initiative.*



**Brunel**  
University  
London



During her visit, Ms. Dilruba Karim engaged in a productive meeting with NSU's Department of Economics and Finance. The focus of this meeting encompassed an extensive discussion on the diverse programs offered by the department, the various specializations available, exciting prospects for pursuing a Ph.D., and potential avenues for collaboration between the institutions. She also provided valuable insights into the esteemed professors at Brunel University, shedding light on their respective fields of expertise.

Furthermore, Ms. Karim dedicated her time to conducting an informative session for the students at NSU. This session served as a comprehensive guide, elucidating the intricacies of the application process, prerequisites, available courses, diverse academic programs, scholarship opportunities, and other avenues for personal and academic growth. Her visit encouraged an environment of international academic cooperation and facilitated a valuable exchange of knowledge and ideas between Brunel University and NSU.

## Collaboration Meeting with Universidad de Monterrey (UEM), México



*On July 27, 2023, a meeting took place with Mr. Alejandra Yañez Vega, Head of the International Programs Office, International Affairs Professor, International Education; Karina Hernández, M.Ed., Coordinator of International Linkages and Communication of Universidad de Monterrey, México; Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, Assistant Director, Office of External Affairs (OEA); and Ms. Tasmia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA.*

This meeting bore testimony to the diligent efforts of the Bangladesh Embassy in Mexico City, dedicated to fostering educational cooperation between Bangladesh and distinguished Mexican universities. The embassy's proactive engagement extended across various Mexican states, including Colima and Morelia. Notably, a visit to the University of Monterrey (UEM) in the State of Nuevo Leon in May 2023 laid the foundation for future collaborations between Bangladesh and Mexican universities, focusing on UDEM.

UEM, an esteemed institution founded in 1969, is a non-profit private university in the State of Monterrey. Its comprehensive range of academic programs is meticulously designed to cater to students' diverse interests and aspirations. Collaborating with UDEM through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) opens up many opportunities, including scholarship programs, faculty and student exchange initiatives, summer programs, and undergraduate courses conducted entirely in English. These collaborations promise to broaden undergraduate students' horizons at NSU, enrich their academic pursuits, and nurture their personal and professional growth.

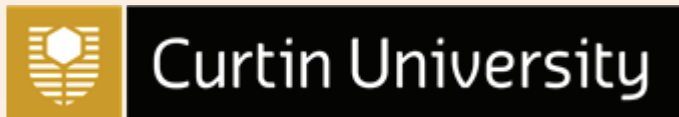
At UDEM, NSU's undergraduate scholars gain access to an extensive selection of English-language academic disciplines, spanning Business Administration, Accounting, Economics, Law, Social Sciences, Engineering, Modern Languages, Humanities, Architecture, and Design. In this enriching environment, they can learn from distinguished professors, engage with a diverse community of students, and foster cross-cultural understanding. This collaboration with UDEM is poised to enhance NSU students' global outlook, language proficiency, and cultural competency, which are paramount in our interconnected world.

This agreement's core objectives are twofold: first, to establish concrete educational relations and cooperation between the participating institutions, facilitating academic linkages and promoting cultural understanding between the two nations. Secondly, the agreement paves the way for collaboration in several areas, including student and faculty exchanges, collaborative research endeavors, scientific events, conferences, seminars, and the exchange of bibliographic materials. It's essential to note that this agreement does not entail any financial commitment at this stage, and the financial aspects of specific programs or projects will be determined separately as both institutions explore external funding avenues for the activities outlined in this agreement.





## Delegation Visit from Curtin University, Australia



*O*n August 02, 2023, a delegation team from Curtin University consisting of Professor Jaya A R Dantas, Dean, International, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Health Sciences and Professor Abhijit Mukherjee, John Curtin Distinguished Professor,

School of Civil and Mechanical Engineering & Director, had visited North South University as a part of their outreach program. A meeting was held at the School of Engineering & Physical Sciences (SEPS) conference room. From NSU, Dr. Javed Bari, Dean, School of Engineering & Physical Sciences; Dr. Hasan Mahmud Reza, Dean, School of Health and Life Sciences; Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs (OEA); Dr. Norman K. Swazo, Office of Research; Mr. Jalal Uddin, Director, Center for Migration Studies; Dr. Mohammad Delwer Hossain Hawlader, Chairman, Department of Public Health; Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, Assistant Director, OEA; and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA, attended the meeting.



The primary focus of this meeting revolved around the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two universities, with both parties exploring avenues to enhance its potential benefits for their respective student communities. Discussions delved into different academic collaboration possibilities, including sharing intellectual resources, joint research initiatives, and collaborative publications. The meeting also saw a detailed conversation regarding specific collaborative projects in development. The atmosphere was marked by enthusiasm and optimism, with all participants sharing a common belief that this partnership would yield fruitful and mutually beneficial outcomes for both institutions. This interaction underscores NSU's commitment to fostering global academic partnerships and promoting a rich exchange of knowledge and ideas.

## NSU Alumni Professional Development Workshop (Session 03)



*T*he NSU Alumni Professional Development Workshop (Session 03) took place on August 03, 2023, in NSU's Syndicate Hall, orchestrated by Mr. Sk. Fardin Yaman, Alumni Officer of the Office of External Affairs. Collaboratively supported by NSU's Marketing and International Business Club (NSU MIBC), this event featured Mr. Ehfaz Nowman as the distinguished Alumni speaker of the day. With his engaging topic, "Digital Communication and Its Impact on Modern Marketing," Mr. Nowman enlightened the fascinating realm of contemporary marketing strategies.

Commencing with a brief self-introduction, Mr. Nowman highlighted his extensive association with advertising agencies, laying the foundation for the insightful discourse that followed. Emphasizing the omnipresence of marketing in our daily lives, he effectively delved into the numerous ways in which digital platforms impact consumer engagement. Mr. Nowman navigated through the diverse channels employed for digital outreach in promotional endeavors, notably underlining the transformative power of artificial intelligence on this landscape. A particular focus was clarifying how artificial intelligence has enabled marketers to connect their new offerings to their target audience. In his interactive approach, Mr. Nowman adeptly fostered audience engagement, encouraging them to raise queries, thus enriching the understanding of the subject matter. Subsequently, Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs extended the closing remarks, drawing the curtain on this informative and enlightening session.

The event, structured with a keen eye on professional evolution, provided a platform to gain insights from accomplished alums like Mr. Nowman. It underscored the NSU community's collaborative spirit in nurturing its members' growth. With the collaboration of the MIBC, the workshop seamlessly fused academia and real-world application, epitomizing NSU's commitment to holistic education.



## Follow-up Collaboration Meeting with U. of Tasmania, Australia

UNIVERSITY of  
**TASMANIA**



*O*n August 2, 2023, a meeting took place with Dr. Nazlee Siddiqui, Discipline Lead, Health Services Management, Course Coordinator of Graduate Certificate and Master of Health Services Management, Australian Institute of Health

Service Management, College of Business and Economics (COBE) from University of Tasmania, Australia.

The meeting was attended by Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs (OEA); Dr. Norman Swazo, Director, Research; and Dr. Hasanuzzaman Sohail, Assistant Director, OEA.

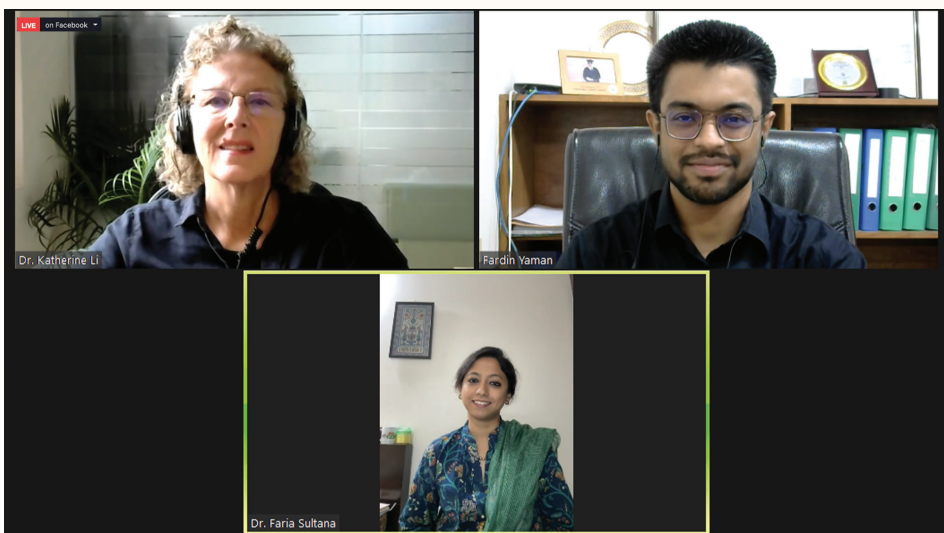
During this meeting of significant import, the focal point of deliberation centered around an MoU agreement that had been previously shared. With a positive outlook, the parties expressed their intent to formalize the partnership by signing a comprehensive MoU. The forthcoming steps leading to the finalization of the MoU were slated for imminent discussion. Furthermore, both institutions thoroughly explored strategies to invigorate this collaboration with tangible and mutually beneficial outcomes. These included active participation in seminars, fostering Ph.D. collaborations, and facilitating academic exchanges, all of which promise to enhance the synergistic relationship between the institutions involved.



## NSU Alumni Talk Show 125

*T*he one hundred and twenty-fifth episode of the NSU Alumni Talk Show aired on August 03, 2023, showcased the inspiring journey of Dr. Faria Sultana. Presently an Assistant Professor and Department Head of Economics at the American International University, Bangladesh (AIUB), she joined in 2019. After graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Economics from NSU in 2004, she pursued further studies abroad, obtaining her Master's degree and eventually her doctorate in health economics from Malaysia. She contributed to the Bangladesh Enterprise Institute for Social Research. She highlighted the various avenues open after achieving a doctorate, such as involvement with international NGOs, consultancy work, or academic teaching. Dr. Sultana emphasized that a teaching career necessitates a strong academic inclination, timely pursuit of a Master's degree, a crucial Ph.D., and dedicated research endeavors.

Dr. Faria Sultana's doctoral research delved into the cost-effectiveness of the diabetic population in Bangladesh and Malaysia, seamlessly blending 50% economics and 50% public health aspects. Gathering raw data from these countries required navigating ethical considerations due to its human-centric nature. Following ethical clearance, the rigorous data collection process began, culminating in her thesis defense. Remarkably, she accomplished her Ph.D. within just 3.5 years, a



testament to her dedication and efficient approach. Dr. Sultana offers valuable advice for aspiring researchers: selecting a subject of genuine interest, opting for a university with substantial research grants, refining communication skills, mastering referencing techniques, and ensuring the research's precision, authenticity, and originality.

Reflecting on her undergraduate years, Dr. Faria Sultana fondly remembers residing near the old campus, a convenience that allowed her to return home promptly after classes. Her abode became a hub of camaraderie as friends often gathered there. The economics department, characterized by a tight-knit atmosphere, profoundly impacted her. She enthusiastically participated in NSU's Young Economist Forum (NSU YEF) club as an undergraduate. Notably, she pursued a minor in environmental science, showcasing her diverse interests. Her affinity for teachers specializing in development economics and urban economics remains a cherished memory. The nurturing environment of NSU, along with approachable instructors, played an instrumental role in shaping her academic journey. Conclusively, Dr. Faria Sultana's reflections radiate a warm nostalgia for her enriching NSU years.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/677488727082177>



## Introductory Meeting with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)



*The introductory meeting between the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA) was held through Zoom on August 07, 2023. The virtual gathering aimed to explore potential collaboration avenues. Present were Dr. Katherine Li, Director of OEA; Mr. Nabil Rahaman, Country Programme Analyst of IFAD's Asia and the Pacific Division; and Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer of OEA.*

Dr. Katherine Li chaired the session, commencing with an overview of OEA's role in advancing research activities at NSU. Emphasis was placed on research collaboration, joint publications, training, and internship opportunities. Dr. Li highlighted NSU's ongoing research focus and potential for partnering on impactful projects.

Mr. Nabil Rahaman introduced IFAD as an international financial institution established in 1977 under the United Nations General Assembly. Headquartered in Rome, Italy, IFAD is dedicated to eradicating rural poverty and hunger. It specializes in providing grants and loans with low interest to projects to enhance agricultural development, livelihoods, disaster preparedness, technology transfer, and climate resilience. IFAD's notable achievements include impacting over 400 million people across nearly 100 countries since its inception.

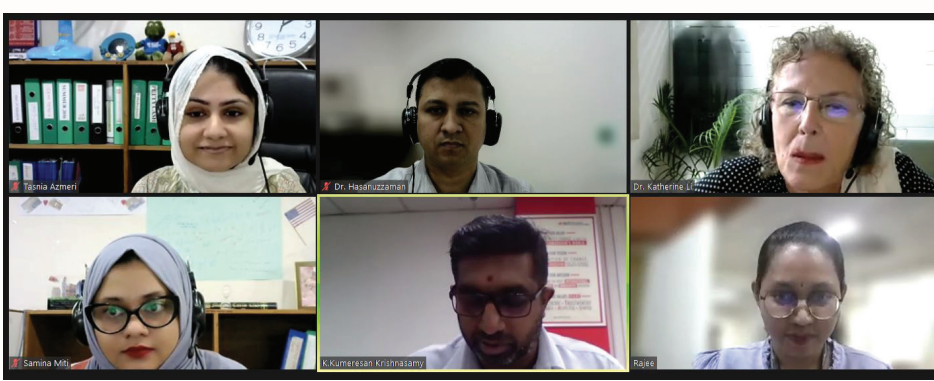


In Bangladesh, IFAD has been investing in rural communities since 1978. The organization promotes inclusive livelihood opportunities for smallholders, micro-entrepreneurs, and marginalized groups, strongly focusing on climate change adaptation, resilient infrastructure, market access, and diversified economies. Key thematic areas encompass women's empowerment, youth engagement, nutrition improvement, and sustainable resource management. Mr. Rahaman detailed IFAD's ongoing projects, highlighting initiatives such as the Char Development and Settlement Project (CDSP) IV Additional Financing, Haor Infrastructure & Livelihood Improvement Project–Climate Adaptation & Livelihood Protection (HILIP-CALIP), and more. He underlined the alignment of IFAD's interventions with the Sustainable Development Goals, including no poverty, zero hunger, quality education, decent work and economic growth, industry and innovation, climate action, and strong institutions.

At the meeting, discussions revolved around potential academic collaborations, particularly in women's empowerment and development-focused areas. The meeting concluded with an agreement to further discussions involving NSU's expert faculty members. Both parties recognized the significance of this collaboration and its potential to drive impactful research endeavors. The meeting provided a platform for IFAD and NSU to explore mutually beneficial partnerships, notably focusing on research projects, joint publications, and internship opportunities to address critical development challenges and contribute to societal betterment.

## Collaboration Meeting with INTI International University & Colleges, Malaysia

*On August 07, 2023, a virtual meeting through Zoom transpired between North South University (NSU) and INTI International University & Colleges, Malaysia. The primary agenda was to explore potential avenues for collaboration between the two institutions.*



During this productive session, the universities explored various avenues for partnership. These included opportunities for joint research initiatives between faculties, faculty and student exchange programs, and the co-development of academic courses that leverage the expertise and strengths of both institutions. Additionally, discussions revolved around the potential for organizing international academic conferences and seminars, which could facilitate knowledge sharing and scholarly discourse.

This meeting laid the foundation for a promising collaboration that seeks to enrich the academic landscape of both NSU and INTI International University & Colleges, ultimately benefiting students, faculty, and the broader academic community.



## NSU Alumni Talk Show 126

The one hundred and twenty-sixth episode of NSU Alumni Talk Show aired on August 08, 2023, featured Mr. Saad Hussain, Vice President and Deputy Head of HR at Standard Bank Ltd, who is an esteemed alumni of North South University, having completed his Bachelor of Business Administration in 2006. With a distinguished career that encompasses roles at Accenture Group, Evercare Group, and Grameenphone Ltd, Saad shared his valuable insights and experiences.

Mr. Hussain imparted essential advice to students aspiring to enter the dynamic field of Human Resources (HR). He emphasized the necessity of continuous learning and staying updated, given the evolving landscape of HR driven by artificial intelligence and technology. Mr. Hussain highlighted that HR professionals are akin to managers, overseeing how teams operate and emphasizing the increasing competition for junior-level positions, where hundreds of applicants may vie for a single opening. Students were encouraged to craft precise and polished resumes to enhance their chances, drawing attention to part-time work experiences and educational institutions. Additionally, Mr. Hussain stressed the significance of thorough research before attending interviews, urging students to leverage platforms like LinkedIn to gain insights into potential employers and their corporate culture. Furthermore, he underscored the importance of professional attire for making a favorable first impression. Mr. Hussain also suggested that acquiring computer programming skills can enhance problem-solving and critical thinking abilities, offering students a valuable edge in their careers.



Reflecting on his decision to attend NSU, Mr. Hussain credited the advice of senior individuals who had recommended the university. During his undergraduate years, he forged lasting friendships and held the position of Vice President of the NSU Finance Club. He fondly remembered the vibrant and welcoming campus environment, where rigorous testing and academic challenges were instrumental in cultivating resilience and an ability to thrive under pressure. Stressing the significance of post-graduation seriousness, whether pursuing a job or venturing into entrepreneurship, Mr. Hussain advised students to diversify their skillsets, recognizing the unpredictability of future demands. Finally, he urged them to surround themselves with positive influences that motivate personal and professional growth. In essence, Mr. Hussain's journey from NSU to a successful career in HR exemplifies the university's impact in nurturing talent and fostering an environment conducive to personal and professional development. His counsel serves as a valuable compass for students aspiring to excel in the dynamic world of human resources and beyond.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:  
<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/667681958744525>

## MoU Signing with TARUMT, Malaysia



On the 8th of August, 2023, Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TARUMT) and North South University (NSU) came together in a virtual ceremony via Zoom to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This significant occasion was marked by the presence of distinguished delegates from both institutions, joining hands to forge a path of collaboration and knowledge exchange.

From TARUMT, the esteemed representatives who graced the event included Prof. Ir. Dr Lee Sze Wei, President; Assoc. Prof. Wong Hwa Kiong, Vice President; Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tan Hui Yin, Dean of Faculty of Applied Sciences (FOAS); Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ler Hui Yin, Deputy Dean (Research & Development), (FOAS); Dr Ong Yien Yien, Associate Dean, Department of BioScience, (FOAS); Dr Chan Kai Quin, Associate Dean, Department of Sport Science, (FOAS); Dr. Chen Chong Sheau Huey, Associate Dean, Department of Physical Science, (FOAS); Assoc. Prof. Dr. Lim Teck Hock, Associate Dean, Quality Assurance (FOAS); Ms. Chan Yeet Kuan, Manager, Office of The President.

Representing NSU were Professor Atiquil Islam, Vice-Chancellor; Professor Hasan Mahmud Reza, Dean of the School of Health & Life Sciences; Professor Javed Bari, Dean of the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences; Dr. Katherine Li, Director of External Affairs; Dr. Norman Swazo, Director of Research; Dr. Nazmun Nahar, Director of IQAC; Dr. Hasanuzzaman, Assistant Director of External Affairs; and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer.



The ceremony unfolded with a captivating TARUMT Corporate Video Presentation, setting the stage for the proceedings. Warm Welcome Remarks from the Vice-Chancellor of NSU and the President of TARUMT followed it. The virtual signing of the MoU between these two esteemed institutions marked a significant step towards future collaboration. The event concluded with a discussion on the potential collaborations that lie ahead as TARUMT and NSU embark on this exciting journey of partnership and academic synergy.

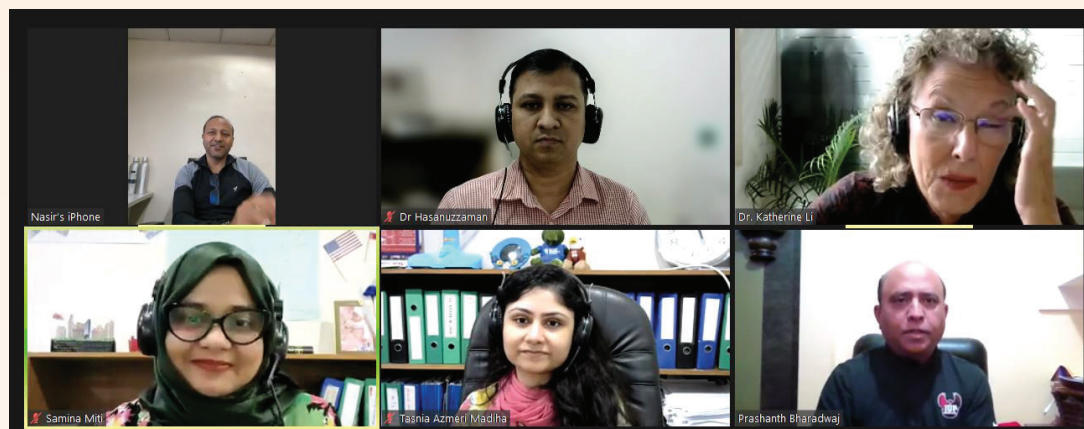


## Meeting with Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP), USA

*On August 8, 2023, a virtual meeting was convened via Zoom between North South University (NSU) and Indiana University of Pennsylvania, USA. The primary agenda of this meeting was the discussion of the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two esteemed institutions.*



The proposed MoU aims to foster collaboration in the fields of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences. One of the



notable features of this agreement is the provision for short-term student exchanges, a promising avenue for cross-cultural academic experiences and knowledge sharing.

This meeting proved highly productive, setting the stage for further in-depth discussions and negotiations concerning the terms and conditions of the renewed MoU. NSU and Indiana University of Pennsylvania anticipate that this collaboration will substantially benefit students and faculty pursuing academic excellence and global engagement. Further deliberations will follow to finalize the agreement

and its associated initiatives.

## Seminar with Evercare Hospital, Dhaka



*On August 09, 2023, North South University (NSU) hosted an enlightening seminar entitled "Healthy Heart, Healthy Life," featuring the distinguished keynote speaker, Dr. Sohail Ahamed, Senior Consultant & Coordinator in Cardiothoracic & Vascular Surgery at Evercare Hospital, Dhaka. This event was attended by esteemed faculty members and eager students from NSU.*

The seminar served as an invaluable platform for creating awareness about the paramount significance of maintaining a healthy heart. Dr. Ahamed commenced by delving into the multifaceted causes behind heart-related issues, shedding light on the diverse factors contributing to heart ailments. He expounded upon the demographic groups most susceptible to these health challenges, elucidating how specific age brackets and lifestyles are more prone to heart issues.

Furthermore, Dr. Ahamed meticulously elucidated the dangers and risks associated with neglecting one's cardiovascular health, highlighting the consequences that can transpire when heart health is overlooked. These encompassed the physical toll and the broader impact on an individual's quality of life. The seminar then transitioned to the next segment that elucidated various preventive measures and strategies to



cultivate a heart-friendly lifestyle. Dr. Ahamed shared valuable insights into dietary choices, exercise regimens, and stress management techniques that collectively contribute to maintaining a healthier heart. This segment underscored the significance of proactive measures to safeguard against heart-related maladies.

Overall, the "Healthy Heart, Healthy Life" seminar provided an informative and comprehensive exploration of heart health's intricacies. It served as an educational beacon, empowering attendees with knowledge about the causes, at-risk demographics, dangers of neglect, and actionable steps towards fostering a heart-conscious way of life. The seminar encapsulated NSU's commitment to holistic education, promoting academic excellence and the well-being of its academic community.



To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/949223712803595>



## International Student Orientation—Summer '23



*On August 10, 2023, the Office of External Affairs (OEA) at North South University (NSU) orchestrated a splendid orientation program tailored for incoming international students pursuing higher education. Diverse in their origins, these students hailed from countries spanning the globe, including China, Korea, India, and several others. Brimming with jubilation and enthusiasm, the event not only facilitated a warm and vibrant atmosphere but also acted as a catalyst for forging new friendships and fostering mutual understanding.*

The orientation program commenced with an insightful introduction to the functions and services offered by the Office of External Affairs, aptly presented by Ms. Samina Alam Miti, the International Affairs Officer within the OEA. Following this formal orientation, each student had the opportunity to extend a personal introduction, allowing them to acquaint themselves with their fellow international peers. As a delightful conclusion to the program, attendees were treated to refreshments and a delectable cake, further enhancing the sense of camaraderie and the welcoming spirit that characterizes NSU.

## NSU Alumni Talk Show 127

*The one hundred and twenty-seventh episode of NSU Alumni Talk Show aired on August 16, 2023, featured Mr. Khalid Gaffar, Deputy Director of Trade and Investment at the British High Commission in Dhaka. Mr. Gaffar, an alumnus of North South University, shared his insights and experiences. After graduating in Economics in 2006 and completing his MS degree in 2011, he has amassed a wealth of professional experience, including stints at the World Bank Group and ACG Limited.*

During the show, Mr. Gaffar emphasized the importance of maintaining a solid network and staying abreast of regulatory policies in the field of international trade and investment. He highlighted Bangladesh's substantial trading potential, fueled by its youthful workforce, asserting that this resource can be harnessed effectively with proper guidance. He noted the significance of internet and mobile access in gathering market information and referred to an HSBC report projecting Bangladesh to become the ninth-largest consumer market by 2030. Mr. Gaffar acknowledged the pivotal role of NSU in nurturing an entrepreneurial ecosystem, specifically through initiatives like NSU Startups Next. He cited the promising prospects in sectors like leather and agro-processing for international market expansion. In advising current students, he stressed the importance of staying updated on global trade dynamics and continuous knowledge enhancement.

Furthermore, Mr. Gaffar reminisced about his NSU journey, sharing that his elder brother's positive experience at the university influenced his decision to enroll in his undergraduate studies at NSU. He praised the intelligence of senior students he interacted with before joining NSU, further solidifying his choice. Mr. Gaffar recognized the valuable network he built at NSU and its pivotal role in his career. He mentioned his active involvement in NSU's Young Economists Forum (NSU YEF) and commended the support and mentorship from professors like Dr. Gour Gobinda Goswami, currently the Director of Student Affairs. By the show's end, Mr. Khalid Gaffar encouraged students not to confine their learning experiences to the classroom alone, emphasizing the wealth of resources and opportunities available at North South University. His insightful reflections accentuated NSU's vital role in nurturing talent and fostering connections that extend far beyond the academic realm.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/143198572161506>



## MoU Signing Ceremony with Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF)



*On August 21, 2023, North South University (NSU) and the Child Health Research Foundation (CHRF) officially formalized their collaboration by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). This significant agreement was reached during a symposium organized by NSU's Office of External Affairs, attended by prominent representatives from both institutions. NSU was led by Professor Atiqul Islam, the University's Vice-Chancellor. Notable figures from NSU's faculty, including Dr. Hasan Mahmud Reza, Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences, and Dr. Javed Bari, Dean of the School of Engineering & Physical Sciences, along with various department chairs and office directors, were also present to commemorate this partnership. The CHRF delegation team included Dr. Sejuti Saha, Director and Senior Scientist; Dr. Yogesh Hood, Senior Scientist; Dr. Areej Majeed, Associate Scientist; Monimoy Dutta, Executive Monimoy Dutta; and Aditya Arefin, Senior Training Officer.*

During this collaborative initiative, Professor Atiqul Islam emphasized the paramount importance of children's health. He noted that partnerships with organizations like CHRF open up vast avenues for NSU to excel in research, especially concerning child health. Dr. Sejuti Saha underscored the multidisciplinary nature of



modern research endeavors. She pointed out that numerous projects require collaboration beyond the expertise of microbiologists and biochemists alone. CHERF aims to set an outstanding example in the field through joint efforts.

The symposium was expertly facilitated by Dr. Katherine Li, Director of NSU's Office of External Affairs, and the welcoming remarks were delivered by Dr. Fariah Mahza-been, Assistant Professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at NSU. This collaboration marks an essential step in promoting research and innovation in child health. NSU's academic strength, coupled with CHERF's expertise, creates a promising platform for groundbreaking work in the field. This partnership is anticipated to yield valuable contributions to children's health and well-being.



## Planning Meeting with BRAC NGO

North South University (NSU) collaborated with BRAC, the Office of External Affairs (OEA), and the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) to organize a campaign and dialogue session on "Gender Equality" for NSU students. This initiative took place on August 24, 2023, and aimed to foster discussions on gender equality. The meeting was attended by Ms. Nobonita Chowdhury, Director, GJD, BRAC;



Mr. Tanvir Islam, Program Manager, GJD, BRAC; Ms. Nurunnahar, Manager, Adv & Networking, GJD, BRAC; Prof. Dr. M. Ismail Hossain, Pro Vice-Chancellor; Prof. Gour Gobinda Goswami, Director, OSA; Dr. Katherine Li, Director, OEA; Comm. Mohammad Zahid Hossain (Retd.), Director, O&M; Dr. Saiful Islam, Faculty Advisor, NSUAPC; Dr. Zerina Shabnaz Akkas, Faculty Advisor, NSUEDC; Ms. Musharrat Hossain, Faculty Advisor, NSUSS; Mr. Meshbaul Hassan Chowdhury, Faculty Advisor, NSUSSC; Mr. Omar Nasif Abdullah, Faculty Advisor, NSUDC; Dr. Hasanuzzaman, Asst. Director, OEA; Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, Coordination Officer, OEA; Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, OEA; Kazmee Al Faruk Chowdhury, Secretary, OSA; A. K. M. Motaher Hossain, Senior Student Affairs Officer, OSA.

The agenda for the planning meeting revolved around involving NSU clubs and departments to maximize student participation. Ms. Nobonita Chowdhury, Director of Gender Justice and Diversity at BRAC, discussed the need to involve NSU clubs and departments to ensure maximum student participation. She emphasized the importance of making the session engaging and interactive by encouraging student involvement. Ms. Chowdhury mentioned the creation of a Google Form for participant registration and issuing e-certificates for registered students. Mr. Tanvir Islam, Program Manager for Gender Justice and Diversity at BRAC, highlighted the successful involvement of university departments in previous dialogue sessions conducted by BRAC. He also discussed the logistics of coordinating the event and the presence of a BRAC team at NSU from September 1 to manage the event's tasks. NSU's Office of Student Affairs (OSA), is committed to ensuring 500 student participants from the clubs, and involving 300 staff members and exposing both students and officers to the Shomotontro program for knowledge dissemination. Engaging target faculties to promote the program in class was brought up. NSU's extensive network of student clubs that would assist in managing volunteers for the event was also suggested.



In conclusion, NSU's collaboration with BRAC and the offices of OEA and OSA aimed to address gender equality through a campaign and dialogue session. After extensive discussions, it was decided that BRAC booths would be set up on September 10, 2023, and the dialogue session would be organized on September 11, 2023, jointly by BRAC and NSU, with NSU's logo prominently featured in promotional materials and banners. It was also decided and agreed upon to have Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Officer, Office of External Affairs as the main coordinator for the event. This collaborative effort aims to raise awareness and promote gender equality among NSU's student community.

## MoU Signing Ceremony with Uttaran NGO (IDRC Project)



Uttaran

North South University (NSU) has taken a significant step towards developing academic and research collaboration by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on August 24, 2023, with Uttaran (IDRC Project). Both institutions stand to benefit from this collaboration project's facilitation of joint research projects, collaborative publications, internships, training opportunities, and research mobilization.

The signing ceremony took place during a meeting organized by the NSU's Office of External Affairs at North South University. NSU's Vice-Chancellor Professor Atiqul Islam, the Deans, department Heads, and office Directors were among the distinguished NSU attendees.

Uttaran (IDRC Project) representatives were also present to facilitate the signing of the MoU and strengthen the relationship between the two institutions. The principal cooperative project under this MoU is titled "Spatial Surge Forecasting Using Artificial Intelligence And Community Knowledge For Inclusive And Transformative Early Actions." This project demonstrates NSU and Uttaran's dedication to addressing critical issues through innovative research.





Dr. Katherine Li, Director of NSU's Office of External Affairs, led the meeting proceedings efficiently, the welcome speech was delivered by Professor Dr. Md. Jakariya, Chair, Department of Environmental Science & Management.

This MoU constitutes a substantial milestone in fostering the exchange of knowledge, the finest research, and academic advancement between North South University and Uttaran (IDRC Project). Both organizations envision a fruitful and valuable partnership.

## What's Your Story? (Episode 18)



*Dr. Ajmol Ali, a distinguished figure in the field of Exercise Science, took center stage in the eighteenth episode of "What's Your Story," broadcast live on Facebook on August 28, 2023. Holding a Ph.D., he currently serves as a Professor of Exercise Science. He carries the esteemed role of International Director within the College of Health at Massey University's School of Sport, Exercise, and Nutrition.*

Dr. Ali's remarkable journey includes his pivotal role in establishing a cutting-edge sport and exercise science laboratory in Auckland. His academic leadership extends to supervising a substantial cohort of over 20 master's and Ph.D. students, a testament to his dedication to nurturing the next generation of scholars. His diverse research portfolio encompasses pediatric exercise science, nutritional supplementation for health, wellness, performance enhancement, sports performance optimization, and workplace wellness. Additionally, he has made significant contributions as a former Deputy Chair of Massey University's Human Ethics Department. Notably, Dr. Ali holds the esteemed position of Principal Researcher for the Healthy Learning initiative, a vital component of the government's well-being budget allocation of 47 million dollars, aimed at enhancing children's overall health and wellness through initiatives related to nutrition, hydration, and physical activity. Furthermore, his impactful leadership extends to his directorship of the Center for Metabolic Health Research, a pioneering initiative dedicated to interdisciplinary research in metabolic health. Additionally, he oversees the Beverage Lab, showcasing his multifaceted involvement in various facets of scientific exploration.

Dr. Ali's journey from his birthplace in Sylhet to the United Kingdom at the tender age of five adds a poignant layer to his narrative. Growing up as the only child of color in his school in Royston, he defied societal expectations and parental skepticism to pursue his education diligently, even resorting to forging his father's signature to attend school. Today, he is a source of immense pride for his family, illustrating the transformative power of determination and education. Dr. Ali's journey is a source of inspiration, demonstrating the profound impact of perseverance and dedication on one's trajectory toward excellence. His accomplishments reflect his personal success and his unwavering commitment to the betterment of society through his significant contributions to research, education, and public health initiatives.

Dr. Ali's journey toward becoming a prominent figure in academia and research is rooted in his early passion for sports and physical education and an unexpected opportunity that set his course. Initially aspiring to become a Physical Education (PE) teacher due to his love for sports and physical activities, Dr. Ali had a fateful encounter with a gentleman who invited him to participate in a study. This initial involvement in research kindled a new path for him, and he soon found himself transitioning from an aspiring PE teacher to a burgeoning researcher. This transformation led him through the rigors of master's and doctoral studies, marking the inception of his remarkable academic journey.

New Zealand became a significant waypoint on Dr. Ali's path to success, thanks to a job opportunity introduced by a friend. His supervisor, a distinguished professor with extensive networks, was pivotal in facilitating Ajmol's career development. Now, two decades later, Dr. Ali continues to contribute significantly to the academic landscape in New Zealand. His involvement in the Healthy Learning Initiative is a testament to his commitment to enhancing student well-being. A multi-million-dollar project supported by the New Zealand government, this initiative is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Health, Sports, and Education. Over five years, it aims to improve students' physical and nutritional environment, particularly in primary schools. Dr. Ali, actively engaged in this initiative for three years, has seen substantial progress, with nearly half of New Zealand's schools benefiting from its positive impact. This initiative enhances teachers' skills and fosters stronger connections among students, teachers, and parents. Moreover, it encourages community engagement and cultural enrichment. Impressed by the initial outcomes, the government has allocated additional funding to further the cause.

In addition to his academic pursuits, Dr. Ali's networking skills have borne fruit in the form of the Beverage Lab, an entity he founded. This research and development hub collaborates with various companies and is currently involved in creating their line of beverages. Dr. Ali also imparts valuable advice for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. He advocates for incorporating physical activity into daily routines, such as taking the stairs instead of the lift and walking to local shops instead of driving. Recognizing the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, he stresses the importance of mindfulness, meditation, exercise, and even cold showers to maintain physical and mental well-being. Dr. Ali is also attuned to the health challenges faced in his home country, Bangladesh, including high mobile phone usage, sedentary lifestyles, and communication gaps between parents and children. His insights and dedication to improving well-being make him an inspiring figure in academia and public health advocacy, serving as an exemplary role model for students and professionals. His accomplishments reflect his personal success and his unwavering commitment to the betterment of society through his significant contributions to research, education, and public health initiatives.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/267591269415153>



## NGO Talk Show Episode 33



*On August 30, 2023, the 'NGO Talk Show' presented its thirty-third episode, featuring the Village Education Resource Center (VERC) as the focal point of discussion. This is one of the outcomes from the introductory meeting that took place between NSU & VERC on July 10, 2023. Mr. Md. Masud Hassan, the Deputy Executive Director of VERC, was the keynote speaker for this episode. VERC is dedicated to grassroots education and community development and is pivotal in advancing education and empowering communities in various regions. Led by Mr. Hassan's insights, this episode promises to shed light on VERC's impactful initiatives and its commitment to fostering positive change at the grassroots level.*

VERC, or the Village Education Resource Center, embarked on its journey in 1977 as a project under SCF-USA. Its primary goal was to provide process consultancy to internal projects of SCF-USA, ensuring active community participation in project implementation. Over the years, VERC transitioned into an independent local organization, extending its role beyond SCF-USA to serve the broader NGO sector in Bangladesh. Throughout its history, VERC's approach and responsibilities have evolved significantly. It initially focused on offering high-level technical consultancy with minimal implementation involvement, later shifting towards extensive project implementation and reduced technical support. VERC primarily concentrates on implementing diverse development projects while providing limited technical assistance to other NGOs. VERC has gained recognition for its pioneering contributions to Non-Formal Education (NFE) and Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) programs.

Aligned with the concept of a learning organization, as articulated by Peter Senge, VERC continuously refines its strategies through strategic planning. The Participatory Strategic Plan for 2015-2020 underscores VERC's commitment to charting its developmental path meticulously. VERC envisions a self-reliant, enlightened society founded on principles of justice, equity, and sustainability. Their mission revolves around transforming the lives of marginalized and disadvantaged individuals, providing humanitarian assistance, fostering resilient livelihoods, and creating an enabling environment for self-empowerment. VERC upholds core values such as participation, respect, environmental responsibility, sustainability, innovation, good governance, and equality to achieve these aims.

Through its core competencies in innovativeness, professionalism, teamwork, participatory management, resource-sharing, networking, and learning, VERC addresses programmatic strategic issues in six thematic areas: social and legal, economic development, environment, institutional, technological, and youth development. Their programmatic focus spans life skill education, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene (WaSH), capacity development, microfinance, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster management and preparedness, emergency and humanitarian responses, and various need-based training programs.

VERC's pioneering contributions include its trailblazing efforts in non-formal education and the introduction of the Community-Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach in Bangladesh. The organization's experience and insights have significantly shaped national sanitation strategies and have been embraced and adapted by numerous development organizations within and beyond Bangladesh. In essence, VERC's rich history and multifaceted programs reflect its unwavering commitment to community development, sustainable practices, and creating lasting positive impacts on the lives of the marginalized and disadvantaged.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/263155046608504>



## Leadership Talk by VC, Canadian University of Bangladesh

*On August 30, 2023, the Office of External Affairs meticulously organized an enlightening seminar of profound significance in close collaboration with the Canadian University Bangladesh (CUB). This intellectually enriching event served as a platform for disseminating invaluable insights into success and leadership. The distinguished speaker for this occasion was Prof. Dr. HM Jahirul Haque, the Vice-Chancellor of CUB.*



The seminar, aptly titled "Leadership for Success," delved into the intricate interplay between leadership and the multifaceted concept of success. Drawing from his wealth of knowledge and extensive experience, Dr. Haque expounded upon the profound essence of leadership and the nuanced facets that contribute to one's journey toward success. He masterfully navigated the complex landscape of leadership, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping individual accomplishments and organizational triumphs. Furthermore, Dr. Haque elucidated the multifaceted nature of success, transcending conventional definitions to encompass personal growth, societal contributions, and holistic well-being.

In his erudite discourse, Dr. Haque artfully weaved together the principles of leadership and the dimensions of success, providing attendees with a holistic perspective that transcends the confines of academia. His insights, deeply rooted in theory and practice, resonated profoundly with the audience, leaving an indelible mark on their understanding of these quintessential life aspects. This seminar undoubtedly served as a

beacon guiding individuals towards a more comprehensive comprehension of leadership's profound significance in forging the path to success. Dr. Haque's deep wisdom and sagacious guidance continue to inspire, fostering a community of aspiring leaders poised to chart their course toward multifaceted success. The session was concluded with a lively Q&A session from the students and with a small token of appreciation from the Office of External Affairs.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/1355030392059423>



## British Council GREAT Talk on Climate Change and Climate Change Education



*On August 31, 2023, an enlightening event unfolded at North South University, orchestrated by the British Council under the banner of GREAT Talks. This exceptional occasion was dedicated to the pivotal topics of Climate Change and Climate Change Education. In a harmonious collaboration, the British Council and North South University sought to foster a deeper understanding of these critical subjects. The session was entrusted to Professor Alison Greig, Director of Education for Sustainability at Anglia Ruskin University.*

The stage was aptly set for this transformative session by Dr. Biswas Karabi Farhana, UK Alumna, Professor in the Department of Environment Science and Management and Director of the Office of Graduate Studies. The inaugural moments were graced by the insightful perspectives of Dr. Katherine Li, Director of the Office of External Affairs (OEA), and Dr. Mohammad Sujauddin, Chair and Associate Professor in the Department of Environment Science and Management. Their opening remarks framed the discourse, emphasizing the critical nature of the topics.

As Professor Alison Greig took the floor, a wealth of knowledge and experience in climate change and sustainability education permeated the room. In her engaging address, Dr. Greig delved into the multifaceted dimensions of climate change, elucidating its profound impacts and far-reaching consequences. She adeptly navigated the complexities of addressing climate change, emphasizing the urgency of collective action and informed decision-making to ensure a sustainable future. Dr. Greig's session not only posed crucial questions but also instilled a sense of responsibility in the audience, motivating them to contribute to the cause of a sustainable world actively.

In this era of climate crisis, Professor Alison Greig's insights provided a compass to navigate the challenges posed by climate change. Her expertise illuminated the path toward sustainable living and underscored the importance of climate change education as a catalyst for transformative action. This remarkable event, orchestrated by the British Council and North South University, served as a beacon, guiding individuals toward a future where responsible stewardship of our planet takes center stage, thanks to the enlightening wisdom shared by Dr. Greig.

To know more about the event, visit the following link:

<https://www.facebook.com/OEANSU/videos/343232664909014>



## Alumni Feature



*Sonia Hossain is an alumna of North South University. She completed both her Bachelor's and Master's from NSU, the first one in Computer Science Engineering and the latter in Business Administration. Currently, after gaining more than a decade of experience in different professional sectors, she has returned to NSU to take on the Administrative role of Assistant Registrar in the Registrar's Office. Prior to this, she worked in organizations like Vantage Lab, Development Gateway, and Therap BD Ltd. She gained firsthand experience in content writing, customer support, project work, report writing, and more.*

*Being a meritorious student, she was rewarded with tuition waivers and also received the opportunity to work as a Teacher's Assistant during her academic life. Now, she hopes to return the favor to her beloved university and contribute to its development.*

**Interviewer:** You currently work as an Assistant Registrar at North South University. How does it feel to be able to serve your university and be actively involved in its development?

**Sonia:** Considering the pinnacle of reputation NSU has been upholding for decades, I am overwhelmed with pride and gratitude for being able to associate myself with this honorable position at this very institute. I feel excited to be part of the core strategic team and be able to engage actively at the front line level, contributing towards the ongoing development of the institute.

**Interviewer:** Tell us about your extracurricular activities during student life. Why do you think students should actively take part in extracurricular activities during their student lives?

**Sonia:** I believe extracurricular activities play a major role in enhancing one's hidden talents. The experiences add value to one's academic and practical learning. During my student years, I participated in multiple sports -out of which skipping and badminton were my particular favorites. I took up debating at an early age and



continued over the secondary years as one of my passions. Over the years at NSU, I was actively engaged in cultural activities, which helped develop my confidence in being proactive.

**Interviewer:** Who is/are your role model/s? What are the things that inspire you in life?

**Sonia:** Reflecting on my gradual progress while cascading through different strides of life, I have realized my parents have impacted me in the most significant ways. Therefore, I consider them to be my role models in every aspect. Since a young age, I have been brought up with discipline and structure. I gained my passion for sports from my father, who introduced me to sports at an earlier stage of my life. My mother has been the driving force of my education. She has also supported me in participating in cultural activities, which helped me build my confidence and people skills. My parents ensured that I studied in an excellent educational institute and instilled the essence in me to surround myself with positive and empowering friendships that I cherish to date. I have been very fortunate and blessed to be inspired by my parent's morals and ethics, which are key guidance to my success story today.

**Interviewer:** How much impact do you think NSU had in your career and life?

**Sonia:** NSU has the reputation of being the very first private university to be established in 1992, which opened up the doors of opportunities to millions of young stars over the decades. I consider myself fortunate to have graduated with flying colors, becoming the flag bearer of the university's reputation. This had a positive impact when I presented myself as an NSU graduate. I was successful in most of the interviews and was able to choose a career that I felt passionate about at a very early stage. It brought a huge deal of personal satisfaction to be able to implement the skillset and knowledge I acquired while completing CSC in NSU. Over the years, I also cherished friendships and acquaintances that have become the means to lifelong attachment and aspirations. Today, I present myself with great pride to be able to establish myself within the vicinity of this highly appreciating educational institute.

**Interviewer:** What would be your suggestions to the current students and fresh graduates of NSU as an alumna?

**Sonia:** I would strongly encourage both current students and fresh graduates of NSU to open up the boundaries of communication and take collaborative steps in supporting each other's personal and professional growth. Being part of the NSU alumni community is an opportunity and an honor to engage in activities that directly or indirectly contribute to communal bonding, eventually catering to community development. Consider it to be an approach to collective prosperity and achievement.

**Interviewer:** What are your future plans? What are the things you would like to accomplish in life?

**Sonia:** My future plans comprise both professional and personal aspects. With the aspiration of continuing to serve at NSU, I want to establish my upskilled version through training and development. I look forward to serving in an integral post where I get the opportunity to directly contribute to strategic decision-making towards improving support and development for as many students as possible. I want to continue to engage with students directly and be able to inspire as many young minds as possible. On a personal level, I want to establish a work-life balance where I'm able to cater to the family's needs at the utmost time when my children are also looking up and aspiring to share the same morals as mine.

## International Student Feature

*Sangey Gyamtsho comes from the beautiful country of Bhutan. He is 18 and has a younger sister studying in the ninth grade. His father serves as an army officer, holding the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Bhutan Army, while his mother works as a Finance Counselor at the Royal Bhutanese Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh.*

*His educational journey began with pre-primary education at a private Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) center. He started my primary education at Sunshine Primary School in the capital city, Thimphu. In 2013, he moved to Western Australia with his family, where he attended Millen Primary School for my third and fourth grades. Upon returning to Bhutan at the end of 2014, he continued my studies at Sunshine Primary School until sixth grade. He then attended Lungtenzampa Middle Secondary School and Yangchenhug Higher Secondary School, where he completed my twelfth grade.*

*During his school years, Sangey actively engaged in roles such as class monitor, event coordinator, and social worker. Apart from his studies, during his weekends, he assisted his grandparents in their real estate business. Tasks ranging from plumbing and electrical work to carpentry, painting, and house vacating repairs became their shared responsibilities. Given the scarcity of laborers in Bhutan, his family and he often undertook these tasks themselves. He also had the honor of participating in the National Youth Engagement and Health Literacy Meet, organized by WHO. Coming from a military background, he enjoys sports like basketball and swimming. He also has a keen interest in driving cars and cycling. Looking ahead, his goals are clear. Sangey plans to pursue a Business Administration (BBA) degree with a Finance major. He aims to complete his studies with good grades and within the set timeframe. He also has a keen interest in studying and exploring potential business opportunities between Bhutan and Bangladesh and seeking avenues for future ventures.*





**Interviewer:** Can you tell us more about growing up in Bhutan and Western Australia?

**Sangey:** I spent most of my childhood in Bhutan, but I also had a brief experience living in Australia. Growing up in both countries has given me unique experiences shaped by culture, society, and the environment. In Bhutan, we learn about the value of community, education, culture, and the environment from a young age. This means that growing up involves having strong connections with our extended family and community. I was taught Buddhist values early on and participated in various religious ceremonies and rituals. While education is primarily accessible in Bhutan, with only a few private schools charging fees, the focus on academics is intense. Getting good grades is the primary way to progress to higher classes. On the other hand, the education system in Australia is more comprehensive, aiming to develop children in all areas. The best part was that there were no exams. Life in Bhutan is simpler; we can walk to school and back home without close monitoring. Parents could send us to school from home, and teachers could teach and send us back home. In Australia, things were different. We relied heavily on technology for education, communication, and entertainment. Unlike in Bhutan, we couldn't go to school on our own. Our parents had to drop us off and pick us up. Since I enjoy outdoor activities, Bhutan's pristine natural environment has been essential to my upbringing. I used to spend time outdoors, going for walks, cycling, and hiking. In Australia, my outdoor activities were mainly limited to outings to the beach.

**Interviewer:** Could you share some insight into the differences between the education systems in Australia, Bhutan, and Bangladesh?

**Sangey:** In general education systems in Australia and Bhutan differ in curriculum emphasis, cultural influence, and educational structures. Bhutan's education system integrates academics, traditional values, and holistic wellbeing. Parents and community members play an active role in supporting schools and education. Australia's education system focuses on a broad education with academic subjects, creative arts, and physical education. Specifically, I would like to express the difference in the education system for primary schools, which I have personally experienced.

i. Roles and responsibilities of teachers: In Bhutan, the teacher's role starts and finishes in schools. The teaching is one-way communication with the exceptions where students can ask questions and clarify their doubts. In Australia, although I was still a kid when I studied there, I felt that teaching is a two-way communication where teachers interact with you, ask your opinions, and give you respect as they do to an adult. The teacher guides and monitors you like a mentor, and you can speak out whatever you feel.

ii. Parental consent: In Bhutan, verbal consent is taken for any activities out of school like field trips or school picnics/ events involving the move of students out of school and any financial contribution. Still, most of the time it comes as a compulsory programme. (But now things are changing.) In Australia, for any activities out of school, like field trips or school picnics/ events involving the move of students out of school and any financial contribution, written parental consent must be submitted; otherwise, the activities are barred for the student. (A right given to individuals whether to participate or not)

iii. Sitting arrangement: Although it differs from school to school, in Bhutan, the sitting arrangement is two people at a desk facing the blackboard and teacher, while in Australia, I remember being seated at a circular table with four to five kids.

**Interviewer:** Could you elaborate on your roles when assisting your grandparents in their real estate business? How did it impact your skills?

**Sangey:** Roles that I have taken to assist my grandparents:

- Driver: I drive the vehicle to carry repair and maintenance materials and equipment within the estate compound.
- Assistant plumber: I go with my father, uncles, and grandfather to repair and maintain plumbing while laying and connecting new pipelines.
- Assistant electrician: I go with my father, uncles, and grandfather to work on electrical repair and maintenance and connect new lines.
- Painter: I go with my family members to do painting jobs like repainting walls with distemper paints and oil paints for windows and doors. This is usually done whenever an apartment is vacated and before new tenants move in as a new tenant.

Impact on my skills:

- Knowledge of tools, equipment, and materials: I became familiar with many tools, equipment, and materials used for repair and maintenance.
- Budgeting: I know the cost of tools, material for plumbing, electrical, and painting items, and how much would be required to carry out the works.
- Driving skills: Apart from knowing how to drive, I have also learned how to carry out minor repairs and maintenance of vehicles.

**Interviewer:** How has your family's willingness to undertake labor-intensive tasks impacted your work ethic and sense of responsibility?

**Sangey:** Since Bhutan is a small country with a significantly smaller population, we import labor on work permits for specific works like house construction and project work. Therefore, the minor maintenance and repair work must be done by ourselves. We are a middle-class, hard-working family, and we take pride in doing any type of work at home. Doing such jobs has made me more mature and responsible, which I have demonstrated at school by being the class captain from grade six to eleven. As a class captain, I had to lead my class in various activities and competitions where, most of the time, my class won, but of course, with our class teacher's guidance and my classmates' support.

**Interviewer:** How has your involvement in social work impacted your community and personal development?

**Sangey:** My involvement in social work has brought about positive change in the community by promoting wellbeing. On a personal level, doing social work has given me peace and a deep sense of fulfillment, bringing many changes to my character. It has fostered empathy, compassion, resilience, and problem-solving skills in me.



**Interviewer:** Can you discuss your participation in the National Youth Engagement and Health Literacy Meet organized by WHO? What motivated you to participate, and what did you learn from your participation?

**Sangey:** The national youth engagement and health literacy program was at the Youth Development Fund or YDF compound for two days. I was honored to meet His Excellency, the prime minister of my country, along with the Health Minister and other members of parliaments and people from the World Health Organization. On the first day, there were lectures from the chief guest about various health issues in the country and how we should try to spread awareness to others. On the second day, we were divided into groups for discussions on tackling various diseases in the country; after that, we had to represent the art of acting. In the last part of the program, we were shown the leadership roles and responsibilities and the importance of having a great leader.

I participated in the program as a representative of my class as I was the class captain. I learned from the two-day program the global health issues and health issues specific to my country, Awareness of WHO's initiatives and advocacy, leadership skills, youth engagement techniques, etc.

**Interviewer:** What draws you to the fields of business administration and Finance, and how do you see them fitting into your future aspirations?

**Sangey:** I'm interested in Business administration and Finance as it has many career opportunities that align with my interest and strength. Additionally, I foresee the potential to contribute to my grandparent's real estate business management in the future, should the need arise.

Although my immediate career goal is to gain experience by working under someone's mentorship, my ultimate aspiration is to establish my venture. Since Business administration and Finance are closely linked to entrepreneurship and starting new ventures, a strong foundation would be invaluable. This foundation would facilitate my professional growth and provide the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship successfully.

**Interviewer:** Could you share any insights into your aspirations to start your ventures in the future potentially?

**Sangey:** I am not entirely sure about my venture, as Bhutan is a developing country with business opportunities that often require a trial-and-error approach. Nevertheless, I am considering following my grandfather's path in real estate development. The dynamic nature of this field, coupled with the market's evolving needs, makes it an exciting avenue to explore. While uncertainties and challenges will be there, by leveraging the foundational knowledge I will gain in Business administration and Finance, I can overcome the complexities of real estate development and contribute to the growth of this sector in Bhutan.

**Interviewer:** How do you plan to bridge potential business opportunities between Bhutan and Bangladesh during your studies?

**Sangey:** During my studies here, I intend to conduct market research to identify sectors with growth potential in both countries, establish networking connections, attend business conferences and trade events if I get the opportunity, and familiarize myself with the regulations and market trends of both countries.

**Interviewer:** What advice would you give to young individuals seeking to balance academic pursuits, personal interests, and community involvement based on your journey?

**Sangey:** My advice to young individuals would be:

- All tasks should be equally important, whether simple or complex.
- Strive to be a leader rather than following what others do.
- Take initiative and work hard consistently regardless of immediate reward. Your efforts will pay off over time.
- Support your parents and grandparents to do routine chores at home.
- Make an effort to care for and spend time with your siblings.
- Stay curious and seek opportunities to learn joyous and valuable things.
- Do not indulge in bad habits like drinking alcohol, using drugs, and smoking.
- Develop budgeting skills and be mindful of unnecessary spending to manage your finances effectively.



## International Faculty Feature



*Dr. Soumik Pal works as Assistant Professor of Media, Communication and Journalism in the Department of Political Science and Sociology at North South University, Dhaka. He holds a Ph.D. in Film and Media Studies from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. His work has been published in journals such as Studies in South Asian Film and Media, NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies, and edited volumes on Bollywood cinema and language politics in India. He has worked on the phenomenon of stardom and celebrity as commodity, notions of masculinity as seen in Hindi cinema from the 1970s to the contemporary era, and how that has informed Indian politics leading up to the current Hindutva era. His research interests include neoliberal cultures concerning bureaucracy, finance, construction of gender representations, and the rise of fascism.*

**Interviewer:** Please tell us about your educational journey from the beginning.

**Dr. Pal:** I grew up in an industrial township called Durgapur in West Bengal, India. I did my schooling in Durgapur from St. Xavier's School. Whereas the school standards were good in Durgapur, the town was obsessed with students pursuing STEM disciplines only. Braving consternation from acquaintances, I chose to study English for my undergrad (RK Mission Residential College, Narendrapur, affiliated to the University of Calcutta), and then pursued Film Studies for my Master's degree from Jadavpur University, Kolkata. After that, I did an MBA in Communications Management from Mudra Institute of Communications, Ahmedabad (MICA) and worked for 3 years in the corporate sector before pursuing my PhD in the United States.

**Interviewer:** Who was your role model?

**Dr. Pal:** I have had many people who I found inspirational, from my parents to school teachers, from artists like Tagore to historical figures like Bhagat Singh. My role models kept changing with age and it would be difficult to choose one role model.

**Interviewer:** How did you discover your passion for the Media Arts?

**Dr. Pal:** Since childhood, I was interested in what we broadly call the "arts". I was always interested in reading literature, watching films, listening to music and I took these hobbies seriously, even as a kid. And during my college and university (Master's) years, the nascent liking took shape and I realized that I wanted to study arts, society and culture full-time.

**Interviewer:** What made you choose Southern Illinois University, Carbondale for your PhD? How was your experience?

**Dr. Pal:** I chose Southern Illinois University, Carbondale purely on the basis of my advisor, Dr. Jyotsna Kapur, whose research interests matched the most closely with mine. In retrospect, I can say that I made the right choice and I have been lucky to have her as my PhD guide.

My PhD experience was good and enjoyable overall. Carbondale is an idyllic university town that is close to nature and enjoys an incredible international student population. I loved small-town America, the facilities that the university provided, the local community and my graduate school colleagues' company. Like most others, my PhD journey was not easy by any means, as it dragged on a bit but looking back, I would call the experience a memorable one.

**Interviewer:** What was the difference between the educational systems in India and the US?

**Dr. Pal:** I think the main difference is regarding resources. While I studied in top schools and colleges in India, whose pedagogy and standards of academics are as good as any institution in the US, the main difference was in access to resources such as a good, well-staffed, easy-to-access library, or something as seemingly basic as the availability of clean bathrooms on campus.

**Interviewer:** What made you want to make your career in academia?

**Dr. Pal:** I first thought of academia as my vocation while doing my MA in Film Studies at Jadavpur University. JU was my first encounter with serious academics and its concerns, and I found myself enjoying the process. Later on, as I taught my own courses at SIUC, I discovered the sense of joy, achievement and fulfillment that teaching gave me. So, since teaching and research are both processes that I enjoy, and I find fulfillment in critical thinking, I chose my career in academia.

**Interviewer:** Tell us about your research interests.

**Dr. Pal:** My primary research interest is South Asian popular culture, especially, as it relates to the changing socio-politics of the region. I am particularly interested in understanding cultures under neoliberalism and also, what social, cultural, economic and political processes contribute to the threat of fascism looming large over the region.

**Interviewer:** Do you make films?

**Dr. Pal:** No, I am an academic on the studies track. Though I have tried my hand at short documentaries and do plan to get into filmmaking in future.



**Interviewer:** How would you compare the global film industries approach to filmmaking historically and contemporarily?

**Dr. Pal:** Worldwide, most major film industries have developed along capitalist lines of production, and so, one would find somewhat common phenomena like rise and fall of studios, dominance of stars, primacy of narrative cinema etc. However, there are characteristics that are unique to the country/region that also hold true for the corresponding film industries. For example, the film industries in South Asia produce films that almost necessarily have songs. I think in the contemporary neoliberal times, the logic of spectacle has become so dominating (superhero film in Hollywood or star vehicles in Bollywood), that it has become restricting for the scope of cinema.

**Interviewer:** Who makes the most honest films? Please explain why you say so.

**Dr. Pal:** I will just name my all-time favorite filmmaker, Luis Bunuel. The Spanish filmmaker had a chequered, eventful career in which he was thrown out of several countries because of his unsparing approach towards a decadent and immoral bourgeois culture that produced a long and prolific filmmaking career.

**Interviewer:** What is the secret sauce behind a good screenplay? Can it be taught/learned?

**Dr. Pal:** A screenplay can be good in many ways. One can have a tight plotline, or a strong emotional core, or great character arcs, or just be attentive to the space and time it is set in. I don't think there is any one secret sauce to a good screenplay but a really good work of art should be able to get to the truth of whatever it is dealing with.

I think screenplay writing can be taught to a certain extent. A good teacher can familiarize the students with the field, the variety of approaches that have been taken towards screenplay writing, and what the best screenplay writers have considered their best practices. But after that, it is up to the individual artist to find their own path towards truth.

**Interviewer:** Who is the best storyteller you know, and what makes him/her so?

**Dr. Pal:** I would name a non-filmmaker as an answer to this question. I think the best storyteller that I know is stand-up comedian George Carlin. Carlin's genius lies in his attention to detail and the ability to bring out the novelty from everyday mundane experiences. When this combined with a strongly opinionated and politically astute mind that was also unrelenting in its commitment to truth, it gave birth to Carlin, the legendary storyteller

**Interviewer:** Who captures what it means to be Bengali best?

**Dr. Pal:** Being a Bengali, like any other ethnicity, cannot be essentialized in any manner. One can mention certain loose characteristics that might define a Bengali, like obsession with food, the propensity for socializing (also known as adda) or a cultivated propensity towards the arts, but it is too varied to capture in a few set criteria. So, while it would be difficult to mention any one person who captures what it means to be a Bengali, I would like to mention Lalon Fakir because of how his life and work symbolizes Bengal's syncretism and cuts across religion and region to truly become Bengal's very own.

**Interviewer:** What made you want to come to NSU? What is your impression so far?

**Dr. Pal:** I had heard the PSS department had faculty openings and I was aware of NSU's reputation of being Bangladesh's top ranked university and its oldest private university. Whatever information I could gather, gave me the impression of a robust academic culture and collegiality in the campus.

My initial impressions confirm what I had heard and hoped for about NSU. While the university has been welcoming in terms of facilities, my colleagues have also been extremely generous and helpful, not to mention the students who have also been extremely receptive and welcoming.

**Interviewer:** Briefly describe your teaching philosophy.

**Dr. Pal:** I believe that education should cut across boundaries and should be ultimately accessible to everyone. Education literally creates the future generation and shapes society. So, teaching is an extremely responsible profession that can do both incredible good as well as incalculable harm. Therefore, I believe that education should reach students wherever they are in terms of their upbringing, mental and emotional journey, and their own individual growth. And for that to happen efficiently, teachers should approach education with kindness, generosity, patience and lots of love. That is what I strive to achieve in my own job.

**Interviewer:** Anything else you would like to share?

**Dr. Pal:** I would just like to share my happiness and excitement on getting the chance to come and work in Bangladesh. Apart from being a vibrant country with some of the most generous people in the world, Bangladesh is also where my ancestral roots lie. Both my parents were born in Bangladesh (erstwhile India, and then, East Pakistan), spent some of their formative years here, and then migrated to India due to communal violence. All my life, I have heard them fondly remember their childhood days in Bangladesh and all those stories have made me fond of the country, even though I never managed to visit before accepting the job offer at NSU. Now that I am here in Dhaka, my short stay so far has been wonderful. While NSU is a great workplace and Bangladeshi food is generally wonderful, it is the warmth coming from the people that makes me glad that I could come to Bangladesh.

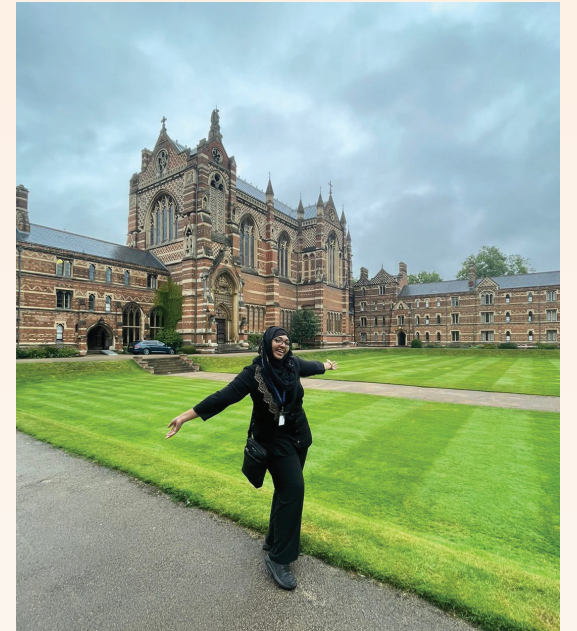


## STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

### Oxford Summer Camp, London 2023

**O**n January 30, 2023, North South University arranged a seminar regarding The Oxford London Summer Program 2023 which was organized by the Office of External Affairs (OEA), NSU coordinated by Ms. Samina Alam (International Affairs Officer, NSU) and Ms. Mona Masud (Coordinator of the Oxford London Summer Program). After I had been selected for the program, I was surprised. I had never imagined that I would get to go to Oxford University. My heart started to beat faster when I got the visa at the last moment. There were two of us from North South University attended this program. I landed on July 16, 2023 in London and spent a whole week at Imperial College. We had 3 amazing deans to take care of us.

From the 2nd day at Imperial College, we started to get proper lectures and practicing Debate. We were informed that we were going to participate in a debate competition at Oxford Union. Oxford Union is one of the prestigious institutions which was formed in the early nineteenth century. Ahmad Nawaz, the president of Oxford Union provided us with appropriate lectures so that we could give our best there. Besides that, there were 4 sessions related to different courses. We left London for Oxford University on July 24, 2023. Oxford was very different than London. The infrastructure of buildings was like a fort. I met a bunch of international students who joined us in this program. On July 24, 2023, we went to St. Anne's College at Oxford University where we had a week-long tutorial. Tutorials consist of a maximum of 3 to 4 students per teacher. So, we had a good interaction with them. I took Business Studies as a major and Politics and International Relations as a minor. I found the subjects more interesting as they made the whole study material practical. Two days before leaving Oxford University we had a fantastic debate competition. We followed the British Parliamentary System in debate consisting of three speakers and a whip. It was one of the most beautiful experiences in the Oxford Summer Program. I received my certificate on my last day at Oxford University and they arranged a formal dinner which lit up the evening. Finally, I landed back in Bangladesh on July 29, 2023.



### FPT Winter Camp, Vietnam



us overcome our fear of stepping into the spotlight and better communicate with the people around us.

We also learnt the importance of teamwork through participating in several different activities, while further strengthening our bonds in the process. Our hosts, FPT University and all their volunteers welcomed us with open arms and were there for us in our every moment of need, making sure our experience in Vietnam went as smoothly as possible. All in all, the time we spent in Vietnam is something we'll cherish forever. We learnt about different cultures, ideas, and took on many new challenges. Some of us may have faltered or stumbled along the way, but we all came out of it as a better version of ourselves, and most importantly, we did it all together as a team.



## NIDA International Summer Camp, Thailand: Creative Tourism and Global Leadership for Sustainability

One of our great opportunities from North South University was the chance to visit the Kingdom of Thailand. A chance to witness the great history and rich culture first hand. The invitation from the National Institute of Development Administration-NIDA sparked the interest among many of us which made us sign up. The advertised events and places were some of the alluring things that attracted us the most. Since landing, the hospitality and warmth of the Thai people were exceptional. The transportation from the airport to the comfortable and relaxing hotel suites was smooth. From the very next day, the Ice-breaking event allowed us to interact with other applicants from Thailand and China in a playful manner which ended unexpectedly well. We got to know in depth about their culture and personal habits and it could be said we started to become friends.

A notable portion of this summer camp were the workshops hosted at NIDA campus by highly qualified professors that helped us gain insight on many aspects of world economics and ethics. Not to mention the food break was filled with adequate and delicious traditional snacks that were almost as large as a meal. Some of the fun moments were the cooking competition in which we dominated with our own traditional food and the dinner Cruise was a relaxing yet thrilling moment for us. All of this including trips to Pattaya beach and Heritage sites was a holiday touch in this workshop. Above all the hospitality and friendliness of the staff, the organizers, the teachers and the participants separated this event from any other. If a chance arises again, none of us would want to miss out on another summer camp in Thailand.



## Saint Mary's Semester Exchange with Study in Canada Scholarships (SiCS) 2022-23



The Study in Canada Scholarships (SiCS) is a short-term exchange program organized by the Global Affairs Canada's International Scholarships Program. The scholarship is offered to a set of international students from a wide range of countries and territories throughout the world for study or research purposes every academic year. The regions where the program operates include Asia, Europe, Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc. One of the Asian countries that fall under the operating areas of SiCS is Bangladesh.

As one of the leading private universities of Bangladesh, North South University (NSU) devotes its attention towards internationalization and

maintains active communication with the global education sector and different international universities around the world including Canada. Saint Mary's University (SMU) of Canada is one of such partner universities of NSU that hosts the recipients of SiCS every year. Through this partnership, two students from NSU had this exciting opportunity of visiting and pursuing their preferred courses at SMU as exchange students for one semester in Winter 2023 academic session as the recipients of SiCS.



## Asian Student Leadership Conference 2023, Singapore

On July 13, 2023, Atia Fiaroz embarked on a journey that transcended borders and cultures. According to Atia, "I am currently a student of the Business department and continuing my 3rd semester". The conference focused mostly on volunteerism and leadership amidst the youth and to built awareness regarding babies who are born with cleft lips. The conference was arranged by Smile Asia, which is a Singapore-registered charity and adheres to local regulatory requirements. It aims to instill a sense of volunteerism among Singapore residents, and create overseas volunteering opportunities.

Student ambassadors from Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, Myanmar, India, Laos, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Singapore participated in the Conference. From Bangladesh, Wasif Chowdhury (from another private university) and I were selected to represent our country and our trip was fully financially sponsored. After a month long preparation, we represented our country at our fullest and we made amazing friends. Everyone was different and talented in their own ways; and thus, I am grateful to have gotten a chance to be on that platform and know everyone else.

The organizers welcomed us to Singapore two days prior to the main conference for which we could explore the city all by ourselves. Then whilst during the conference, we were appointed to different groups which consisted of students from different nationalities. As I navigated through the myriad of workshops, discussions, and interactions, the conference not only enriched my understanding of global volunteer initiatives but also bestowed upon me invaluable lessons in harnessing leadership skills to drive positive change. I hope I can contribute my learnings from this conference for the betterment and success of NSU.





## Special Feature

# Team Impact Diplomats become First-ever Cohort from NSU in prestigious Millennium Fellowship:

*For the very first time in North South University's illustrative history, a cohort of 20+ students—who call themselves the Impact Diplomats—have been selected for the distinguished and highly competitive Millennium Fellowship Class of 2023 jointly organized by the United Nations (UNAI) and Millennium Campus Network (MCN). A global youth leadership development program, this year accounted for the Millennium Fellowship's highest applicant number (44,000 students) from more than 190 countries. Including universities from the likes of the Ivy League, Oxbridge, and other prestigious portmanteaus, only around 260+ campuses from 38 countries worldwide were selected to host the 4,000+ Millennium Fellows this year (9% acceptance rate). Among them sits our Impact Diplomats team from NSU—a historic milestone achieved after more than 7 months of strategic efforts and perseverance.*

The Millennium Fellowship aims to mobilize youth advocacy for the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the UNAI Principles. The Founding Organization, MCN, along with the support of the United Nations Academic Impact, bring together the most socially engaged youth leaders from around the world every year to support their unique social impact projects. The Fellowship provides these youth with Community Impact skill-building, Networking and Partnership-building skills, and Social Leadership skills. Graduates of the Fellowship go on to lead their own Social Impact initiatives or pursue satisfactory careers across renowned social impact organizations. Team Impact Diplomats believe they can benefit immensely from the program's offerings, and they have high ambitions for their project and fellowship tenure.

The project that secured this monumental feat for North South University goes by the name "The Breaktime Student Athletes", a project led by Mahiat Shan under his organization, Breaktime Foundation. Mahiat Shan, famously known for his advocacy of the SDG 13 (Climate Action) through his ClimateScience Olympiad promotional event as the Campus Coordinator of ClimateScience at NSU (See The Bridge Issue #31 pages 17 and 22), is back again with his team, the Impact Diplomats, to advance the UN SDGs within North South University.

As a brief description of the project, here's what Mahiat and his team had to say: "A significant proportion of the population in Dhaka city falls below the poverty line, inevitably resulting in adverse and unforgiving survival challenges for those inhabitants. A concerning aftermath of poverty is when children belonging to such families are forced towards the ruthless job of a breadwinner, oftentimes depriving them of a healthy diet and lifestyle, basic education, or even recreation. Another pressing repercussion that arises as a by-product of child labour is children leaning towards drug abuse as a coping mechanism from hunger, depression, and pain as their lives spiral around dog-eat-dog struggle in search of a better living.

The Breaktime Student Athletes project aims to tackle these issues by establishing a source of means for such children to ease them from their breadwinning responsibilities so that they can pursue an empowering education. At the heart of Breaktime Foundation's values are Sports, Collaboration, and Charity. Hence, sticking to its roots, Team Impact Diplomats aims to use sports as a medium of aid for the underprivileged and underserved members of our society. They plan to host multi-sports charity tournaments, bringing together sports enthusiasts from all socioeconomic classes to engage in a fun and meaningful outcome—educating the youth of Bangladesh.

Through their tournaments, their key goal is to establish a sustainable fund stream for children to chase an education rather than money while simultaneously enjoying the fruits of their youth. To realize this ambitious plan, Breaktime Foundation aims to partner up with NGO schools, renowned Brands, Public Figures, Financial firms, etc. and they believe the NSU Student Community can come together to support them in their initiative. The Breaktime Student Athletes project aims to leave behind a lasting impact, hoping to continue empowering many such children beyond the Millennium Fellowship tenure."

Impact Diplomats have also stated that their minimum goal is to help 20 children pursue their education, and they plan to establish a community of Social impact Leaders and SDG advocates within and beyond North South University. Their project advances the following UN SDGs: SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). Additionally, they are also achieving the UNAI Principle #3—Education for All—through their inquisitive ideas.

The Cohort from NSU working on The Breaktime Student Athletes project consists of the following students: Mahiat Shan (Project Director), Ayesha Sadia Khan (Campus Director), Ishfar Quaderi, Salsabil Noor Nokshi, Syed Nabil Ahsan, Ahmed Aidid, Azwa Nardeen, S. M Souhrid Zaman, Naimur Rahman Durjoy, Maria Rahman Momo, Zarif Mahdir Rahman, Nafisa Maliat, Rubayet Rezwan, K. M. Rayed Zakwan, Fahmid Rahman Rafid, Mohammadullah Mohammad, Rakib Rahman Aronno, Latifa Shiraji Chowdhury, Nafis Wahid Nijhum, Arpita Sarker, Tanzidur Rahman Nakshatra, Ehatasham Emad Haque. Additional Members of the Cohort working on different projects: Mohaimenul Islam (Campus Director), Sarwar Iftakhar.

Team Impact Diplomats thanks the Office of External Affairs of North South University for their continued support in helping the team advocate for the SGDs, and they hope that the greater NSU community will also join them in their Social Impact initiatives when the Breaktime Student Athletes project comes to life.

