



**Office  
of External  
Affairs**

# THE BRIDGE

## The Official Newsletter of the Office Of External Affairs

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### Editor's Message

As I write my second editorial for Bridge in the capacity of the editor, it is important to reflect on the significant changes that have taken place since the last issue. After several years under a regime marked by corruption, and exploitation, a student led-revolution has transformed Bangladesh into a new era. The students, once silenced, now are part of the leadership. They are in charge of the governance, reminding the world that it is often the youngest voices that spark the most profound revolutions. But now comes the real challenge: rebuilding the country in alignment with the ideals they fought so hard to uphold. We are super proud of the Bangladeshi students who were at the forefront of this movement. We are humbled by the bravery shown by so many of our NSU students, faculty members, and staff.

As we move forward toward a new Bangladesh, OEA will continue to serve as a bridge between North South University and the international community. I am excited to announce that, starting from the next issue, Bridge will have a fresh new look, offering research-based news articles, inspiring interviews, and valuable information. This update will allow us to better serve our community by highlighting opportunities available to students, faculty members, staff, and our partner institutions. I hope you enjoy reading through this issue.

Editor

Illustrator

Reporter

Dr. Samiksha Koirala Hafiz Uzzaman Zafreen Islam

### NSU Welcomes Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed as Chairman of the Board of Trustees



*The Office of External Affairs is pleased to welcome Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of North South University (NSU). Mr. Ahmed has served multiple terms as Chairman of North South University and is a founder life member of the Board of Trustees of North South University and North South University Foundation. He is a graduate from the University of Dhaka.*

Mr. Azim is also Sponsor Director and former Chairman of Southeast Bank PLC. He is the Chairman of Mutual Group, Mutual Trading Company Limited, AD Holdings Limited and also the Director and former Chairman of the Arla Foods Bangladesh Limited, a joint venture between Mutual Milk Products Limited and Arla Foods of Denmark for production of Dano Brand Milk Product in Bangladesh. [Continued on page 2.](#)

### Welcoming a Visionary Leader: Prof. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury Appointed as NSU's New Vice-Chancellor

*The North South University (NSU) community proudly welcomes Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury as the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor. With over 34 years of experience in teaching, research, and academic leadership across Bangladesh, Canada, the USA, and China, Professor Chowdhury brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to guide NSU into a new era of excellence. [Continued on page 2.](#)*



Photo credit: Nusrat Santa

## NSU Welcomes Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed as Chairman of the Board of Trustees

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He is also the Partner of Mutual Agro Complex, Mutual Departmental Store and Mutual Distribution and Silonia Agencies, Managing Director of Mutual Food Products Limited, the only manufacturers of Horlics in Bangladesh. He is also Managing Partner of Mutual Logistics Service & Muhuri Agency.

Mr. Azim is associated with a number of trade bodies and associations devoted to social work. He was the past President of Rotary Club of Dhaka North and Area Governor of Rotary District. He was the past President of Gulshan Club Limited. He was the President of Baridhara Society for long time. He served in different capacities in Dhaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DCCI), Federation of Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FBCCI) and Bangladesh Indenting Agents Association. He is the current President of Bangladesh Consumer Products Manufacturers Association. He represented Bangladesh as a leader and member of a number of Trade Delegation to Europe, USA, Asian countries including China and many others on Govt. and private trade delegations. He is a widely travelled person across the globe.

Mr. Azim is from the educationalist and philanthropic family and engaged him in philanthropic activities. He is the Founder of Azim Uddin Ahmed Islamia Madrasha, Duluma Azim High School, Fatema Farzana Kindergarten and Azim Uddin Ahmed Forkania Madrasha in his village. He has contributed for several educational and socio-cultural organizations all over of the country.



## Welcoming a Visionary Leader: Prof. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury Appointed as NSU's New Vice-Chancellor

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A seasoned academic, Professor Chowdhury has played pivotal roles within NSU, including serving twice as Dean of the School of Business and Economics (SBE) and holding positions such as Executive Director of External Relations, Director of the BBA Program, and Director of Career Services. His leadership experience extends beyond NSU, having served as Primeasia University's Vice-Chancellor and Eastern University's Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

Dr. Chowdhury earned his Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Northeastern University, Boston, USA, and his M.S. in Operations Research from the same institution. He holds a Bachelor of Science (Honors) and a Master of Science in Statistics from Jahangirnagar University. His vast research portfolio includes over 65 published papers, two books on statistics, and over 75 conference presentations globally. His focus on Business Statistics, Total Quality Management, and Social Business aligns perfectly with NSU's mission to foster academic excellence and innovation.

The Office of External Affairs extends its warmest and most enthusiastic congratulations to Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury on his prestigious appointment as Vice Chancellor of NSU. We are truly excited to embark on this new chapter under his exceptional leadership. With his vision and expertise, we are confident NSU will achieve even greater academic and institutional excellence. The entire NSU community eagerly anticipates the positive changes and innovations he will bring to the university, and we look forward to working closely with him to shape a transformative future for NSU.



# Through the Lens: The July Revolution

Photo Credits: Risul Islam Rifat & Fuad Al Mubassir



Credit: Risul Islam Rifat



Credit: Fuad Al Mubassir



Credit: Risul Islam Rifat



Credit: Risul Islam Rifat



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Credit: Fuad Al Mubassir



Credit: Fuad Al Mubassir



Credit: Fuad Al Mubassir



Credit: Fuad Al Mubassir

# A Journey of Personal Growth and Cultural Discovery: An NSU Student's Reflection on the O.P. Jindal (JGU) Semester Exchange Experience



**OP JINDAL GLOBAL  
UNIVERSITY**

*O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU), India, recently hosted a successful semester exchange program, welcoming four exceptional BBA students from North South University: Shifatun Nahar, Jawad Araf Khan, Md. Abdullah Al Amin, and Syed Raisul Islam Rafi. One of the participants, Syed Raisul Islam Rafi, shared his experience as follows:*

Academically, JGU offered a refreshing change from what I was used to at NSU. The educational methods varied, emphasizing critical thinking and global viewpoints more significantly. The faculty members were competent and engaging, encouraging us to explore challenging problems further. I recall one course that focused on negotiation skills; it extended my perspective and pushed me to explore outside traditional paradigms. The diversity of the classroom, with individuals from diverse nations and states in India, added layers to our discussions, making each lesson a valuable learning experience. However, the exchange wasn't just about academics. Living in India and being immersed in its culture was an eye-opening experience. The warmth and hospitality of the people at JGU, from fellow students to faculty, made me feel at home. I had the



chance to participate in various cultural events and festivals, which allowed me to appreciate the richness of Indian traditions and their similarities with Bangladeshi culture. Also, there were students from other countries around the world joining us for the semester exchange program. The shared experiences with my peers, whether during a lively debate in class or while exploring the local area, created bonds that I know will last a lifetime.

One of the highlights of my time at JGU was the sense of community on campus. The vibrant student life, with countless clubs and activities, provided endless opportunities to engage and grow outside the classroom. Whether attending a guest lecture, joining a student organization, or simply hanging out with friends at the cafeteria, every day was filled with new experiences.

In conclusion, my time at OP Jindal Global University was more than just an academic exchange. It was a journey of personal growth and cultural discovery. The knowledge I gained, the friendships I made, and the experiences I had have left an indelible mark on me, and I am grateful to NSU authorities, especially the whole team of the Office of External Affairs (OEA), for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this incredible program.



## Exploring Japanese Healthcare and Culture: A Summer Exchange Experience at Niigata University School of Medicine

*This summer Niigata University School of Medicine, a leading institution renowned for its advanced medical technology and exceptional medical professionals, cordially invited us to attend their summer exchange programme which offered us an unparalleled insight into the Japanese healthcare system, traditions and culture. The G-medX team was exceptionally welcoming and supportive, ensuring that we had an outstanding experience throughout our time with them.*



**新潟大学**  
NIIGATA UNIVERSITY



The university extended a warm and supportive environment to international exchange students, from diverse cultural backgrounds and fields of interest. The program provided a unique opportunity to interact with forty individuals representing seven different countries namely China, Indonesia, Japan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkey, Russia, giving us a lifetime opportunity to extend our friendship beyond the borders.

During these ten days we were assigned to the Department of Virology under the guidance of Dr. Takayuki Abe who is leading the department. Abe-sensei gave us the opportunity to do laboratory work and gave us insights on how COVID might affect our

brain. Dr. Mashiko Takahashi and Dr. Taichi Kakihana, were also kind enough to let us explore the forefront of virological research.



G-medX team introduced us to the vibrant and colourful culture of Japan, especially of Niigata through different cultural events and the Tsukioka Onsen Trip. We thoroughly enjoyed the tea ceremony, immersing ourselves in its tranquil ambiance. We also participated in calligraphy and origami which was certainly a joy, as we watched simple paper transform into beautiful designs like Crane. The onsen trip was one of the highlights of our Japan trip as the soothing hot spring waters provided a perfect escape, easing our muscles and calming our minds amidst the serene natural surroundings. Another memorable experience was our visit to the serene Hakusan Shrine, followed by time spent at the picturesque beaches along the Sea of Japan. We also enjoyed the Summer Festival in Shibuya, Tokyo where we watched the parades, colourful fireworks, street food, and festive music and dance.



With a blend of these enjoyable activities and diverse learning experiences, our trip to Japan ended, leaving us with cherished memories and valuable knowledge.



## Insights and Experiences from the Macquarie University Study Tour



**MACQUARIE University**  
SYDNEY · AUSTRALIA

Macquarie University, Australia recently organized a study tour where four exceptionally talented students, Zarin Tasnim Chowdhury, Tanaaz Zahin Khan, Maliha Binte Mannan, and Mohammed Ibrahim

from the BBA department represented North South University. Here we present their interesting experiences from the study tour:

Our study tour at Macquarie University was a transformative experience combining academic excellence and cultural exploration.

The esteemed professors and innovative teaching methods created a dynamic and engaging learning environment. The diverse mix of cultures among the students broadened our perspectives and fostered a collaborative atmosphere. We also had the opportunity to attend workshops on job hunting in Australia and course briefings for business analytics and master of commerce programs at Macquarie University. The most honored thing we got was the “meet and greet” with the Executive Dean of Macquarie Business School, Professor Eric Knight. The opportunity to taste cuisines from around the world at the university campus added another cultural richness to our experience.

Upon completing the program, we gave two presentations to groups of 2 about “Economic ties between

Australia and Bangladesh: Facts and Opportunity” and “Experience in Australia and Macquarie University.” The evaluation process done by MQU faculty allowed us to learn how to present slides and data professionally, cite every source via QR code, use the correct body language while presenting, and many more tips.

Beyond the classroom, Sydney offered numerous opportunities for adventure and discovery. We explored the iconic Bondi Beach and Manly Beach, kayaked under the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and explored Chinatown. The Taronga Zoo provided a unique encounter with Australian wildlife, and lastly, the most daring thing to do in Sydney was climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Our all-time favorite spot in Sydney was Circular Quay, where we would take ferry rides to anywhere for just \$4.

All of these were possible because the Office of External Affairs of NSU, Mr. Tanvir Shaheed, and Mr. Alkayet Hossain from MU created this opportunity for us and guided us throughout the process. This study tour was more than just an academic endeavor; it was a life-changing adventure we will cherish forever.



## International Student Feature

# Embracing My Bengali Heritage

Hello, my name is **Amatulla Taha**, and I grew up in the colorful culture of West Bengal, where tradition and modernity blend seamlessly. Residing in Bangladesh for the last few years has made me fall even further in love with my Bengali heritage. Celebrating occasions such as Pohela Boishak, where the entire city is dressed up in white and red, and you would see stalls put up on every corner. Notably, the people of Bangladesh also celebrate Pohela Falgun (the first day of Spring) with colorful attire, flowers,



and songs. I have always been interested in exploring different cultures. My upbringing sparked my interest in exploring other cultures, leading me to appreciate diversity and global perspectives.



However, when I revisit Kolkata during my vacation, I get to rekindle my childhood. I reconnect with my family and friends and spend quality time with them. My grandmother prepares my favorite home-cooked meals, such as chole bhature, which I devour in no time. I also explore the rich heritage of Kolkata with my friends. We visit the Victoria Memorial and take a walk through the old streets of the city. Kolkata is famous for its delicious street food, so whenever I'm in town, I make it a point to go out and try it. Notably, I love eating phuchka, kathi rolls, jhalmuri, and singara. I enjoy shopping at the local markets, such as New Market, where I can find unique clothes, accessories, and home décor at discounted rates.

My journey at North South University (NSU) has been transformative. NSU's dynamic environment has allowed me to explore my academic interests while also engaging in diverse extracurricular activities. A highlight of my time here has been participating in various cultural events and student organizations, which have broadened my perspective and deepened my appreciation for our heritage. My experiences at NSU have enriched my knowledge, broadened my perspective, shaped my character, and equipped me with invaluable skills for the future.

During my leisure time on campus, I enjoy going to the library, which is one of my favorite spots. The quiet environment helps me escape the uproarious world outside.

Apart from academics, I love exploring Dhaka city with my peers. I am fond of reading books, so we visited the Bengal Boi; as an avid reader, I was mesmerized by the collection of books and the welcoming interior. I love embarking on adventurous activities, so I tried Zero-Gravity, laser tag, etc. I enjoy eating local cuisines such as biryani, bhuna khichuri, hilsa fish, and sweets like mishti doi and sandesh. Dhaka has a very rich heritage, so I enjoy visiting historical places such as Lalbagh Fort, Ahsan Manzil (Pink Palace), and Dhakeshwari Temple to get a better understanding of the rich culture and heritage that still prevail.

Alumni Feature

Cultivating Soft Skills for Success



*Shehrina Kamal is the vice president of Product Management at Everstream Analytics, where she leads a global team focused on developing AI/ML-driven solutions for supply chain risk, multi-tier mapping, and sustainability. With over 13 years of experience in B2B SaaS and six years in leadership, Shehrina has a proven track record of building and scaling high-performing teams across three continents. Her customer-centric approach and innovative vision have been instrumental in bringing market-leading products to life, earning Everstream recognition as one of the world's most innovative companies by FastCompany. Shehrina's expertise spans product vision and strategy, roadmap definition, and talent development, making her a key player in advancing supply chain technology. Shehrina is a proud alumna of North South University. She is from Batch 2005 and studied Economics as her Bachelors degree.*

Interviewer: Could you tell us about your journey from North South University to becoming the Vice President of Product Management at Everstream Analytics? What essential experiences or challenges have shaped your career?

Shehrina Kamal: I finished my Bachelor of Science in Economics at North South University and landed an internship opportunity at the DHL global headquarters in Bonn, Germany, through AIESEC, which I was active in during my time at NSU. My internship was at DHL Express in Global Sales, where I was responsible for requirements management, roll-out, and adoption of an internal sales platform. This was my foray into product management, though I didn't realize it then.

Towards the end of my internship, I started looking for full-time employment. This was in 2010, when macroeconomic conditions were not excellent, and opportunities were limited.

Nevertheless, I was hired into the Corporate Communications team at Deutsche Post DHL, where I supported various communication initiatives. From there, I made my way into the innovation department of DHL, managing its external partner network. Through this role, I was tapped to support partnership activities of an innovation project within DHL to address supply chain resiliency. I soon took on a full-time role in this initiative, becoming the 3rd employee of the emerging start-up. Fast forward 12 years later, I have had a front-row seat in building a company from scratch in a fast-growth environment through VC funding and developing an industry-leading supply chain resiliency solution. The path wasn't always linear, but curiosity and willingness to try anything twice kept me going and led me to where I now realize I always wanted to be.



Interviewer: What drew you to product management?

Shehrina Kamal: I have always loved looking at an abstract problem and coming up with ways to solve them through understanding what needs solving. What needs solving is never straightforward either – because if it is, then someone probably has done it already. It takes patience and perseverance to understand what truly needs to get done, and then combine it with market readiness and feasibility to create a solution around it. It requires that problems be looked at from all angles and that's what keeps me motivated – continuously stretching myself. There is no end to innovating, but keeping an eye on what solves a real problem, whether it scales and how it drives business growth makes product management a true cross-functional role and that's what gets me excited everyday.

Interviewer: In a rapidly evolving tech landscape, how do you ensure that your product strategies stay aligned with market demands and customer needs?

Shehrina Kamal: I live by a couple of core tenets: listen to your customers, don't fall in love with your own ideas, keep an eye on the competition, follow industry developments, and understand how technology is shaping the industry. Then tie it altogether





er to see the big picture. Make targeted bets. There will never be enough resources to do all the things that need doing, but making some targeted bets will help you stay aligned with market demand and customer needs.

Interviewer: Who is/are your role model(s)? What are the things that inspire you?

Shehrina Kamal: I am often inspired by resiliency and perseverance, in all shapes and forms. From witnessing my parents build and demonstrate resiliency in the face of adversity, to reading stories of ordinary strangers who have lived extraordinary lives – I often find myself seeking out narratives of resilience that help me see life from different perspectives. Most recently, I have been inspired by the student-led protests in Bangladesh that achieved the impossible. On a professional level, I



am continuously inspired by strong, female leaders that push boundaries in non-traditional industries (for women) and I am lucky to be surrounded by such women who I learn from everyday.

Interviewer: What advice would you give to current students or recent graduates who aspire to pursue a career in product management or the tech industry?

Shehrina Kamal: While what you study and what grades you get are important, it is not the most important thing in predicting professional success (unless you intend to pursue a highly-specialized path). Focus on understanding who you are, what makes you get up in the morning and what you are/can be good at. Dabble in hobbies. Your profession does not have to be your passion, but spend enough time on understanding yourself so you are not miserable at work. Be intentional in developing soft skills as you work towards acquiring technical skills. Be curious. Focus on being a well-rounded, well-informed, empathetic human being. That is what will set you apart.

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## NSU Partners with Jhpiego Bangladesh to Strengthen Global Collaboration in Healthcare

North South University (NSU) formalized a strategic partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Jhpiego, Bangladesh, one of the most prominent US-based International NGOs affiliated with Johns Hopkins University. Representing Jhpiego, Bangladesh, were Dr. Setara Rahman, Country Lead, Dr. S M Munavir Yusuf, Senior Technical Specialist, and Mr. Farhad Ahmed, Finance Officer. From NSU, Mr. Mehedi Masud Sumon, Senior Officer from the Office of External Affairs (OEA), attended the MoU signing ceremony, which took place at the Jhpiego, Bangladesh office on August 13, 2024.



Following the initial meeting on May 26, 2024, between North South University (NSU) and Jhpiego, Bangladesh, one of the largest US-based international NGOs affiliated with Johns Hopkins University, both parties agreed to establish an academic partnership through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Jhpiego, Bangladesh, is committed to improving the quality of life for the poorest and most vulnerable communities, mainly supporting underprivileged women in Bangladesh. Their work focuses on family planning, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, gender equality, developing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) for vulnerable adolescents and youth, and addressing climate change challenges. These initiatives aim to uplift marginalized populations in Bangladesh while aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This partnership between NSU and Jhpiego, Bangladesh, will open numerous opportunities for collaborative research publications and internships, greatly benefiting NSU students. This alliance marks a significant step towards integrating academic research with practical, on-ground interventions, contributing to Bangladesh's broader social development and empowerment mission.

## MoU Renewal and New Partnership Updates



The Office of External Affairs (OEA) is making significant strides in renewing several Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with existing partners and expanding its network through new agreements. Meetings were held with several institutions, including Nottingham University (UK), O.P. Jindal University (India) and UNESCO, Bangladesh, to explore potential collaborations, primarily focusing on climate change, migration, and press freedom. Talks were held with officials from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh (ICAB) and the Institute for Developing Science & Health Initiatives (ideSHi) for MoU renewals, with a strong emphasis on expanding research collaborations. The MoU with the University of South Alabama (USA) has been renewed, while agreements with Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and Taylor's University in Malaysia are currently in the process of renewal. These partnerships aim to foster joint research collaborations and provide semester exchange opportunities for students.

## Scholastica Students as Interns at NSU's Office of External Affairs



The Office of External Affairs recently hosted two talented students, Ms. Nuvia Nurain and Ms. Swagata Bhowmick Roy, from Scholastica, as part of our internship program. During their time with OEA, they gained valuable exposure to corporate work culture, learning firsthand about professional ethics and the intricacies of day-to-day operations. Their enthusiasm and curiosity brought a fresh perspective to the team, and everyone at the office thoroughly enjoyed supporting their growth throughout this meaningful experience. Here, we share their insights and experiences regarding the internship.

We are incredibly thankful for the opportunity to intern at the Office of External Affairs at North South University. While we were eager to learn and gain more experience, we regret that we could not complete our internship in person due to the political unrest in July and early August. However, our short time at the OEA has been profoundly rewarding and provided us with the knowledge we will carry forward in our careers.

This internship, in a gist, gave us a valuable glimpse into the workings of a corporate office environment. A highlight was

visiting the impressively large campus and discovering new aspects each time. We loved learning about important things like credit transfer and MoU and interacting with people, which was a new aspect of knowledge.

Everyone at the OEA was fantastic, offering us valuable learning opportunities. We are especially grateful to Sadia Apu for her exceptional guidance and constant support. She always ensured we were learning and growing. We genuinely wish we could have spent more time with the entire OEA team.



## Experience as Interns for North South University



It is uncommon to see students of Class 11 to be given the opportunity to work as interns. However, Scholastica broke the norm by offering summer internship programs for students. We, Taybah Tasneem of Scholastica Mirpur Campus and Mahazabin Nuha of Scholastica Uttara Campus, were selected to work as interns at North South University through a rigorous selection process. We started our journey on 7th July, and the experience was transformative.

As soon as we stepped into the main lobby of North South University for the first time, we were struck with awe. The institute was impressive, beautifully decorated, and well-secured. We were then guided to the Office of External Affairs. Meeting the entire team initially felt daunting, but we quickly discovered they were very friendly. Sadia Miss from the Office of External Affairs then showed us around the entire campus. Towards the end of the working day, we were informed that we would be working for the Office of Registrar.

Working as an intern in the Office of the Registrar at North South University provided us with valuable experience in administrative work. We were placed at the front desk from the very beginning; the role involved various tasks such as verifying documents, handling student ID cards, entering data and acting as a point of contact for students and parents regarding their needs. It brought us opportunities to meet a wide range of interesting people. Although we were working alongside people much older than us, we did not feel out of place. Regular employees such as Marufa Miss, Fatema Miss, Rajon sir, Papia Miss and Moushumi Miss patiently taught us daily tasks and made us feel comfortable. Particularly Marufa Miss and Fatema Miss were hospitable and welcoming towards us. Even though we made several mistakes along the way, we were never reprimanded. Instead, they corrected our errors and guided us on how to improve.

Dealing with guest relations was no easy task and having to repeat the same instructions multiple times was exhausting. One incident that particularly stood out involved a student who, accompanied by his father, arrived with no documents verified and demanded to speak with the Registrar. Fatema Miss calmly explained the procedure and guided them on the next steps. This gave us a new perspective on how composed one has to be in order to work in guest relations. Although our internship was cut short, every moment spent was memorable and the skill set we developed will have a lasting impact on our lives. This experience of working in customer care opened our eyes to the struggles of dealing with people of various attitudes and increased our respect for the profession.



## International Faculty Feature

## Promoting Academic Collaboration and Cultural Exchange through the Confucius Institute

*Ms. Ma Xiaoyan is the Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute (CI) at NSU. She received an MA in Chinese Linguistics and Philology from Jilin University in China. Since 2018, she has been a lecturer at the School of Chinese International Education at Yunnan University. Ma joined NSU as a Chinese teacher from 2018 to 2020 and returned in 2023 to assume her current role as the Chinese Director. For this issue, we contacted Ms. Ma to learn more about her experiences in Bangladesh and her plans at CI.*

**Interviewer:** As the Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute, could you share some insights about the institute and your collaboration with faculty members and students at NSU?

**Ms. Ma:** The Confucius Institute at NSU was jointly established in 2006 by North South University and Yunnan University (YNU) China. It is the first Confucius Institute in both Bangladesh and South Asia. Named after China's greatest philosopher and educator, Confucius, the institute aims to teach the Chinese language and promote cultural exchange between Bangladesh and China. The Confucius Institute at NSU received the Best CI Award in 2016.

As an institution jointly established by universities in China and Bangladesh, the Confucius Institute at North South University is committed to serving as a bridge to promote collaboration and exchanges between educational institutions in both countries, particularly between YNU and NSU. This includes promoting the establishment of the China-South Asia Socio-Cultural Center, jointly hosting international academic conferences, facilitating teacher-student exchanges, and organizing summer camps.

**Interviewer:** What are your plans in your current role at the Confucius Institute?

**Ms. Ma:** In the future, I hope to elevate the quality of Chinese language teaching in Bangladesh and promote academic collaboration and cultural exchange between the two universities. Regarding Chinese language teaching, the CI at NSU aims to assist North South University in establishing an undergraduate major in Chinese Language and Culture, as well as offering more Chinese courses tailored to the demands and career plans of Bangladeshi students. In terms of academic collaboration and cultural exchange, the CI at NSU would like to promote the study of China in Bangladesh and South Asian studies in China, facilitating mutual visits and collaborations among scholars.

**Interviewer:** How do you see the future of academic collaboration between China and Bangladesh?

**Ms. Ma:** China and Bangladesh are good neighbors and trade partners. The two countries have close cooperation in various fields, such as politics, economy, and culture. An increasing number of experts and scholars from both countries are showing interest in each other. Given this context, academic collaboration between the two countries will become broader and more profound.

**Interviewer:** Given China's rich culinary heritage, what are some must-try dishes for foreigners, and which restaurants would you recommend for experiencing authentic Chinese cuisine in Dhaka?

**Ms. Ma:** China has a large land area, and the diet varies significantly between the north and the south, with each region having its own special dishes. Many foreigners enjoy Beijing Roast Duck, Kung Pao Chicken, Poached Sliced Beef in Hot Chili Oil, and Scrambled Eggs with Tomato. There are more and more Chinese restaurants in Dhaka. One I often visit is Dunhuang Lou, located on Road 11 in Banani. Another is Silk Road Posthouse, located in Anannya Shopping Complex, Baridhara DOHS, Dhaka.

**Interviewer:** What do you enjoy most about Bengali culture, and have you noticed any similarities between Bengali and Chinese cultures?

**Ms. Ma:** I enjoy Bengali food very much. For the first two months after I arrived in Bangladesh last year, I had Bengali food for every meal, especially polaw, kichuri, chicken bhuna, Rui fish, and naan.

I have found that both Bangladeshi and Chinese people place great importance on family and relationships. The happiness of one's family is often seen as a key factor in determining a person's success.

**Interviewer:** What advice would you give to foreign academics considering a move to Bangladesh?

**Ms. Ma:** The first and most important thing for foreign academics is to respect the Bangladeshi people and culture. Make an effort to learn about the history and at least some basic Bangla language, this will be very helpful in your interactions with local people and will facilitate your academic research and daily life.



## Meeting with Sasin School of Management, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand



On July 1, 2024, Mr. Quazi Tafsirul Islam, Senior Lecturer at the School of Business and Economics (SBE) and Coordinator at NSU Startup Next (NSUSN) at North South University (NSU), visited the Sasin School of Management at Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, a prestigious institution accredited by both the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the European Quality Improvement System (EQUIS).

During this visit, Mr. Islam engaged in a productive discussion with Dr. Piyachart Piromswad, Deputy Director of Learning Solutions at the institution, and his team to explore potential collaborations. The meeting focused on opportunities for joint initiatives such as student and faculty exchanges and research publications from both institutions.

"The outcome of this potential collaboration holds great promise for enriching students' academic journeys and advancing knowledge across disciplines," Mr. Islam stated after the meeting.

## NSU Delegation Visits SB Police Officials for Strategic Discussions

On July 28, 2024, key representatives from North South University (NSU) participated in a meeting with Superintendent of Police (SP) Jesmin Keka at the Special Branch (SB) Police Office in Malibagh. Dr. Samiksha Koirala, Director, and Ms. Samina Alam Miti, International Affairs Officer from the Office of External Affairs, along with the Directors of the Confucius Institute (CI), Dr. Mohammad Bulbul Ashraf Siddiqi and Ms. Ma Laoshi, were also present. The discussions covered a range of topics, including immigration issues, enhancing visa extension procedures for international students, regulations for non-degree students, and visa statuses for foreign faculty members to ensure compliance with local regulations.

During the meeting, SP Keka emphasized the importance of updating information on a centralized government platform, stating, "It is crucial to maintain accurate and up-to-date information on this platform to ensure effective monitoring of student statuses and streamline communication between the institution and regulatory bodies."

A noteworthy aspect of the meeting was the recognition of NSU's efforts by the Special Police Branch. SP Keka acknowledged and appreciated the university's proactive approach in supporting international students and faculty.



## Meeting with the British Council Regarding IELTS Scholarship



On August 28, 2024, a virtual meeting was convened between the British Council and North South University (NSU).



From the British Council team, Ms. Tahnee Yeasmin, Head of Business Development, and Ms. Sana Shahid, IELTS Trainer were present. Representatives from the Office of External Affairs (OEA), NSU included Dr. Samiksha Koirala, Director and Ms. Sadia Ayesha.

The meeting commenced with a warm introduction of the members followed by an extensive discussion on the "IELTS Scholarship Program" and the selection process. The meeting acknowledged the joint efforts of both parties in advancing the IELTS scholarship initiative, highlighting their continued commitment and collaboration.



# Office of External Affairs



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