A new opportunity on the horizon

ON the 5th of October a "Meet the Press" Iftar party was organized in the Presidency University campus to officially unveil the link-up between Presidency University, a leading private university in Bangladesh, and INTI International University College in Malaysia. INTI was founded in 1986 and quickly became one of the largest and most reputable institutions in Malaysia.

Presidency University is set to become an international partner institution of INTI. Accredited universities in the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand and Australia, numbering over 300 are already partners of INTI. It has gained international recognition for its quality educational programmes and high academic standards. To date, INTI has 8 campuses in Malaysia: the sprawling 82-acre Main Campus in Bandar Baru Nilai, Negeri Sembilan and five associate campuses in Selangor, Pahang, Penang, Sarawak and Sabah. INTI also operates three international campuses in China, Indonesia and Hong Kong. INTI students who wish to expand their international exposure can choose to transfer within this vast network.

The INTI model of education is different in that INTI itself does not offer any degrees. Rather, INTI's partner universities from UK and Australia bring their degree programs to INTI campuses where students can obtain British or Australian degrees studying in INTI campuses. Students from East Asian countries like Thailand, Malaysia and China face a lot of problems taking exams like TOEFL, SAT or GMAT because of the emphasis in English in these tests. The high cost of attending university in Western countries is also another problem. Taking these factors into consideration, INTI went to some foreign universities and asked them to outline the standard that they expect of students. Using the feedback, they designed a series of foundation courses designed to teach students the basics of what they need to know to be competent according to the Western education system. The other benefit that students receive is that tuition costs in Malaysia are one-fourth of what it is in most Western countries.

The advantage for students of Bangladesh is that instead of giving the SAT or TOEFL exams, they will have to do a one-year Foundation course after which they can transfer to an INTI campus in Malaysia. Since the cost of education in Malaysia is one-fourth of other foreign countries, financially weak students can also benefit from this endeavor. The annual cost of studying in Malaysia is $6000. Additionally, if they choose to, students can transfer to an INTI partner university in the UK or the USA. Universities in USA or Canada, numbering over 265, offer only transfer programs in INTI campuses. Students enroll into an American or Canadian university degree program in an INTI campus, and then transfer their credits to the USA or Canada at a convenient stage and obtain their degrees while residing in the US or Canada. The National Accreditation Board (LAN), Malaysia accredits all degree programs, transfer programs, certificate programs and diploma programs. INTI standards are higher than the international standard because they have to satisfy the quality requirements of American, British and Asian universities.



Kazi Sarmad Karim

Apart from cost savings another advantage INTI offers is: Admission to a degree program of a partner university. Instead of having to take exams like TOEFL, IELTS, SAT and A-levels, INTI offers Foundation Programs that prepare students for degree programs in any field of study in INTI's partner institutions. Good grades in the Foundation Program ensures acceptance and opens up opportunities worldwide. The Foundation Programs are of one-year duration and costs are very favorable when compared to the cost of obtaining an A-level, IELTS, TOEFL or SAT degree. Students who have five O-levels with at least a C grade, 60% score in the S.S.C exam or 50% score in the H.S.C exam are eligible for enrollment into the Foundation Programs.

The Vice Chancellor of Presidency University Prof. Harunur Rashid was present on the occasion and spoke to the journalists present. He said that this affiliation occurred due to two reasons, firstly because INTI was looking for partners to enter the Bangladeshi education sector, and secondly because Presidency University was looking to diversify. He stated that though initially students would have to go to Malaysia and then transfer to a partner institution of INTI, eventually he hoped that by providing high quality students Presidency would be elevated on par with other partner institutions so that students, after completing 1 year Foundation courses in Bangladesh, can transfer directly to UK. He further stated that this Spring semester the INTI program would start at Presidency on a low profile as INTI had to train examiners to meet British and North American standards, and then in Summer 2007 the program would start at a more high profile level.

Last week, a seven-member team from Presidency University comprising of Department Heads went to Malaysia on a fact finding and training mission. One of the team members, Assistant Professor Shibli Khan was very optimistic about this affiliation and said "Presidency University will soon become one of the premier education institutions in Asia due to the affiliation with INTI".