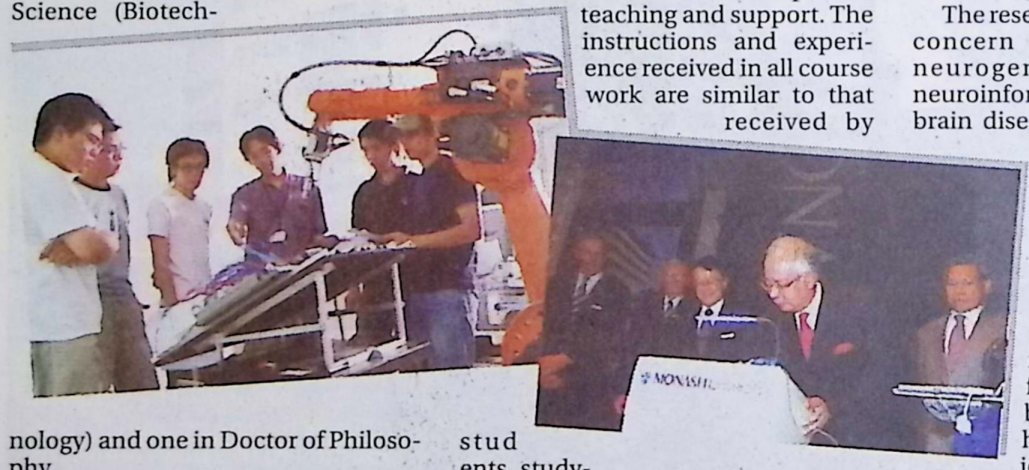
The Sunway campus of Monash University offers various degrees through five academic schools - School of Arts and Sciences, School of Business, School of Engineering, School of Information Technology and School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The Sunway campus is a diverse, multicultural institution. Out of the 3500 students in this campus 1000 are foreign students from various countries in Asia. There are about 40 Bangladeshi students at the Monash Campus, 25 of which are in studying in the Bachelor of Commerce and Management discipline, 12 in Bachelor of Engineering, one in Bachelor of Communication, one in Bachelor of Science (Biotechnology) and one in Doctor of Philosophy.



One of the Bangladeshi students who recently joined the Monash family is Nashit Arafat who is a first year student of Engineering. Nashit has given his O and A Level examinations from the Bangladesh International School in Saudi Arabia.

Nashit had always wanted to study engineering. When he could not get into BUET he got into AIUB and did one semester there. "I joined Monash mainly because it gives you an international certificate at a minimum fee," says Nashit, "in Australia the tuition fees are much higher than here and so are the living costs. Also being a Muslim I don't have any problems eating in this country, everything is halal."

Nashit, whose parents are in Saudi and a sibling in Bangladesh, says that his experience at Monash has been amazing. "The professors here actually explain to you what you're doing as an engineer. The teaching style is really amazing and the teachers are very helpful," says Nashit, "we have tutorial classes every week where we can do more practical work."

Nashit is currently staying at the Monash Hostel, which is a walking distance from the campus, but there are also shuttle bus services to and back. "In the beginning it was a bit difficult to become familiar with the place and the people," says Nashit, "but now I have made a lot of friends and am very comfortable here."

As one of the eight Monash campuses, the Sunway campus is subject to Monash University for all matters related to academic development, teaching and support. The instructions and experience received in all course work are similar to that received by students studying in Australia. The degrees awarded to the graduates are the same throughout all its eight campuses.

The Sunway campus has research strengths in biotechnology, medicine and health, economic and business modelling, Islamic banking, electronic test technology and agribusiness. The new campus is a paradise for research students with state-of-the-art research facilities (having received the Research and Development Excellence Award for private institutions of higher learning from the ministry of Higher Education in 2003), internationally recognised medical school and trainers with comprehensive international exposure.

Mapping the Human Brain

Professor Ishwar Parhar is the Director of Research of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and has done extensive research work first at the Rockefeller University in New York and then as the former Director of the Molecular Neuroendocrinology Unit of the Nippon Medical School in Japan. He has now returned to his home in Malaysia after spending 30 years abroad and set up his own brain research centre at Monash where among other things he is studying the brain of tilapia fish to have a better understanding of the human brain.

"Most brain related problems like depression and Alzheimer's have their origins probably very early in life," says Parhar talking about his findings, "maybe even while we are in our mother's womb."

The research works he will focus on concern genomics, behavioural neurogenetics, nanomedicine, neuroinformatics, brain imaging and brain diseases. "What we're looking for is some of the markers that can help us identify how neurons travel," says Parhar, "you don't need to train the female fish to take care of its babies. You don't train the male to make a nest. But the male makes the nest and the female takes care of the babies. We want to find out how these parental behaviours are regulated."

"We use nanotechnology for two things one to deliver drugs into the brain, and another to regenerate neurons." His research work may one day help revive a paralysed limb using nano techniques to regrow neurons in the right direction. At Monash there already is a huge neurogenomics lab and Professor Parhar is also setting up a neuroinformatics centre.

Bridging The Digital Divide

Gil-Soo Han, Associate Professor & Head of Arts at Monash University, Malaysia is currently working on a project to bridge the huge gap that exists in ICT between urban and rural Malaysia, which holds great relevance for Bangladesh and many Southeast Asian countries.

According to Han as rural population make significant contribution to the nation particularly in developing countries like Bangladesh,