From Mississippi to Ganges

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TO many of you who are not entirely familiar with American literature, the name Samuel Langhorne Clemens will not strike you as much as the pen-name Mark Twain will. Samuel Langhorne reincarnated as Mark Twain and is much celebrated today because of his creations, *"The Adventures of Tom Sawyer"* and *"The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn"*. Through this sequel and many other great works of literature, he conveyed a moralistic message to his young readers. Despite the fact that he used keen wit and sharp satire, he spoke strongly about slavery, capitalism, materialism and all other stimulating factors of transformation that led to the creation of the America we see today.



With this notion in mind, the English Department of the Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB) in collaboration with The American Centre organised a conference aptly titled "Revisiting Mississippi: The Adventures of Mark Twain", which focused on the in-depth analysis of Mark Twain's works and how they are read and interpreted by the readers in Bangladesh. The programme was divided into two sections with the first one highlighting "Reading and Re-reading Mark Twain" while the second incorporated a more mind-boggling theme titled "Mark Twain in Bengal". Both the sessions had question and answer rounds, which were made lively and interesting with the co-operation and participation of the audience.

The Vice-Chancellor of IUB, Professor Bazlul M Chowdhury, the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor M. Omar Rahman, and the Director of the School of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Professor Nazrul Islam graced the occasion. Dr. Razia Sultana Khan, Head of the Department of English, and the Director of the American Cultural Center, Ms. Lauren Lovelace, spoke on the occasion. Alongside them, other distinguished professors and faculty members from different universities were also present at the conference as speakers and guests.

The keynote paper was presented by Dr. Fakrul Alam from the English Department of Dhaka University. He began with the following quotations from Hemingway and Faulkner on Mark Twain - "All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*" (Hemingway)