

# Private Universities: Successes and Challenges

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On August 3, vice-chancellors of several renowned private universities along with the chairman of the University Grants Commission were present for a roundtable emphasising on the "Successes of and Challenges before Private Universities," hosted by Mahfuz Anam, editor and publisher of The Daily Star.

The discussants talked about how private universities have been constantly scrutinised despite their strong establishment in the country in the early 1990s. These institutions are often mistakenly regarded as a higher education choice for the affluent, whereas the reality is: a good number of students from the middle and bottom tier of the financial pyramid are also enrolled here, speakers said. Private universities have also contributed to the economy by reducing the number of students opting for higher education abroad.

Despite such favourable outcomes, their image has been further tarnished due to the current issue of militancy. VC of North South University, Professor Atiqul Islam, said that his university is taking all the preventive measures to tackle further deterioration of the situation. NSU has drawn harsh scrutiny as some of the ter-

rorists involved in the recent attacks had been former students of the institution.

Highlighting NSU's success, Professor Islam talked about zero unemployment among its graduates and the recent research arrangements with NASA and Johns Hopkins University which he hoped

ulum that is on par globally for the success.

Professor Syed Saad Andaleeb, VC of BRAC University, talked about value addition and also focused on how these institutes were producing a driven and skilful set of future employees. "The general



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would bring in gains for the country.

"Private universities are no longer a mere back-up plan for those who fail to get admission in public universities," said Professor M. Omar Rahman, VC of Independent University, Bangladesh. He said, "We must be offering something that makes these institutions an attractive first choice." He credited a competent team of faculties, good infrastructure, and a curric-

education courses that are being offered equip students with all the core competencies that the job market demands," he said.

Building on which, Professor Imran Rahman, VC of University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, talked about their provision of co-curricular activities that equip students with soft skills that are not taught in classrooms and also the diverse teaching

body.

As a challenge, he pointed out, they receive no form of capital or financial aid from the government but must go through a difficult bureaucratic process even when they try to make curricular changes.

The VC of United International University, Professor Mohammad Rezwana Khan pointed out the delicate matter that, despite being non-profit establishments, private universities have to pay 15 percent tax which, he suggested could have been directed towards research and development instead. About the state of affairs of students, he said, "The rise in undeserving GPA 5's disrupts and dilutes the uniformity, as it makes it hard for us to distinguish between a student who is ready for university-level education and one who isn't. We have to go back and start from scratch."

Mahfuz Anam concluded the session by saying that private universities are here to stay, and should be given the credit and recognition they deserve. He emphasised on the need for collaboration among private universities – as proposed by Dr. Carmen Z Lamagna, VC of American International University Bangladesh – to work as a unit, utilising each other's resources to thrive and tackle all the challenges.

# BRAC University Football League Comes To a Close

SAMIUL HASAN

This year's BRAC University Football League, powered by Ahmed Group, and partnered by The Daily Star, Madchef, Somoy News, was inaugurated on July 15 at the BUET field. The tournament came to a close on July 30, 2016 with a thrilling finale with BRAC University Photography Club clinching the title of champions after a tiebreaker with the consequent runners-up BRAC University Film Club.

The showpiece event of the calendar saw the competing clubs arranged into two groups of six and proceed in a Round Robin format for the group stages. The participants of Group A were Drama and Theatre Forum (DTF), Cultural Club (BUCuC), Indoor Games Club (IGC), Entrepreneurship Development Forum (EDF), MONON, and Cricket BRAC University. Meanwhile, Law Society (BULS), BizBee, Photography Club (BUPC), Adventure Club (BUAC), Art Society, and Film Club (BUFC) completed Group B.

After a tumultuous run of results, the top four teams from each group proceeded to the knockout rounds. Despite their best efforts, MONON and IGC missed out from their groups. Meanwhile,

it was heartbreak for Art Society and Adventure Club as their last-ditch attempts to qualify were futile. Meanwhile, Film Club and Cricket BRAC University pulled off a miracle escape

major upset. In the next match, the vast experience and strong nerves of Tanvir Arefin under the BUPC goalposts helped them to outshoot EDF in the tiebreaker and move on to the semifinals. In the next



from the verge of relegation.

The knockout phase began on July 29. Team BUFC held off favourites DTF to a tiebreaker where their keeper Sami's heroics took them to the next round in a

two matches, BUCuC and BULS won the matches against BizBee and CBU respectively.

Next up, BUFC met BUCuC in the first semifinal for another BUFL "El Clasico".

The early lead of BUFC was cancelled by a late BUCuC equalizer and the match went to penalties. Keeper Sami (BUFC) proved to be the hero again as he took his team to the finals. In the next match, BUPC met BULS again for the remaining spot in the finals, in the end, BUPC exacted revenge for their earlier drubbing at the hands of BULS as they prevailed in the penalty shootout courtesy of goalkeeper Tanvir.

Two unlikely teams defied all odds to take their rightful places at the final stage of the tournament. An intense match saw BUFC taking the lead through a well-taken goal from

Saadman. However, an inspired BUPC comeback culminated with a beautiful goal from Rubab. The pressure was on as two tiebreaker heroes Sami and Tanvir faced off for the final glory. It was drama till the very end as Tanvir (BUPC) made a crucial stop and Rumi scored the winning penalty to hand BUPC their very first BUFL title.

The prize giving ceremony of BUFL was graced by the presence of Minhaj Ahmed, Director of Ahmed Food Products, Amit Hassan, Coach of BRAC University Football Team, and Mirza Maruf, former player of BRAC University Football Team.