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## BIOTECHNOLOGY: FOR THE FUTURE

RASMIA RAHMAN AMREEN

The National Institute of Biotechnology and the Ministry of Science and Technology jointly organised the first National Biotechnology Fair in Bangladesh, from September 7 to 8, 2018, at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Novo Theatre, Dhaka.

Various government research organisations, life-science departments of both public and private universities, biotech based companies and concerns, and research laboratories participated and set up stalls displaying a promising future for Bangladesh in the fields of genetic engineering, biochemistry and molecular biology, microbiology and of course,

biotechnology.

Nahida Sultana, Scientific Officer at the Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, describes how plant mutation can help from losing billions of takas by stimulating early paddy cultivation so that when natural disasters strike, such as flooding or unpredictable weather, the crops are not damaged. "As we are an agriculture based country, the use of biotechnology to modify the biological structure of our agricultural plants can bring about a fantastic revolution," she adds.

Dr Nazneen Naher Islam, Associate Professor of the Department of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, Chittagong University, mentions that as many as 23 research

papers from her department have been published in world renowned research journals.

"We've started using biotechnology as tools for creating life saving solutions to illnesses like chikungunya and thalassemia."

According to ESCO Corporation, a leading designer and manufacturer of highly engineered biotech equipment also participated at the fair.

"Our company didn't want to let go of this exclusive chance," shares Shehrin Monjur, a Senior Executive at ESCO. "Better connections between industry and biotech based institutes will help merge better research labs in the country."

The Novo Theatre premises drew the attention of nearly 500 scientists, 800 officials and 400

entrepreneurs related to the field of biotechnology over the course of two days. Also, the event intended to play a major role by drawing the youth of our country towards this booming and promising field of biotechnology, which indeed worked, as thousands of school and college students were seen taking a stroll through the fair, stopping and examining the projects on display with curious eyes.

Dr Anan Mannan, Assistant Professor, Department of Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, University of Chittagong, explains how a Forbes magazine research finding stated that the biotechnology sector is amongst the top ten business sectors in the near future. "If that's the case, then

advancement of Bangladesh's biotech sector would bring about a revolutionary change within the country, similar to what the ICT division has done."

The National Biotechnology Fair served the purpose of creating awareness about this new sector to the general mass, connecting and helping to collaborate between industries and universities besides highlighting and impacting the government policy to patronise Bangladesh's biotech sector. However, most importantly, it was the students who were benefited the most—out of thousands, a lot many left the fair with a better vision on Biotechnology and maybe even a new dream of becoming a biotech expert.

## BYLCx Revamped: 25 new online courses launched

SADI MOHAMMAD SHAHNEWAZ

With an objective to future-proof the next generation of workers in a rapidly changing market, BYLCx unveiled its revamped website at a launch event which took place in Lakeshore Hotel on September 5. "Drawing on our 10 years of teaching leadership, BYLCx was launched to make our existing courses widely accessible to youth from all corners of Bangladesh," said Ejaz Ahmed, the founder and President of BYLC.

The Academy, which has already provided comprehensive leadership training to over 4000 individuals through the Prime Minister's A2i (Access to Information) program has made



PHOTOS: SHANTO LAWRENCE COSTA

these courses available countrywide to meet industry demands. "Our revamped website is free for access at the moment, and with a reasonable internet connection, it will load



within 3 seconds," said Khaled Saifullah, the Product Manager of BYLCx. He also mentioned that Premium users of BYLCx will have access to offline mentoring from BYLC instructors. A series of subsequent courses on innovation and design thinking, entrepreneurship, data science, business analytics, financial management and digital marketing is also planned for launch.

Bangladesh Youth Leadership Center (BYLC) is the first leadership institute in Bangladesh, and it exists to build connections among the youth from diverse backgrounds, equip them with leadership skills, and enable them to have impact in the job and entrepreneurship market in the country.

## In remembrance of Chester Bennington

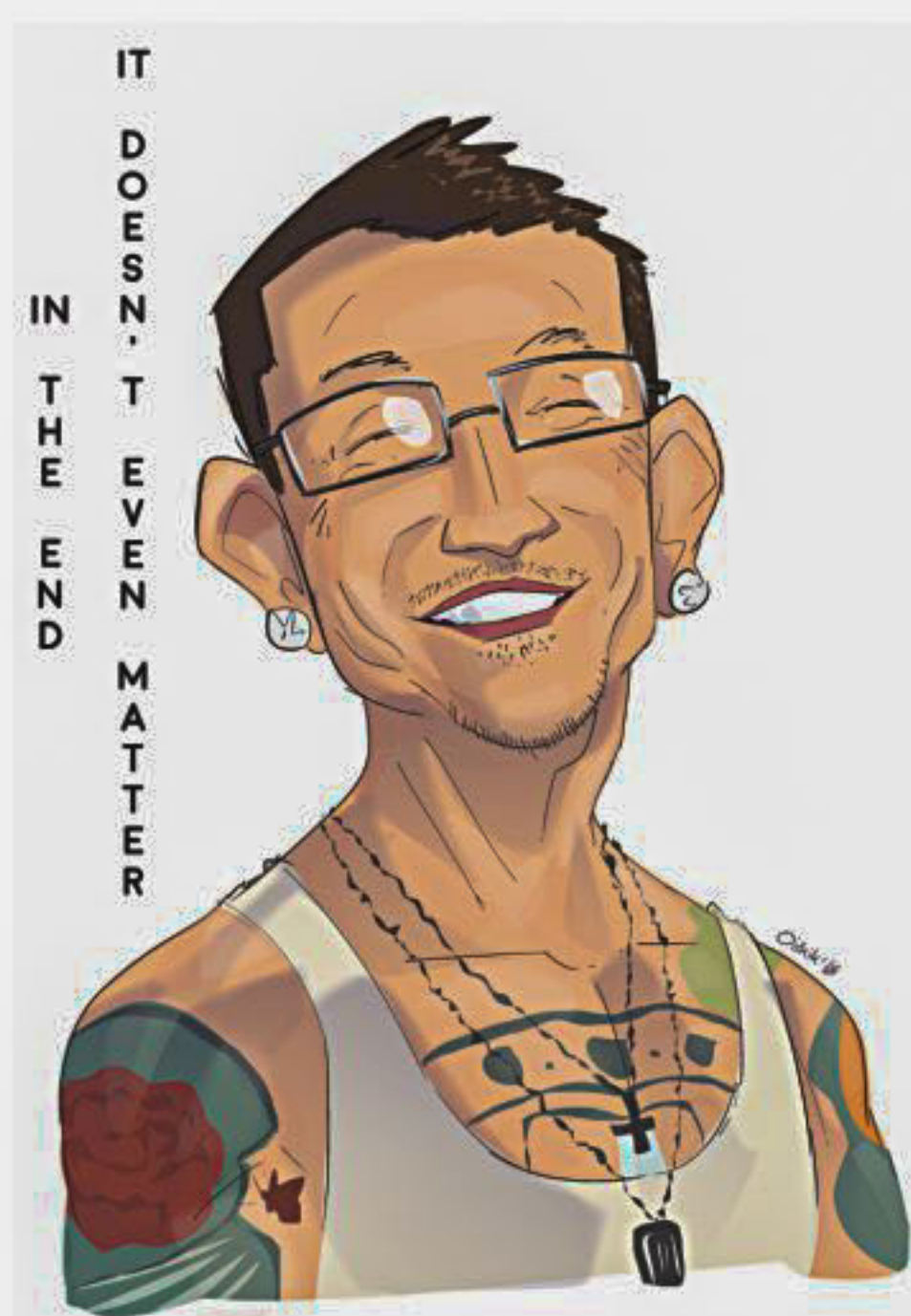


ILLUSTRATION: OISHIK JAWAD

*The news of Chester Bennington's death seemed to me like any other baseless rumour orchestrated by the media. I remember surfing through tweets of different media outlets, struggling to fight back tears before it hit me that he was really gone.*

FARJANA AHMED ANNAN

I have been battling chronic depression for years. I did not grow up in what you could describe as a 'picture-perfect' family. I hated seeing my mother weeping behind a half-closed door. I was not what they would call an 'ideal daughter' or 'conventionally beautiful,' so I had to compensate that through good grades. Many times, I ran to my room, locked the door, curled up in my bed and would cry silently after an argument with my relatives. In those difficult times, I would grab my headphones and play Linkin Park tracks, which worked like a soothing ointment on my invisible wounds. Those songs always stood strong as a shield for me. Those words helped me to believe that it does not matter if anyone understands me and my struggles, the only thing that matters the most is how I accept myself just the

way I am. To this day, Linkin Park songs inspire me to move forward, embrace all of my frustrations, anger and pain and manage my suicidal tendencies. They have the power to work in the place of a therapist.

It has been more than a year since Chester's death and I still have not mastered the art of holding back my tears while listening to Linkin Park songs; I am not sure how long it will take for me to cope up. Today, whenever I feel like giving up, I look at the amazing musical legacy Chester has left behind and how, if I give in to my own demons, people who care about me will go through the same maddening pain I did upon realising Chester took his own life. Chester taught us that life will always be harsh, yet fighting against it and making our dreams come true is what we must aim for. In the end, he mattered; his music mattered.

## A school for 21st Century Skills

The term 21st century skills refers to a broad set of knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits that are believed by educators, school reformers, college professors, employers, and others to be critically important for success in today's world, particularly in collegiate programmes and contemporary careers and workplaces.

CIDER International School is an English medium institution in Chittagong that offers both Cambridge and National Curriculum in English. The school has a clear vision and mission framed by its management and provides a well-balanced approach of academic and extracurricular activities. Having one of the largest playgrounds in the city and its top-class infrastructure, CIDER has not only produced wonderful results in the academic arena but also has provided platforms to students to showcase their talents in other areas as well. With the motto, "Every child is special and unique," CIDER believes in establishing a transparent relationship with parents, students, teachers and everyone associated with the school in planning and preparing for its growth. The management of CIDER understands that leadership is about the art of motivating, influencing and directing people so that they work together to achieve the goals of a team. Thus, the school is committed to pursue a broad set



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of outcomes for all its students that enable them to realise their full potential. It has a practicing student council both in the senior and junior sections, where students are elected as Head Boys, Head Girls, Sports Captains and House Captains to lead their respective areas. These activities require going beyond a narrow set of academic outcomes and redefining stu-

dent success to include a range of academic and non-academic knowledge that young people need to become modern leaders who will address the challenges of tomorrow. Overall CIDER is committed towards the holistic growth of its students. The school can be followed on social media and can be reached on www.cisbd.org.