



PHOTO: COLLECTED

THE HOPE OF A SUSTAINABLE GREEN BANGLADESH

YOUTH DESK

Worldwide, climate change is destroying livelihoods, infrastructure, and communities, forcing people from their homes and towns. Whereas, Bangladesh is exceptionally vulnerable to climate change, its low elevation, high population density, and inadequate infrastructure further jeopardize the situation. Add to that, an economy that is heavily reliant on farming only feeds the raging fire.

Because of Bangladesh's natural susceptibility to extreme weather, the locals always have used migration as a coping strategy. However, as conditions intensify under climate change, more people are being chased away from their homes and land, fighting for survival by more frequent and severe hazards such as rise in sea level, storms, cyclones, drought, erosion, landslides, flooding, etc.

A climate crisis is a water crisis that threatens critical water supplies and services for the

world's most vulnerable people. Bangladesh stands on the frontline of climate change, and places like Shyamnagar, Gabura, Assasuni (coastal regions), and Tahirpur (wetlands) suffer from severe water, sanitation, and hygiene crisis, where the impacts are real and measurable and hundreds of stories exist like Reshma, a visually impaired woman who could hear the super cyclone Amphan that made landfall in 2020 destroy everything she once held dear to, or Kohinoor and Rozina who works tirelessly at local shrimp farms to support their husband while facing the gender pay gap and are responsible to fetch water miles away meanwhile also maintain household including children every day. These stories only portray the fact that the ones suffering most from the crisis are not the ones causing it.

The 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) was held from October 31 to November 12, 2021. Being the

largest global climate summit, Bangladesh had an all-time high stake in it as less developed countries like Bangladesh suffers the worst from the problem mostly contributed by the developed countries. The covid-19 pandemic has put additional strain on climate-vulnerable countries. The pandemic is considered to have increased inequality not only within countries but also among the countries. Therefore, without enhanced finance, countries like Bangladesh will struggle to recover from the fallout of the pandemic and build a better economy.

Hence, several nonprofit organizations, especially WaterAid, an international leading water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) charity, operating in Bangladesh to counteract this issue with intention of contributing towards achieving universal access to WASH by 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Each of WaterAid Bangladesh's programmes - Urban, Rural, Climate Change, and Influencing & Enabling are working to contribute

most effectively towards the strategic objectives given their distinctive contexts. With three goals (clean water, proper sanitation, and good hygiene) and one team, they are active in the complex and diverse urban environment through projects that bring safe water and improved sanitation and promote hygiene behaviour for lasting change; working with City Corporations and service providers to expand public services to reach slums in cities; running projects that are intervening in schools to promote WASH for a better learning environment.

Furthermore, ensuring inclusive and sustainable WASH services in rural households, healthcare facilities, and schools for the most vulnerable and excluded communities in remote rural areas, including tea gardens, hill tracts, and char and haor areas, and help everyone around live happy and healthy lives everywhere with the hope of a sustainable green Bangladesh.

Global professional certification in engineering now at fingertips

MD MIZANUR RAHMAN HIMADRI

Construction engineers in Bangladesh can now appear in global professional certification exams without flying abroad.

The registration is already open for the Certified Welding Inspector (CWI) exam, set for December 20 and 21, as the test organiser American Welding Society (AWS) has expanded its footprint to Bangladesh.

This will be a sustainable journey, initiated by AWS, the most trusted global authority in this field, to enable thousands of engineering graduates and diplomas to be globally certified staying in Bangladesh, said Mohammad Tanvir Hossain, CEO, and MD of engineering solutions company Reactron, the local facilitator of the exam.

Previously, students used to fly abroad to pursue training in the subject and then appear in the exam. Since most engineering graduates are job holders, they could hardly manage a couple of months off their work or afford the cost to stay out of the country for this purpose. Consequently, they were deprived of their deserved promotions and progress in many aspects of their professional life, he added.

Since the infrastructural development in Bangladesh is reaching a new dimension, this certification will help many engineers and welders to apply for quality assurance and quality control jobs at the mega-projects such as the Padma Bridge construction. The huge demand for these certifications can be readily understood as even foreign professionals working in Bangladesh are registering for the course, he further said.

GUIDES

5 things to consider before choosing your university major

MORMEE MAHTAB

Choosing a university major can be daunting, especially when you are surrounded by unsolicited advice on what you should study, the peer pressure of applying to a popular programme, and the uncertainty around your own choices.

A little research and introspection can help you make an informed decision and extensively abate the pressure. Here are five things to consider before choosing a university major.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

Before you apply for your degree, it is important that you have a dialogue with yourself about what are the things that you enjoy doing. If you are passionate about something, ask yourself if you would be happy studying it for the next few years. In case you don't know that, ask yourself what skills you would you like to develop over the years and couple it with your strengths and weakness to select a major.

SKILLSETS

Learning about a particular major includes having a basic idea about the kind of skills the subject will offer you. You can talk to experts who have built a career on that field. Along with that you can read articles, watch YouTube videos, do a crash course on the internet to know more about facets of the major. Research helps you narrow your choices down.

FUTURE EMPLOYABILITY QUOTIENT

Look for job prospects that the major provides and ask yourself if it aligns with your future goals and priorities. Even if you are unsure about your future career goals, you can follow an inductive method and know about the career options that your area of interest could lead to. At times, having a particular

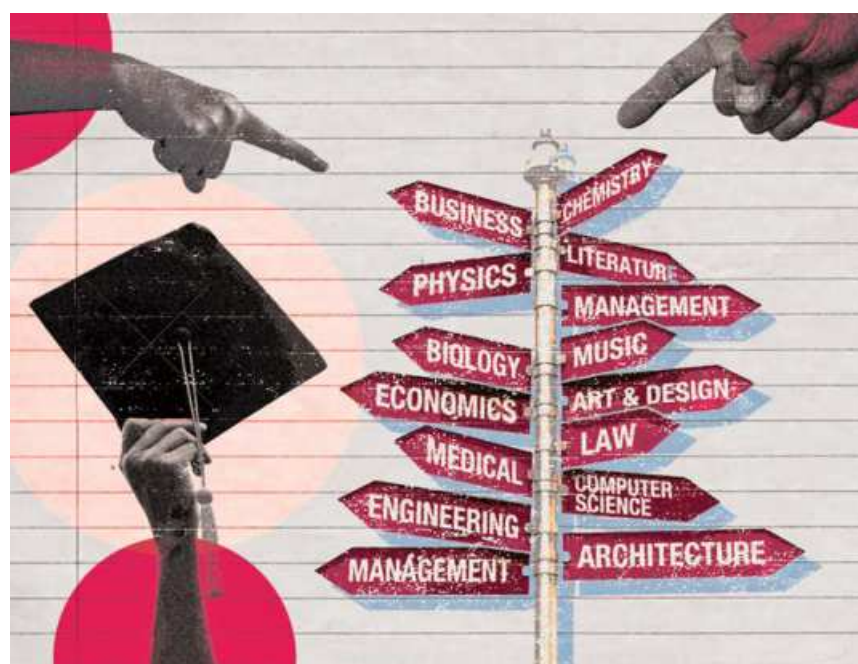


ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

degree opens up doors to job opportunities to more than one sector.

AVAILABLE PROGRAMMES AND CURRICULUM

Besides all the above points, you also have to consider the programmes available around you. In that case, you can either go to the website of the university of your Interest or collect a brochure from their office. Websites contain admission details along with course outlines. Moreover, talking to a few students currently pursuing the major that interests you could help you assess the quality of education and the academic opportunities that the programme offers.

AFFORDABILITY

Affordability is a huge factor to consider. As you are investing both time

and money into building a future, it is important that you choose a major that optimally benefits you. Learn about the tuition fees and make a comparative analysis of alternative choices. Inquiring about scholarships and tuition waivers can also play a huge part in making the right decision.

Undergraduate programmes are broad, and gives you a chance to build a foundation and learn further about your potential areas of interest. If you have some ideas about the career you want to build, go for a major that points towards that direction. And if you like making lists like me, jot down the pros and cons from the information you already have.

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NURTURING DREAMS

Prapty's earnest mission to popularise programming among children

SHANIZ CHOWDHURY

Ministry of Codes is a laudable initiative founded by Prapty Rahman with the aim to impart knowledge about science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education, especially programming and robotics, among children. It offers a wide range of products, like STEM toys, tutorials, and classes, depending on age groups.

This year, Prapty was named one of the nine Global Shapers, which is a community by the World Economic Forum that recognises talented individuals working in diverse fields, ranging from art and engineering, to climate change, human rights and animal conservation.

"When I was a first-year student back in 2019, I participated in the Bangabandhu Innovation Grant competition. For this, I developed the app Doctor AI, which detects skin diseases using artificial intelligence and a smartphone camera. When I received the grant for it, it made me confident to transform my other ideas into tangible actions," shared Prapty.

On April 24 last year, over a month after lockdown started in Bangladesh, she opened her YouTube channel and Facebook page, "Ministry of Codes". She started with C programming tutorials, which were all in Bangla because she believes that learning something in one's mother language is crucial. Prapty aspires to encourage young kids to use their skills in programming and robotics for practical scenarios, when they pursue their dreams.

She and her team created a STEM robot called KITTY, which can help kids to perform activities based on their basic knowledge of coding using visual programming language. Ministry of Codes has run many campaigns in different institutions, focusing on primary school children.

"Usually, a kid's learning capacity is wider than an adult's. This is why I want to instill confidence and knowledge among them from a very young age. My motto is to promote "learning by doing" so people can understand the practical implications of what they are taught. When I was younger, I did not have the ability to express myself or think outside the box.



Prapty Rahman.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Thankfully, studying engineering made me a creative thinker because I was using my learnings in real life," said Prapty, who is currently in her final year at Daffodil International University, studying Computer Science and Engineering.

She received the BASIS National ICT Award for her work with Ministry of Codes.

She is currently writing a book about programming for kids, which will be out in next year's Ekushey Boi Mela.

"In the near future, I want Ministry of Codes to be available to underprivileged kids who don't have access to education as well as everyone else from the older generations," she added. For her graduate programme, Prapty plans to go abroad. "Many foreign countries have advanced in the education sector. I want to utilise their tools to teach kids, in the context of our country. I want to inspire every child to innovate without boundaries," she concluded.

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