



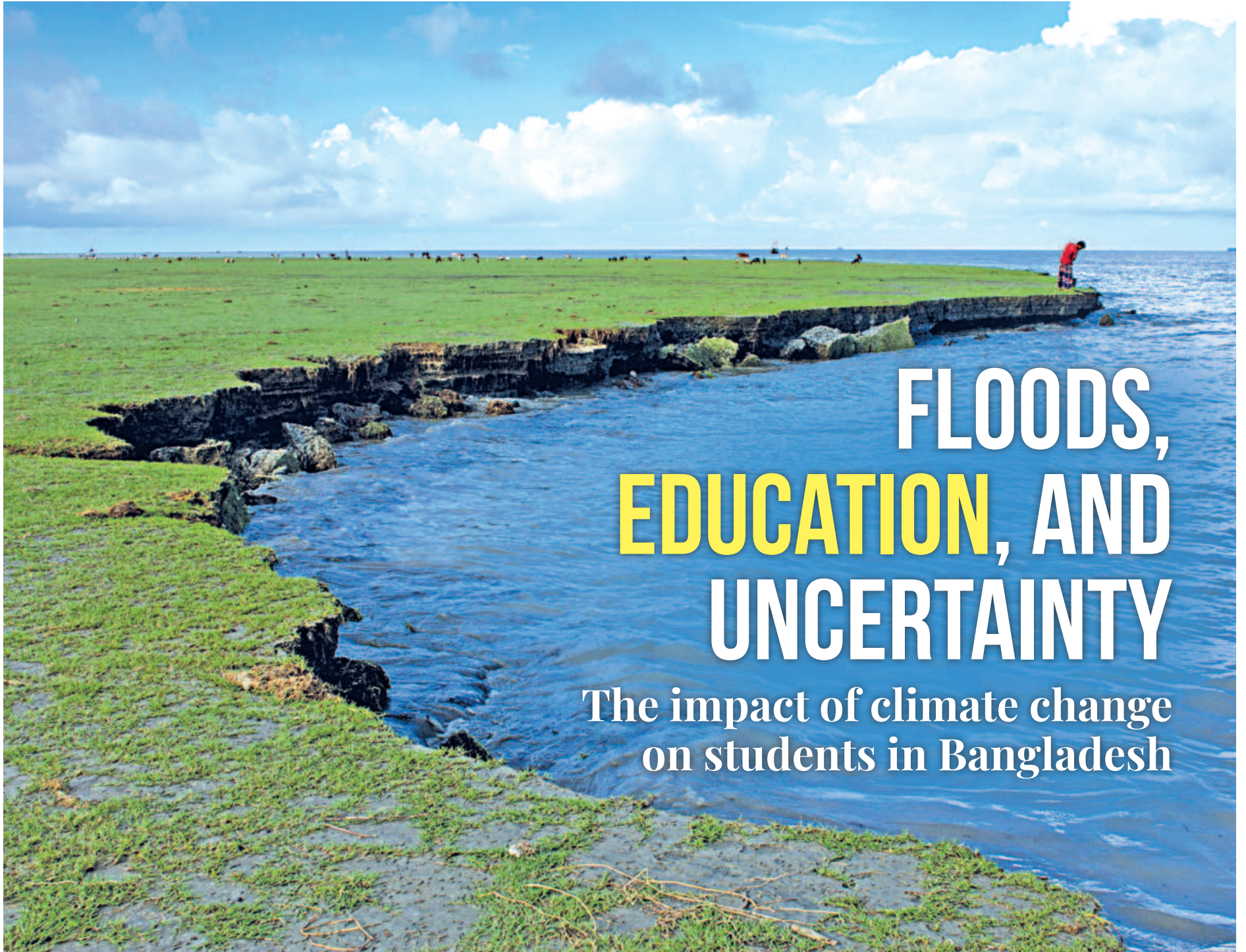
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FLOODS, EDUCATION, AND UNCERTAINTY

The impact of climate change on students in Bangladesh

PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL



Digital Campaign 2024 Season-21

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GAMES

DRAGON BALL: SPARKING! ZERO

A dream come true for Dragon Ball fans

SABIL SADAT ZAHIR

Any *Dragon Ball* fan who was lucky enough to own a PlayStation 2 in the 2000s probably holds a deep nostalgia for the *Budokai* and *Budokai Tenkaichi* series. I remember coming home from school and diving into these games, losing myself in them for the entire afternoon. I was not particularly skilled at these games, but I spent countless joyful hours having epic fights and playing as my favourite characters. And now, as I come home from work to play *DRAGON BALL: Sparking! ZERO*, I feel like I am being swept back to those simpler times.

The game is, in every sense, an enhanced version of the acclaimed *Dragon Ball Z: Budokai Tenkaichi 3*. The game faithfully adapts the power scaling from the manga and anime, so it's intentionally unbalanced. However, that does not mean that simply playing as the canonically strongest characters makes it an easy game. Winning matches, especially in parts of the story mode and in ranked multiplayer, requires a solid understanding of the mechanics and a decent level of skill. But, even as someone not very skilled at fighting games, I found the mechanics of this game much easier to grasp and practise than most other fighting games. The game's story mode centres around



specific characters, with each character's narrative being further divided into distinct sagas. The "What If" scenarios or "Sparking! Episodes" are the best part of the story mode, as you can diverge from the canon story throughout various points and experience some really fun alternative scenarios.

The game has its flaws, particularly in the presentation of the story mode. It fast-forwards through many events, making it a very condensed version of the original narrative. Another significant issue is the

limited local split-screen co-op. Moreover, while the "Custom Battle" mode allows players to create their own *Dragon Ball* fights and storylines, the customisation options are quite limited.

Nonetheless, *DRAGON BALL: Sparking! ZERO* might be the best *Dragon Ball* game ever made. You can tell that the developers put a lot of passion into the game, as it feels like it was made by *Dragon Ball* fans for *Dragon Ball* fans. While it certainly has some issues, with further updates and expansions, the road only looks bright.



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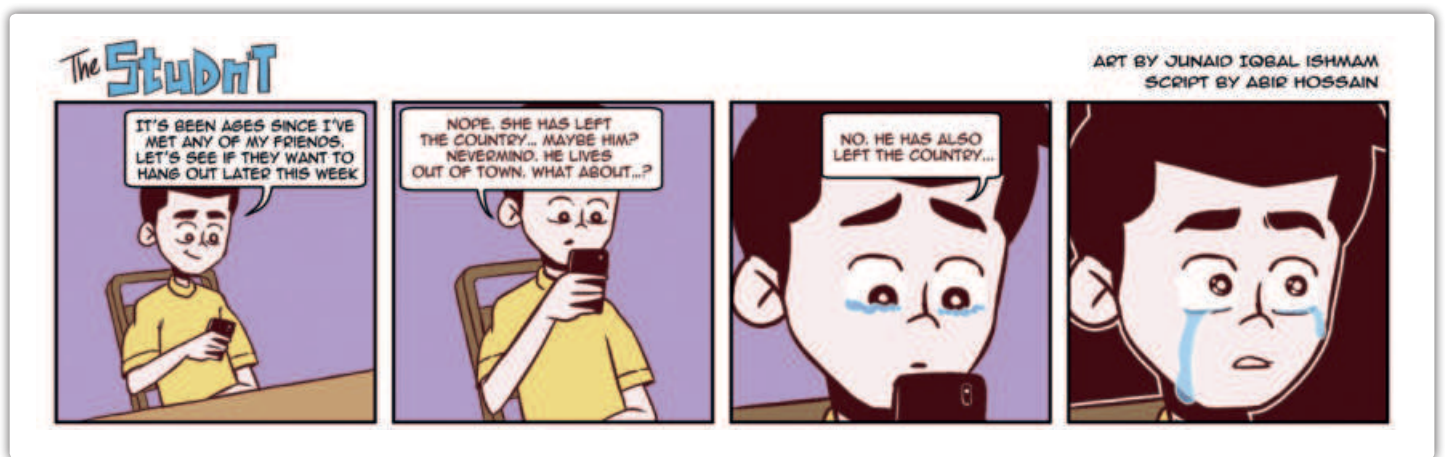
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EDUCATION

FLOODS, EDUCATION, AND UNCERTAINTY

The impact of climate change on students in Bangladesh

FARIHA LAMISA

As climate change intensifies, Bangladesh faces heightened vulnerability due to its tropical environment, geographic location, and the unchecked pressures of a capitalistic economy. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), by 2050, almost a million people may be displaced in southern Bangladesh due to rising sea levels. Record-breaking heat waves and frequent flash floods continuously occur as a premonition of the impending disaster. Consequently, every sector of Bangladesh and its people's lives are being hampered due to the climate catastrophe. Education is one such sector that is struggling to cope with climate change.

In August this year, parts of the country were devastated by floods; Sylhet was one such region. As was to be expected, this had a detrimental impact on students as commuting to school became almost impossible and classes were suspended.

Md Zawad Nafi, a student from Murari Chand College, Sylhet, recounts the difficulties he faced while attending classes during the floods, "During the floods, our college remained open, but due to low attendance, classes were unofficially suspended. It was very difficult for students to commute to and from their colleges during this time as – because of the heavy rainfall – most of the roads went underwater."

The floods had a more severe impact on students who were supposed to sit for their public examinations, such as the HSC examinations. Nafila Firuz, a recent HSC graduate from Chhatak Degree Government College, Sunamganj, was one of the many HSC candidates whose exams were halted during the floods.



From left to right: Children eat snacks while sitting on a concrete shelf as they take shelter in a madrasa amid severe flooding in the Fazilpur area of Feni. A child wearing a life jacket swims through flood water after collecting relief materials in Feni. A man carries his granddaughter on his back while wading through flood water in the Fazilpur area of Feni. Flood affected people take shelter inside a school building in Daganbhuiyan in Feni. PHOTOS: AFP & REUTERS

"It was a very stressful situation for me and other HSC candidates because we could neither study properly nor attend the exams due to the flood," says Nafila. "Everyone had to use boats to commute from one place to another. Also, everyone was worried since we weren't sure whether or not the exams were going to take place. On top of all that, there were a lot of fake news stories circulating on social media regarding our exam schedule and its postponement. Because of the floods, we also had to deal with power outages and internet issues. I was panicking and constantly thought about what would happen if the exams took place

and I failed to participate."

Apart from the exam stress, Nafila was also worried about her home and family. "Everyone had to leave their homes and take shelter somewhere else; it was very hectic," she recalls.

It goes without saying that these climate change-induced natural disasters in Bangladesh are creating unsafe environments for the country's students. What's even more unfortunate is that the condition gets worse when the victims are socially marginalised.

Articulating the severity of the impact of such disasters, Ekhtekharul Islam, a senior lecturer at the Department of Environmental Science and Management, Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), says, "The recent floods in Feni and Cumilla have left many already-dilapidated schools completely unusable for an extended period, even after the floodwaters receded. The flash flood in Sherpur came without any early warning and forced many students to discontinue their studies as the primary focus of their families was on recovery.

The record-breaking flood in the Sylhet region in 2022 had submerged hundreds of education institutions, leaving them closed for weeks."

While climate change impacts every single person including students, female students disproportionately bear its wrath. French philosopher and writer Simone de Beauvoir, in her seminal book *The Second Sex*, theorises that in society, females are the "other" and males are considered the "default". That means women are treated as mere extensions of men instead of having their independent identity or purpose. This is specifically true in a stringently patriarchal society like Bangladesh. In the face of natural disasters, it is girls' education that gets disproportionately impacted.

As Laila Khondokar, an international development worker, points out, "Bangladesh is highly vulnerable to climate shocks, which disproportionately impact girls' ability to go to school, especially in vulnerable geographic areas like *char*, *haor*, and coastal areas where climate events pose the greatest

threat. Floods, tropical cyclones, storm surges, and droughts are likely to become more frequent and severe in the coming years due to climate change. Patterns of natural disaster have also changed, increasing uncertainties for parents and making girls more vulnerable."

Regarding girls' education, Ekhtakarul recounts the experience of a low-income family that he came across where the daughter's education was deprioritised. He recalls, "I met a father who migrated to Dhaka with his son and wife after the destruction of his grocery shop in the 2022 floods in Sylhet. However, they left their nine-year-old daughter behind with her grandmother as the rest of them decided to work and repay the loans they had. The girl stopped going to school. It can be anticipated that her life will be dramatically affected due to the flood. According to a recent study I came across, 86 percent of young girls who continued their education after natural disasters experienced an increased workload, reducing their time for studies."

Given the impact climate change is having on

Bangladeshi students, it would not be an exaggeration to say that it is posing a great threat to the educational progress of this country by plucking its students out of the classroom and deteriorating their educational environment. For this reason, the Bangladeshi government, as well as global leaders, must act with urgency to mitigate this climate crisis.

"There is a need to develop and implement flexible, accessible, inclusive, and gender-responsive distance learning programmes that can be scaled up rapidly in the event of future school closures to prevent disruptions to learning," suggests Laila.

Ekhtekharul adds to this, suggesting that the government should empower locals through community mapping. He says, "Policymakers can incorporate community risk mapping as part of climate adaptation efforts to specifically identify and address risks faced by school-going children. By integrating gender-sensitive risk mapping, policymakers can better identify the specific vulnerabilities girls face, which include early marriage, trafficking, and dropout in post-disaster scenarios."

Along with that, Ekhtekharul also suggests that educational institutions should help students develop climate action clubs. According to him, establishing such clubs would make students more knowledgeable and self-equipped in the face of natural disasters.

"These clubs could raise awareness about climate change, develop leadership qualities among students, and have them engage in undertaking precautionary measures. Involving students in climate action also ensures they are more equipped to handle the psychological and academic challenges posed by disasters," he explains.

Nonetheless, to implement a climate-friendly infrastructure, different factions of the government have to take decisive action. Along with that, mutual trust between locals and government officials has to be established. Only a collaborative effort from all sections can mitigate the traumatic impact of climate change on students.

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1. The Daily Star (February 12, 2024) *Rising Sea Levels: 9 lakh in south may be displaced by 2050.*
2. The Daily Star (February 29, 2024) *Climate change is fuelling child marriage in Bangladesh.*

Fariha Lamisa is majoring in English at East West University. You can reach her at flamisa2020@gmail.com.



PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

NOTICE BOARD

BRAC University premieres documentary highlighting challenges for students with disabilities in higher education

BRAC University's School of General Education recently hosted the world premiere of *Breaking Barriers*, a poignant documentary highlighting the experiences and challenges of students with disabilities within Bangladesh's higher education landscape. Directed by BRAC University students Umma Maimuna, Atiqur Rahman Priom, Partho Chowdhury, and Tanvir Hasan, and executive-produced by School of General Education faculty member Dina Hossain, the film captures the struggles and resilience of students like Rahim Bhuiyan, a Computer Science and Engineering student, as they navigate educational spaces that are often not designed with accessibility in mind.

Breaking Barriers is part of a broader initiative to empower young filmmakers to promote social justice and civic engagement through impactful storytelling. The film addresses the critical need for inclusive educational policies by showcasing the infrastructural and societal challenges that students with disabilities face daily.



BRAC University's new campus is prominently featured in the film as a model of accessibility, equipped with features that allow students with disabilities to move independently – a first among universities in Bangladesh. By portraying these advancements, *Breaking Barriers* advocates for a comprehensive

approach to inclusivity, combining both accessible infrastructure and inclusive policies to support students with disabilities nationwide.

Following the screening, the filmmakers shared insights on their journey, with Umma Maimuna discussing the logistical and emotional complexities of capturing such personal narratives. The premiere also featured a panel discussion moderated by Fahmida Rahman, a senior lecturer at BRAC University's School of General Education. Panelists included Jahirul Islam, founder and executive director of Team Inclusion, Md Zahidul Islam, lead of BRAC Disability Inclusion, and Dr David Dowland, registrar of BRAC University.

Dr Samia Haque, Dean of the School of General Education, concluded the event with remarks reaffirming BRAC University's commitment to inclusivity and equitable access in education. *Breaking Barriers* and the discussion that followed underscore BRAC University's dedication to advancing inclusivity in higher education, setting a precedent for institutions across the region.

NSU hosts seminar on global peace in collaboration with the French embassy

The Center for Peace Studies (CPS) and the Office of External Affairs at North South University (NSU) jointly organised the seminar: "Revisiting the Global South's Contribution to Global Peace - A French Perspective" in collaboration with the Embassy of France in Dhaka. This insightful event brought together diplomats, academics, and students to discuss the impactful role of the Global South in promoting peace and stability on the world stage.



The seminar featured Marie Masdupuy, Ambassador of France to Bangladesh, as the keynote speaker. The event began with welcome remarks by Dr Abdul Wohab, Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology, NSU and Coordinator of CPS. Dr Cynthia McKinney, Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Sociology, NSU and Director of External Affairs, NSU served as the moderator, facilitating the discussions and guiding the seminar through various perspectives on peace and diplomacy.

Prof Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, chaired the session and welcomed the collaborative efforts between NSU and the French Embassy. The event concluded with remarks from Professor Sk Tawfique M Haque, Director of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG). He reflected on the discussions and underscored the importance of ongoing dialogue in building sustainable peace.

The seminar attracted a diverse audience, including faculty members, students, diplomats, and representatives from the international community in Dhaka. Discussions explored themes such as peace diplomacy and regional security cooperation.

Bangladesh to celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week 2024 from November 18 to 24

Based on the theme "Removing Barriers and Welcoming All", Department of Innovation and Entrepreneurship of Daffodil International University will celebrate Global Entrepreneurship Week (GEW) 2024 in Bangladesh from November 18 to 24. This year, GEW will be celebrated globally across 200 countries with over 40,000 events and an expected reach of 10 million people worldwide. In Bangladesh, 300 events will be hosted across the country through more than 50 partner organisations and inspire 100,000 youth directly and three million digitally.

All this was informed at a briefing organised by Dr Md Sabur Khan, Managing Director of Global Entrepreneurship Network - Bangladesh (GEN Bangladesh). The briefing was also addressed by Shawkat Hossain, Chief Executive Officer, Bangladesh Venture Capital Ltd. (BVCL); Dr Rubina Hosen, President, Bangladesh Federation of Women's Entrepreneurs; K M Hasan Ripon, Executive Director, Bangladesh Skill Development Institute (BSDI); and Mohammad



Kamruzzaman, Head, Department of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Daffodil International University.

This year's GEW theme, "Removing Barriers and Welcoming All", underscores our commitment to making entrepreneurship accessible and inclusive for all aspiring and existing entrepreneurs. As the national hosts, GEN Bangladesh, in partnership with Daffodil International University, is committed to empowering and supporting entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey.

Huawei inaugurates advanced solar lab at UIU

Huawei and Centre for Energy Research (CER) of United International University (UIU) have jointly inaugurated the first solar energy lab with ESS facilities in Bangladesh at the UIU premises. This pioneering solar lab will offer top-notch training and research opportunities in the renewable and sustainable energy sector.

The inauguration event took place in UIU's Multipurpose Hall on November 9. The event was chaired by Prof. Dr Md Abul Kashem Mia, Vice



Chancellor, UIU; Prof. Dr Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan, Advisor, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources Government of Bangladesh was the chief guest; the special guests were Yao Wen, Ambassador, People's Republic of China to Bangladesh, Prof. M Rezwan Khan, Chairman, Power Grid Bangladesh PLC, and Pan Junfeng, CEO, Huawei Technologies (Bangladesh) Ltd.

Prof. Dr Muhammad Fouzul Kabir Khan said, "At present no one wants to lag, everyone wants to work smartly.

That is why we need to do more with renewable energy. Renewable energy is helping to reduce the cost of the current energy system by 20 percent. This lab will play an important role in the powerful and sustainable development of the country's renewable energy sector."

Huawei-CER, UIU solar lab will offer three months certificate courses to the young engineers and professionals. Interested applicants can enroll by filling up online application when it is live.

■ CAREER ■

WORKING AT A STARTUP

What fresh graduates should know

ADRIN SARWAR

Joining a startup offers fresh graduates a unique chance to dive into fast-paced environments, work closely with founders, and gain hands-on experience. Startups also offer valuable experience in adaptability, innovation, and problem-solving which can be appealing for fresh graduates. However, it is important to consider whether the startup environment aligns with your career goals to avoid any potential mismatch.

Startup employees are often involved in the core business and its decision-making process, which is more difficult to achieve in a corporate setting. Tasnuva, a senior marketing specialist at a leading digital martech startup, says, "I joined a startup because there is more autonomy and more things to learn. People who work in corporations learn to be great managers but to become a specialist in your respective field or area of interest, startups can be a great alternative."

“When hiring, job descriptions are usually well-defined for both the employees and the hiring team. Since fresh graduates often have limited experience, the hiring team doesn’t expect too much from them initially. Instead, we focus more on their capacity to learn.”

One defining characteristic of startups is their emphasis on working in closely-knit teams. This makes the existing members accountable for their roles and helps build a sense of belonging among them. This approach helps the employees get out of their comfort zones and make important decisions at work.

Startups are often recognised for having a clear mission. Besides, they are not just profit-oriented; startups often engage in work that can impact the world in a meaningful way. Iffat Jahan joined the mental health platform Relaxy as a content team lead because she found that the startup’s primary objectives aligned with her own values.

"I was excited to make an impact from the beginning and explore different areas beyond my core role," says Iffat. "It allowed me to build my resume in ways I wouldn't have been able to in a rigid corporate structure."

Seeing the impact your work can have makes the job significantly more fulfilling and motivating. In startups, this impact is tangible. You are not just another cog in a giant machine; every effort you make impacts the progress of the company.

Reflecting on her journey with Relaxy, Iffat says, "Watching my ideas take shape and knowing I was helping to build the future of the company was empowering. My team's core task is to shape Relaxy's image to users and partners. Since I joined, the platform has witnessed outstanding growth in terms of users as well as revenue growth. I can also see the direct impact of our content through user engagement

and feedback. It's gratifying knowing that my work isn't just about marketing, it's also about helping people feel better and access the support they need."

Startups are also known for their unique and flexible work culture. Usually, they operate on a flat organisational structure. As employees can openly share their ideas, fresh graduates often feel comfortable in such a setup over the rigid corporate culture. Besides, startups often provide a more flexible and informal work atmosphere – something that's very appealing to new or upcoming university graduates.

Nionta Ahasan, a senior instructor at 10 Minute School and an undergraduate student, says, "I take classes at 10 Minute School in the evening, and have my own classes at university in the morning. Hence, it's easy for me to manage my time accordingly."

The networking aspect in start-ups is another perk for fresh graduates as they often get the opportunity to connect with entrepreneurs, investors, and industry professionals.

Jahnobi Rahman, CEO at Relaxy, emphasises the importance of interns collaborating with industry professionals. She says, "Having interns participate in managerial body or investor meetings can help them foster a sense of responsibility. It can also be a great networking opportunity. This can bridge the gap between academic knowledge and industry standards."

Nionta adds to this saying, "For my job, I had to talk to different types of people with different interests and expertise. I had to work with them on small projects. This helped me build a professional network."

Having said all that, the behind-the-scenes situation at startups is not always as glamorous as it appears as the work can be incredibly demanding.

"The workload can be intense. There are so many days when it feels like I am juggling multiple projects at once, but at the same time, I find it fulfilling," says Iffat.

While taking on responsibilities beyond your job title does offer valuable experience,

long hours can quickly become the norm if the practice persists. Besides, some startups often struggle with clear job descriptions due to their fast-paced nature, leading employees to take on tasks beyond their initial roles. According to Iffat, "Working at a startup means you're constantly evolving, and new responsibilities can come up. There were moments when I had to figure things out on my own or take on tasks outside of my initial role, especially as the company expanded."

Regarding evolving job roles, Jahnobi says, "When hiring, job descriptions are usually well-defined for both the employees and the hiring team. Since fresh graduates often have limited experience, the hiring team doesn't expect too much from them initially. Instead, we focus more on their capacity to learn. Over time, fresh graduates may discover that they're a better fit for a different role than the one they originally signed up for."

Working at a startup might not always bring you the financial rewards or other fringe benefits that you can draw from working at a corporate or well-established company. Those who do draw high salaries are either very skilled at their respective roles or are working at a high-profile startup. Besides, if you are considering a role at a startup, it's important to acknowledge that most of them fail. In fact, according to a report by Startup Genome, up to 90 percent of startups end up failing. Hence, for fresh graduates, working long-term at a startup might not be feasible or a good idea.

Of course, at the end of the day, choosing between a startup or a corporation depends on your career goals. While corporate jobs offer a structured environment with better salaries, benefits, and long-term sustainability, startups offer dynamism and a chance to advance your career. Hence, consider your strengths, aspirations, and adaptability before deciding whether or not you want to join a startup as a fresh graduate.

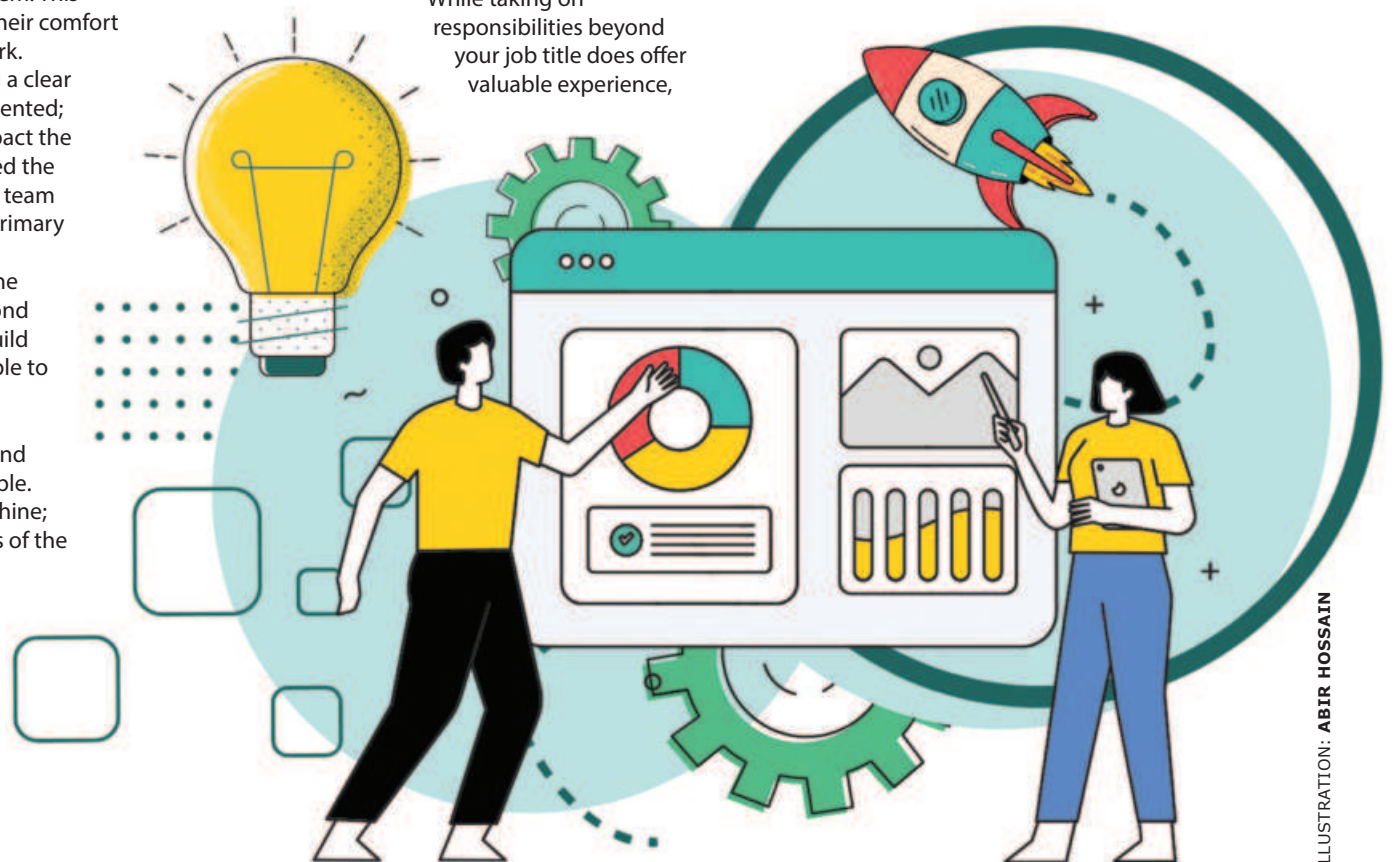


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EDUCATION

What it takes to study Computer Science in Bangladesh

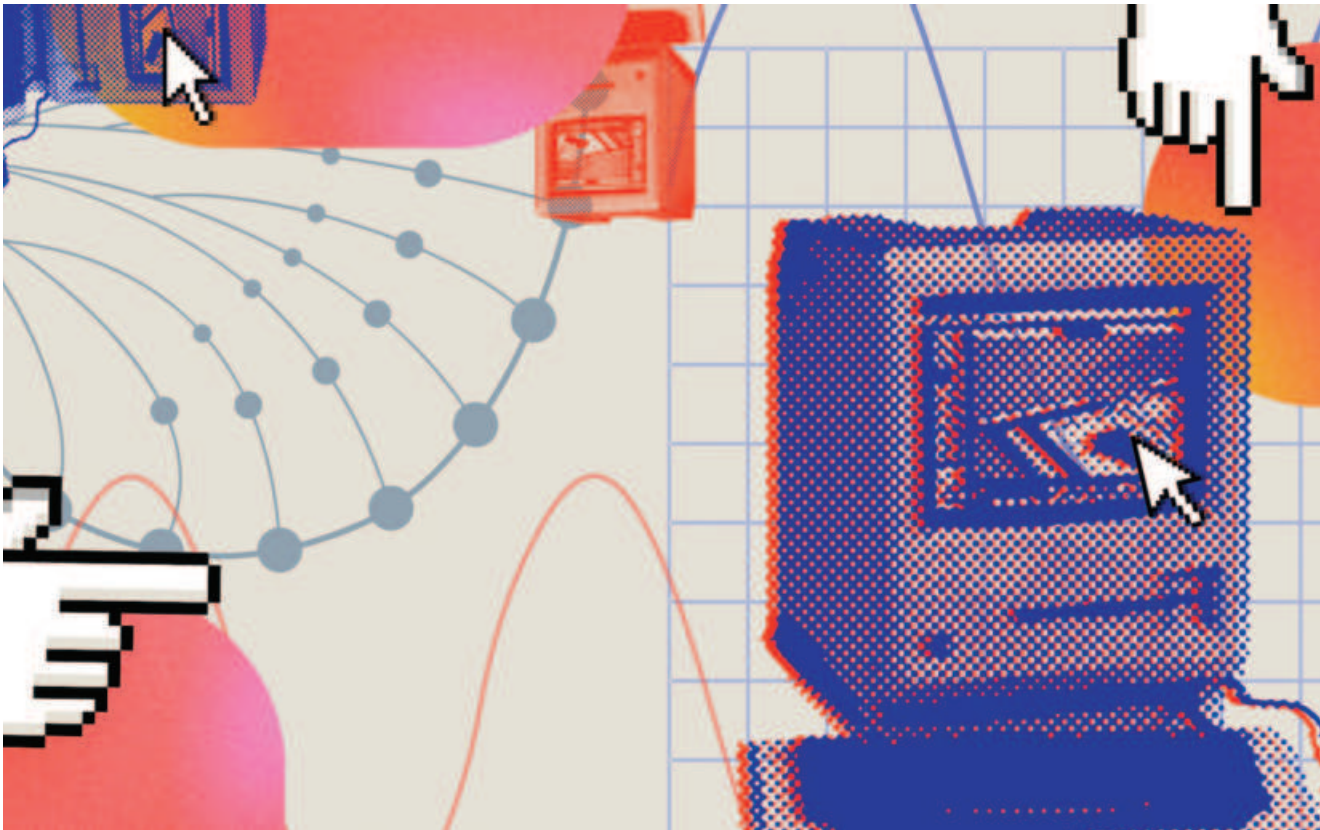


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Coding is a crucial part of the curriculum, and not being able to code will make things difficult. You need to really understand how to write and debug code, but more importantly, how that code works.

BIPRA PRASUN DAS

Nowadays, with terms like artificial intelligence, machine learning, and cybersecurity spawning in daily conversations, online blogs, and newspaper headlines, a growing number of students in Bangladesh are considering Computer Science (CS) or Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) as their fields of study. While those who opt to pursue CS have a genuine interest and passion for the field, many students are lured by the promise of a well-paid career in a seemingly ever-expanding tech industry, without really knowing what it entails to be a student in either of those fields.

Firstly, being able to code and do it well will be required of you. While there are people who enjoy coding and find it to be a fascinating experience, many others do not. For the latter group, learning how to code can prove to be a tedious and cumbersome process.

“Coding is a crucial part of the curriculum, and not being able to code will make things difficult. You need to really understand how to write and debug code, but more importantly, how that code works,” said Labib Rahman*, a student at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering at Rajshahi University.

Programming is by no means the only aspect of CS/CSE, but it is still a

very significant part of it. So, before one chooses either one, it is important to consider whether programming is something they are likely to enjoy.

When I was starting out, the most daunting challenge for me was adjusting to the learning curve. In fact, many students, like myself, find programming concepts, data structures, and algorithms challenging to learn. Understanding the syntax and semantics of programming languages can be very overwhelming, especially for those without prior experience. Additionally, the mathematical foundations required for the subject, which includes discrete mathematics and calculus, can prove to be challenging for those who struggle with Maths.

Sheikh Arifin Ahmed, who studies Computer Science at BRAC University, says, “Initially, grasping coding concepts proved to be quite challenging as I had no experience with computer programming beforehand.”

Balancing coursework, assignments, projects, and personal life can also prove to be difficult as well, leading to burnout. Meeting project deadlines will be crucial and requires effective time management skills, which many students struggle with. This may be a result of students underestimating the steep learning curve and rigorous curriculum that is characteristic of a degree in CS and CSE. Due to its taxing nature, however,

studying for the degree can take a toll on one’s mental health.

Farhan Khan* who studies CSE at North South University talks about his struggles, “I have suffered quite a bit with self-doubt and imposter syndrome, especially when I compared myself to my peers who are more advanced and perform better academically.”

Not only does it affect their mental health, but many students also end up regretting their choice to pursue the subject. Poor grades and a lack of motivation reinforce such feelings of disillusionment. I, for instance, really enjoyed mathematics as a high school student. Part of the reason why I chose CSE was because of its heavy application in maths. However, a few weeks into my degree, I realised that mathematics was just a part of this vast field, and simply being proficient in it would not suffice.

Labib added, “I was considered proficient in mathematics when I was in college, by both my peers and teachers, which is why I thought I would enjoy Computer Science. However, that has not been the case for me.”

Another important factor that should be thoroughly assessed is to what extent self-learning works for a student. Both CS and CSE students often receive advice from seniors and lecturers about the importance of self-learning. University lectures are essential for grasping fundamentals and key concepts. Due to time constraints though, not every aspect of a topic can be fully explored in class. Therefore, you will have to supplement your learning by exploring additional resources such as the Internet and textbooks.

CS and CSE are vast subjects. Therefore, it is important that you evaluate whether you have a genuine interest and passion for technology, problem-solving, and coding. In addition, reflect on your career goals and consider if they align with the diverse opportunities available in fields like software development, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and related fields. It is also a good idea to think about your proficiency in mathematics and logical thinking, as well as your willingness to engage in continuous learning to keep pace with technological advancements. Your personal commitment to developing practical skills through hands-on projects will help with whatever goal you have. Those who are compatible with the demands of this major and find joy in studying it tend to grab opportunities when they present themselves and excel.

*Names have been changed upon request.

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