



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR



The advertisement features a colorful, stylized illustration of various people interacting with Walton refrigerators. On the left, a woman in a yellow sari stands next to a refrigerator. In the center, an elderly man in a blue shirt is looking at a refrigerator. To the right, a man and a woman are standing next to a refrigerator. The background is composed of large, overlapping geometric shapes in blue, green, and orange. The text 'No. 1' is prominently displayed in the center, and 'WALTON Smart Fridge' is on the right. At the bottom, the text 'REFRIGERATOR BRAND' is written in bold, followed by a testimonial and contact information.

No. 1

WALTON
Smart Fridge

REFRIGERATOR BRAND

With the trust of millions, we've proudly made it happen for the 11th time.

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VISUAL NOVELS

Looking to get into visual novels? Here's where to start

RAIAN ABEDIN

Visual novels often serve as the perfect blend between reading a book and playing a game. As such, the experience they offer can be varied, with in-depth stories written to feel fresh and to allow the players the ability to make meaningful choices that affect the outcome of the game. For those looking to experience a story that manages to be dense and lengthy, and still have a level of interactivity associated with it, here are three visual novels to check out.

Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney

Originally released all the way back in 2001, *Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney* follows our titular character working as a defence attorney swinging between investigating cases and defending his clients from the clues discovered through his investigations. As such, the game also employs a variety of puzzles alongside dialogue options that allow you to take charge of proving your client's innocence. The player is given plenty to do here, from examining clues to speaking to witnesses — the game does a fantastic job at laying out the whole process for the player to experience.

Steins; Gate

If you're familiar with the masterfully created



sci-fi time-travelling anime, then you probably already know the story *Steins;Gate* has to offer. The story follows Okabe Rintarou (also known as Hououin Kyouma) as he one day finds the body of a young scientist named Makise Kurisu covered in blood. This sets off a series of events involving time travel, conspiracy theories, and attempting to change a future that may be set in stone. Unlike *Phoenix Wright*, however, player interactions with this visual novel are generally kept to a minimum. While this can take away from the interactive aspect of the visual novel, the oddball narrative filled with

twists and turns more than makes up for any shortcomings *Steins;Gate* may have.

Disco Elysium

The narrative of *Disco Elysium* follows a police officer waking up from a period of unconsciousness with no memory of where he is or even who he is. The story then revolves around traversing the fictional city of Revachol, trying to uncover the mystery of a body hanging from a tree. The premise may seem simple, but the world it takes place in is the furthest thing from it — exploring themes of poverty, politics, civil war, and even personal trauma.

OPPORTUNITIES



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DEADLINE: NOT MENTIONED



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Applicants must submit: A completed application to Western Sydney University.

Visit thedailystar.net/campus/opportunities to learn more.

DEADLINE: MAY 15, 2025 (FOR SPRING INTAKE).

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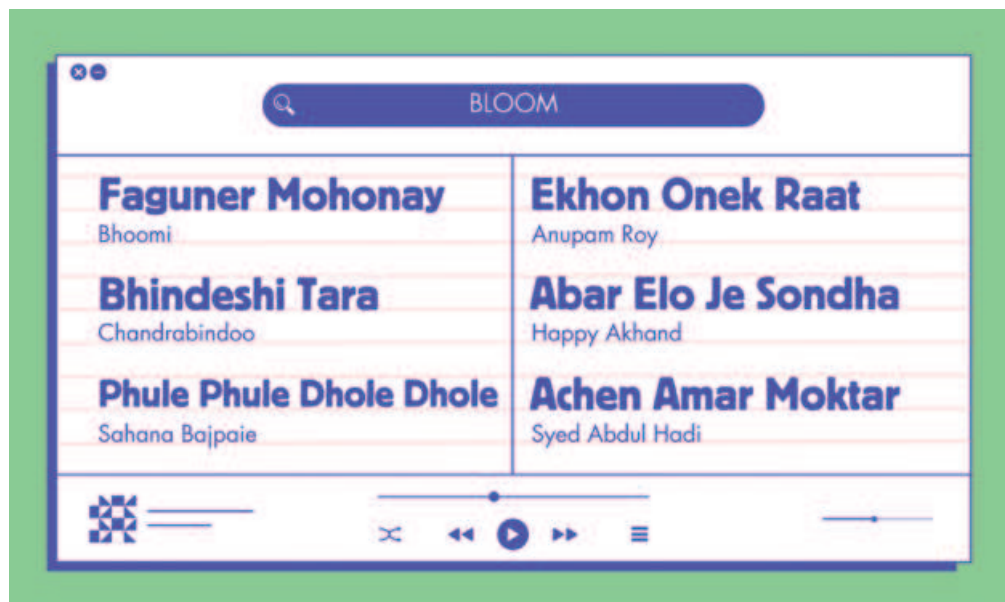
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OFF CAMPUS

Aspirations of IUT, RUET rover teams crushed as India rejects visa applications

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

Rover teams from Bangladeshi universities have been making headlines for a while now due to their remarkable achievements in global competitions like the European Rover Challenge, International Rover Challenge, University Rover Challenge, International Rover Design Challenge, and Anatolian Rover Challenge. This year, three university rover teams from Bangladesh – Team Ogrodoot from Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology (RUET), Project Altair from Islamic University of Technology (IUT), and Team Mongol Barota from Military Institute of Science and Technology (MIST) – qualified for the finals of International Rover Challenge (IRC) 2025, which took place between January 28 and February 2, 2025, in Goa, India.

Preparations for the finals were in full swing as students of the qualifying teams aspired to deliver dazzling performances and bring home accolades. However, all hopes were crushed when the teams faced a mass Indian visa rejection.

“As teams, we prepare for months for international competitions, invest significant resources, and put our hearts into building a rover. To have our efforts hindered by entry restrictions is deeply demotivating.”

Despite being invited to attend the competition by the organisers of IRC 2025 themselves, all members of Team Ogrodoot had their visas denied. Out of the 12 people who applied, only three members of Project Altair were granted visas, even though a team of at least 10 is necessary for rover assembly and task completions. Team Mongol Barota, on the other hand, had not applied for visas.

Rodoshe Mou, a senior member of the mechanical and manufacturing sub-team of Project Altair, shares her disappointment at the outcome, “We were officially invited to participate in the competition, yet



PHOTOS: COURTESY

our visas were denied despite us providing proper documentation. This unprofessional and outright disrespectful action has not only resulted in our efforts being wasted but also undermined the spirit of international collaboration.”

The team leader of Project Altair, Md Emon, expresses his dissatisfaction with the situation. “As teams, we prepare for months for international competitions, invest significant resources, and put our hearts into building a rover. To have our efforts hindered by entry restrictions is deeply demotivating. It’s essential that all hosting nations prioritise inclusivity to uphold the spirit of global collaboration in such events.”

The situation is similar for Team Ogrodoot. S M Shafayet Jamil, the team leader, recounts his experience regarding the visa denial, “It was heartbreaking for me to have to tell my passionate teammates that we weren’t granted visas for the upcoming IRC 2025. The Assistant High Commission of India, Rajshahi, delayed the visa procedure and made us go back and forth a lot. At first, we were asked to provide No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from organisers and host venues. When we provided them with the appropriate documents, we were asked to acquire similar documents from the Ministry of Home Affairs or the

Ministry of External Affairs of India. I believe this step of the procedure was only an excuse for their negligence.”

Md Jubair Ahamed, the co-lead and team manager of Team Ogrodoot, shares, “Team Ogrodoot was selected for the final round of IRC 2025 from nearly 100 global teams. Since September, we dedicated ourselves fully, working tirelessly, even during our semester finals, to clear four rigorous selection rounds. In previous years, only invitation letters and NOCs from our institutions were required for visas. However, this time, despite providing more documentation, we were asked for an additional NOC from the Ministry of External Affairs of India, which takes 30 to 50 days to process. Despite giving it our best, we were denied the opportunity to compete, simply due to bureaucracy, as not a single person from our 15-member team was granted a visa. It’s disheartening to see months of dedication go unrecognised, and we hope such barriers are addressed to ensure fair opportunities for passionate teams like ours.”

It’s worth mentioning that both teams have had remarkable records in previous IRCs, with Project Altair securing first position in the astrobiology expedition segment and standing sixth overall in last year’s challenge.



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WHAT IS THE ROLE OF AN ACCOUNT MANAGER AT AN ADVERTISING AGENCY?

An account manager at any advertising agency is the link between the client and the entire agency. In a way, the account manager acts as both the salesperson for the agency as well as the client's representative within the agency.

The advertising account manager takes the lead in presenting the agency's ideas, ensuring they align with the client's brief while staying within the designated timeline and budget. They are often tasked to make sure that the ads, campaigns, visuals, etc. designed by their agency meets client expectations.

One of the most crucial aspects of account management is crafting a well-targeted brief, as it lays the foundation for a successful campaign. Although responsibilities may vary by agency, account managers typically oversee client budgets, manage account executives, and handle various administrative tasks. Account managers also solve any issues that arise between the client and the agency.

CAREER

At the intersection of CREATIVITY AND STRATEGY

What it takes to work at an advertising agency

ALLIN MOHANA BISWAS

The first time I stepped into an advertising agency, I was overwhelmed by the sheer energy of the place. Designers hunched over screens, copywriters furiously typing away, and account managers darting between meetings. The walls were lined with storyboards and campaign concepts, each one a glimpse into a world of creativity. I had imagined advertising to be all about glamorous shoots and catchy jingles, but I quickly learned that behind every successful campaign was a team executing it through sheer grit.

Life at an advertising agency is anything but predictable. Tight deadlines, late nights, and endless brainstorming sessions are the norm. What is often overlooked, however, are the creative minds working tirelessly to bring campaigns to life.

"Every day is dynamic," explains Ali Ausjhahi Rufai, a senior account executive of client relations at Mediacom Limited. "Advertising agencies exist to solve problems – whether they're business, social, or environmental. As an advertiser, you face new challenges and opportunities daily. One day, you might be working on a press ad for a baby skincare product that requires a nurturing tone. By evening, you could be designing a bold ad for a steel company. This constant variety ensures that your work life is never boring."

Tasmia Islam, a copywriter at a renowned advertising agency, shares her experience, "Maintaining a fixed schedule at an agency is challenging. Work can come in at any moment – my day might start at 9 AM, 12 PM, or even 3 PM. I spend my mornings researching and watching television commercials and online video commercials to expand my understanding. By 11 AM, I log into work, create a list of my deliverables, and meet with client servicing executives to discuss urgent tasks. But as the day goes on, more small tasks come in."

She adds, "When writing a script, I collaborate with the strategic planner and creative director to map out the entire concept. These creative sessions can last anywhere from two to three hours, sometimes even longer. To avoid creative blocks, we take breaks by grabbing refreshments, relaxing, and watching TV shows. My work usually wraps up around 8 PM, but there are times when I have to stay late to review the final output, ensuring that there are no spelling or design errors."

Advertising agencies house a variety of roles – from copywriting and graphic design to video production, motion graphics, and data analytics. While an undergraduate degree can get you an entry-level job, agencies prioritise skills over formal qualifications. Many students start working while still in university, gaining hands-on experience and climbing the career ladder.

"An agency has three major departments: account management, creative, and strategy," says Ali. "In recent years, many media and communication graduates have entered advertising since their studies cover most aspects needed in the field. However, business and marketing graduates are well-suited for roles in account management and strategy. Creative roles, such as those of visualisers, tend to favour those

with a background in the arts or graphic design. Copywriting roles require a strong knowledge of social and cultural trends."

"Larger agencies typically hire full-time employees, while some startup agencies offer part-time roles, which are perfect for students looking to gain experience," Ali adds.

"Agencies often hire entry-level candidates for roles like account executives, copywriters, and visualisers. The key qualities that agencies look for include problem-solving skills and the ability to execute tasks effectively," notes Ali.

"In my view, account management offers better career opportunities. Account management roles allow you to work with different industries, helping you build knowledge and a strong network. This network and business knowledge can help with career advancement. Digital advertisers and creatives also have great opportunities, as local and multinational companies invest in in-house teams. The demand for skilled digital marketers continues to grow, creating more career opportunities," he added.

Furthermore, the work environment in an agency is quite distinct from that of other industries. "People working in agencies often believe that a slower pace and relaxed approach help spark creativity and lead to delivering amazing work for their clients. The intense work pressure comes from meeting tight deadlines for high-profile clients," says Anwarul Hoque Ansari, an executive of planning and strategy at Spellbound Leo Burnett.

Creativity and adaptability are essential for anyone looking to build a career in this field. "Creativity is important for you to fulfil your role in an agency. No matter what position you are in, your creativity will help you throughout. To nurture this creativity, you have to always keep learning new things," explains Tasmia.

She continues, "I think the biggest mistake people make is when they stop learning, assuming that certain topics will never be useful. For example, I might not be interested in banking news, but gaining a perspective on that topic could help me visualise new ideas. I stay up to date with trends, cultures, news, and even memes. Children's cartoons, advertisements from around the world, and short YouTube videos are some of my go-to sources. Watching more movies and reading books of various genres really help me expand my thinking."

"Innovation is essential in an agency that focuses on 360-degree marketing, omnichannel, and digital channels. We need to develop an intense approach to bringing the 'wow' factor to the product and meeting the client's expectations. Creativity is a crucial trait one should possess while working in the agency sector," said Anwarul.

Many assume advertising is all about creativity and glamour, but the reality is far more complex. "People think it's all just fun and games, but it involves managing clients, analyses, and last-minute deadlines," says Tasmia, dispelling common myths about agency life. "We do more than just make ads, and we don't work with celebrities all the time." She also challenges the belief that agency work requires extreme creativity saying, "Strategy and execution matter just as much."

Ultimately, selling ideas remains one of the toughest challenges in advertising.

"The hardest part of the job isn't always coming up with ideas, it's convincing clients to buy into them," she adds.

"Problem-solving is key. You need to think on your feet and tackle challenges as they come," says Anwarul.

He also highlights time management as a crucial skill to have in a fast-paced environment along with research skills for understanding market trends. "Creativity is important but it must be paired with logic and feasibility," he said. "A strong marketing approach helps craft messages that resonate with the audience."

For many, the thrill of bringing ideas to life outweighs the challenges. "My most favourite and memorable project was when I organised, planned, and executed the 50th jubilee celebration of a school in Army Golf Garden. As I planned and executed the whole event on my own, it really helped me shape myself. I directed a documentary for the school and planned out everything from marketing to ticketing. What made it stand out was the design and wording, which made it different," recalls Tasmia.

So, if you're looking for a fast-paced, dynamic career where creativity meets strategy, an advertising agency might just be the perfect fit for you.



ILLUSTRATION:
ABIR HOSSAIN



SKILLS YOU NEED TO WORK AS A COPYWRITER AT AN ADVERTISING AGENCY

Strong writing and storytelling skills

A copywriter at an advertising agency must craft compelling narratives that capture attention and drive action. This includes writing persuasive ad copy, taglines, and scripts that align with a brand's voice while resonating with the target audience.

Creativity and concept development

Copywriters must also be able to generate fresh ideas that stand out in a crowded market. Keeping up with the latest trends, especially on social media, is also vital here. Copywriters collaborate with art directors and marketing teams to develop campaigns that blend strong messaging with striking visuals.

Understanding of marketing and consumer psychology

A deep understanding of branding, target audiences, and consumer behavior helps copywriters create content that persuades and influences. They must tailor their writing to different platforms, from digital ads to print campaigns.

Adaptability and collaboration

Copywriters must adjust their tone and style based on the client's needs and industry trends. Working in an agency setting also requires strong teamwork, as they frequently collaborate with designers, strategists, and account managers.

NOTICE BOARD

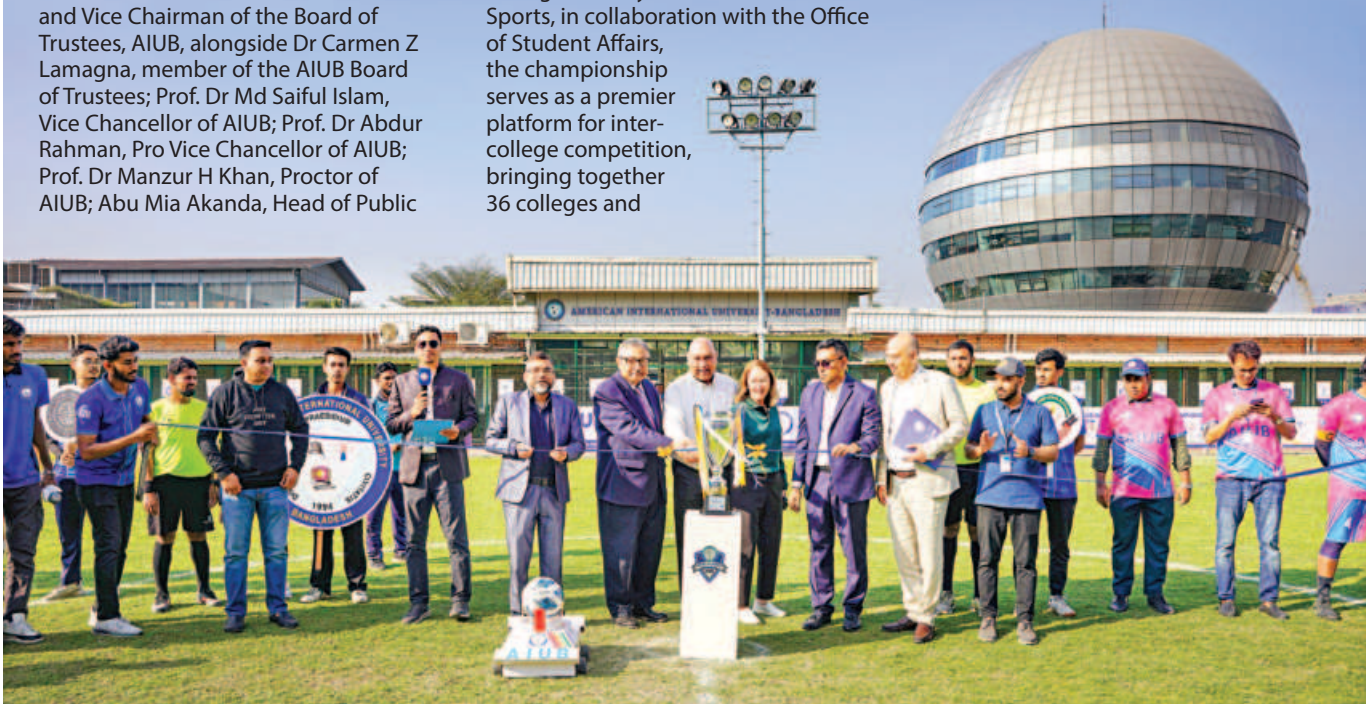
AIUB Inter-College Football Championship 2025 begins

The AIUB Inter-College Football Championship 2025 officially commenced on February 8 at the sports field of American International University–Bangladesh (AIUB). The inauguration ceremony was graced by Dr Hasanul A Hasan, Founder Member and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, AIUB, alongside Dr Carmen Z Lamagna, member of the AIUB Board of Trustees; Prof. Dr Md Saiful Islam, Vice Chancellor of AIUB; Prof. Dr Abdur Rahman, Pro Vice Chancellor of AIUB; Prof. Dr Manzur H Khan, Proctor of AIUB; Abu Mia Akanda, Head of Public

Relations; and Md Joynal Abedin, Coordinator, Office of Sports, AIUB. The event was further attended by faculty members, administrative officials, students, and representatives of various colleges.

Organised by the AIUB Office of Sports, in collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, the championship serves as a premier platform for inter-college competition, bringing together 36 colleges and

approximately 720 students from across the Dhaka Division. The six-day tournament will culminate in the grand finale on February 13, marking the conclusion of an intense and thrilling competition.



BRAC University welcomes Spring 2025 semester students

BRAC University welcomed a cohort of new students of the Spring 2025 semester through an orientation ceremony at the multipurpose hall of its Merul Badda campus in Dhaka on February 6. This event marked the official commencement of the students' academic journey at BRAC University, setting the tone for an exciting and transformative educational experience.

The ceremony featured an inspirational speech by Professor Syed Ferhat Anwar, Vice-Chancellor of BRAC University.

In his speech, he encouraged students to be humble and respectful toward one another, emphasising the need for unity by setting aside differences.

He urged them to become unique individuals and responsible citizens, saying, "Love your country and strive to make it proud on the global stage."

An engaging audiovisual presentation provided the attendees with insights into BRAC University's rich history and the philosophy of its visionary founder, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed. The presentation emphasised the institution's commitment to quality education.

The ceremony also featured remarks from esteemed members of the university community, including Registrar Dr David Dowland, Dean of School of General Education Professor Samia Huq, Proctor Dr Rubana Ahmed, BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) Director Professor Shaila Sultana, and It's Humanity Foundation Founder Md Adnan Hossain.

Their words of encouragement not only reinforced the university's dedication to fostering an inclusive academic environment but also sought to inspire the students, instilling a sense of motivation and empowerment.

Tahsina Rahman, Joint Director of Student Life, moderated the event, guiding students through the day's proceedings.

The event also featured lively performances by members of BRAC University Cultural Club and BRAC University Monon, showcasing their artistic talents. A delightful concert marked the end of the orientation.

BRAC University remains committed to empowering students, providing strong support, and guiding them to create a positive impact in their communities and beyond.

AHZ draws massive crowd at the UK Education Expo

On February 8, the biggest UK Education Expo took place at The Westin Dhaka, bringing together students, families, and friends for an exciting and insightful event.

With the UK being a top destination for higher studies, AHZ organised this expo to support students in shaping their academic future. The event was filled with engaging activities, where students explored a wide range of courses, top universities, and scholarships of up to GBP 10,000.

It was a great chance for students to meet university representatives and learn about admissions and career opportunities. British Council-certified counsellors at AHZ were also there to help students with 100 percent free application processing, making the whole process easy and stress-free.

Adding to the excitement, fun games and competitions, held during the event, offered exclusive prizes which not only brought fun and energy to the event but also encouraged students to engage and participate actively.

AHZ's sister concern, MIE English Academy, generously provided free IELTS courses to winners, while MIE Pathways guided students in overcoming study gaps to pursue their UK education dreams with the pathway programme.

Beyond academics, the expo created an



environment where students could interact with peers, share aspirations, and build confidence in taking the next step toward studying abroad. Expert counsellors were available throughout the event to provide personalised guidance, ensuring that students made informed decisions about their future.

AHZ takes pride in making global

education more accessible to all and is dedicated to supporting students at every stage of their journey. Events like these not only open doors to world-class opportunities but also inspire students to dream big and achieve more. The enthusiasm and energy at the expo reaffirmed our belief in the potential of every student.

EDUCATION

UNLOCKING OPPORTUNITIES

as a high school exchange student



ILLUSTRATION: ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

PUNOMI RAHMAN TITIR

In Bangladesh, foreign exchange student programmes are still a relatively novel concept. Providing unparalleled gateways for broadening global perspectives, these programmes enable young people to immerse themselves in vibrant educational settings and diverse cultural environments. An exchange year abroad lets students unlock a world of opportunities, conquer new challenges, and build friendships that last a lifetime.

For high schoolers, the concept of spending an academic timespan overseas may initially seem daunting. However, stepping into a new atmosphere beyond one's comfort zone fosters internal growth in ways that may not be possible in familiar surroundings. From cultivating a sense of independence early in life to honing problem-solving skills in real-world situations, high school exchange programmes provide a unique learning opportunity that develops self-confidence and character.

"Seeing my school seniors return from exchange programmes with a transformed outlook on life deeply inspired me," says Sarika Saiyara, currently a gap-year student and an alumnus of the Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange and Study programme. "The programme was fully funded, allowing me to experience living in the United States – something I could have never afforded otherwise. The journey offered an incredible opportunity to broaden my perspectives, both academically and culturally, while fostering greater tolerance and understanding of different customs and values."

Sarika continues, "For instance, my host parents had a completely different outlook on life – they were hunters. That was definitely a hard blow. However, accepting parts of their tradition and perceiving life through their lens taught me a lot. My time spent with them felt somewhat bittersweet. While cultural differences made

my connection with them challenging, they were always kind and welcoming and made sincere efforts to have me involved in family activities. Over time, I came to value the unique dynamics of our relationship, gaining valuable insights into another way of life."

Iqbal Samin Prithul, a former exchange student under the Asia Kakehashi Project, shares a glimpse into his unique experience while studying at a Japanese high school during 11th grade. While some students were placed in dormitories and others stayed with host families full-time, Prithul was fortunate enough to experience both.

"Although I stayed with three different host families, I grew attached to one of them. I spent the entire winter and spring vacations with them; they even invited me over on weekends. They were incredibly welcoming people and I could talk to them about anything without having to feel embarrassed. Even now, we often communicate through video chats, where I can savour long conversations in Japanese. I can't wait to meet them again."

He further adds, "Living in the dorm was a bit challenging at first, as it was my first time staying by myself. As punctuality is highly valued in Japanese culture, there was a strict schedule with set hours for showers, wake-up calls, sports nights, and meals. However, the constant company of friends was great — I could hang out with them anytime. Both experiences — living in the dorm and with host families — were enriching, but connecting with my long-term host family felt truly special."

Students enrolled in exchange programmes usually attend a host institution in the designated country, where they learn to adapt to a different education system. There is an emphasis on extracurricular activities and community involvement, encouraging students to connect with their peers beyond the classroom. In contrast to Bangladesh, where opportunities for young

people tend to be limited, with schools often failing to incorporate anything outside textbook learning, exchange programmes provide individuals with an excellent platform to enhance their non-academic resume.

Prithul, also an alumnus of the U.S. Department of State's Community College Initiative, says, "As long as I kept up with classes, the programme allowed me to travel extensively within the U.S., thanks to a generous stipend and a good deal of independence. I especially enjoyed volunteering, which is uniquely integral to American culture and made for some unforgettable memories. Additionally, I completed a three-month internship that helped me grow professionally and even led to a remote job opportunity in the U.S. after I returned home."

For Sarika, the experience contributed profoundly to her artistic journey. She recalls, "My exchange year ignited my passion for cooking, which blossomed while volunteering at the local teen centre. Food became my comfort space while coping in a new environment. Besides, I initiated an after-school Bangladeshi dance club, introducing my peers to traditional folk dances. I was also honoured to be the only student receiving a full-ride merit scholarship to the Music Conservatory of Sandpoint to study Western classical music — undoubtedly one of the coolest experiences I got to encounter as an artist. Additionally, I had the privilege of performing Bangali folk songs at a school concert, a first for my host community. Ultimately, your exchange year is what you make of it."

Besides exposure to vast opportunities and scope to improve networking, exchange programmes have more to offer to high school students. Farhana Amin Ripa, also an alumnus of the Asia Kakehashi Project, reflects, "The most important part of my experience was perhaps the early exposure to an independent life. Living on my own and connecting with people from diverse backgrounds made my world feel so much bigger at that stage in life."

Farhana acknowledges that the cultural differences were initially overwhelming as she knew little about life in Japan. However, determined to make the most of her experience, she chose to approach it with an open mind by embracing every opportunity, from festivals and events to new foods, completely submerging herself in the culture of a foreign country.

High school exchange programmes are widely popular in many countries across the globe. However, in Bangladesh, we often fail to recognise the need to explore opportunities outside academia and don't acknowledge the value of global connections.

"The lack of access to information about opportunities, compounded by the conservative mindsets of parents, creates barriers for students applying to these exchange programmes. Guardians often have reservations about sending children abroad because of safety concerns and uncertainty regarding where they'll be placed. Such concerns lead to fewer students applying. However, this narrative is slowly shifting, with more and more students applying each year, as thousands compete for limited spots. This reflects a growing awareness about the purpose of exchange programmes for personal growth and global exposure," concludes Sarika.

*Titir is in hate with her student-self these days.
Be kind enough to send her some condolences at
punomirahman@gmail.com*

■ OFF CAMPUS ■

TACKLING HAIR WOES

Quick fixes for broke, busy students

HIYA ISLAM

Students live with a hundred raging problems every day. Hair issues can be the bane of their existence if left without care or maintenance. This is not to blame them, because when one has to juggle several priorities vying for first place, ignoring the slow decline of one's gorgeous locks seems not so bad until one day when they realise it is too late. However, the good news is that there are a number of ways in which these problems can be nipped in the bud with low-cost, low-effort solutions.

Scalp acne

If you are prone to facial acne, breaking out around the hairline or deep under your hair is not uncommon and this often leads to hair falling out. The biological principle is basically the same as for any other type of acne. It is caused by a clogged pore, in this case, the hair follicle, the pore through which the hair grows. This can be a result of overuse of hair products like hairsprays, styling gel, dry shampoo, oils, etc. To add more, buildups of sweat, dead cells, dirt, microbes, and sebum also contribute equally.

It can be cleared up by making a few changes in haircare. For example, frequent hair washes and keeping hair accessories, such as hair combs, pillowcases, headbands, hats, scarves, etc. clean go a long way. Alternatively, shampoos formulated with anti-acne ingredients like tea tree oil and salicylic acid can also improve scalp health. However, before resorting to any cosmetic treatment, cleanliness and personal hygiene take the vote.

Split ends

Yet another messy hair trouble often remedied by regular trims every six to eight weeks. But, persisting

split ends hint to a more serious concern such as chemical damage from hair dyes and bleach, heat damage from repeated use of styling tools and so on. All of these eventually strip the oil out of the hair and make it dry; and dry hair is more likely to split (and tangle).

So, in order to avoid developing split ends, it is important to incorporate weekly moisturisation with serums and oils into one's haircare routine. It is best to apply hair masks at least twice a week, and different hair oils for different purposes. Hair oil promoting hair growth should be applied to the roots and for short periods of time whereas hair oil meant to treat hair breakage and protect the hair from pollution or heat should be applied after washing, along the lengths of the hair.

Hard water damage

Mineral deposits from hard water make the hair dull and lifeless. But this damage is, thankfully, completely reversible. Minerals like calcium and magnesium form a film on the scalp and hair that regular shampoos are unable to remove. Clarifying shampoos (not meant for daily use) contain strong chelating agents that break down the layer of minerals weighing down the hair strands, which in turn lead to increased hair fall.

Unfortunately, the list of consequences goes on. The mineral residue also makes the hair dry, frizzy, and prone to tangling. At the same time, the scalp is affected and can be itchy and flaky causing more dandruff, and even greasiness! As for dyed hair, hard water leads to the colour fading sooner. In the long run, the water will render most hair products ineffective. Shampoos tend to lather less leaving you with the "unclean feeling" despite having washed it. And, conditioners and oils seem to fail at their magic of reclaiming the old glory.

For this, a quick solution to managing hard water-damaged hair is a vinegar rinse, suitably apple cider

vinegar, but essentially any kind of vinegar diluted in (bottled) water is effective. Rinses work best when the hair is in contact with the mixture for about one to two minutes on a weekly or biweekly basis. Too much exposure to vinegar will dry out the scalp leading to irritation. As vinegar is slightly acidic, it helps in dissolving the mineral layer. Nonetheless, overexposure will strip natural oils from the strands, trapping you in an everlasting cycle of dry hair, frizz, and tangles.

Hair fall

Hair fall is a side-effect of many underlying hair-related conditions. Pinpointing the main cause may take some time and effort but it leads to better efficacy of the treatment. Improper combing techniques and hair-drying methods easily damage the hair. To tackle this, always gently detangle using the wide tooth and opt for drying the hair in the air or using less vigour with the towel or heat settings. Dry, rough hair tends to tangle and detangling itself can tear apart a few strands every brush.

It is best to not let the hair reach such a stage. And even more important is to consider if your hair is brittle. In most cases, brittleness is due to lack of hydration or loss of proteins through various heat or chemical treatments. Brittle hair easily snaps under the slightest of stress. Depending on your hair needs, periodic deep conditioning with hair masks is likely to bring back the elasticity. Out of a myriad of reasons, abnormal hair loss in the shower cues towards hard water damage.

Another neglected cause of losing hair is an imbalanced diet. Daily intake of vitamin D/E, zinc, iron, biotin, protein, etc. are strongly recommended to boost hair growth and strength. An easy way to fill this gap in your diet is by incorporating dairy, eggs, nuts, and fish weekly and slowly building the regime as necessary with other products.

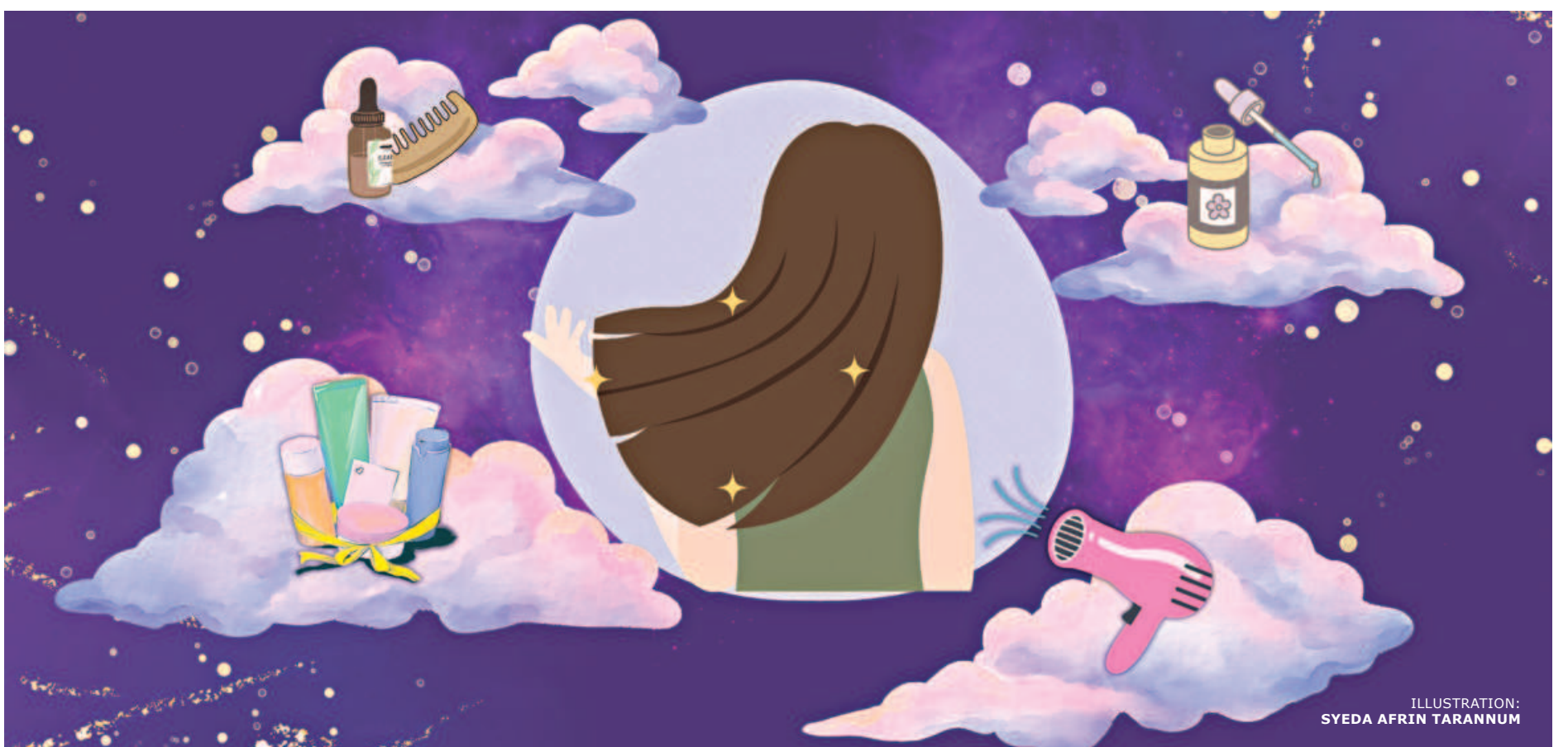


ILLUSTRATION:
SYEDA AFRIN TARANUM