



PURSUING AN MBA: IS IT STILL PRACTICAL?



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■ MUSIC ■

MAYHEM

Lady Gaga's new album is a delightfully chaotic mix of old and new

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM and SAIF SAMMI RAHAT

When I opened Spotify on March 7 and was greeted by *MAYHEM*, a brand-new Lady Gaga album — whose first track, “Disease”, sounded like a grungy, gothic callback to “Born This Way” and *The Fame Monster* — I was instantly hooked.

Following the slow and heavy opening, the second track, “Abracadabra”, is what many describe as classic Lady Gaga. Its psychedelic dance-pop sound and energetic choreography is the wave of nostalgia that numerous fans, old and young, have been craving for.

A strong suit of *MAYHEM* is in its choruses, as seen in “Garden of Eden”. The sultry track is characterised by brash and energetic vocals in its verses followed by soft vocals in its chorus, almost like it is luring the listeners into temptation.

The album presents a variety of sounds, ranging from heavy metal to vapourwave. Tracks such as “Perfect Celebrity” and “Can’t Stop the High” (bonus track) might compel one to scream the lyrics out loud while “Don’t Call Tonight” and “LoveDrug” are



songs one might blast on a lonely evening drive.

“Zombieboy” and “The Beast” were probably the most fun tracks in the album. Hedonistic and unhinged in all the right ways, they preached a complete lack of inhibition.

While the first three-quarters of the album had absolutely enraptured me, the last few tracks left me somewhat disappointed. The Taylor Swift-esque sound of “How Bad Do U Want Me” felt disconcertingly odd in her voice. “Blade of Grass”, a romantic nod to her fiancé, employed a rather common pop melody that stripped it of all its Gaganess. And arguably the biggest song of the project, “Die with a Smile”, a collaboration with Bruno Mars, felt entirely out of place.

However, despite a few duds, *MAYHEM* might just be Lady Gaga reclaiming her place as a queen of pop. She manages to pay homage to her old self and bring back the sound that enraptured so many Little Monsters while showcasing the maturity she has gained as a songwriter and musician. *MAYHEM* not only stands true to its name but also to the brand of Gaga.

OPPORTUNITIES



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EDUCATION

Struggles of writing a research paper as an UNDERGRAD STUDENT

NUSRAT MEHERIN FAIZA

Have you ever started a research paper with a head full of ideas only to hit a wall mid-way? This is a common experience for many undergrads writing their first research paper. What begins as an exciting dive into a topic can quickly devolve into a frustrating maze of tedious work. Even though the end result is rewarding, the process is filled with roadblocks that might feel insurmountable unless tackled with patience and tact.

Struggling with team coordination

One of the most challenging aspects of writing a research paper is finding the right team. Initially, teaming up may feel like a brilliant idea — tasks can be easily divided and deadlines seem within reach! But soon you realise it's not that simple. Clashing schedules, different work ethics, and last-minute panics quickly turn what was supposed to be a group effort into a source of stress. To avoid these pitfalls, set clear goals from the beginning, maintain a shared calendar to keep everyone on track, and arrange regular meetings to keep everyone accountable and organised.

Difficulty in finding study participants

Research relies on valid data, responses from survey findings, or interviews. While reaching out to people for these surveys and interviews, however, oftentimes emails sit unnoticed, messages get ignored, and forms remain incomplete. The clock keeps ticking but you keep not being able to find enough research participants to meet your data requirements. At some point, you start wondering; "Will I have enough responses to complete this research on time?" To increase participation and gather sufficient data, diversify your network and cast a wide net through social media, offer incentives to participants, and send follow-up reminders to ensure a timely submission of responses.

Facing writer's block

Your participants are ready, your research topic is on track, and the deadline is set. But then the dreaded writer's block creeps in. Ideas buzz in your mind, yet the words refuse to take shape and you end up staring at a blank page for hours on end. Every researcher knows this struggle — it's as if a battle is being waged in your mind between thoughts and words while time keeps slipping away. To get the words flowing, outline your thoughts in bullet points before expanding them into paragraphs. Discussing your ideas with a peer may also be the catalyst you need to spark creativity.



ILLUSTRATION: ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

The challenge of understanding unfamiliar topics

Writing a paper becomes more challenging when tackling a topic you know little about. Starting a paper on an unfamiliar topic can be overwhelming in and of itself; limited online resources for primary research can further complicate this process. Although this obstacle is manageable over time and with effort, the initial lack of knowledge often feels like a significant hurdle, making it difficult to know where to begin. To understand your topic clearly, reach out to professors or experts and form study groups with classmates who have a stronger grasp of the topic and can share valuable insights and resources.

Formatting and citation

Citations are far more than a formality in academic writing. They are necessary for maintaining academic integrity and safeguarding against plagiarism. The problem with this final part of the paper begins with understanding the different styles of citation — APA, MLA, Chicago, and more. From punctuation placement to italicisation, the slightest mistake can undermine the credibility of an otherwise well-organised paper. Moreover, the fear of plagiarism looms large — forgetting to cite a source can have serious academic consequences. To keep track of your sources and ensure correct formatting, use citation management tools online or

consult with a librarian to ensure accuracy.

The pressure of balancing research with coursework

A good paper needs constant effort to make progress. However, just when you think you are making progress, a string of assignments, project work, and quizzes pile up at your university. The constant switch between tasks makes it difficult to focus and research often gets sidelined. Finding a balanced routine to prioritise academics without neglecting your research becomes hard. To reduce the pressure, employ time management techniques like the Pomodoro method, which breaks work down into 25-minute intervals with short breaks, to enhance focus. If needed, discuss workload management with academic advisors to find a balanced approach.

The entire research process can lead to burnout with you constantly doubting your every effort. However, it is important to see these obstacles as part of the learning process. Each struggle is a chance to build critical thinking abilities and time management skills. And, in the end, it all feels worthwhile when you finally see your work getting published and gaining recognition from your peers.

Nusrat Meherin Faiza is a writer, tutor, and chronic overthinker. Reach out to fuel her overthinking at nmfaiza15@gmail.com



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OPPORTUNITIES

FROM BANGLADESH TO EUROPE

Erasmus+ exchange programme for undergraduate students

ALLIN MOHANA BISWAS

Studying abroad during their undergraduate years is a dream for many students, and for some, it becomes a life-changing reality. The Erasmus+ exchange programme offers students the unique opportunity to study abroad for a semester at a European university.

In Bangladesh, the Erasmus+ programme has gained momentum in recent years, with universities like Daffodil International University and Independent University, Bangladesh actively participating in exchange programmes with European institutions. Through these partnerships, students from Bangladesh are given the opportunity to travel to Europe on a fully-funded programme and study at renowned universities, experiencing new academic environments and gaining exposure to different cultures and ideas.

Morshedur Rahman Khan, a student of Information Technology & Management at Daffodil International University, and Tanfia Khan Disha, a student of Life Sciences at Independent University, Bangladesh, both took up the opportunity to participate in the Erasmus+ exchange programme.

Morshedur, who studied Computer Science at Mälardalen University in Sweden, and Tanfia, who initially studied at the Department of Agriculture & Life Sciences at the University of Maribor in Slovenia before switching to the Department of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering, found that Erasmus+ provided an opportunity that added enormous value to their academic and professional journeys.

Morshedur explained his motivation for choosing Erasmus+ by saying, "I chose to study abroad with Erasmus+ because it offered a unique chance to experience a new education system, gain international exposure, and challenge myself in an unfamiliar environment. The programme's focus on cultural exchange, academic excellence, and skill development perfectly aligned with my aspirations." He added that the Erasmus+ scholarship made it financially accessible, removing barriers that might have prevented him from pursuing his dream.

Tanfia shared, "It seemed like a great opportunity to grow, both academically and personally. I was excited to experience new cultures, meet people from different backgrounds, and gain a global perspective on my field of study."

Morshedur shared, "The best part of studying abroad was the freedom to learn, explore, and grow. Sweden's education system was eye-opening as it focused more on research, critical thinking, and practical applications than memorisation." The shift from a more traditional education system in Bangladesh to Sweden's research-driven and discussion-based approach challenged him to think in new ways and broaden his academic skills.

Tanfia found the academic challenges in Slovenia both rewarding and eye-opening. "Academically, it

was more intense than in Bangladesh, but I enjoyed the challenge. The labs were incredibly well-equipped, which allowed me to gain the hands-on experience that I wouldn't have gotten here," she shared.

At the University of Maribor in Slovenia, Tanfia was introduced to cutting-edge research in Life Sciences, which deepened her understanding of her field and gave her a sense of what the global academic landscape looks like.

Morshedur also reflected, "Studying in Europe gave me access to high-quality labs and cutting-edge research facilities. The industry-focused, practical curriculum enhanced my technical expertise and career prospects."

While academic growth is key, the personal transformation that students undergo is just as important. For Morshedur and Tanfia, living in a new country and adapting to different cultures was a major part of their experience.

Morshedur's journey in Sweden brought challenges, particularly in regards to adjusting to the long, dark winters and a new lifestyle. "The cold Swedish winter was a shock, and adjusting to the new environment

Both students immersed themselves in local cultures, further enriching their experiences.

"One fascinating aspect was the Swedes' appreciation for work-life balance and the concept of 'lagom', meaning 'just the right amount' in everything," Morshedur said. This philosophy had a significant impact on his own life, prompting him to think more critically about how he approached both work and leisure.

Tanfia embraced the diversity around her in Slovenia. "Studying abroad completely changed my perspective on diversity. Being surrounded by people from different cultures made me appreciate how unique everyone's experiences are," she reflected. Her exposure to different cultures made her more open-minded, inclusive, and respectful of others.

Another profound aspect of Erasmus+ is the friendships and networks that students build. Morshedur and Tanfia found that, while making friends initially proved challenging, the friendships they built were some of the most rewarding aspects of their experiences.

Morshedur shared, "Making friends wasn't easy at first. Swedes are reserved, but joining student events and group projects helped me connect. I met incredible people from all over the world, and by the end of my stay, I had built friendships that felt like family."

Tanfia also made lifelong friends. "Traveling with my friends was one of the highlights. We explored new cities, tried local food, and saw iconic spots like the Eiffel Tower in Paris, the Colosseum in Rome, the Hungarian Parliament Building in Budapest, and the UN Headquarters in Geneva," she said.

Looking back, both Morshedur and Tanfia

agree that Erasmus+ was an amazing experience that shaped their academic, personal, and professional lives.

"Studying abroad through Erasmus+ has given me a competitive edge for my career. It provided international exposure, taught me how to work in diverse teams, and improved my adaptability," Morshedur said.

Tanfia's perspective on her future also changed after completing her study abroad. "It completely shifted my perspective. It made me realise that the world is moving at a rapid pace, and to keep up, I need to think beyond traditional boundaries," she explained. Erasmus+ gave her the clarity and confidence to pursue her future goals with a broader vision of the world.

For students in Bangladesh, the Erasmus+ programme offers an incredible chance to experience new cultures, enhance their academic skills, and gain lifelong memories. Morshedur and Tanfia's stories offer a glimpse into the life-changing impact of studying abroad, with Erasmus+ having the potential to change the course of their lives forever.



ILLUSTRATION:
SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM

took some time. There was barely any sunlight, and I had to adjust my routine to make the most of the daylight," he explained. These early challenges helped him grow more adaptable and independent.

Tanfia's experience involved a period of adjustment too. "I walked 10 kilometres a day until I figured out the public transportation system," she recalled. She also had to adapt to cultural differences, like the importance of punctuality in Slovenia. "Punctuality was super important there, whereas in Bangladesh, being 5 minutes late is usually no big deal," Tanfia said, reflecting on how small things like this could affect her daily routine.

Both Morshedur and Tanfia were able to take these challenges in stride, ultimately benefiting from them in ways they hadn't anticipated. The experience helped them develop resilience, independence, and problem-solving skills that will serve them throughout their lives.



EDUCATION

Pursuing an MBA in 2025 IS IT STILL PRACTICAL?

IRINA JAHAN and TAASEEN MOHAMMED ISLAM

Historically, holding an MBA has always been the gold standard in management. An MBA would be the key to climbing the ever-so-daunting corporate ladder and accelerating career progression.

But times have changed, and so has the job market as well as the value of certain degrees. In light of reports that in today's job market, even MBA candidates from elite Business schools are struggling to get jobs, increased scepticism on the programme should not come as a surprise.

There used to be a time when only select institutes such as the Institute of Business Administration, Dhaka University (IBA-DU) and North South University (NSU) offered MBA degrees. It was assumed that MBA holders coming out of these universities were usually of exceptional calibre and went on to reap the benefits financially.

However, over the past decade, there's been a boom in the number of schools offering MBA degrees, whether public or private, accredited or unaccredited. Consequently, there's now a surplus of MBA degree holders fiercely competing for jobs in a contractionary economy. But what drives so many graduates to spend an additional two years pursuing a degree that does not add much supplementary value to their employability?

A big criticism of Management degrees in Bangladesh is the generalised scope of knowledge they provide. While many foreign programmes have customisable double MBA or MS degrees and unique pathways ranging from climate to technology management, the same can't be said for the ones offered in Bangladesh. Most MBA programmes here are rigidly bound to the typical management, finance, marketing, and operations concentrations. Additionally, some courses can be redundant for candidates with prior exposure to business studies, as new material may not be covered.

"I don't think an MBA adds to one's skills," says Syeda Faiza, an HR executive at a local IT company. "As a Business student, I found that it teaches the same

subject matter as undergrad courses, with a bit more depth."

As mentioned previously, MBA programmes are everywhere in universities, and their widespread availability might suggest strong industry demand. However, whether this assumption holds true remains a matter of debate.

From an employer's standpoint, having an MBA is often less important than where it was obtained from. Recruiters frequently use the reputation of an institution as a proxy for a candidate's competence.

The degree itself, however, is often seen as a way to stay competitive in a job market where mid to senior-level professionals often hold MBA degrees. In fact, some workplaces make pursuing an MBA a formal requirement for career advancement.

That being said, not everyone needs to pursue an MBA. It is arguably most beneficial for individuals from non-business backgrounds who want to acquire theoretical business acumen to advance in their careers or launch their own enterprises. For these professionals, an MBA can provide a structured foundation in business principles that they might not have encountered otherwise.

However, for those with a business background, the value of an MBA is not as clear. Career advancement is not solely tied to obtaining the degree, and other pathways can often be more efficient.

If someone is fresh out of their undergraduate studies, they may find that industry-specific certifications, such as the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) for finance, Six Sigma for process improvement, or Certified Supply Chain Analyst (CSCA) for supply chain management, offer more targeted and practical knowledge than a generalised MBA.

A major drawback of many MBA programmes, particularly in Bangladesh, is their failure to address key knowledge gaps left by undergraduate studies.

Waseka Alam, an MBA graduate from a well-known private university in Dhaka, offers a candid assessment of her experience. "MBA, in Bangladesh, is mostly book-based knowledge. In a few courses, we were

required to visit factories for group projects, but often, the employees were unwilling to share details about the business. I completed both my BBA – Bachelor of Business Administration – and MBA and to be honest, I didn't learn anything new. I already knew most of the material from my undergraduate degree, and even from my O and A level Business Studies."

An MBA programme should train students for real-world business challenges, equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate complex management environments. If a programme fails to do so, it raises serious concerns about the return on investment. Without industry engagement, working on case studies that reflect current challenges, and exposure to emerging business trends, an MBA can feel like a redundant extension of undergraduate education.

While an MBA may not be the most efficient way to gain specialised skills, it can offer valuable networking opportunities.

"Thanks to a couple of years of experience working in HR alongside pursuing my MBA, I can see myself getting promotions more easily or moving to another company in a better position with better pay," explains Faiza.

Of course, while an MBA might offer an initial career boost, long-term success still depends on continuous learning, adaptability, and staying relevant in a dynamic business world. Also, an MBA degree might not be the career-fixing band-aid it used to be, but it could still help you get your foot through the door in certain job spheres, especially in lucrative industries such as banking, finance, consulting, and technology.

Furthermore, having an MBA degree will allow candidates to be taken more seriously at work. "With the stamp of an MBA degree, you get to assert yourself into leadership positions more easily," says Faiza.

Having said all that, is an MBA still practical in 2025? That depends entirely on your goals, the industries you plan to work in, and the specific career-centric value that an MBA programme can provide. For some, the investment will pay off while for others, alternative learning paths may prove far more rewarding.

NOTICE BOARD



BRAC UNIVERSITY holds seminar on women's safety

Student club Peace Café and the Counseling and Wellness Centre of BRAC University, in collaboration with the platform Cyber Support for Women and Children (CSWC), recently organised a seminar titled "Accelerating Women's Safety: International Women's Day".

Held at the university's Merul Badda campus in Dhaka celebrating International Women's Day, the seminar focused on addressing the challenges and ways to ensure women's safety in Bangladesh.

Inaugurating the programme, Dr David Dowland, Registrar, BRAC University, emphasised the crucial role of students and youth in driving social change. He expressed confidence in the determination of young minds to create a safer environment for women and children.

Manzoor Hasan OBE, Executive Director, Centre for Peace and Justice, BRAC University, focused on three key points. They include the alarming statistics of violence against women and children in Bangladesh, multifaceted challenges in addressing this issue, and strategies to increase youth engagement in combating violence and promoting gender equality.

Tania Sharmin, Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting Analyst, UN Women, underscored the importance of strengthening grassroots feminist movements and increasing women's political representation. She called for intensifying efforts to ensure women's safety, promoting equality in decision-making, and enhancing digital inclusion.

Safina Binte Enayet, Counsellor, Counseling and Wellness Centre, expressed concern over rising incidents of violence against women and children, highlighting the severe short-term and long-term psychological harm it causes. She urged all to jointly work towards eliminating inequality and being more mindful of others while prioritising mental health.

Manisha Biswas, Senior Officer (Legal and Research), Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust, which runs the CSWC platform, explained definitions and elements of cyber harassment and highlighted legal measures that victims could take.

Minhaj Aman, Research Coordinator, Digitally Right, which describes itself as a private company offering critical knowledge and solutions regarding information flows, highlighted an alarming rise of technology-facilitated gender-based violence in Bangladesh. Pointing out a lack of evidence-based research on this issue within the country, he urged prioritising conducting studies to generate more credible data.

Sadat Hasan, Founder and President, Cyber Teens, shed light on their initiative for enhancing online safety for teenagers through its helpline, educational programmes, and community outreach.

Tahsina Rahman, Joint Director, Student Life, BRAC University, and Sorna Rani Das, President, Peace Café, also spoke at the event.

Grand finale of Socio Biz 2024 – a social business idea competition for university students – held



The Daily Star, in collaboration with Grameen Danone Foods Limited, yesterday concluded its social business idea competition for university students, Socio Biz 2024, with Keeron and Campus as partners.

The champion title was awarded to Team Micdrop from the Islamic University of Technology (IUT), while Team Pritilata from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology (SUST) was recognised as the runner-up.

The primary goal of this competition was to inspire young innovators to create and launch social enterprises that extend beyond the traditional profit-centric business approaches.

More than 250 teams from 69 universities across Bangladesh entered the competition. Following the preliminary round held online, 20 teams qualified to participate in the online presentation stage. Among them, the top six teams ultimately advanced to the finale, where they



showcased their ideas to the judges.

The winning teams were selected by a distinguished panel representing Grameen Danone Foods Limited including its managing director Dipesh Nag, its marketing and sales director Surayya Siddiqua; and Mahzabin Ferdous, general secretary of BANCAT.

Md Tajdin Hassan, Chief Business Officer of The Daily Star, expressed his gratitude to Grameen Danone management, the judges, and all the partners for making the initiative a success.



Participants of Socio Biz 2024, a social business idea competition for university students, with the judges at the Grand Finale event held at The Daily Star Centre yesterday. The Daily Star, in collaboration with Grameen Danone Foods Limited, organised the event, with Keeron and Campus as partners.

PHOTO: STAR

Where do medical assistants fit into our health system?

MEHRAB JAMEE & AHNAF TAHMEED PURNA

Healthcare is a collaborative exercise. Healthcare professionals of different levels and qualifications work under the same system to provide patients with optimised healthcare. However, a lack of clear demarcation within the infrastructure and the transgression of existing boundaries by medical assistants, in particular, have led to controversy and widespread protests across the country.

In what capacity have Diploma Medical Practitioners been working?

There are currently 16 government-run Medical Assistant Training Schools with over 200 non-government MATS-related institutes. These schools offer a Diploma in Medicine Faculty (DMF) course of three years with a year's internship. The qualification required to get into one of these schools is a minimum 2.5 GPA in SSC or equivalent exams.

According to the Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) Act of 2010, the BMDC recognises MATS as 'medical assistants'. It also has strict guidelines for the 73 drugs they can administer and the minimal external surgeries they can perform (under the supervision of a qualified doctor, of course).

Following these guidelines, they can apply to work as Sub Assistant Community Medical Officers (SACMO) under the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) at different NGOs, or practice privately in remote areas. Registered Medical Practitioners (RMP) or Local Medical Assistant and Family Planning (LMAFP) are entirely separate courses, requiring 3 to 8 months to complete. These degrees, producing "village doctors", are less regulated. Moreover, applicants can range from SSC graduates to postgraduates in any subject. This degree is, however, not recognised by the BMDC.

Why is it a risk to public healthcare?

In August 2024, the BMDC ruled that Diploma Medical Practitioners can use the title "Dr" before their names. The use of "Dr" has given rise to widespread condemnation from the MBBS community, claiming that the rural populace often cannot differentiate between an MBBS doctor and a DMF doctor. They see the prefix "Dr" and immediately feel a sense of security. Many DMF doctors, capitalising on this trust, do not adhere to the 73-drug list published by the BMDC and perform complex surgeries or even cesarean sections without supervision.

Moreover, medical assistants prescribing ultrasonography of the uterus in male patients and antibiotics for more than three months have sparked widespread outrage on social media. There is no international precedent for paramedics or medical assistant equivalents to use "Dr". But MATS students continue to demand that they should be allowed to practice as Diploma Medical Practitioners because they've gone through four years of schooling. Nonetheless, years of neglect in the formalisation of the MATS curriculum and a lack of oversight in the quality of these schools have led to instances like the ones stated above.

Can MATS have a role in our healthcare system?

Doctors are often seen as the backbone of the

healthcare system. However, the system relies on a range of professionals to function effectively. MATS graduates, as their name suggests, are trained to assist medical practitioners, and their skills fill critical gaps in Bangladesh's healthcare infrastructure, particularly in emergency and rural care. Globally, paramedics play a pivotal role in emergency response which significantly improves patient outcomes.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), countries with robust paramedic systems have seen a reduction in preventable deaths caused by delays in emergency care. Bangladesh, however, lacks a standardised paramedic workforce. With proper training and regulatory frameworks, MATS graduates can become skilled paramedics, addressing both healthcare needs and unemployment among this group. For instance, India's introduction of paramedic training programmes under the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has demonstrated how such initiatives can enhance healthcare delivery while creating employment opportunities.

Furthermore, integrating MATS graduates into the healthcare system aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 3, which stresses universal health coverage and access to quality

care. By leveraging their potential, Bangladesh can take a significant step towards building a more resilient and inclusive healthcare system. The protests, therefore, are a wake-up call for systemic reform that benefits both healthcare professionals and the population at large.

The dilemma of using "Dr"

On March 12, 2025, the High Court directed that only individuals who have completed their MBBS and BDS degrees can use the title "Dr". The court also clarified that those who previously used the title despite not completing MBBS or BDS degrees cannot be punished. However, any such use from the day that the verdict was ruled would be considered an offence under the relevant law.

The dilemma, however, over MATS graduates using the title "Dr" underscores a deeper struggle for recognition within the rigid professional hierarchy. While their demand reflects a desire for respect and validation, it also risks conflating their role with that of fully qualified doctors, potentially leading to confusion and ethical concerns.

The title "Dr" is not merely an honorific; it signifies years of rigorous medical training and expertise, which MATS graduates, despite their valuable contributions, have not undergone. Allowing them to adopt this title could inadvertently dilute its significance

and undermine public trust in healthcare credentials. This issue is further complicated by the fact that even village doctors use the title "Dr" in some cases, despite receiving less standardised training than MATS graduates. Their use of the title has similarly sparked debates about professionalism and the integrity of medical credentials. This dual dilemma really accentuates a systemic issue: the lack of clear titles and career pathways for paramedical professionals in Bangladesh.

Instead of focusing solely on the title, the solution should lie in creating formalised roles and titles that reflect their expertise, such as "Paramedic Officer" or "Medical Assistant Specialist" for MATS graduates, and "Community Health Officer" for SACMOs. This approach would grant them the respect they deserve while maintaining the integrity of professional distinctions. Countries with advanced healthcare systems have successfully integrated paramedics into their frameworks, recognising their indispensable role in emergency and rural care without conflating their qualifications with those of doctors.

Ultimately, the fight for recognition should not be about a title but about creating a system that values their contributions and provides clear career pathways. Respect is earned not through prefixes but through the quality of service and the impact of one's work. What matters most is the value they bring to healthcare, not the letters before their name.

Mehrab Jamee is an activist at Sandhani and a fifth-year medical student at Mugda Medical College.

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PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

The Bangladeshi girl excelling in the international robotics scene

MAHPARA FAATIN

In an era where technology is evolving at an unprecedented pace, one Bangladeshi high school student is proving that the future of robotics is in capable hands. Nasheetat Zainah Rahman, a 12th-grade student at Mastermind English Medium School, is not just a robotics enthusiast — she is a trailblazer in the field. Over the past six years, she has actively competed in robotics olympiads at both national and international levels, earning multiple accolades, including three gold medals at the International Robot Olympiad and five gold medals at the Bangladesh Robot Olympiad.

But her passion for robotics extends far beyond competitions. She has delved into research on increasing female participation in robotics olympiads, had a poster paper published at the Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing '24 as well as a full paper accepted at GE@ ICSE 2025 (Gender Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Software Engineering) — both highly prestigious international academic conferences.

In this interview, Nasheetat reflects on her journey,



PHOTOS: COURTESY



the challenges she has overcome, and her vision for the future of robotics in Bangladesh.

Campus (C): Could you share how your journey in robotics began?

Nasheetat (N): My fascination with computers began at a young age — I would spend endless hours on Microsoft Paint, drawing, or playing games. Since I loved gaming so much, my mom introduced me to Scratch,

a block-based programming platform. The ability to create my own games felt almost magical — it was my first step into the world of programming.

At the same time, I had a deep love for LEGO, and when I discovered the LEGO Mindstorms EV3 robotics kit, I was instantly captivated by the idea of building and programming my own robot. That was the moment when my robotics journey began.

Eager to learn more, I attended an Arduino workshop which introduced me to more advanced robotics concepts. It was there that I first heard about the Bangladesh Robot Olympiad — a discovery that led to years of participating in competitions, countless hours of building and coding, and an ever-growing passion for robotics.

Campus (C): What resources have been most valuable in your robotics journey?

N: Workshops have played a pivotal role in my robotics journey. The Bangladesh Robot Olympiad regularly hosts beginner-friendly workshops that make learning robotics accessible and engaging. These workshops were a lifesaver when I was just starting out and they helped me build a solid foundation.

Beyond workshops, YouTube has been an invaluable resource, offering hands-on project tutorials that feel like having countless mentors at my fingertips. I also frequently use a website called Instructables which provides detailed step-by-step guides for various robotics projects.

When it comes to books, Mishal Islam's *Srishtir Ullashe Robotics* series has been particularly insightful, breaking down complex robotics concepts in a simple and engaging way.

Campus (C): What has it been like representing Bangladesh for so many years? Could you share some of your favorite memories and the challenges you've faced along the way?

N: Representing Bangladesh on the international stage for so many years has been an unforgettable journey. One of the most beautiful moments was hearing our team's name announced as winners for gold, and walking onto the stage, holding our country's flag. The sense of pride and joy I felt in that moment is indescribable.

But the medals are only part of the story. The memories I've made with my teammates are what

I cherish the most. We've spent weeks together, supporting each other through challenges, exploring new cities, and pulling all-nighters working on our robots. Those moments of camaraderie made the experience truly special.

Of course, the journey hasn't been without its struggles. As girls in robotics, we often have to face those who doubt our abilities. Even after we had proven ourselves, people's scepticism lingered. It was challenging and it affected my confidence, but these obstacles also taught me resilience. I used to have a tendency to give up when things got tough. However, through these competitions, I discovered a side of myself that refuses to quit, even when everything seems to fall apart.

Six years is a long time, filled with both highs and lows, but the fact that I never gave up makes me incredibly proud. This journey has been full of lessons, growth, and memories I'll carry with me forever.

Campus (C): What are your future aspirations?

N: Looking ahead, I hope to become a robotics engineer focused on developing innovations that address real-world problems and make a positive social impact. Additionally, I'd love to mentor young aspiring roboticists, guiding them through the same journey that shaped me. Helping the next generation of innovators discover their passion for robotics and watching them grow will be just as rewarding as the innovations I hope to create.

Campus (C): What advice would you give to those who are just starting to learn robotics?

N: Robotics can definitely be frustrating at times — when your circuit won't connect or your code doesn't work as you imagined. But trust me, the moment your creation finally comes to life, you will experience one of the most rewarding feelings.

It takes patience, but it's worth every bit of effort. The idea that you can build something entirely from your imagination and watch it move, think, or interact is simply magical. Robotics might seem complex and overwhelming at first, but remember, I was once a beginner too. Don't give up when things get tough because the moment it all clicks is truly unforgettable.

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