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ANIME NETFLIX'S DEVIL MAY CRY

A reimagining with mixed results

SABIL SADAT ZAHIR

Netflix's *Devil May Cry* animated series provides a new take on the classic games released by Capcom. While the show has stellar animation and a mostly enjoyable story, it diverges from the source material in polarising ways.

The series primarily follows demon hunter Dante as he tries to stop an invasion from Hell while coming to terms with his childhood trauma and lineage. He is driven towards this quest by a government agency known as DARKCOM and a powerful demonic figure named the White Rabbit, who serves as the main antagonist.

The show does not directly adapt any particular game from the franchise, though it does borrow elements from *Devil May Cry*



(2001) and *Devil May Cry 3: Dante's Awakening* to tell a completely original story. Dante himself is portrayed quite well and retains his aura from the source materials. The games are known for having amazing soundtracks, and the show continues that tradition. The animation and action sequences in the show are absolutely stunning. The show also features lots of fun easter eggs to the *Devil May Cry* games as well as other franchises from Capcom.

Now, to the weak parts. While the villain's backstory is well-written, he falls into a particular trope that can be best described as "the villain is actually right, but he must be the bad guy, so let's make him crazy". His villainous actions directly contradict his noble goals and character during the flashbacks, and the show doesn't do a good job of

showing that transition into madness.

The weakest aspect of the show has to be the portrayal of Lady/Mary, a fan-favourite character from the games. In *Devil May Cry 3*, she had an amazing character arc that involved her overcoming childhood trauma caused by her father and changing her perception of demons. While some of those elements remain in the show, Lady is, instead, portrayed as a cold government agent who is awfully discriminatory towards demons to the point where she makes lots of counterproductive choices in the plot.

Overall, *Devil May Cry* is a fun show with great animation, but it is best enjoyed as an alternate take on the source material. For the true *Devil May Cry* experience, it's probably best to just play the games instead.

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EDUCATION

Should you opt for the GED diploma programme?

SILWAT QUADER

The General Education Development (GED) diploma is a popular alternative to the traditional high school diploma. The GED testing system is administered under the American Council of Education and is an internationally recognised high school diploma. It primarily caters to students who are unable to complete their high school (grade 12) education or prefer not to take the conventional high school diploma route. But what precisely does securing a GED mean?

The GED diploma is the credential students get after passing its examinations. It shows that the student has abilities similar to those of a graduating high school senior or someone who has completed their A levels/HSC. The standardised test assesses knowledge in four core academic subjects and enables GED diploma holders to qualify for higher education.

Anybody who is at least 18 years old is qualified to sit for the GED diploma test. The exam is conducted electronically in selected testing centres across the country. In addition, the candidate has to be approved by an authorised GED prep provider before they can sit for the exam.

The cost of each of the four subjects is around USD 80 – required to be paid in full during registration.

Structure of the GED test

As we've already mentioned, the exam comprises four core subjects, of which students must demonstrate a strong understanding. The mathematical section of the test covers topics on algebra, geometry, and data analysis. It is called Mathematical Reasoning and is a 115-minute exam.

The second subject is Science, emphasising scientific reasoning and interpretation. The exam covers life science, physical science, earth science, and space science. This section is 90 minutes long.

The third subject is Social Studies, which focuses on critical thinking and document analysis skills. It is a 70-minute test that covers history, geography, government, civics, and economics. The fourth and final subject on which the test is held is Reasoning Through Language Arts (RLA). It is a 150-minute test which evaluates reading comprehension, language, grammar, and writing skills.

The GED scores examinees on a scale of 100-200 per subject. A minimum score of 145 on each subject is required to pass. If a candidate fails to meet this requirement in any of the four subjects, they can register again for the particular subject.

How to prepare for the GED test

There are quite a few ways students can prepare for the GED test, such as enrolling in GED classes conducted by certified centres in the country. Students enrol in the courses which help them prepare for their upcoming exam by conducting additional trial tests at the end of the courses.

Many students also self-study with the help of available online resources, guidebooks, and other available materials. Furthermore, there are also other online programmes which help candidates prepare for the test.

Difference between high school and GED Diploma

A traditional high school diploma – that is, grade 11 and grade 12 – takes around two years to complete, while a GED diploma can be earned within a few months. When sitting for the GED test, candidates have the liberty to choose

their examination dates, unlike with a high school diploma exam. However, high school learning allows for a more in-depth and hands-on educational journey. Both diplomas will make the candidate eligible for university admission though.

The most effective and convenient feature of the GED testing system is that it doesn't have an age restriction. Anyone unable to complete high school can take the test at any age and time, and secure the equivalence certificate.

Where is the GED diploma accepted?

Some foreign universities accept GED scores, including those in the UK, USA, Canada, China, South Korea, Japan, etc., for international students. Some competitive universities and majors may have additional requirements such as SAT/ACT, IELTS/TOEFL scores, or advanced coursework. For universities in Bangladesh, Universal College Bangladesh (UCB) and other foreign universities that have operational branches in the country, such as University College Sedaya International (UCSI), officially accept the GED diploma as part of their admission requirement.

Taking the GED test can be a worthwhile option for those who could not complete their high school education as well as for those looking for something other than HSC and A level examinations. Students with learning difficulties can also consider the GED testing system due to its short duration, concise coursework, and the flexibility it provides.

The GED provides an accessible path forward with available study resources, practice tests, and official testing centres equipped to facilitate the standardised testing system.

Silwat Quader is majoring in Economics at NSU.



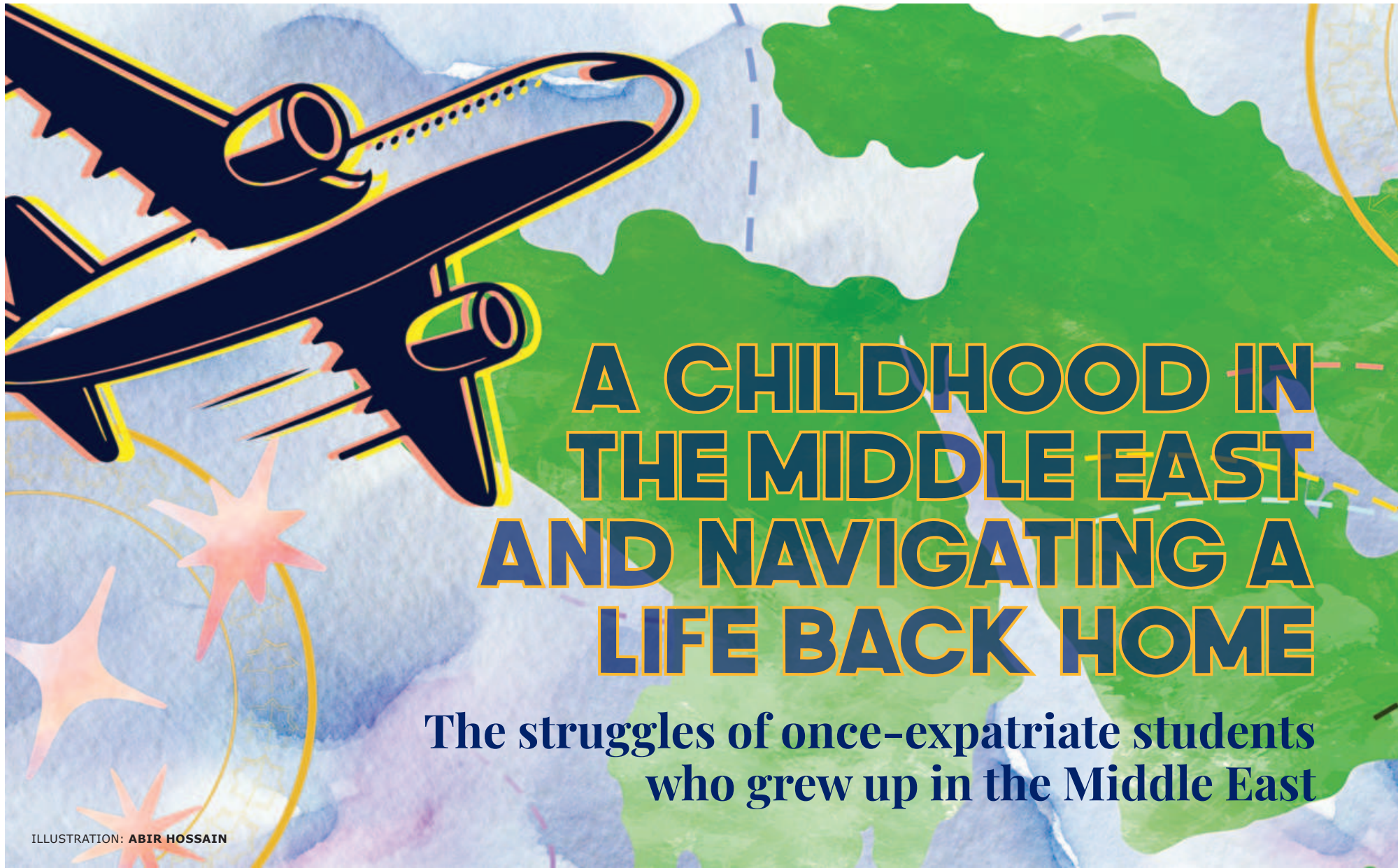
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TAZRIN RASHID PRITHA

In recent decades, the rapid economic expansion in the Middle East, driven by oil revenues and initiatives to diversify economies, has generated job opportunities and attracted migrants seeking a better life. Today, approximately 43 million people in the Middle East-North Africa region were born in another country or territory. Among them, around 3.6 million immigrants are from Bangladesh, residing primarily in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, with smaller populations in Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and Jordan.

The children of these expats mostly study in embassy-run schools, which either follow the British Curriculum or the National Curriculum of Bangladesh. Tahasina Tasnim Afra, a graduate of Bangladesh International School- Muscat, said, "I sat for my O level and A level exams under the Pearson Edexcel board. My classes were mostly conducted in English. It might come off as a surprise, but I do not speak a word of Arabic, even after living in Oman my entire life. From my experience, many expats I've met in the Arab world also know only a few words but not enough to speak fluently. I feel that this language barrier is one of the primary factors contributing to the Arab-non-Arab segregation."

Adding to this conversation, Md Ahad, an alumnus of Bangladesh International School-Riyadh, and currently a manager at Factory Makabes Al Sharq for Metal Products, said, "I studied under the Bangla medium curriculum until HSC. We even sat for the exams at the exact time students in Bangladesh did."

Ahad also noted, "Our teachers were Bangladeshi migrants like us."

However, Shazzadur Rahman, a software engineer and a

former student of Bangladesh International School-Riyadh, pointed out, "The teacher-student ratio was off. There would be only one or two teachers for each subject."

He further explained, "The only teachers available to teach the curriculum were the school teachers. As a result, we had to go for private tuition under these very same teachers. Unlike students in Bangladesh, who had the flexibility to learn from different teachers if they struggled to understand their current ones, we were stuck with the same set of teachers."

"Moreover, since we were studying under the national curriculum, our competition was not supposed to be just with our peers inside the classroom in Riyad," said Ahad.

"Our competition was actually on a much larger scale, but we never got to realise that. Students in Bangladesh compete with their neighbours, cousins, and so on. Healthy competition is beneficial. It pushes one to improve further and stay in the habit of studying regularly. An absence of that leads to a lack of motivation," said Shazzad.

"Unlike Saudi Arabia and Oman, Kuwait doesn't have an embassy-run Bangladeshi school," informed Hashmita, a Bangali-Filipino born and raised in the State of Kuwait. "I studied in an Indian school and completed my education under the CBSE board," said Hashmita. "As a result, I did not really know much about the culture and heritage of Bangladesh. As a matter of fact, I came to learn about the liberation war of Bangladesh and the atrocities committed by the Pakistani army after taking a Bangladesh Studies course in my first semester of university," added Hashmita.

Bangladeshi students in the Middle East typically study there until the 12th grade before moving to Bangladesh for their undergraduate studies, while their families often remain behind.

Afra further said, "There are a few decent universities in

Oman. The ones that are worth considering charge very high tuition fees to the international students compared to the locals. I had no other choice but to shift back to Bangladesh and made up my mind to sit for the medical admission test."

Shazzad said, "It is the same case in Saudi Arabia where I feel that the quality of undergraduate education isn't as great. Compared to that, Bangladeshi universities are doing far better. The only difference with Oman is that the tuition fee for a bachelor's degree is equally expensive for both locals and expats in Saudi Arabia. I can study at top-tier private universities in Bangladesh at half that price."

Shazzad also said, "Saudi Arabia is a great option for master's and PhD programmes though, and universities attract students from all over the world, including the United States."

The admission season in Bangladesh lasts for about three to four months at most. It is crucial to utilise this period efficiently to secure a seat at one's target university. However, for many students returning from the Middle East, adjusting to a new environment during this critical phase poses significant challenges.

Shazzad highlighted this difficulty, saying, "It's impossible to focus entirely on studying when a large part of this period is spent just trying to adjust to the surroundings."

For some, the living situation made the transition even harder. Afra shared, "I had to stay at a relative's place during the admission phase, but they made me feel very unwelcome. I missed my parents dearly, and the food didn't suit me at all. I vomited more times than I could count."

Echoing Afra's struggles, Hashmita added, "I also fell sick regularly and even fainted once. When I saw a doctor, he told me I wasn't getting enough nutrients from my diet.

Ironically, I was eating more food here than I did in Kuwait, but the average diet here simply isn't as nutrient-rich."

Aside from health and emotional struggles, transportation was another major adjustment for returning students.

"In Saudi, we had our own car for commuting," said Shazzad. "Suddenly having to rely on public transport was a huge inconvenience in the beginning. On top of that, Dhaka is notorious for its traffic. I was not prepared for how many hours I would have to waste just sitting in traffic."

Hashmita also shared her shock at the chaotic traffic situation. "People here are less eager to follow traffic rules," she said. "Once, a bus got so close to the CNG I was in that I thought I was going to die. The driver just laughed and told me, 'This is how people drive in Bangladesh.' In Kuwait, cars stop to let pedestrians cross. Here, if I stop, the car will run over me," she sighed.

These struggles inevitably affected students' performances in their entrance exams.

Shazzad added, "On top of these challenges, we were already behind

compared to the local admission candidates, who had been preparing diligently for at least two to three years. That certainly didn't help. I remember feeling completely lost in the early days of my preparation."

For some expatriate students, the challenges began even earlier due to a lack of access to information about the admission process.

Ahad shared, "I wasn't even aware that the admission season had started in Bangladesh. One of the biggest drawbacks of being an expatriate is that we tend to miss out on crucial information like this."

He explained that he only found out about the exams by chance. "I had travelled to Bangladesh to resolve a passport issue. After landing, I learned that the Faculty of Business Studies at Dhaka University was about to conduct its admission exam. The only reason I am a Dhaka University graduate today is because the stars aligned in my favour," he elaborated.

Students who studied under a foreign curriculum faced additional hurdles when applying to their desired universities in Bangladesh. One of the biggest challenges was obtaining an equivalence certificate. An equivalence certificate shows the converted 10th and 12th qualifications to the National Curriculum standard.

Hashmita shared her experience, "While students from the British curriculum also need to go through this process, it is much easier for them because many students follow that curriculum. As a result, university authorities are familiar with the conversion process. Since very few students from the Indian curriculum come to Bangladesh for higher education, the university authorities were unfamiliar with how to handle my case. This led to a lengthy and complicated procedure for me. I had to appear before a jury of six to seven members, who carefully reviewed my transcripts, passport, and other official documents. They also asked me numerous questions. The entire process lasted an entire day and was extremely exhausting."

Many students returning from the Middle East also struggle to adapt to the university environment in Bangladesh. Hashmita said, "Since I am part Filipino and part Bangali, my parents chose English as the primary language at home. My classes in Kuwait were also conducted in English, so my Bangla is not as strong as I would have liked."

She added, "I struggle to keep up with my classes since they are usually conducted in a mix of Bangla and English."

Another challenge these students face is difficulty in relating to their peers. Afra said, "Our life experiences shape who we become. They influence our likes, dislikes, and sense of humour. Because of this, I find it hard to connect with people here."

Hashmita added, "My closest friend in university is an expatriate from Saudi Arabia. I feel he is the only one who truly understands the struggles I am going through,

especially that constant feeling of being out of place."

For other students, universities provide their first experience of a diverse environment. Ahad said, "Our classes in Riyadh were segregated by gender, and our classmates came from similar socio-economic and religious backgrounds."

He added, "Bangladesh, by comparison, is a very diverse country where people of different religions coexist. There are people from many indigenous communities here as well. As a result, classroom discussions offered new perspectives and were a breath of fresh air."

Although these students' families used to stay behind when they moved to Bangladesh for university, this is rarely the case anymore. "Oman had temporarily suspended dependency visas for Bangladeshis and later increased the visa costs, making it difficult for many families to continue living in Oman," mentioned Afra.

A similar trend can be seen in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia as the entire Middle East undergoes reformation. Hashmita said, "Kuwait is undergoing Kuwaitisation – a policy ensuring that Kuwaiti nationals get more job opportunities and reducing reliance on foreign workers. They started laying off expats, refusing to stamp working visas for those over the age of 65."

"As my father was over 65, our visas soon expired, and my family had to relocate," added Hashmita.

Hashmita also mentioned, "My mother is a working woman, and she was below 65. Yet, they refused to renew the visa as the husband is considered to be the sole breadwinner even if both spouses are in the workforce. The dependency visas are registered under his name."

Shazzad said, "A lot of rules have been changed recently in Saudi Arabia, which exponentially increased living costs and compelled many families to move back to Bangladesh. Additionally, many government institutions started getting acquired by private companies. They started implementing new rules and regulations. Thus, our family had to shift back to Bangladesh as the family visa got cancelled."

Many of these students have expressed a desire to move back to the Middle East if given the opportunity. Shazzad said, "Living in Saudi Arabia would allow me to perform Umrah more frequently."

Others want to return because of the safety and security offered by Middle Eastern countries. Afra said, "I had my own driving license in Oman and used to travel freely with my friends. Given the rise in violence against women and the cases I hear about in the news, I can't imagine travelling alone here."

However, securing a job in the Middle East as a foreigner is not easy, especially when there is no longer a family member back there. Ahad explained, "Saudi Arabia operates on a referral system. Job hirings aren't as open to foreigners – it's a much more gated process. Openings aren't publicly announced, and foreigners cannot just apply anywhere. Having a referral from a Saudi national significantly helps."

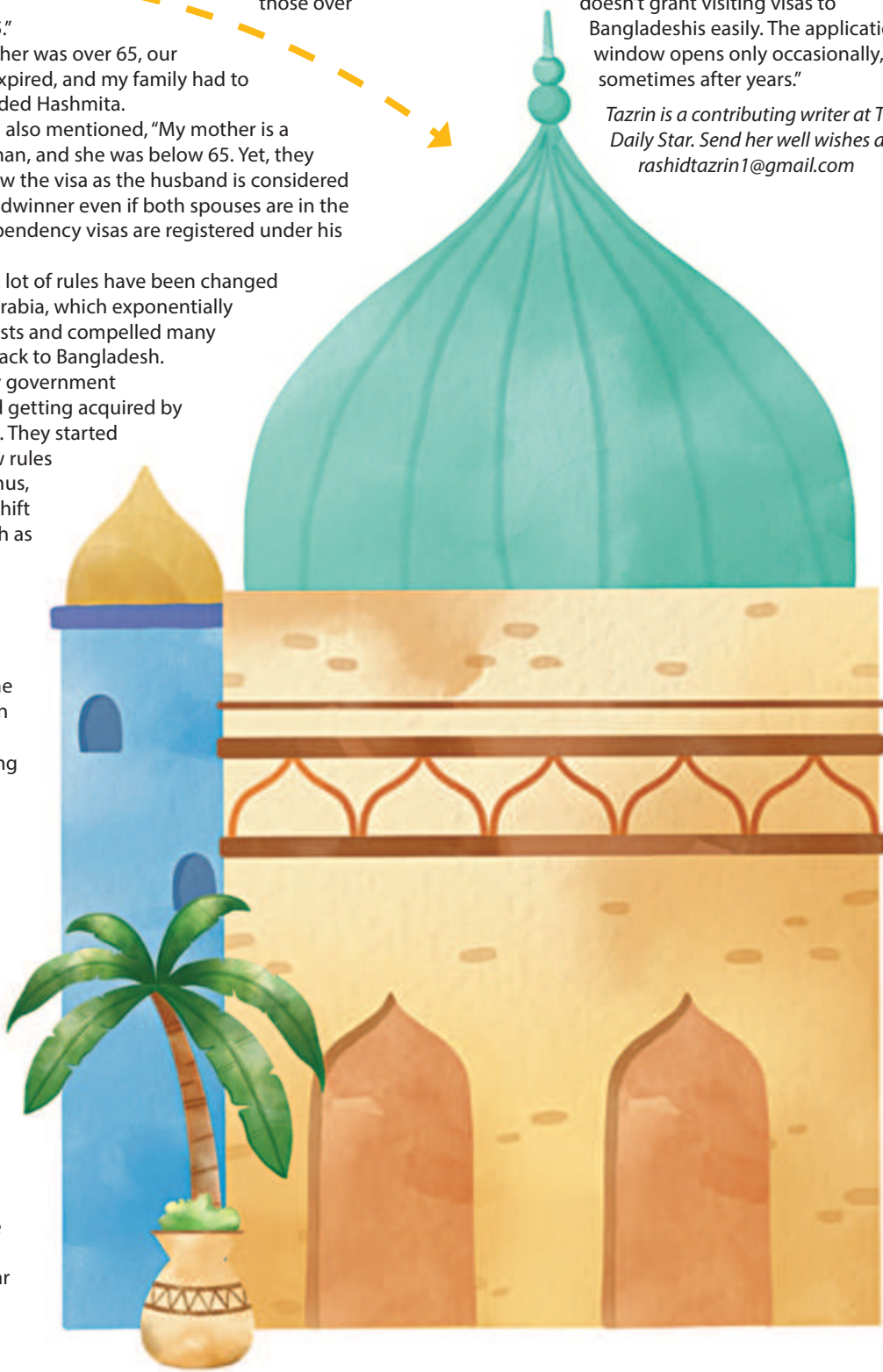
He added, "Moreover, getting professional degrees like Chartered Accountant (CA) and Certified Management Accountant (CMA) accredited costs around BDT 2 to 4 lakhs. Professionals such as engineers must also pass a licensing exam before they can officially use their titles."

However, for many of these students, these countries were home, even if temporarily. Nevertheless, the transition is one that is often complex and may have far-reaching impacts on the concept of home itself, and the ideas of their own identities.

Afra shared, "Sure, the Middle East has its flaws, just like anywhere else. But it has been my home for most of my life. I know I'm not an Arab, yet I don't feel like a local here either. It is a complicated identity to navigate."

Echoing Afra's sentiment, Hashmita added, "It would be nice to visit sometimes, but Kuwait doesn't grant visiting visas to Bangladeshis easily. The application window opens only occasionally, sometimes after years."

Tazrin is a contributing writer at The Daily Star. Send her well wishes at rashidtazrin1@gmail.com



STUDY ABROAD

4 UK UNIVERSITIES offering scholarships to Bangladeshi students for September 2025

TAMJIDUL HOQUE

For students who are considering going to the UK to pursue their higher studies, a key factor to consider is the finances required to do it. The financial burden may seem too high at times for students and that's why some universities provide partial scholarships to ease that burden and allow students to pursue their study abroad dreams.

Here are some UK universities that provide scholarships for which Bangladeshi students are eligible.

University of Sussex

University of Sussex, a public research university located in East Sussex, England, is offering the "Sussex Bangladesh Scholarship" worth GBP 4,000 for graduate applicants and GBP 4,500 over three years for undergraduate applicants from Bangladesh in the form of tuition reduction.

There is no limit on the number of scholarships available and it is applied automatically when you receive an offer of a place to study at the university. The confirmation of the scholarship will be sent by email after receiving the offer.

Students, however, must be self-financing to be eligible for the scholarship, and the awards cannot be combined with any other Sussex-funded scholarship.

The deadline to apply for the scholarship is September



1, 2025.

University of Surrey

University of Surrey, a public research university in Surrey, England, is offering the "International Excellence Award" worth GBP 5,000 for international students applying for both postgraduate and undergraduate programmes in the form of a tuition fee reduction.

To secure the scholarships, students must have an offer from the University of Surrey and complete the scholarship

application form. The scholarship is merit-based and its recipients are decided by the scholarship awards panel.

The application deadline for this scholarship is July 31, 2025.

University of Glasgow

The University of Glasgow, a public research university located in Glasgow, Scotland, and a member of the prestigious Russell Group, is offering the "World Changers Glasgow Scholarship" for applicants from various countries including Bangladesh. The scholarship is worth GBP 5,000 in the form of a tuition fee reduction.

The scholarship is available for students applying to select postgraduate programmes and no separate application for the scholarship is required. Students will be sent a communication confirming their scholarship after they receive their offer.

Leeds Beckett University

Leeds Beckett University, a public university in Leeds, England, is offering the "Leeds Law School International Scholarship" worth GBP 6,750 per year over the course of three years for undergraduate LLB applicants and GBP 6,500 for students applying for LLM courses in the form of tuition fee reduction.

OFF CAMPUS

Team Bored Tunnelers secures a place among the top six teams in Elon Musk's "NOT A BORING COMPETITION"



PHOTO: COURTESY

FATIMA ASHRAF

Team Bored Tunnelers has proudly secured a place among the top six teams in the 2025 edition of Elon Musk's "Not-a-Boring Competition", placing Bangladesh among the top four countries in the competition. This is a historic achievement for the nation as Bored Tunnelers was the sole representative of Asia.

What started as a dream between three friends – Shaekh Mohammed Shithil, Shahriar Iqbal Mahim, and Fahin Uddin Enam – has now become a national symbol of innovation. Formed back in 2023, the team has grown into a group of over 30 young engineers and

students, uniting talents from ten different universities across Bangladesh. Together, they took on one of the most challenging engineering competitions in the world, hosted by The Boring Company – founded by Elon Musk – in Bastrop, Texas. Last year, they won the prestigious 'Rookie Award', making their entrance into the competition noteworthy.

The competition spanned from March 24 to March 30 and included several technical rounds before the final "Dig Day" round. On the first day, teams had to present their "Mining Readiness Review (MRR)", showcasing their overall preparation and they visited key parts of The Boring Company's facilities, including the famous PRUFROCK-3 and PRUFROCK-4 tunnel boring machines.

In the following days, each subsystem of the team's machine – hydraulics, electrical, mechanical, and software – was thoroughly inspected. Through these inspections, Bored Tunnelers had to prove that their design could withstand the real challenges of underground boring.

The final testing and digging race was where each team's tunnel boring machine was put to the test to see

who could dig the most, dig the safest, and navigate the best.

For a team coming from a developing country with limited access to high-end R&D infrastructure, their journey was far from easy. But this only made the appreciation they received even more meaningful. "Our cutterhead was the best out there in the competition," said Md Apu Bhuiyan, the team's head of manufacturing. "The cutterhead – the rotating front part of the machine that breaks through the ground – was praised not only for its efficiency but also for how cleverly it was engineered under resource constraints."

Team Bored Tunnelers' journey has also opened doors for investments and support in deep-tech innovation in Bangladesh. With the Bangladesh Investment Development Authority (BIDA) recently showing serious interest in supporting high-tech and engineering startups, there's a sense of new possibility. Under the guidance of forward-thinking advisors, there is a renewed push to fund and promote R&D-based projects.

Fatima Ashraf is a contributor for Campus.

EDUCATION

What you should know before approaching faculty members for research guidance

FARIHA LAMISA

Conducting research of any form – be it for an independent project or your undergraduate thesis – is always a challenging task for any student. The task becomes even more challenging when students lack guidance in this regard. Therefore, it is crucial for young aspiring researchers to seek out proper guidance, ideally from faculty members. To do so, students must know how to approach a faculty member in the first place.

One of the first things student should know when approaching a faculty member is that they are extremely busy. Between their teaching duties and their own research, faculty members are constantly having to juggle multiple responsibilities simultaneously. Hence, students should not expect them to make time for research discussions at a moment's notice.

For Zahin Anan Haider, a final-year undergraduate student at BRAC University, finding a supervisor for her research work was a taxing experience. Faculty members who shared similar research interests as hers were not available to guide her as she failed to approach them earlier. She says, "I reached out to the faculty members quite late. As a result, the professors who shared my research interests were unavailable. The one faculty member who was available had high expectations from the research, something my groupmates and I knew we could not meet at the time."

Zahin's statement is an important reminder for students that even if someone is available to supervise your research, they might not be thinking on the same level as you. In fact, it's only natural for faculty members to think of more advanced concepts or point out flaws in your research idea that you might not have noticed yourself. This also means that the longer you delay in approaching them, the harder it will become for you to work with them as you won't have the time to reach a middle ground where both of you are satisfied with the direction your research will be heading in.

Knowing what you want to do with your project is another important requirement of approaching a faculty member. According to Dr Syeda Nadia Hasan, an assistant professor from the Department of English at East West University, "One common mistake students make when approaching faculty members is that they are unsure of what they want to do; specifically, the lack of adequate content knowledge of their preferred field poses

One of the first things student should know when approaching a faculty member is that they are extremely busy. Between their teaching duties and their own research, faculty members are constantly having to juggle multiple responsibilities simultaneously. Hence, students should not expect them to make time for research discussions at a moment's notice.

a problem. Moreover, many students assume that research is a simple task of quoting and integrating other source materials into one's own work. Nothing disappoints or frustrates faculty members more than when they identify a lack of seriousness and

Dr Mohammad Moninoor Roshid, a professor at the Institute of Research and Education, Dhaka University says, "Multiple factors come into play when I decide if I want to guide or assist a student with their research. Some of the factors that I like to look into are their interest, potential in the field of research, and language skills to convey their findings objectively to the academic community."

Dr Roshid feels that students should demonstrate their research potential through skills such as being able to produce good literature reviews and collect data. He elaborates, "A student's capacity to do coherent literature reviews and data collection can help faculty members in understanding their prospect in the research arena."

Students often assume that in order to approach a faculty member for research collaboration in any capacity would require them to have a good CGPA. However, Dr Roshid thinks students' motivation plays the most vital role here. He states, "CGPA can be a factor. However, it is certainly not the most important factor. In my career, I have encountered students who have good CGPAs but are not interested in research. On the other hand, I have also found students who are average academically but very focused when it comes to research work."

Emphasising the factor of motivation, Dr Hasan adds, "Nurturing interests is an integral part of doing research. Hence, students who exhibit an intrinsic desire to conduct research will impress their professors. Moreover,

students need to be mindful of other important factors, such as having an adequate grasp of the topic and some basic technical knowledge of step-by-step research procedures. Students are most likely to rely on their professors' expertise while collaborating. However, having a mindset or an attitude that promotes self-learning will be an effective way to let professors know that students may continue to grow as independent researchers besides playing a secondary role in collaboration. Furthermore, other qualities such as hard work, patience, and integrity are key attributes for building research capacity that students can cultivate before approaching professors."

As evident from the discussion above, before you approach a faculty member for their guidance on your research or project, you need to be well-prepared in certain ways. Timing, patience, and your own understanding of the topic of your project or research are all key factors. Approaching your professor or lecturer with these things in mind will help you get the guidance you need for your research.

Fariha Lamisa is a struggling student. Currently, she is on the verge of dropping out of university. Send your well-meaning consolation via email at flamisa2020@gmail.com



ILLUSTRATION:
ADRIITA ZAIMA ISLAM

integrity in aspiring researchers."

Students must also be mindful of the specific qualities that a faculty member may look for in aspiring researchers.



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

■ OFF CAMPUS ■

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO LIVE ON YOUR OWN AS A STUDENT?

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

Having to leave the comfort and familiarity of home to pursue education is an experience many of us undergo at some point in our lives. While some of us look forward to finally leaving the nest, others may find it difficult to cope without the comfort of their family. Dormitory life has its ups and downs, but it can be the highlight of your life if you're blessed with good roommates and food that is somewhat decent.

However, institutions often don't have enough housing capacity to accommodate all their students. Not to mention, some universities don't provide residential facilities at all. The onus to arrange housing then falls on the students themselves, along with additional responsibilities like cooking, cleaning, and other household chores, which are tasks dormitory residents tend to be spared from. Students also often cannot afford the luxury of living alone due to soaring rents.

Mohammad Muhibul Haque, currently enrolled in the Architecture department of BRAC University, who moved to Dhaka from his hometown for his undergraduate education, shares that his experience has been a mixed bag. He says, "We live in a three-bedroom flat within walking distance of our university. There are four of us sharing two rooms, and the third room is our studio for working. The living standard here is well below average considering how much we have to spend as there is a tendency to overcharge bachelors."

"Living alone, doing chores, and everything else on my own is definitely a challenge, but I am enjoying it. I feel that this experience has made me more responsible, and capable of adjusting to sharing a life with friends and flatmates," he adds.

Dhaka, despite being home to some of the best and most reputed educational institutions, is far from being student friendly. Students have responsibilities beyond attending classes and can't afford to spend long hours on

the road commuting, which often forces them to move out and arrange accommodations despite already living in Dhaka with their families.

Faisal Raihan, a student at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), moved into a place closer to his university despite already being a resident of Dhaka. "I tried commuting from Uttara to BUET for the first two months by bus. Getting to campus would take an hour and a half, but returning in the evening took almost three hours," he says.

Faisal shares, "It gets lonely sometimes, and you have to do everything by yourself. I realised while living with my roommates that boys are generally very messy. However, my mother was strict about cleanliness growing up, which I also internalised. Naturally, I became the one nagging my roommates about the mess."

A common factor of the students' accounts is that the experience is made more difficult by landlords, who go out of their way to impose heavy-handed rules. Muhibul remarks, "My landlord is fairly accommodating, but oftentimes, landlords impose ridiculous rules like not allowing friends, even if they're of the same gender. They would randomly come into the house to check the rooms, which is a violation of our privacies. Not to mention, they would be very negligent if anything in the house needed servicing."

Anika Tabassum, a student of Computer Science and Engineering at the Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB), shares her experiences, "The rent where I live is unreasonable. The lowest rent in my area is 7,000 to 8,000 Taka for a single room, and that's excluding utilities. Not to mention, living alone as a girl is hard. A bunch of restrictions are placed on us simply due to us being girls. For example, we aren't even allowed to have home deliveries because we are female students without guardians. Although I do think living alone teaches us many things, a hygienic dormitory

with a good living environment facilitated by universities is preferable."

There are also other circumstances that compel students to move out as well. Kashem Chowdhury*, for instance, is an architecture student from BRAC University who had a rather unorthodox reason for moving. "As an architecture student, I have to work on large scales to make projects that can go up to seven to eight feet in size. We tend to complete these in groups, so while working, we often have 10-20 people over at a time. I used to work at a friend's place before, but his landlord was very unaccommodating. They also don't allow members of the opposite gender to visit, which poses a problem. Considering all of these, I decided to rent an apartment to serve as a studio for my friends and me."

Aside from chores and adjusting with people who share a living space, there's a financial aspect to living independently. Most students try their best to finance themselves or at least contribute to their own expenses. This also entails that they're in charge of budgeting, which means they have to watch out for how much they're spending. Faisal shares that sometimes he even has to skip meals to accommodate his budget at the end of the month.

Living away from home and outside of the campus is by no means an easy feat. Adjusting to added responsibilities amidst hectic academic schedules takes some time. Anika shares that while she felt the burden of acclimatising to a new environment, her friends got her through it. This is a sentiment Faisal, Kashem, and Muhibul all share.

Despite the multifarious challenges posed by the transition of moving out of family homes, students share that living by themselves allows them freedom and a sense of self-sufficiency that they wouldn't have achieved otherwise. That, along with the company of friends you love, can make this next step wonderful, and you may find that the compromise is a small price to pay for such experiences.