

# FROM GLOBAL CLASSROOMS TO LOCAL FUTURES

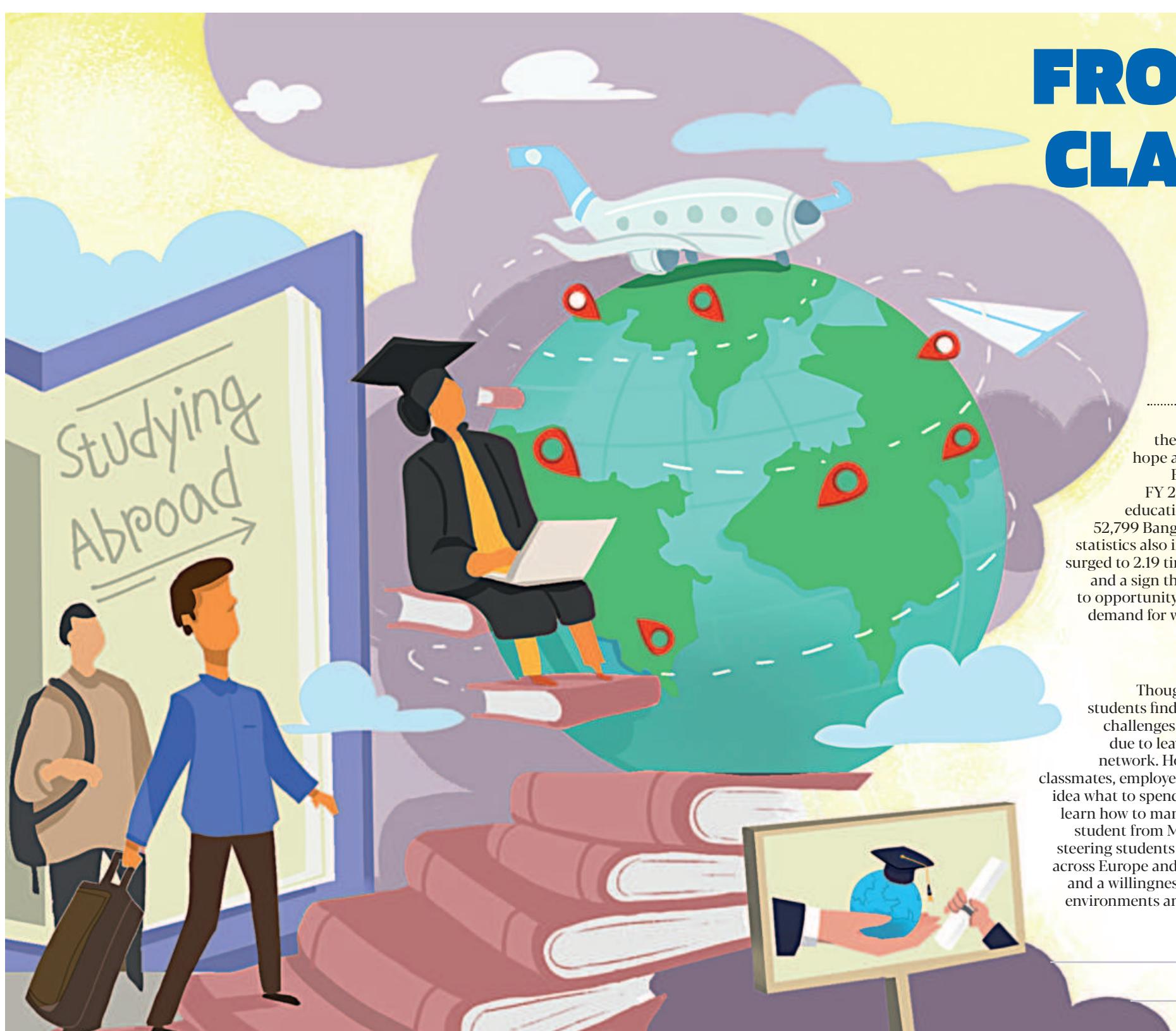
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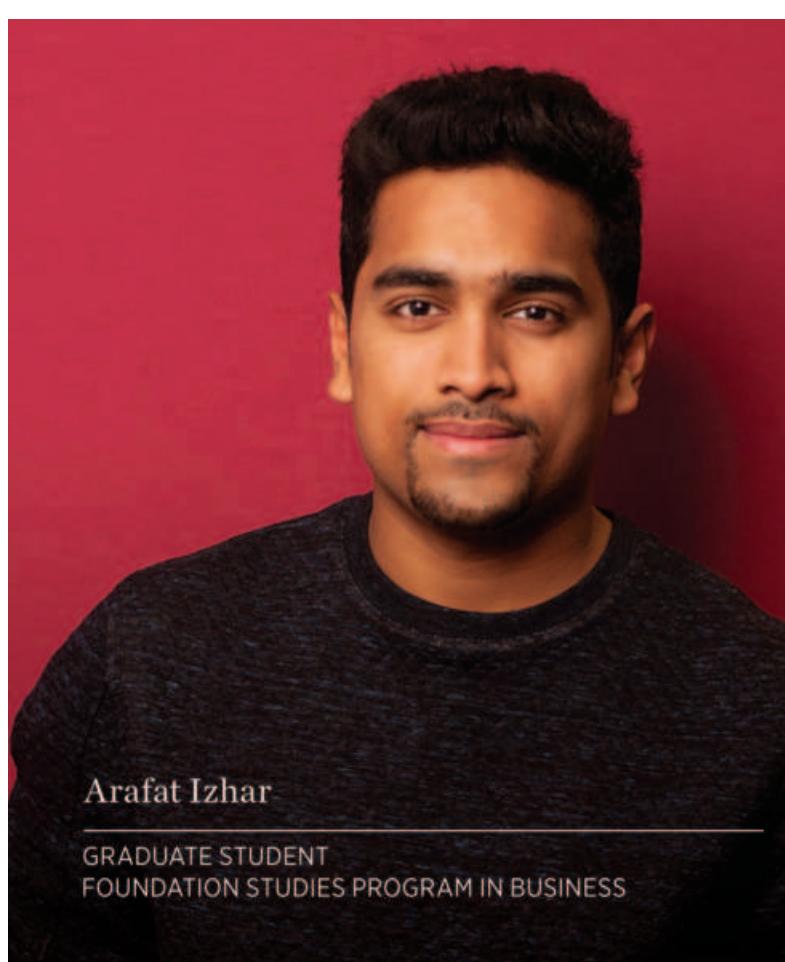
Many Bangladeshi families view the decision to send their child overseas for higher education as both an act of hope and a step into the unknown. According to Bangladesh Bank, Bangladeshi students spent USD 533.2 million in FY 2023-2024 and USD 662.2 million in FY 2024-2025 on education-related services abroad. In 2023, UNESCO recorded 52,799 Bangladeshi students enrolled outside the country. Further statistics also indicate that the number of students going outside has surged to 2.19 times higher, which is a dramatic rise from a decade ago and a sign that global classrooms are increasingly seen as pathways to opportunity. For Bangladeshi students, this number reflects rising demand for world-class training, stronger career prospects, and the promise of broader horizons.

## ■ EARLY CHALLENGES

Though the opening weeks can be tough, many Bangladeshi students find they brighten quickly. Newcomers often face practical challenges such as managing money, learning to cook, loneliness due to leaving loved ones all of a sudden, and building a support network. However, assistance is readily available from universities, classmates, employers, and local communities. "In the first month I had no idea what to spend money on. It took me around three to four months to learn how to manage my finances," recalled Kazi Niloy, a fresh graduate student from Melbourne. Various statistics also show policy shifts are steering students toward more affordable, student-friendly programmes across Europe and Asia, creating new, welcoming options. With patience and a willingness to ask for help, students regularly discover that work environments and local cultures, even when unfamiliar, are supportive and full of learning opportunities.

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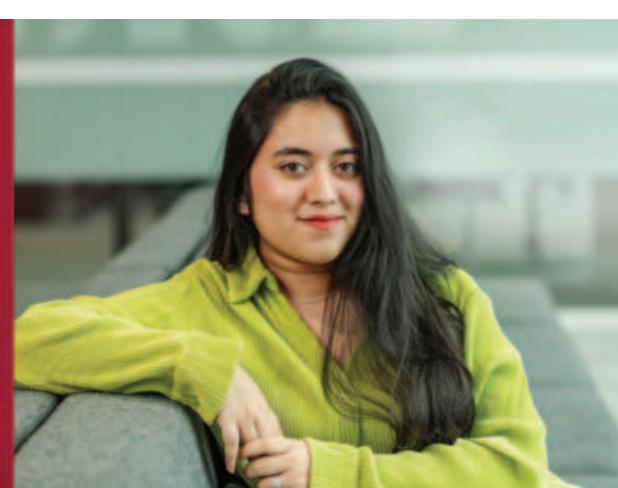




**Arafat Izhar**  
GRADUATE STUDENT  
FOUNDATION STUDIES PROGRAM IN BUSINESS

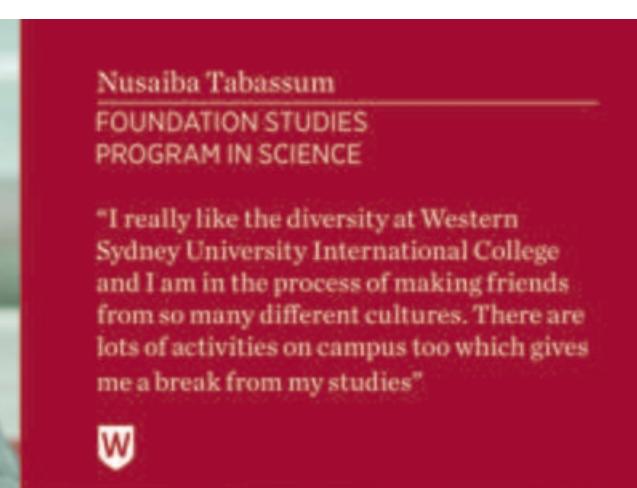


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**Sazid Hasan**  
DIPLOMA IN ARTS

"I feel at home at Western Sydney University International College. The staff and teachers are so friendly - I never expected this experience to be so great! I will really miss this place when I move onto Western Sydney University."



**Nusaiba Tabassum**  
FOUNDATION STUDIES  
PROGRAM IN SCIENCE

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- 04.** The campus is only a 2 minute walk from the Parramatta train and bus terminal, making it accessible no matter where you live.
- 05.** Iconic attractions such as the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Opera House are only 25 minutes away by train.
- 06.** The International College is a diverse, multi-cultural environment where our students make friends easily, and learn about new cultures and customs.

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FROM PAGE SI

### ■ RESILIENCE AND NETWORKS

Early hurdles often foster resilience and pave the way for practical learning. Students frequently note that the importance of friendship and networking is irreplaceable. "Strong connections turn campus into a home," explains Samir Ahmed, who came to study in London three years ago. Mentors' Education remains optimistic about the expanding range of options and clearer pathways that assist students in transforming their studies into careers. They stated that roughly 10,000 Bangladeshi students in Australia, 9,000 to 10,000 in the United States, 4,000 in Canada, 4,500 in the United Kingdom, 4,000 in Malaysia, and close to 20,000 are spread across Europe and other Asian nations include Germany, Italy, Finland, South Korea, and China. That spread is now a strength. Stricter visa rules and higher costs in some countries have pushed students to seek scholarships, lower fees, and student-friendly environments in places like Sweden, Denmark, and Finland, which makes home routes more realistic and varied.

“Most of the international students see their foreign education both as a dream and an investment. A degree costing 50 lakh feels wasted if returning home means starting over from scratch. We cannot stop the brain drain until the society as a whole brushes off the things they are subscribed to.”

**Redwan Uz Zaman Reham**, Undergraduate student, The University of Western Australia

### ■ REINTEGRATION AND CREDENTIAL RECOGNITION

If we are serious about turning aspirations into outcomes, the government must act. They can expand targeted scholarships tied to a required return period. Moreover, they can offer centrally accessible pre-departure seminars before each admissions season, covering money, housing, basic cooking, transportation apps, and workplace rights. Regulating agents and universities and funding post-arrival mentoring is also essential, as clearing credential pathways will make returning graduates employable. Redwan Uz Zaman Reham, an undergraduate at the University of Western Australia, notes, “Living abroad offers safer streets, more reliable services, and a work culture that speeds professional growth.” In this way, the daily demands of independence force students to learn practical skills faster, which builds confidence and makes them more career-ready.

Bangladesh's rising cadre of internationally trained graduates is a national asset. With better pre-departure support, a smarter scholarship design, and stronger international partnerships, we can turn individual risks into collective returns. This will help each student not only survive the first month but thrive for a lifetime. The horizon is bright; with the right supports, our young people will reach it with confidence.

**ANNUAL STUDY ABROAD EXPENDITURE**  
Figures in million US\$

Year	Expenditure (in million US\$)
2023-2024	533.2
2024-2025	662.2



## English made simple for GLOBAL SUCCESS

**MD. NOOR E SHAHRIAR SIFAT**, Director, FM Method Ltd.

For decades, English has been seen as the gateway to global opportunities, yet many Bangladeshi students still struggle with confidence despite years of compulsory lessons. Founded in 1986 by Mohammed Feroz Mukul, the FM Method offers a different approach, one that focuses on communication and sentence-building instead of rote grammar. In this conversation, Md. Noor E Shahriar Sifat, who now leads the institute, explains how the method works and why it continues to shape students preparing for higher education abroad.

**TDS: How is FM Method different?**  
**Md. Noor E Shahriar Sifat (NSS):** FM Method is not a coaching center but a research institute dedicated to teaching English to Bengalis. Founded in 1986 by my father, FM Sir, it simplifies learning by grouping Bengali sentences into three categories based on their last words. Each branch of "FM's English Tree" has five levels, with formulas for easy sentence construction. Instead of memorising grammar rules, students learn through direct Bangla-English connections, gaining confidence in building sentences. We also hold free workshops so learners can experience the method firsthand.

**TDS: How many students from Bangladesh do you think pursue studying out of the country each year and why do you think it occurs?**

**NSS:** Some students want to experience different cultures and live abroad, whereas for others, their parents see studying abroad as an investment, because they believe the grass is greener on the other side. In many cases, it is true. From high-quality academics and research facilities to career opportunities with global recognition, studying abroad offers a wide range of advantages that are often missing here.

Every year, thousands of students apply abroad. Their decision is not only driven by education but also by independence, and a chance to transform their future.

“Many students struggle with English as curricula stress grammar over communication skills.”

**MD. NOOR E SHAHRIAR SIFAT**,  
Director, FM Method Ltd.

**TDS: How does this compare to conventional English teaching in Bangladesh?**

**NSS:** Despite learning English as a compulsory subject for about 18 years, many students are still unable to form their own English sentences because the curriculum focuses more on the intricacies of grammar than on the language itself.

Think about it: does a child learn Bangla grammar first and then the language? No! The language comes first. To learn a language, you first need to learn two things: (i) its vocabulary and (ii) its sentence patterns. That is exactly what we do in FM Method.

The conventional system tells students to search for tenses in a sentence before attempting to construct it. FM Method, on the other hand, simply asks learners to look at the last word of a Bangla sentence. This lets learners build sentences creatively and naturally.

**TDS: How does FM Method help students with IELTS?**

**NSS:** We use our own grading system. A simple sentence like "He learns" is Grade 0, and adding details progresses the grade. By the time students prepare for IELTS, they already have strong sentence-building skills, which strengthens writing, speaking, and comprehension. That foundation makes achieving target band scores easier.



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# From Dhaka to the World

For many students finishing HSC or A Levels, the excitement of results is quickly followed by uncertainty. Should they choose public or private universities? Stay in Bangladesh or go abroad? What subject will best secure their future? These questions not only trouble students but also weigh heavily on their parents.

Traditionally, the most ambitious students looked abroad. Yet today, studying overseas has become harder: admission competition is rising, scholarships are shrinking,

visa policies are stricter, approvals are fewer, and costs for tuition and living continue to climb. Even part-time job opportunities abroad are less available than before. For many families, the dream of international education feels increasingly out of reach.

That is where Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD) steps in. Created in partnership with some of the world's leading universities, UCBD offers Bangladeshi students the chance to earn prestigious international degrees without leaving Dhaka.

## DIRECT PATHWAYS ABROAD

UCBD collaborates with globally respected institutions, including the London School of Economics (LSE) under the University of London, University of Central Lancashire (UCLan), and Monash College in Australia. Through these partnerships, students gain access to internationally recognised programs with the same curriculums, exams, and faculty approval as their overseas counterparts.

The Monash University Foundation Year (MUFY) provides a direct route to Monash University in Melbourne or Malaysia, guaranteeing admission for students who successfully complete the program. The UCBD International Foundation Year (UIFY) prepares SSC and O Level students for university study in the UK, US, Canada, and Australia. Meanwhile, the Monash College Diploma (MCD) fast-tracks AS, HSC, and MUFY graduates straight into the second year of Monash University degrees.



Professor Hew Gill,  
President and Provost,  
Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD)



After HSC or A Levels, students often face tough choices: which university to join, what subject to study, whether to stay in Bangladesh or go abroad. Parents share the same worries, especially as tuition costs rise, visa policies tighten, and scholarships shrink. Studying abroad is still a dream for many, but with fewer part-time work opportunities and increasing expenses, the emotional and financial strain on families is greater than ever.

This option saves time, reduces costs, and still leads to the same prestigious Monash qualifications.

or partly in the UK, with students receiving the exact same certificates as those in Britain.

## INTERNATIONAL DEGREES IN DHAKA

UCBD also delivers full University of London degrees under the academic direction of LSE. Programs include Accounting & Finance, Business & Management, Data Science & Business Analytics, Economics, and Finance. Students graduate with certificates identical to those earned in London, with UCBD listed only as the teaching centre. They even have the option to attend their graduation ceremony in the UK.

In addition, UCLan offers UK-accredited degrees in Business & Marketing, Cyber Security, and Software Engineering at UCBD. These three-year programs can be completed entirely in Bangladesh

## STAY LOCAL, GO GLOBAL

UCBD's philosophy is simple: stay local, go global. Every program mirrors the standards of its international partner, from curriculum to assessment, while UCBD faculty undergo rigorous approval processes. Small-group teaching encourages engagement and confidence, and the cost is far more manageable for middle-income families compared to overseas study.

Graduates leave with international credentials, global skills, and the confidence to succeed – whether in top Bangladeshi firms, multinational companies, or careers abroad. For current SSC, HSC, O and A Level students, UCBD represents a reliable gateway to world-class education and long-term opportunity.



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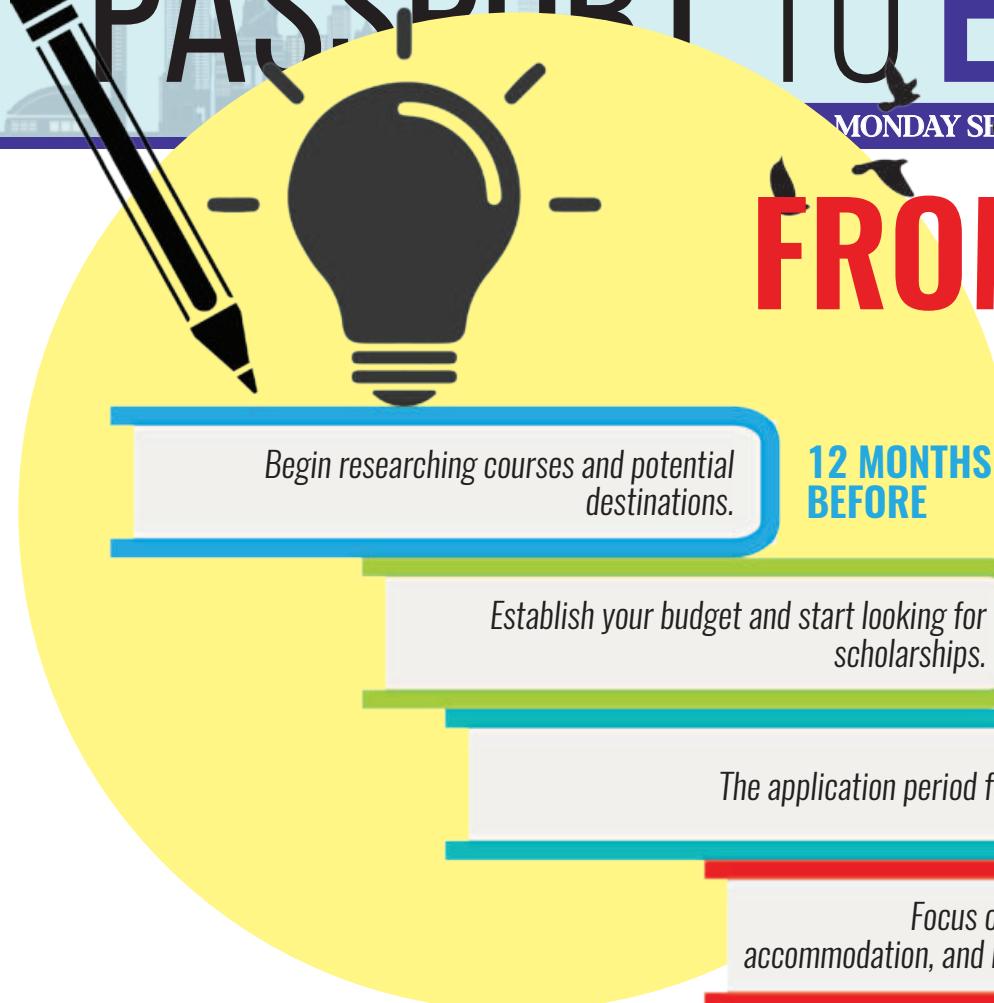
## Step 1: Choose What to Study

The first step is to decide on a subject you are passionate about. Consider your interests, skills and career aspirations.

## Step 2: Decide Where to Study

After choosing your field of study, the next step is to select a country. Consider the following factors:

Language | Cost | University Reputation | Cultural Fit  
Student Life | Climate | Distance from Home



# FROM DREAM TO DEPARTURE IN 9 STEPS



## Step 3: Research and Select Universities

Once you have a country in mind, start researching specific universities. It is advisable not to focus on just one option.

## Step 4: Adhere to Application Requirements

Each university will have its own set of application requirements. Common requirements include:



A personal statement or motivation letter



Letters of recommendation



Language proficiency test scores



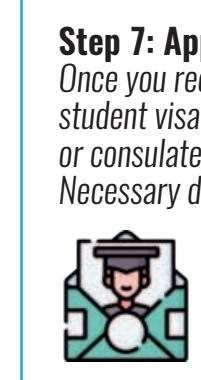
## Step 6: Submit University Applications

Be mindful of application deadlines and start the process well in advance to avoid stress. After submitting your applications, you will need to wait for acceptance letters.



## Step 8: Arrange Accommodation

After securing your university placement and visa, the next step is to find a place to live. Research your options, which may include university dormitories or private rentals.



## Step 7: Apply for a Student Visa

Once you receive an acceptance letter, you can begin the student visa application process. Contact the local embassy or consulate of your host country for specific procedures. Necessary documents typically include your,



Acceptance letter, Proof of financial resources, and



A completed application form.



## Step 9: Book Flights and Prepare for Departure

With all the major arrangements in place, you can book your flight. Before you leave, make sure you have all the necessary documents and have prepared for the cultural and language differences you may encounter.

## The student MIGRATION WAVE



### ANINDYA CHOWDHURY

Managing Partner & CEO, Mentors'

Each year, an estimated 60,000-70,000 Bangladeshi students move abroad for higher studies, making the country one of the fastest-growing sources of international students in the region. The motivations are varied: access to world-ranked universities, stronger career prospects, and aspirations for a more stable and higher quality life. Some plan to return after graduation, while others pursue longer-term migration through education and work experience. Encouragingly, most students supported by Mentors' Study Abroad have gone on to thrive in their careers and personal lives. Leading this effort is Anindya Chowdhury, Managing Partner and CEO of Mentors' Study Abroad, who also heads Mentors' Education, the country's top institute for test preparation and language skills, and Mentors' Learning, its e-learning platform.

#### THE BIG SHIFT

Destinations shift year to year. About 10,000 go to Australia, 9,000-10,000 to the US, 4,500 to the UK, 4,000 each to Canada and Malaysia, and nearly 20,000 across Europe and Asia – with Germany, Italy, Finland, South Korea, and China leading the way. Stricter visa rules and rising costs have slowed US and Canadian intakes, pushing more students toward Australia and Europe, where affordable tuition, scholarships, and student-friendly policies are drawing attention.

The US, UK, Australia, and Canada remain the "Big Four," offering English-medium education, top-ranked universities, post-study work opportunities,

"Stricter visa rules in the US and Canada have directly contributed to a rise in the number of Bangladeshi students choosing Australia and Europe."

and established Bangladeshi communities. Malaysia attracts students with lower fees and proximity, while Germany, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland are gaining ground for affordability and support. New Zealand is also rising.

#### POLICY CHANGES

Recent visa policies reflect domestic concerns. The US has tightened rules, Canada faces housing and cost pressures, and Australia has hinted at limits. The UK, despite debates, shows steady approval rates. Students with strong academics, test scores, and financial proof generally succeed.

Mentors' Study Abroad reports an 85-90% success rate in its core markets. Many students secure tuition waivers and scholarships at world-ranked universities. From test prep to admissions and visas, Mentors provides end-to-end support built on honesty and reliable guidance, giving families confidence in making life-changing decisions.

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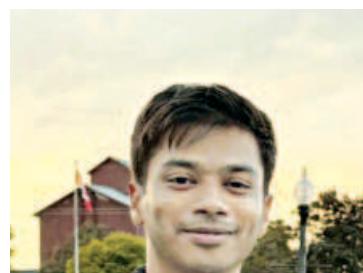


## WHAT NO BROCHURE TELLS YOU

### FAISAL BIN IQBAL

Every year, thousands of students leave Bangladesh to pursue their higher education abroad. While glossy brochures and university websites highlight academic excellence and vibrant campus life, the lived experiences of international students reveal the less glamorous—yet deeply meaningful—side of the journey. We spoke to three Bangladeshi students studying in the United States, Australia, and Canada. Their insights capture both the challenges and the opportunities that come with this life-changing decision.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOLARSHIPS, COMMUNICATION, AND SMALL TALK



Zunayed



Amrin



Rafid

For Amrin Tasnim Rafa, now at Kenyon College in the United States, money and communication were the biggest hurdles. "Ask for more scholarship money, and apply to more places to increase the odds of getting it," she says. "Both quality and quantity of applications matter."

Even after arriving, the adjustment wasn't easy. Rafa recalls being

"intimidated by professors and administrative figures and avoiding communicating my needs with them." What helped was seeking out campus counselling and other mental health services—a reminder that support systems exist, but students have to make the first move to access them.

Cultural differences also hit hard. To cope, Rafa stays connected to

home while reminding herself that people everywhere share the same highs and lows of life.

"There will always be something that you can find in common with people from the opposite end of the world," she explains. She also holds onto the idea that her unique background enriches the communities she has joined in the U.S.

Practical benefits, like work opportunities and health insurance, vary from one American university to another. Rafa advises incoming students to study the details of their financial aid packages carefully and to learn the F-1 visa work regulations, including CPT and OPT. Her biggest preparation tip? "Small talk—very, very important. Good conversation skills go a LONG way in getting jobs, getting into the classes and clubs you want, and not being socially isolated/excluded."

### ADJUSTING TO PRACTICAL REALITIES

At Monash University in Melbourne, Rafid Saadman Rasul quickly discovered that studying abroad is more about hands-on skills than memorising theory.

SEE PAGE S9

## Mental Health Abroad

A growing concern for students

### E. RAZA RONNY

Studying abroad brings more than academic challenges. It often places unexpected mental health burdens on students, especially those far from home.

### HIGH STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH RISKS

According to research in the National Library of Medicine, among 360 undergraduate medical students, roughly half of overseas students reported symptoms of depression (50.30 per cent) and anxiety (52.5 per cent), and 41.3 per cent experienced stress, significantly higher than their domestic peers.

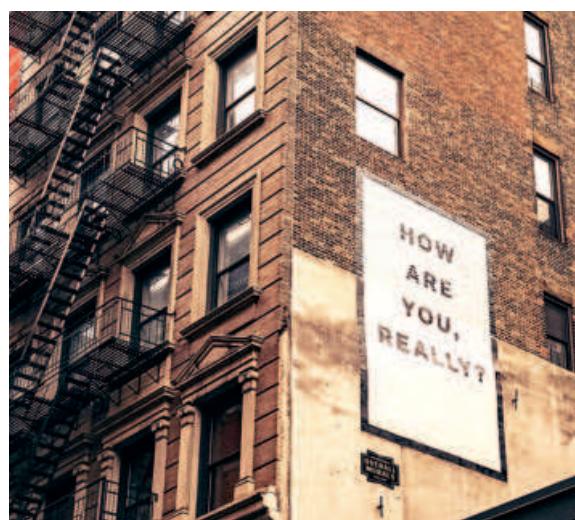
More broadly, international students are not immune to distress. A 2023 data from Purdue University shows that roughly half screened positive for major depressive disorder, generalised anxiety, eating disorders, or suicidal ideation. Despite this, international students seek help far less often than domestic students.

### HOMESICKNESS, LONELINESS, AND CULTURAL PRESSURE

Many international students face isolation and cultural adjustment challenges. For instance, among Chinese students studying in the U.S., 45 per cent reported depression, and 29 per cent reported anxiety. What's more, 27 per cent of them were unaware of on-campus mental health services.

### MENTAL HEALTH AMONG DOMESTIC STUDENTS IN TRANSITION

Even within Bangladesh, students face mounting pressure. A study at local universities found that 72 per cent exhibited depressive symptoms, 40 per cent experienced moderate to severe anxiety, and 53 per cent had poor mental health overall, especially during the COVID-19 peak.



### WHY THIS MATTERS

These figures reveal a clear trend, whether at home or abroad, students are at heightened risk of mental health issues. When living overseas, these risks are compounded by isolation, academic pressure, immigration stress, and limited awareness of support systems.

### WHAT CAN BE DONE

#### Universities and counsellors should:

- Raise awareness of available mental health resources,
- Offer culturally sensitive support,
- Normalise seeking help,
- Train peer mentors to detect early signs of distress.

Families and institutions must recognise that mental health isn't secondary to academic success; it is essential to it. Ensuring students can thrive emotionally is as important as preparing them academically.

## Guiding beyond admissions

### FOR BANGLADESHI STUDENTS

For Bangladeshi students, navigating the complex world of international admissions can feel overwhelming. MN Global positions itself as more than just an agency. It promises a professional, transparent, and supportive partnership from the first consultation to the moment a student settles abroad.

What sets MN Global apart is its emphasis on honesty. Rather than making empty promises, the team provides clear assessments of each student's qualifications and potential. This helps families make informed decisions and avoid costly missteps.

### THE ROADBLOCKS STUDENTS FEAR MOST

The journey abroad is not without hurdles. Surveys show that 66–73% of prospective students cite the cost of living and finances as their biggest concern, with 57% worried about scholarships. Rising tuition fees, housing costs, and currency fluctuations can make studying abroad feel financially daunting.

Just behind finances come visa challenges. Around 47% of students identify visa processes as a major stress point, and over 21% say delays in appointments or processing forced them to postpone confirming their admission. These anxieties

are real and often derail even the most determined applicants.

### WHY GUIDANCE MATTERS

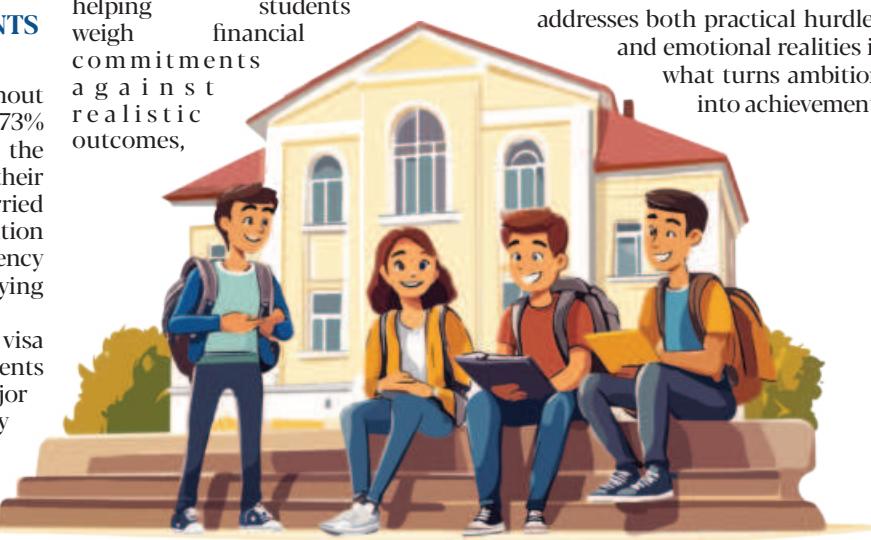
Beyond paperwork, these challenges highlight the need for clear, reliable guidance. Students often feel pressure to pick the "right" university or course without fully understanding long term implications for careers, finances, or settlement prospects. Families, meanwhile, struggle to balance pride with worry, knowing the decision involves significant sacrifice.

This is where responsible counselling makes a difference—helping students weigh financial commitments against realistic outcomes,

preparing them for visa requirements and timelines, and supporting them in adjusting to life abroad.

For many families, what matters most is reassurance: knowing that their children are making informed choices, not rushing into decisions shaped by hype or misinformation. Studying abroad will always involve risk and uncertainty, but with the right preparation, students can turn those obstacles into opportunities.

At its core, the admissions journey is less about forms and approvals, and more about giving students the confidence to thrive in a new environment. Guidance that addresses both practical hurdles and emotional realities is what turns ambition into achievement.



# Surviving first semester abroad as an international student



A report by UNESCO, in 2023, over 52,000 students from Bangladesh went to 55 countries to pursue tertiary education. Within the last decade or so, the number of Bangladeshi students going abroad has risen by 119 per cent.

#### FAISAL BIN IQBAL

It is evident that many students from our country are eager and excited to pursue their studies abroad. However, most of them are not prepared to deal with the changes and challenges. First semester abroad can feel overwhelming as you juggle academics, cultural differences, finances, and personal well-being.

Here's a quick survival guide to help you settle in and make the most of your first few months abroad.

#### ACADEMIC NAVIGATION

Universities abroad often emphasise independent learning, critical thinking, and research. You may find fewer lectures and more assignments, group projects, and presentations compared to what you experienced in Bangladesh during your secondary education.

Don't hesitate to approach professors during office hours or join study groups with classmates. Most universities also offer writing centres, libraries with digital resources, and tutoring services. Make use of these early so you don't fall behind.

#### DEALING WITH CULTURAL SHOCK

Moving from Bangladesh to a new country can bring culture shock. Different food, social norms, accents, and even classroom etiquette can all contribute to the shock.

At first, it may feel confusing or even intimidating. The key is to stay open-minded and curious.

Attend cultural events organised by your university, connect with student associations, and learn about local customs. You are also likely to find dedicated Bangladeshi communities at your university, so don't hesitate to join them for different events and discussions.

#### DEALING WITH HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is common, especially in the first semester. Missing family meals, Eid celebrations, or even the comfort of speaking Bangla can hit hard.

Stay connected with loved ones through regular video calls, but don't let it consume all your free time. Build a support system with new friends, both from Bangladesh and other countries.

#### BUDGETING AND INSURANCE

Living abroad comes with expenses you might not have faced back home, including rent, utilities,

transportation, and groceries. Create a monthly budget and track every expense. Avoid unnecessary spending, like eating out too often.

You will also find that public transport, museums, and stores around campus often offer student discounts. Equally important is health insurance. Many countries require international students to have coverage.

#### TRAVELLING

Your first semester is not just about academics. Travelling gives you a chance to explore the country, understand its people, and take a break from routine.

Plan short trips during weekends or semester breaks. Use affordable options like student train passes or budget airlines.

**“When moving to the UK, set up a bank account, get a SIM card, and use apps like Citymapper for transport. Various applications also provide student discounts to make living a bit easier. Navigate the job market a bit and build your CV as soon as possible.”**

**SAMIR AHAMED**, Brunel University of London, United Kingdom

#### GETTING A PART-TIME JOB

Many Bangladeshi students look for part-time jobs to cover expenses. Rules differ depending on the country; some allow up to 20 hours a week during the semester and longer work hours during semester breaks.

Jobs on campus, such as working in the library or cafeteria, are often easier to manage alongside studies. Before applying, check your visa regulations to ensure you don't violate any conditions.

The first semester abroad can be challenging, but it's also a time of immense growth. With the right mindset, careful planning, and a willingness to step out of your comfort zone, you can thrive academically, socially, and personally.



83% of international graduates say their UK degree helped them secure a job (Universities UK International report).

27 UK universities rank among the world's top 200.

## The UK education advantage

Studying in the UK opens a world of academic excellence, innovation and global opportunity for Bangladeshi students. With world-renowned universities and practical teaching approaches, the UK equips students to realise their potential. According to QS figures from 2025, the UK hosts two of the world's top three universities and 27 institutions among the top 200 globally; three UK universities also rank in the top 10 of the Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2025.

Master's programmes remain a significant draw for Bangladeshi students, and UK graduates are highly employable. The QS Graduate Employability Rankings and a report by Universities UK International found that 83% of international graduates said their UK degree helped them land a job.

Beyond academics, the student

According to QS figures from 2025, the UK hosts two of the world's top three universities and 27 institutions among the top 200 globally; three UK universities also rank in the top 10 of the Times Higher Education World University Ranking 2025.

experience is rich and diverse. The UK's multicultural campuses foster a global mindset while allowing students to share and celebrate their identity. Student life includes sports, arts, societies and volunteering, and universities provide orientation, academic support, career counselling

and mental-health resources to help students thrive.

Cost is a key concern, but the UK offers a range of scholarships and financial support options, from partial awards that reduce tuition to full funding covering program fees, living costs and return airfare.

GREAT Scholarships are a popular option for students with an undergraduate degree who plan to pursue postgraduate study in the UK. If you're already a UK alumnus, register on the British Council's global Alumni UK portal to expand your professional network, access webinars and masterclasses, and stay informed about training and events.

With world-class teaching, strong employability outcomes and comprehensive support systems, the UK remains a top destination for Bangladeshi students seeking academic quality and global opportunities.

## From fear to FLUENCY



**SAIFUL ISLAM**, CEO, English Therapy

Saiful Islam, an author and Founder & CEO of an English teaching platform named "English Therapy", has spent the past eight years helping thousands of learners become fluent in English.

**TDS: As the CEO of English Therapy, where do you see English proficiency playing the biggest role for students aiming to study abroad?**

**Saiful Islam (SI):** I saw so many talented people held back simply because they could not express themselves confidently in English. Our education system puts heavy emphasis on written exams, but little on real-world speaking or listening. Students can memorise vocabulary, yet freeze in conversation. That is why I founded English Therapy to create a practical, enjoyable alternative to traditional coaching. For those going abroad, proficiency matters most in English-speaking countries like the US, UK, Canada, and Australia. Beyond just academics, it is crucial for business, law, and even STEM fields, where clear technical communication is key.

**TDS: What do you find are the most common weaknesses, and how does English Therapy address them?**

**SI:** Speaking is by far the weakest skill for most learners. It's a mix of fear, lack of practice, and the influence of the mother tongue. Listening is another major hurdle, especially when faced with

"Confidence in English is not about passing a test. It is about being able to stand anywhere in the world and make your voice heard."

unfamiliar accents. Students may know grammar rules or score well on paper, but when it comes to real-time interaction, confidence crumbles. At English Therapy, we counter this with immersive methods – mock lectures, debates, personalised learning plans, and digital practice tools. For those heading overseas, we also provide cultural orientation so they are not lost when facing everyday conversations or academic settings.

**TDS: Your work seems to go beyond just test prep. What is your bigger vision?**

**SI:** Admission is only the first step. Many students discover the real challenge starts once classes begin: writing papers, joining discussions, adjusting to different teaching styles, and even making friends in a new culture. Our mission is not only to get them through exams but to build lifelong communication skills. We want them to thrive in any global environment, whether in the classroom, workplace, or everyday life.

# ERASMUS

## The World Awaits

FARHAT LAMISHA

The ambition to study abroad is a familiar one for many graduates in Bangladesh, but for me, it became a personal quest. After my bachelor's degree, I sought a master's that would not only solidify my skills but also ignite a more creative passion for my work. This dream was my guiding star, but the path toward it would be a true test of perseverance.

## JOURNEY BEGINS

It took nearly three years to secure a funded master's program. Those years were a relentless cycle of hope and rejection. With each refusal, however, I chose to see a lesson, not a failure.



The true value of the program lies in the classroom. I am learning alongside students from 37 different countries, where every discussion becomes a kaleidoscope of global perspectives.

FARHAT LAMISHA  
Erasmus Scholar



Juggling a full-time job with demanding applications and continuous skill development was a challenging yet profoundly interesting experience. This difficult road eventually sharpened my focus onto one goal: the Erasmus Mundus program, drawn by its unique promise of studying at world-class universities across Europe.

Then, on a sunny day in 2024, a single email changed everything. The coordinator for the European Master in Global Studies confirmed I had been awarded the prestigious Erasmus Mundus Scholarship. In that moment, my life pivoted towards a new horizon. The period that followed was a whirlwind of preparation—navigating the maze of visa applications, shopping for a new climate, and managing funds for personal expenditures. Most importantly, I prepared myself mentally

for an endeavour that I knew would shape the rest of my life.

## A CLASSROOM WITHOUT BORDERS

The Erasmus Mundus Master in Global Studies is more than an academic program; it is a lens through which to understand our interconnected world. Supported by the European Commission, the scholarship is a comprehensive package covering tuition, health insurance, and living expenses, allowing students to fully immerse themselves in their studies.

But the true value of the program lies in the classroom. I am learning alongside students from 37 different countries, where every discussion becomes a kaleidoscope of global perspectives. This environment has pushed me to express my ideas more confidently, to constantly

challenge my own assumptions, and to grasp complex topics on a much deeper, practical level. Graduates are equipped for impactful careers in international organisations, NGOs, and academia, empowered by a large, active global alumni community that supports us long after graduation.

## EMBRACING THE CHALLENGE

The path of an Erasmus scholar is a roller coaster ride. From the initial application to living and studying in a foreign land, the journey tests your resilience. We must adapt to new languages, unfamiliar cultures, and different academic systems, especially as we attend semesters in different countries.

However, these hurdles are an integral part of the learning process. The entire academic journey is a masterclass in communication and adaptability, forcing you to connect with people from all around the world. It's about creating lifelong memories while fostering immense personal and professional development. The program shapes students not just to be experts in their fields, but to be culturally intelligent global citizens ready to contribute to the world.

I feel profoundly honoured to have been selected from Bangladesh for such a highly competitive program. It is a privilege to represent my country on a global stage, and I am deeply grateful for this incredible opportunity.

The writer is an Erasmus Scholar of Erasmus Mundus Master in Global Studies (EMGS),

Universität Leipzig (First Mobility) & Uniwersytet Wrocławski (Second Mobility).

## Placing students BEFORE STATISTICS



## SHAMS JAHAN FARHAT

Country Manager, StudyIn

For many Bangladeshi families, studying abroad is one of the biggest decisions they will ever make. But with so many agencies focused on numbers over genuine advice, students can easily feel lost. That's where Shams Jahan Farhat and his counselling service step in to prioritise meaningful guidance tailored to each student's goals, rather than chasing volume. In this interview, He shares his approach and explains why the UK remains one of the most popular choices for Bangladeshi students.

**The Daily Star (TDS): What was your main goal when you started your counselling service?**

**SJF:** My main dream was to change lives by providing genuine, meaningful advice tailored to each student's career goals. We prioritise quality guidance over application numbers, ensuring students and parents receive the support they truly need for their future.

**TDS: How do you ensure students and parents trust your advice?**

**SJF:** We build trust as an authorised agent with British Council-certified counsellors who receive regular university training. We provide comprehensive support for the entire journey from university selection and applications to visa preparation and pre-departure assistance, ensuring a reliable process.

**TDS: What are the current hopes, concerns, and trends for Bangladeshi students?**

**SJF:** Students hope for a stable future but are concerned about post-study work and permanent

"We prioritise quality guidance over numbers, ensuring every student receives the support they truly need for their future."

residency prospects. A key trend, due to dependent visa restrictions, is married students applying for MRes programs. This has attracted non-genuine applicants, unfortunately increasing visa refusals.

**TDS: What are the main benefits of choosing the UK for education?**

**SJF:** The UK offers globally recognised degrees and shorter programs, like one-year master's, saving time and money. Its multicultural environment, combined with the two-year post-study work visa, provides valuable international experience and significantly enhances career prospects for Bangladeshi students.

**TDS: What practical information should students know about the UK?**

**SJF:** UK master's degrees are typically one year. Students can work 20 hours/week and stay for two years post-study with the Graduate Route visa. Annual tuition is £11k-£25k; monthly living costs are £900-£1,600. International student scholarships are also available.

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# SKILLS TO MASTER

## before studying abroad

FAISAL BIN IQBAL

Studying abroad is a dream for many Bangladeshi students, but adjusting to life in a foreign country often comes with challenges. Beyond academics, you'll need practical skills that make everyday living smoother, less stressful, and more cost-efficient. Before you board that flight, investing time in building certain skills here in Bangladesh can give you a head start when you step into your new life overseas.



### BARISTA SKILLS

Coffee culture is strong in most countries where Bangladeshi students go for higher studies, from the United States to Australia. Cafes in these countries are hubs of social interaction, and a major source of part-time employment for students, especially from abroad.

Learning basic barista skills in Bangladesh, such as operating an espresso machine, brewing different coffee styles, and handling customers, can give you an edge in finding part-time jobs abroad. Some coffee shops in Dhaka or Chattogram even offer short training programmes. Awake Coffee Roasters, for instance, has an entire academy that offers professional barista training. They offer Specialty Coffee Association of America (SCA) standard training that is accepted globally. North End also offers barista training where one can learn skills like espresso making and latte art. They can also familiarise themselves with various coffee machines and coffee making techniques. Fees for these training programmes range from BDT 2,000 to BDT 18,000.



### COOKING

Eating out regularly abroad is expensive, and depending on instant noodles won't fuel your health or studies. That's why cooking is a must-learn skill. If you can make staples like khichuri, curry, dal, and paratha, you'll not only save money but also carry a piece of home with you. Western countries often have Bangladeshi or South Asian grocery stores, so you can easily find ingredients to replicate familiar dishes. Additionally, knowing how to prepare quick international meals like pasta or stir-fry makes life easier on busy study days.



### DRIVING

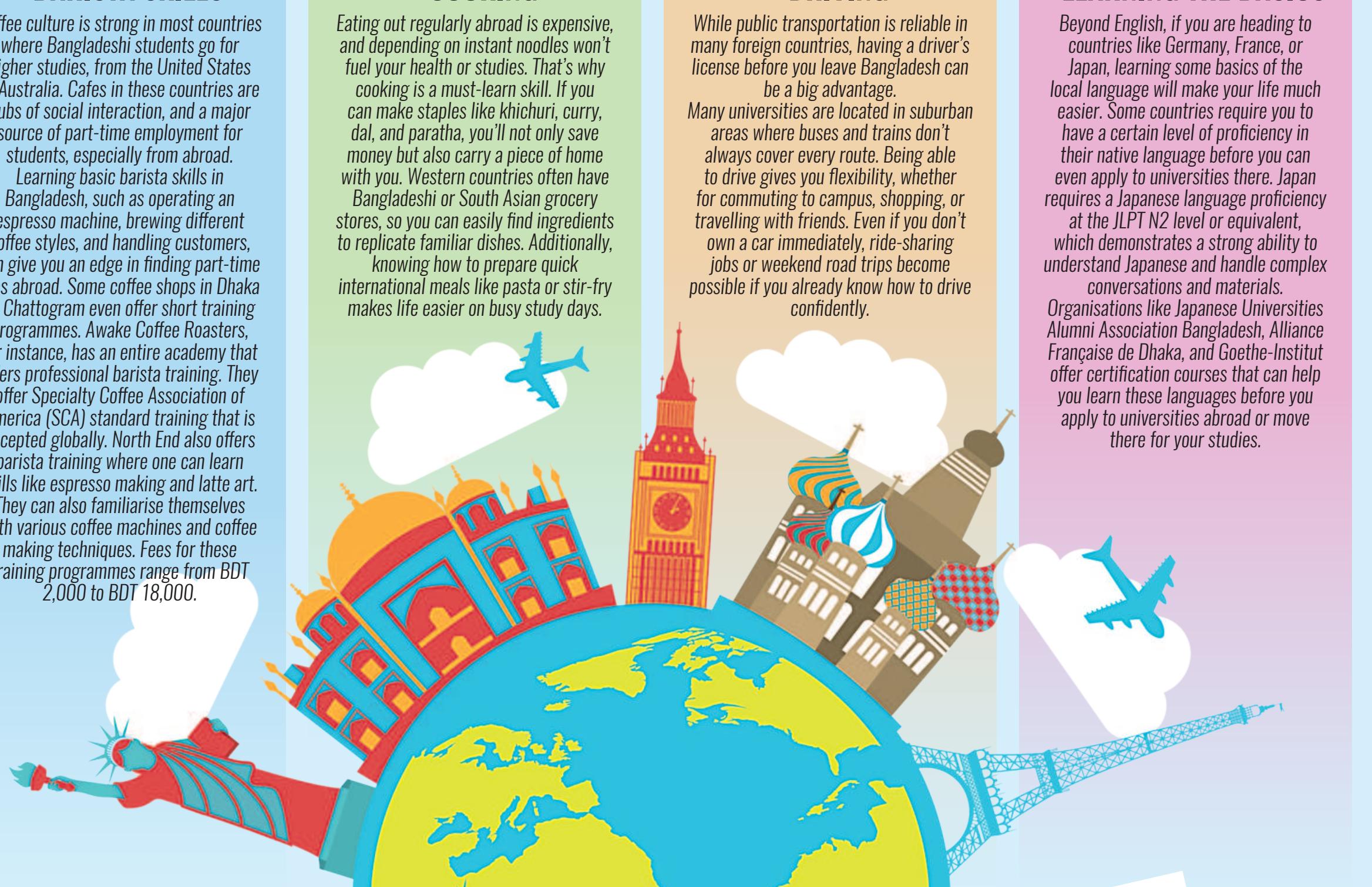
While public transportation is reliable in many foreign countries, having a driver's license before you leave Bangladesh can be a big advantage. Many universities are located in suburban areas where buses and trains don't always cover every route. Being able to drive gives you flexibility, whether for commuting to campus, shopping, or travelling with friends. Even if you don't own a car immediately, ride-sharing jobs or weekend road trips become possible if you already know how to drive confidently.



### LEARNING THE BASICS

Beyond English, if you are heading to countries like Germany, France, or Japan, learning some basics of the local language will make your life much easier. Some countries require you to have a certain level of proficiency in their native language before you can even apply to universities there. Japan requires a Japanese language proficiency at the JLPT N2 level or equivalent, which demonstrates a strong ability to understand Japanese and handle complex conversations and materials.

Organisations like Japanese Universities Alumni Association Bangladesh, Alliance Française de Dhaka, and Goethe-Institut offer certification courses that can help you learn these languages before you apply to universities abroad or move there for your studies.



## EARNING WHILE LEARNING

Part-time jobs around the world

Avg. living cost (per month)	Avg. working hour	Barista	Food Delivery	Dog walker	Waiter
£1400 - £1100 187000 BDT to 244000 BDT	10- 20 hours per week	£44	£12	£48	£43
\$1500 - \$2500 188000 BDT to 309000 BDT	20 hours per week	\$12	\$24	\$21	\$17
800 - 1,500 CAD 705000 BDT to 132000 BDT	24 hours per week	\$20CAD	\$21CAD	\$23CAD	\$25CAD
80,000 yen - 105,000 yen 66000 BDT to 86000 BDT	28 hours per week	¥1,531 JPY	¥1,498 JPY	¥1,508 JPY	¥1,250 JPY
1,400 - 2,500 AUD 112000 BDT to 200000 BDT	12 hours per week	\$31	\$30	\$32	\$32
700 - 1,200 EUR 99000 BDT to 170000 BDT	20 hours per week	\$14	\$20	\$14	\$13



\*Wage rates can vary depending on the employer and the number of hours worked.

\*The estimated living costs cover necessities such as food and rent, but do not include tuition fees.

# DON'T GET FOOLED

A parent's guide to spotting fake agents and offers

SADIA ISLAM

For many Bangladeshi families, sending a child abroad to study is a lifelong dream. But with the rise of fake agents and fraudulent offers, that dream can quickly turn into a financial nightmare. Parents often invest their savings only to discover that the promised university,

scholarship, or visa does not exist.

The truth is simple: genuine universities and embassies never guarantee admissions, scholarships, or visas. Scammers, however, thrive on these false promises.

## HOW TO STAY SAFE

The easiest way to protect yourself is to verify every claim. Always check official university websites for admission rules and fees. If you receive an offer letter, email the university directly to confirm it.

Secondly, look for accreditation because genuine universities are listed with their national education boards. Embassies also provide lists of recognized institutions and updated visa requirements.

Parents can also talk to alumni. Thousands of Bangladeshi students are studying abroad, and many are happy to share their experiences. A quick conversation can often save you from months of trouble.

## RED FLAGS TO WATCH

Parents should be cautious if they notice

- ☛ Guarantees of admission or visa because no one can promise this.
- ☛ Unrealistic scholarships that cover "everything" with no conditions.
- ☛ Cash-only demands without receipts or proof of payment.
- ☛ No official documents or offer letters that cannot be verified.
- ☛ High-pressure tactics urging families to pay immediately.

THESE ARE CLEAR SIGNS THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG.

## PROTECTING YOUR MONEY

Money is usually where the scam happens. Never pay tuition to an agent. Always transfer funds directly to the university account using official bank channels. Keep copies of every transaction, both digital and printed.

If needed, consider using an education loan or an FDR-backed plan, which adds transparency and helps create a clear financial trail.

## FINAL WORD

Studying abroad can open doors for Bangladeshi students, but scams can close them forever. The best way to protect your child's future and your savings is to stay cautious. Trust only official sources, double-check every offer, and remember: real opportunities never need fake guarantees.

## A PARENT'S QUICK CHECKLIST

Before sending money or signing papers, ask yourself:

- ☛ Is the university listed officially?
- ☛ Did I verify directly with the admissions office?
- ☛ Is the scholarship on the university website?
- ☛ Do I have receipts and proof of payment?

If the answer is no, do not move forward.



# WHAT NO BROCHURE TELLS YOU

FROM PAGE S5

"Well into the 2nd year, a lot of the theory being taught was already familiar to me from high school," he says. "But when it came to practical classes, labs, and projects where we had to build or assemble something, I was countries behind."

The social transition was equally tough. "Making new friends is also hard," Rafid admits.

Domestic students often arrive with existing networks, leaving international students to build relationships from scratch. Food differences and Melbourne's notoriously patchy public transport didn't make things easier.

Still, Rafid highlights the upsides of studying in Australia, like the clean air, water, high-quality education, and friendly people. Students also get the opportunity to be themselves.

The country also offers valuable work

"The support system I had back home in terms of friends, family, and some luxuries that I took for granted simply disappears overnight."

mattered, and expenses added up quickly," he recalls. What helped was learning to budget, prioritising needs over wants, and building relationships both online and in Canada.

Homesickness still lingers, especially during long stretches away from home. Zunayed copes through small rituals—Bangla food, music, and following news from Bangladesh. "It's a combination of counting the days until I am able to visit Bangladesh again with the little things, such as eating a dish from back home."

On the positive side, Canada offers work opportunities that fit better with student life. International students can work up to 24 hours per week during the semester and full-time during summer breaks. "A lot of well-known companies (Google, IBM, and the Big Four) hire students during the summer as paid interns," Zunayed notes. Health insurance is also included in student fees, covering everything from hospitalisations to dental and travel insurance.

### WORDS OF WISDOM FROM THOSE WHO'VE BEEN THERE

Across continents, one theme stands out: preparation goes far beyond academics. Students who thrive abroad emphasise communication skills, financial literacy, and mental resilience. They also remind future applicants not to underestimate the emotional toll of leaving their support systems behind.

As Rafa puts it, "Apply to a LOT of places and put effort into your applications. Just submitting the application form is often not enough." Rafid insists students focus on building a future rather than clinging to low-wage survival jobs. Zunayed's advice is simple but powerful: "Everything will not always go as planned, and that's okay."

For anyone dreaming of studying abroad, these voices paint a fuller picture—one that includes hardship, resilience, and growth alongside the promised opportunities.

Practical benefits, like work opportunities and health insurance, vary from one American university to another. Rafa advises incoming students to study the details of their financial aid packages carefully and to learn the F-1 visa work regulations, including CPT and OPT. Her biggest preparation tip? "Small talk—very, very important."

opportunities, though he warns against falling into the trap of low-wage part-time jobs. "Focus on studies, do courses, attend seminars, work on startups, go to networking events, socialise and have fun, and build your portfolio before getting into full-time roles."

His advice is blunt but practical: weigh whether you really need to study abroad. With the high cost of living, he stresses, "If you NEED to do part-time jobs to support yourself, you should not be studying abroad."

### RESILIENCE AND REBUILDING

For Zunayed Ahmed, now at Seneca Polytechnic in Canada, the hardest part of moving wasn't academic but emotional. "I wish I knew how important it is to be mentally strong," he reflects. "The support system I had back home in terms of friends, family, and some luxuries that I took for granted simply disappears overnight."

Two early struggles stood out: managing finances and second-guessing the decision to leave home. "Every dollar



## STUDY ABROAD

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## TOP 7 INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship Program	Host Country/Region	Target Audience	General Eligibility Highlights
Australia Awards	Australia	Individuals from developing countries in, Indo-Pacific region.	Citizen of a participating country. Requiring return to the home country for at least two years
ICCR Scholarship	India	Students from over 180 countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.	For undergraduate, postgraduate, and Ph.D. programs.
DAAD Scholarship	Germany	Students from a wide range of countries.	Strong academic record, at least two years of professional experience.
Chevening Scholarship	United Kingdom	Individuals with demonstrable leadership potential and strong academic backgrounds.	Citizen of a Chevening-eligible country Citizen or permanent resident of a Commonwealth country, Can get Chevening if unable to afford to study in the UK without the scholarship.
Commonwealth Scholarship		Citizens of Commonwealth countries.	Undergraduate degree holder Return home for at least two years.
Erasmus Mundus	Europe	Students from all over the world at the Master's level.	Must have a bachelor's degree or be in their final year of bachelor's studies.
Fulbright Program	United States	U.S. citizens to study abroad and citizens of other countries to study in the U.S.	

## BENEFITS

	Full funded	Monthly allowance	Health insurance	Travel allowance	Living facilities
Australia Awards	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
ICCR Scholarship	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
DAAD Scholarship	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Chevening Scholarship	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
Commonwealth Scholarship	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Erasmus Mundus	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓
Fulbright Program	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓



## THE AI JOB SHIFT

E. RAZA RONNY

Artificial intelligence is no longer a futuristic idea. It is here, reshaping careers in real time. From automating routine office work to fueling growth in new industries, AI is rewriting the rules of employment. For young people planning their futures, the challenge is clear: how to prepare for jobs that last while

higher than their managerial counterparts. It means that while leadership roles may still demand human judgment, the roles that traditionally serve as gateways to those positions are being hollowed out. What happens to ambition when the "training wheels" of the job market disappear?

The anxiety isn't just statistical. Geoffrey Hinton, widely regarded as the "Godfather of AI," has issued perhaps the most direct warning: "Rich people are going to use AI to replace workers. It's going to create massive unemployment." It is not a message of science fiction but of present economics. Hinton's words highlight a troubling imbalance: those with capital will harness AI to boost profits, while those seeking their first job may struggle to get a foothold at all.

This raises deeper questions. If the entry-level door closes, how do young people acquire the skills, experience, and resilience that only early jobs once provided? Do we need new apprenticeship models, more emphasis on hybrid human-AI roles, or even a rethinking of how we define "work" in an age where machines can mimic so much of it?

The challenge, then, is not only to adapt skills but to adapt systems. Without deliberate strategies from universities, policymakers, and industries, an entire generation risks being sidelined before their careers can even begin.

and construction are difficult to automate, while healthcare roles, particularly nursing, are seeing surging demand worldwide.

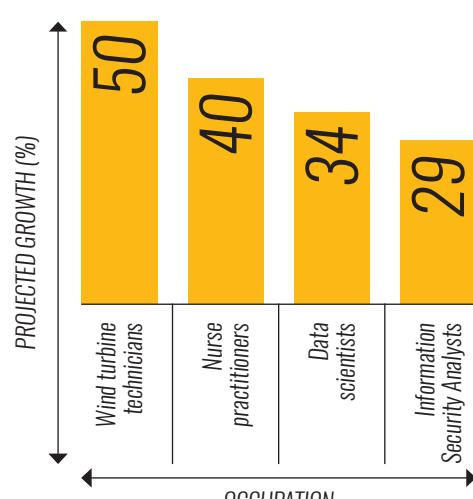
U.S. labor data shows very strong growth in several high-demand occupations. Nurse practitioners are projected to grow 40% between 2024 and 2034, while data scientists are expected to see about 34% growth and information security analysts about 29% in that same period. Wind turbine service technicians are forecast to lead with around 50% growth.

Globally, the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 predicts that 170 million new roles will be added by 2030 even as 92 million jobs are displaced by technology and automation.

## NAVIGATING THE TRANSITION

So how should young people prepare? By combining technical knowledge with human skills. Areas like AI fluency, data analysis, cybersecurity, and renewable energy are worth studying, while creativity, adaptability, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence remain irreplaceable. Young workers should embrace hybrid models, learning to work with AI rather than against it. The future of work is shifting rapidly. The safest route is a mix: future-proof industries plus personal skills no machine can replace.

## RISING CAREERS IN AN AI-DRIVEN ECONOMY



avoiding ones that are disappearing.

## THE JOBS UNDER THREAT

AI is no longer just an abstract force on the horizon. It is already cutting into the lower rungs of the career ladder. Routine tasks once seen as entry points into stable careers such as writing, bookkeeping, customer support, even basic programming are increasingly becoming automated. A Stanford analysis shows just how stark the change has been. Between late 2022 and mid-2025, employment for 22-25 year-olds in the most AI exposed jobs fell 6%, while older workers in the same fields actually grew by 6-9%. The very group most in need of entry-level experience is finding the ground shifting under their feet.

The numbers paint a sobering picture. Market research analysts face 53% of their daily tasks as automatable, and sales representatives about 67%. Both are far



# Opening pathways to GLOBAL EDUCATION

**MD AL-AMIN SARKER**, COO, FICC

MD AL-AMIN SARKER, COO of Farees International Career Counseling (FICC), a leading centre in Bangladesh that provides student friendly support to study abroad. Since its inception, it has accomplished remarkable achievements and progress.

**The Daily Star (TDS): Could you provide an overview of FICC's mission and how your student counselling services for studying abroad fit within it?**

**MD AL-AMIN SARKER (AS):** From scholarships to career guidance, our counselling services focus on every step of studying abroad, from selecting universities and funding opportunities to processing visas and planning long term careers.

**TDS: What is the primary value of international education for Bangladeshi students today?**

**AS:** Students gain access to world class teaching, research facilities, and innovative learning methods. More importantly, international exposure builds communication, leadership, adaptability, and problem-solving skills, all critical in today's job market. Ultimately, students return with global perspectives and leadership qualities that contribute to Bangladesh's economic and social development.

**TDS: What are the most common challenges students face, and how do you help them navigate these?**

**AS:** The three biggest challenges are securing scholarships, choosing the right university or country, and managing finances. We guide students in identifying scholarships that fit their profiles, assist with strong applications, and support them throughout the funding process. Our team carefully

**"Demand is strong for Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and Europe. Popular study fields include business, IT, engineering, and health sciences, chosen for their global career potential."**

reviews academic records, long-term aspirations, and budgets to ensure students can pursue international education with confidence.

**TDS: What makes FICC's counselling unique?**

**AS:** We prioritise students' interests above all. Every recommendation is based on thorough profile assessments and counselling credentials. FICC is affiliated with the British Council and IDP, and is a recognised member of ICEF and FACD-CAB, which ensures our services meet international standards of trust and credibility.

**TDS: What trends are you seeing among Bangladeshi students?**

**AS:** Demand is strong for Australia, the UK, New Zealand, and Europe. Popular study fields include business, IT, engineering, and health sciences, chosen for their global career potential. Families increasingly look for affordable pathways and scholarships, focusing on the return on investment of higher education.



## IELTS:

# Opening doors to study, work, and migration

Every year, thousands of Bangladeshis take their first step towards studying, working, or settling abroad with IELTS, the International English Language Testing System. Accepted by over 12,500 organisations in 140+ countries, including top universities and immigration authorities in the UK, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, IELTS remains the world's most trusted English test.

#### WHAT IS IELTS?

IELTS measures real-life English skills in Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The test lasts 2 hours 45 minutes. Listening, Reading, and Writing are taken back-to-back, while Speaking is a face-to-face conversation with a trained examiner, held the same day or within a week.

#### THERE ARE TWO TYPES:

- Academic – for higher education and professional recognition.
- General Training – for workplace opportunities and migration.

Candidates can choose IELTS on Paper or Computer.

#### WHY IELTS?

- Global recognition: Preferred by governments, universities, and employers worldwide.
- Human interaction: Speaking is always with a trained examiner, ensuring fairness and natural conversation.
- Fairness and accessibility: Secure testing protocols, multiple test centres, and support for candidates with special needs.

#### GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

IELTS opens doors to world-class universities, scholarships, and career opportunities. A Universities UK International report found 83% of international graduates said their UK degree (secured via IELTS) helped them land a job. Employers in healthcare, engineering, and finance, as well as migration authorities, trust IELTS scores.

#### REGISTRATION & PAYMENT

Booking is quick and secure with a valid ID and card. To make IELTS accessible, the British Council offers 0% EMI through 32+ banks in Bangladesh, letting candidates spread the fee over three months. Test centres operate in Dhaka, Chattogram, Sylhet, and more.

#### RESULTS & RETAKE

- Computer: Results in 1-2 days.
- Paper: Up to 13 days.
- UKVI Life Skills: 7 days.

Candidates get an official Test Report Form (TRF) and up to five free additional TRFs sent to institutions.

If one section falls short, candidates can use One Skill Retake within 60 days, saving time and money. With decades of expertise, the British Council offers trusted preparation tools, flexible booking, affordable EMI options, convenient centres, fast results, and support like One Skill Retake making IELTS not just a test, but a pathway to global opportunities.

# ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT studying in Australia?



**S.M. ARSH ALAM**, student at Western Sydney University.

Australia has become a second home for thousands of international students, valued for its quality education and diverse lifestyle. Among its leading institutions, Western Sydney University stands out. It is ranked in the top 2% of universities worldwide according to the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024. For those who need a stepping stone, the Western Sydney University International College offers a supportive pathway that helps students build skills and confidence before moving into their degree programs.

The college is based in Parramatta, just 25 minutes by train from Sydney's Central Business District. With small class sizes, free support in English and Maths, and a dedicated student services team, the International College supports students every step of the way. We spoke to alumnus S.M. Arsh Alam, who completed a Diploma in Business and is now continuing his studies at Western Sydney University.

#### What has been your biggest achievement so far?

**Arsh Alam:** After graduating from Western Sydney University International College, my biggest achievement has been leveraging my academic knowledge to build upon my existing business experience and background. I successfully combined theoretical concepts with practical skills, enabling me to expand and diversify my entrepreneurial ventures. This included launching several business initiatives in Sydney, such as a consultancy firm, a trading business, and other projects within the trade and creative industries.

**"I appreciate my time at Western Sydney University International College. Coming here has changed my life for the better and I have met people from different backgrounds and cultures."**

**What advice would you give students from Bangladesh who are thinking about studying at the International college?**

**Arsh Alam:** My advice for other students from Bangladesh is simple: stay focused, stay curious, and believe in yourself. Plan, stick to your goals, and don't be afraid to ask for help when needed. Remember, every challenge you overcome brings you closer to your dreams. Keep learning, stay persistent, and success will follow!

**Where are you currently at with your studies?**

**Arsh Alam:** I am currently in my second year at Western Sydney University, where I am pursuing an undergraduate Business degree. Through my studies at the University, I have collaborated with multinational companies on diverse projects, gaining valuable experience in global business operations. I am also training to become a pilot.

For more information about Western Sydney University International College, please visit [internationalcollege.westsydney.edu.au](http://internationalcollege.westsydney.edu.au)

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# GOODBYES, CALLS, and the weight of distance

**I believe that the most important thing is to keep track of what your child is doing. They should have the mental strength to let their child start a new life abroad.**

**AZRA HUMAYRA**

Every evening in Dhaka, when the house quietened, Rokeya Huq kept the family computer open and waited for the familiar Skype ring. On the other end were her children, Reza Ul Karim, calling from his Cambridge dorm, or Roksana Karim from Melbourne, ready to share their day.

"My son would share everything with me, his daily activities, his friends, what he did that day," she recalled. She mostly listened, offering advice sparingly. The ritual kept distance at bay, even if the ocean never truly shrank.

#### DISTANCE PULLS

For parents, a child's decision to study abroad is both pride and endurance. Safety, finances, emotional support, and independence become daily questions once the plane takes off. Parents must prepare their children for practical realities while learning to manage their own fears.

For Monica Margaret, whose son Ernest Prottoy studied Strategic Management and Organisation at Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University in Japan, success abroad begins with community and responsibility. "They should have good relationships with their classmates and their teachers as well, and should develop financial management skills

to avoid financial crises," she said. To her, thriving is about building bonds that make a new environment feel less hostile.

Financial planning, she added, starts long before departure. "If parents have an aim to send their child abroad to study, they should have a savings scheme for that." International education is costly; without a long-term plan, families may struggle under tuition and living expenses. Once overseas, students must sharpen budgeting skills and prepare for emergencies, and parents should remain a steady source of reassurance. "The parents should assure their child that they are always there for him or her... whenever he or she faces any problem, whether it is financial or emotional."

#### THE NEED TO PROTECT

That reassurance needs calibration. The urge to protect often clashes with the need to grant independence. Rokeya found balance in listening, while her husband, Mohammad Karimul Huq, emphasised physical presence even briefly. "We always made sure our children came home after every semester, even though it was expensive," he said. Those trips home reminded the children that their lives abroad were still anchored in family. "We worried about whether they had good company, whether

they got sick, how they would manage, but we did everything we could to make sure they were comfortable."

The Huqs also looked outward, learning from peers who had navigated the same journey. "We also listened to our friends living abroad to understand which places might be better for our children, so that we could make informed decisions about their future," Rokeya said. Advice from others often filled the gaps that geography created.

In all this lies a central dilemma: how to trust without retreating, how to guide without controlling. Monica is clear. "Parents can do that in a very subtle way. I believe that the most important thing is to keep track of what your child is doing. They should have the mental strength to let their child start a new life abroad. So, they should not push their child into preferring to lie by mistrusting and overprotecting. They should let him or her enjoy the independence and at the same time become their sanctuary."

**LEARNING TO LET GO**  
Her words capture the paradox of distance. Parents must learn to live with absence while inventing new forms of presence. Children gain freedom yet lean on family in unseen ways. Behind every semester, every tuition bill,

and every video call is a quiet interdependence.

The departures hurt and the worries linger. Yet parents continue to let their children go, believing the world beyond home will help them shape their own lives. The sacrifice doesn't get easier with routine; it's carried with resolve call by call, semester by semester until the children return as adults,

moulded by distance.

**Azra Humayra** is majoring in mass communication and journalism at the University of Dhaka.



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