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CAMPUS

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Career prospects to explore as an EEE graduate

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

TV SERIES

PEACEMAKER SEASON TWO

A tale of overcoming trauma and seeking self-worth

SABIL SADAT ZAHIR

Peacemaker's second season delivers a deeply personal and character-driven story that delves into themes of trauma, loneliness, and self-acceptance – all set against the backdrop of yet another multiverse-centric narrative.

The new season starts with Christopher Smith (Peacemaker) and the rest of his friends (the 11th Street Kids) at a relatively low point in their lives. Amidst the turmoil, Chris discovers a door to a parallel dimension where his deceased brother and father are both alive. In tandem, Chris is also being hunted down by Rick Flag Sr, the Director of ARGUS.

Despite the comedic nature of the Peacemaker himself, Chris is an incredibly layered and complex character whose entire arc is intertwined with the internalised guilt caused by the trauma and loss he has faced. This leads to some truly emotional scenes, both on the heartbreaking and wholesome side, elevated by what is undoubtedly John Cena's best performance in his career.

Meanwhile, Chris's love interest, Emilia Harcourt, struggles to cope with the loss of her job at ARGUS and falls into a pattern of self-destruction. For one, her denial of her feelings for Chris creates contention between the two, and becomes one of the key plot points that brings out both of their struggles with self-worth.

However, the show does have some glaring issues that prevent it from being perfect. To begin with, some episodes are quite short, with the runtime clocking in at 30-35 minutes. As the show is an eight-episode series, longer episodes could have added more depth to the overall narrative.

The finale is rather divisive as well. While it does reach an emotional climax and wraps up all the character arcs quite well, it ends on a cliffhanger that sets up future DCU projects. This ending falls under the same kind of problem that plagues superhero franchises as it sets up an unrelated project rather than a potential third season.

Overall, *Peacemaker's* second season is a fantastically written story that, despite the divisive finale, might be one of the best shows to come out this year. It is a must-watch for fans of the superhero genre, as well as fans of John Cena.

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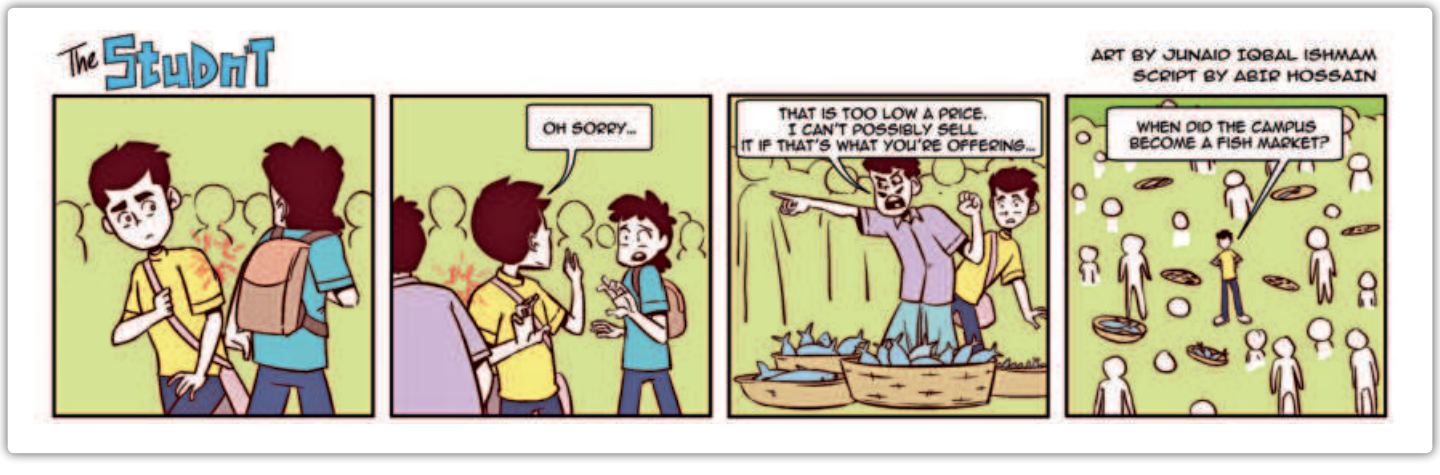

OPPORTUNITIES

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- A strong portfolio is a must.

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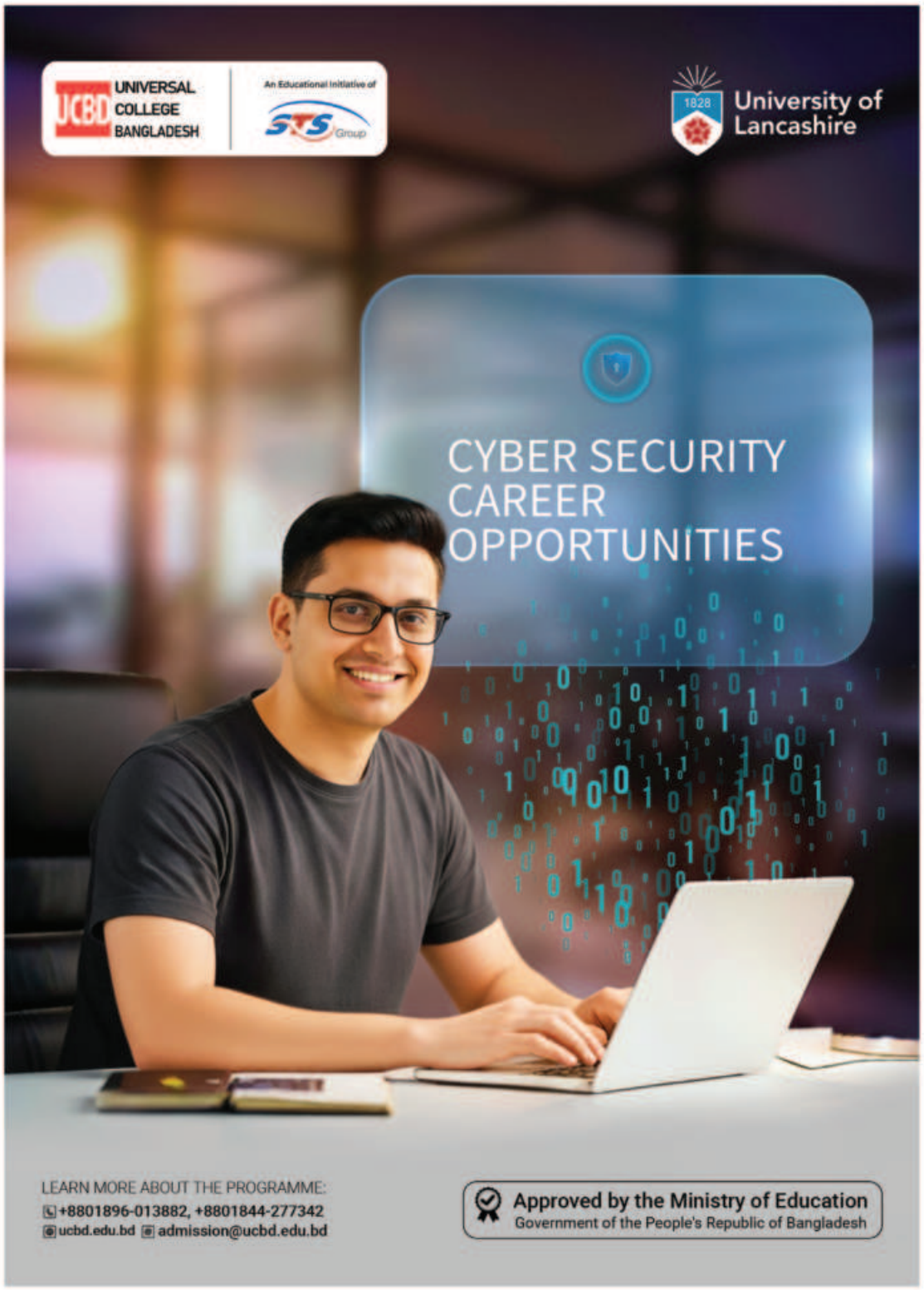
UCBD's UK Cyber Security degree turns digital threats into career opportunities



From e-governance and fintech to e-health and mobile banking, every sector in Bangladesh is going digital. Digitisation makes our lives easier, but it also means that online systems are vulnerable to attack. This means that the world needs cyber security professionals to protect its growing online networks, but there are more jobs than there are qualified graduates to fill them. Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD) is addressing this gap by offering full UK Cyber Security degrees at its campus in Dhaka.

UCBD offers the country's first international degree in Cyber Security in collaboration with the University of Lancashire (ULan), UK. This degree is open to A Level and HSC students from any stream, so for the first time arts or commerce students can complete a full Bachelor of Science honours degree in Cyber Security in Bangladesh. The UCBD programme is the first of its kind in other ways too because the international standard curriculum is exactly the same as the curriculum taught in the UK, and the degree is taught by expert faculty approved to UK standards. The ULan degree is focused on practical and technical skills, so there is a lot of hands-on project work. Perhaps best of all, there are no big exams and students are assessed using modern methods like assignments, presentations, and practicals.

The unique collaboration between UCBD and ULan enables Bangladeshi students to acquire a world-leading UK Cyber Security qualification in Bangladesh. It offers the chance for ambitious students who want to study one of the most rapidly expanding professional sectors in the world to get a full honours degree without the cost and hassle of traveling abroad. Even so, the international accreditation of the programme through ULan ensures that graduates receive globally recognized credentials, significantly boosting their career mobility both within Bangladesh and abroad.

The UCBD degree has the potential to reduce the country's over-reliance on foreign cybersecurity experts. Through proper training and developing a new generation of experts at home, Bangladesh can have its own way of protecting public and private sector networks. It goes without saying that having its own skilled manpower is the key to enduring national resilience in the context of evolving cyber threats.

At the same time, cyber security is a global field where threats and opportunities alike cross borders. Because UCBD equips its graduates with world-class education and practical exposure, they are fit to work effectively in multinational corporations, defence systems, global tech firms, defence institutions, and leading IT industries. This global mobility provides an opportunity for Bangladeshi specialists to become high earners overseas by following careers in rapidly growing sectors such as cloud security, digital forensics, and AI-driven threat detection.

The UCBD degree aligns Bangladesh with global best practices and legal frameworks in cyber security and digital governance. UCBD students gain practical knowledge not only of the technical aspects of cyber security, but also of its legal, ethical, and policy dimensions. This comprehensive preparation ensures they can navigate complex regulatory environments, whether advising Bangladeshi companies on compliance or working with international organizations on cross-border security initiatives.

In an era where digital transformation defines progress, cyber security defines protection. UCBD's partnership with ULan represents not just a new academic programme, but a pathway to global careers, lifelong relevance, and national contribution. Bangladesh's digital future will depend on those who can defend it — and through this pioneering programme, Universal College Bangladesh is preparing that next generation of defenders. For more information visit ucbd.edu.bd

CAREER

Career prospects to explore as AN EEE GRADUATE

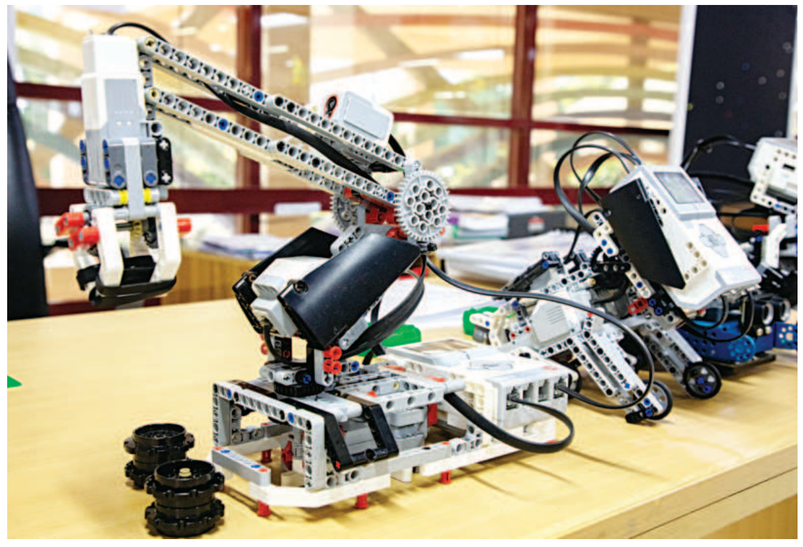


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

When I chose Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE) after getting admitted to university, it wasn't out of a grand passion for circuits or machines. I was told that EEE graduates had better chances at landing government jobs. To me, it was always easier to picture what a Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) or Civil Engineering graduate actually did. But as I sat through my first few classes as an EEE undergraduate student, one question kept circling in my mind — what does an electrical engineer actually do?

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

Breaking down the EEE field

EEE, in general, can broadly be divided into 3 majors: Electronics and Photonics, Communication and Signal Processing (CSP), and Electrical Energy and Power Systems (EEPS).

The field of Electronics and Photonics explores materials at the nanoscale level that are used to develop faster, smaller, and more efficient devices. By studying how materials behave at this level, it is possible to design advanced electronic and photonic components.

CSP dives into advanced communication systems that power today's interconnected world. The field also integrates artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and the IoT (Internet of Things) to create smarter, more efficient networks — spanning wireless, optical, and satellite systems. Signal processing forms the core of this innovation, enabling AI to interpret complex data through techniques like noise reduction and pattern recognition.

Lastly, EEPS deals with modelling and controlling complex power networks to ensure stable and efficient electricity flow. It focuses on integrating renewable sources, managing inverter-based systems, and preventing large-scale outages.

Pursuing research in EEE

Among EEE graduates, pursuing a career in research, especially abroad, is a widely popular choice, now more than ever. For those looking to pursue research in EEE, Chinmoy Biswas, a graduate research assistant at Canada's National Institute of Scientific Research, suggests doing so as an undergraduate student.

"Most universities now offer the option to pursue an undergraduate thesis in the final year, so that's a good point to start," says Biswas. "If you have a decent CGPA, I don't recommend getting into research earlier than the final year. But you can always reach out to a professor of your choice and start working independently with them alongside your thesis. Of course, one needs to be aware of the maximum workload they can handle, as working on multiple projects with different professors or supervisors without results doesn't amount to much. It might end up hampering your CGPA without amounting to any significant advantage."

As a graduate research assistant, Biswas's key responsibilities include performing research, reading papers, writing conference and journal manuscripts, and presenting research work at conferences.

For pursuing a master's or a PhD abroad, Biswas suggests ensuring that one actually enjoys conducting research before just jumping on board. He says, "Research abroad includes some downsides and upsides. The upsides include the promise of a better life, a job with a better salary, and academic prestige. The downsides are mental stress, living on minimal money with hardly any savings in the bank during the research period, tirelessly working to produce some good results, and missing your home and family. There's always the excess headache and panic attacks if your supervisor is not supportive or cannot contribute much to the work you're doing. Be sure to mentally account for these things as you make your decision."

Pursuing a career as an educator

Other than actively pursuing research, there's also the option of staying involved in academia as faculty members at colleges or universities. The selection procedure varies from one university to another, but topping your class helps significantly, as per Ahmed Jawad Rashid, a junior lecturer in the Department of EEE at the Islamic University of Technology (IUT).

"Since most universities across the country are now going for internal recruitment in one form or another, you basically have to be among the top candidates of your class to land a faculty position at your own university," says Rashid. "University cultures vary, and there's no universal manual these recruiters are following. So, the first rule of academics is to perform well. And if you're not lucky enough to get internally recruited, your next move is to look around and observe which universities have faculty members who are alumni of your university. Going for a doctoral degree will always increase your chances of getting faculty positions in universities which, otherwise, might not hire freshers."

As a junior lecturer, Rashid's key responsibilities include teaching lab courses which are offered to him. He says, "Some of these courses fall within my wheel of expertise and comfort, while others are outside my familiarity and require additional preparation. In addition to teaching, I also handle a range of administrative responsibilities that go beyond the 18 credits of courses I teach. The department head and higher authorities expect active participation in these administrative tasks, which can include paperwork related to programme accreditation, departmental documentation, and committee work."

"As faculty members, we also collaborate and supervise student research work or projects, which are not necessarily formally compensated or included in our contracts. But I think most teachers try to be engaged in such work or projects out of their genuine interest in supporting student growth," remarks Rashid.

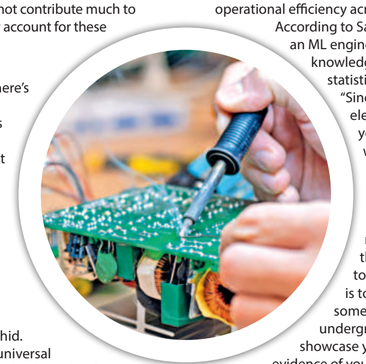
According to him, the main challenge he faces is the lack of growth in his job, "As a faculty member, one ends up teaching materials they learned back in their undergraduate life. Meanwhile, your friends are taking on different professional jobs across various industries, and suddenly, the fear of missing out hits, because they're constantly learning new things, expanding their skills, and pushing themselves to broaden their horizons. In academia, promotions are not as abundant. You typically get only four or five promotions throughout your entire career. Hence, growth doesn't show up as yearly KPIs (key performance indicators) or numbers. Instead, it becomes visible only over decades."

"However, what I absolutely love about my job is the freedom," Rashid adds. "I have the creative freedom and personal liberty to bring my ideas to life through my courses, research, and everything I do. Honestly, it's deeply rewarding when you go above and beyond for teaching a course, pouring your energy into providing students with good content."

Opportunities as a CSP major

Career prospects related to the CSP major could be anything, ranging from engineers at government organisations, like Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL), to private telecom companies, like Grameenphone.

As an ML engineer at ACI Limited, Aranya Saha's key responsibilities include designing, developing and deploying machine learning solutions that automate and optimise various business processes and operations within the company, "So far, I have been involved in projects like an automated sorting system, insight generation for tabular data, Bangla OCR, etc. Each of these projects aims to automate labour-intensive processes within ACI, significantly reducing manual effort and improving operational efficiency across teams."



According to Saha, the prerequisites of becoming an ML engineer include basic mathematical knowledge of linear algebra, calculus, statistics, and strong programming skills, "Since Python is widely used, it's almost elementary for an ML engineer. Then, you have to familiarise yourself with libraries and frameworks like Pandas, NumPy, PyTorch, etc. You need a clear understanding of basic concepts like supervised learning, unsupervised learning, neural networks, etc. Above all, the main thing that opens a door to getting an ML engineering job is to have proof of your skills. Having some really good projects in your undergraduate years, which can help you showcase your skills in coding, can work as evidence of your capabilities."

For Saha, the biggest challenge lies in creating something new without fully knowing how to make it happen, "For example, one company might have landed a very difficult project, which is their flagship, and so they haven't released the codes or the pipelines of the project. Now, an ML engineer can be instructed to replicate the same project. So, without any knowledge about the pipeline, an ML engineer might have to build the project from scratch. Or, they might have to build a project from the ground up, tailored specifically to the company's demand. However, knowing how my work as an ML engineer has saved enormous man-hours for my company is always a rewarding experience."

Exploring the electronics field

For someone majoring in Electronics, the job field focusing solely on electronics is somewhat limited in Bangladesh. However, some local semiconductor design companies, like Ulkasemi and Neural Semiconductor, have been evolving rapidly and offer incredible opportunities for someone interested in electronics and fabrication.

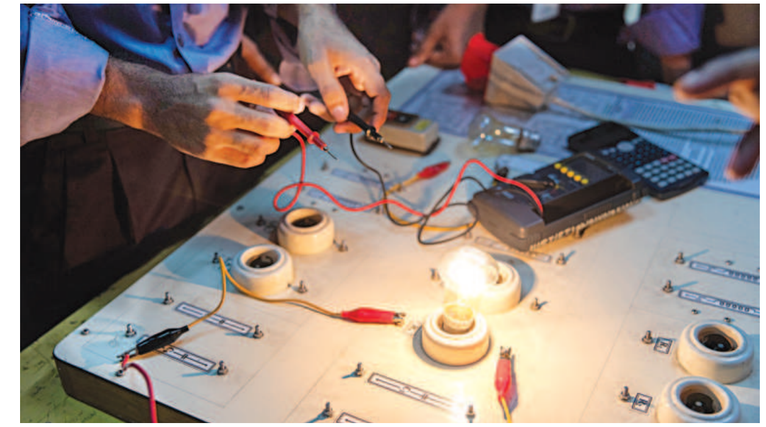


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Shadman Saquib, a trainee engineer in the analogue circuits design division at Ulkasemi, explains the prerequisites of getting into the semiconductor industry, "The easiest way to get into this industry is by being recruited as a fresh graduate who's taken relevant courses like Very-large-scale integration (VLSI), Digital Logic Design (DLD), and Analogue Integrated Circuit (AIC) offered at their university. If you have a completely different background or are switching career track, you need to self-study these courses and prove that you have the minimum prerequisite knowledge in the initial online screening tests and interviews."

As the semiconductor industry is bound to get bigger in future, Shadman insists that it'll always have a demand for skilled designers and engineers. He explains, "This industry already has a higher barrier to entry in terms of the depth of prerequisite knowledge required. It's not something you can learn through a short bootcamp. If anyone gets into this industry just for the sake of having a job without a genuine passion for the field, it will be extremely hard to survive and grow. But the demands for advanced chips will continue to increase, and so will the rewards for those with real design expertise."

Even for someone interested in pursuing research in electronics abroad, experience in the local semiconductor industry can be highly beneficial for their portfolio. As an analogue circuit design engineer, Shadman has to work as part of the team when they're assigned a new project by a client, "At first, I have to attend meetings with the clients and understand their requirements. After that, I design the initial block-level architectures and then get them reviewed by senior engineers. Then, I am back discussing the work with the clients, implementing the architectures at the circuit level (doing pre-layout schematic simulations), and preparing detailed design documentation. I also have to communicate with other teams to whom my schematics are passed. When the layout team finishes its job, I perform post-layout simulations and validate the results against specifications as well."

Job opportunities for EEPS majors

For EEPS majors, the job sector in Bangladesh is somewhat limited, apart from the government circulars, owing to the limited number of private power corporations. Government agencies, like the Dhaka Electric Supply Company (DESCO) and Dhaka Power Distribution Company (DPDC), hire engineers once every few years, and the recruitment process is usually lengthy and highly competitive. Md Mostafizur Rahman, a sub-divisional engineer at the Power Grid Company of Bangladesh (PGCB), describes how most power sector recruitment exams are divided into preliminary, written, and viva stages.

"Entry-level engineers join as assistant engineers (AE) and are later promoted to sub-divisional engineers (SDE), with both roles sharing similar duties, says Rahman. "For the preliminary exam, candidates should focus on general knowledge, especially Bangla and English literature and national and international affairs. Aptitude-based questions are also common. The written exam emphasises core departmental subjects, particularly those taught from the first to third years of the engineering curriculum. During the viva, questions usually cover basic technical concepts and the structure of Bangladesh's power system."

The responsibilities of the power engineers vary depending on the department, but can be divided into two categories: operation and maintenance, and planning and design. The operation and maintenance jobs include managing grid substations, operating the national grid, handling equipment, protection relays, and instrument testing and maintenance. On the other hand, the planning and design responsibilities include system planning, project implementation, and substation equipment design.

For a power systems engineer like Rahman, ensuring the uninterrupted operation of the national grid is one of the most important responsibilities.

"Substation in-charges and maintenance engineers must remain available 24/7 to respond to system faults or interruptions," says Rahman. "This often requires balancing heavy responsibilities and personal time. Despite these challenges, the most rewarding part is knowing that our efforts keep the national grid running smoothly, ensuring power reliability across the country. Moreover, working under such pressure fosters strong skills in time and resource management."

Apart from these common fields, EEE graduates can also explore career opportunities in fields like robotics, large-scale industrial automation, aerospace, and even biomedical and software development. A lot of these opportunities are more readily available abroad than in Bangladesh. That being said, many companies, especially startups, in our country are currently exploring these fields, so it is possible that EEE graduates can pursue opportunities in these niches at home soon.

Electrical and Electronics Engineering is truly one of the more diverse branches of engineering because it allows you to spread out into other streams of engineering as well. Whether it's designing microchips, advancing machine learning, or keeping the national grid stable, each branch of EEE demands a blend of technical mastery, persistence, and curiosity. And while the journey can be demanding, it's also a deeply rewarding one.

Hasib is a EEE graduate from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Reach him at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com.

NOTICE BOARD

NSU observes World Mental Health Day 2025

North South University's (NSU) Department of History and Philosophy (DHP) observed World Mental Health Day 2025 on October 14 with a Stress Management and Healthy Living programme.

The session chair of the programme was Prof. Abdur Rob Khan, Treasurer and Pro-Vice Chancellor (IC), NSU; Engr Pranjit Lal Shil, Organiser, Quantum Foundation; Dr Moniruzzaman, Coordinator, Quantum Hear Club; and Dr Md Rizwanul Islam, Professor of Law & Dean, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, NSU, attended the programme. Dr Mahbubur Rahman, Professor and Chair, Department of History & Philosophy, NSU, was the moderator.

Dr Rahman said, "Through breathing techniques, nutrition, and resting, we can beat stress and allow our productivity to flourish. A stress-free life is not a distant idea, but a practical goal that can be achieved through a series of healthy habits and routines."

Engr Lal Shil discussed the various techniques that are used in stress management. He said, "Stress can either break you or make you, which one it does is your choice. It is important that you face the stress instead of avoiding it. You will be able to win against it, and we are all with you in your journey."

Dr Moniruzzaman presented the importance of healthy eating, nutrition, and a balanced diet. He said, "We should live according to what science tells us to lead a healthy and active life. Our food can either be our medicine or the reason for our disease. We should formulate a balanced diet so that our food becomes medicine."

Prof. Khan said, "Stress is not a character flaw; it is a psychological reaction to pressure. The choices we make about handling stress determine our quality of life. Through stress management practices, we can transform mental well-being from simply a slogan into an achievable goal."

In the vote of thanks, Dr Islam said, "Today's programme was beneficial and informative. It is important to have more of these discussions concerning World Mental Health Day."

A Question-and-Answer session was held following the presentations. The event concluded with a meditation session conducted by Engr Lal Shil.

Int'l professional development expert Katherine Rick conducts interactive sessions at IUB

Katherine Rick, Director of Professional Development at the British Management University, Uzbekistan, conducted two interactive sessions with faculty, students, and the management staff of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB) on October 16 at the university's DMK Lecture Gallery.

The first session, titled "Ignite Your Mind: Where Curiosity Becomes Drive", explored how curiosity influences creativity, confidence, and purposeful learning. It was organised by the Outreach, Extension, and Continuing Education (OECE) unit of the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor of IUB. Through engaging stories and interactive reflections, students were encouraged to embrace curiosity as a powerful tool for growth and discovery.

Prof. Dr Raisul Awal Mahmood, Dean of IUB's School of Business and Entrepreneurship; Asif Parvez, Registrar; and officials from the Office of Pro-Vice Chancellor and the Media and Public Relations Department attended the session.

In the second session, titled "Symphony of Minds: A New Era of Human–AI Artistic Storytelling" and jointly organised by OECE and the Department of Media and Communication, Rick demonstrated how human creativity and artificial intelligence (AI) can merge to produce innovative knowledge-based content. She presented live technical examples and discussed applications of AI tools in creative publishing.

This session was attended by Dr Imran Firdaus, Assistant Professor and Head (In-Charge) of the Department of Media and Communication, along with other faculty members, officials, and students.

Through both sessions, participants gained insights into curiosity-driven learning and the evolving intersection of human creativity and AI innovation.

Department of English brings together 22 universities for Lit-Carnival 2025

The Department of English, East West University (EWU), organised a day-long literary event titled "Foodi Presents EWU Lit- Carnival 2025" on October 16. Amidst much excitement and enthusiasm of participants, attendees, and guests from all across Bangladesh, the event showcased the biggest celebration of literature and arts of the year.

More than 200 students and literary enthusiasts from 22 public and private universities competed in various segments, from spot poetry and recitation to cosplay, poster presentations, drama, and masquerade. The carnival allowed participants to exhibit their creativity and present their ideas to a wider audience.

The festival also included interactive stalls such as literature-themed food court and exchange of secondhand books. Prof. Dr Mohammed Farashuddin, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees (BoT) of EWU, and Prof. Shams Rahman, the Vice-Chancellor of EWU, were present at the opening and concluding ceremony, respectively. Luva Nahid Choudhury, the Director General of Bengal Foundation, inaugurated the programme as the Chief Guest. Munize Manzur, a member of the EWU BoT, was invited as one of the esteemed judges. Renowned academics and cultural figures, including Dr Fakrul Alam, Dr Ahmed Ahsanuzzaman, Tahmina Ahmed, and Mashrur Shahid Hossain, also graced the event with their presence.

Universities such as North South University, Gopalganj University of Science and Technology, Eastern University, Shanto-Mariam University of Creative Technology, and Presidency University earned recognition across categories, while EWU students excelled in every category.

Assistant Prof. Israt Jahan and senior lecturer Shahnaz Ameer were the conveners of the Lit-Carnival.

EDUCATION

How are HSC examinees reacting to UNIVERSITY ADMISSION TESTS' ROUTINES?

PHOTO: **PRABIR DAS**

AYAAN SHAMS SIDDIQUEE

It's difficult to overstate the weight that the university admission phase carries for a freshly graduated high school student. From starting supplementary coaching classes as soon as the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination ends to completely going off the grid during the final days of preparation, students seldom take this phase lightly.

So, it should come as no surprise that admission candidates face an immense amount of mental pressure. Unfortunately for the latest batch of HSC examinees, this mental pressure has been exponentially aggravated due to changes in various admission tests' routines and structures.

After talking to almost a dozen candidates, it became clear that the biggest shock thus far has been Dhaka University (DU).

First of all, the exam date for DU's Institute of Business Administration (IBA) has been set to November 28 — less than a month and half after the HSC results were published. In comparison, the previous admission test for the 33rd batch was held nearly three months after the HSC results came out. This dramatic and unexpected time crunch has sent both students and tutors into a state of panic.

Itekaf Bin Hafiz, a student at IBA, DU and an instructor at Cognita Educare, was dumbfounded when he learned that the admission test would be held in November. He says, "We designed our course estimating the exam to be held in the latter half of December at the earliest. Now, we have to reevaluate our expectations and squeeze in extra classes to make up for the fact that we're virtually a month behind on schedule."

He also adds, "Tutors and coaching centres that leave mock tests for the absolute tail-end of their course are under a lot of fire right now, because there are concerns as to whether or not the students will be exam-ready by the end of November."

The dates for the other units of DU also sparked some confusion among prospective examinees. In the previous admission season, for instance, the Science unit's exam was held after the Medical Admission Test (MAT) and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) preliminary examination took place. This has been the norm for a few years now. So, when DU announced earlier this week that the entrance exam for the science unit would be held on December 20, candidates were left with a lot of questions.

"Students usually set mental expectations for how their university admission journey will unfold, drawing from the timelines of previous years exams," says Azmayeen Sadat, an HSC 2025 examinee from Notre Dame College.

He continues, "That expected schedule helps those applying to multiple disciplines — like medical, engineering, or other STEM fields — structure their routines and decide what to study and when. So, when we saw that the MAT and DU exams were scheduled so close together, with BUET and other engineering exams likely following suit, it threw everyone into a state of anxiety. The new dates just didn't line up with what students had been preparing for."

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP) has also announced their admission exams' timeline. While the exam dates — set for early January 2026 — have been met with relief from prospective examinees, a major change in the Business department was made without any prior official announcements.

According to the notice published on October 15, two separate entrance exams are to be held under the Faculty of Business Studies (FBS) — one solely for the BBA General aspirants, and another one for the accounting, management, finance, and marketing aspirants. In previous years, a single exam was held for the entire business studies department, which meant that an aspirant preparing for the DU IBA exam could sit for the BUP FBS exam as well with little to no extra preparation.

But as Golam Mostafa Shreshtha, a fresh HSC graduate from Dhaka City College puts it, that will likely no longer be the case. He shared, "BUP was seen as a competitive but far more realistic backup to DU IBA, particularly due to the fact that the former admitted a greater number of students. But with the BBA General exam being separated from the rest of the business studies department, it will most definitely mean that we'll be competing for far fewer seats with the same amount of preparation our seniors had."

Upon being asked about the rationale behind implementing this rule, Shreshtha replied, "I don't understand why the authorities would withhold such crucial information and dump it on us without any prior notice. It would make sense for them to announce the change now and actually enforce these revisions from the next intake onwards so that the candidates could align their goals accordingly."

As for medical aspirants hoping to appear for the MAT, certain changes are also in effect from this intake period onwards. For starters, medical and dentistry students will be sitting for a single, combined exam that will be held on the same day, based on the same question.

Surprisingly, these decisions were also announced quite abruptly. According to Takbir Ul Islam, an MBBS aspirant from Mohammadpur Preparatory School & College, the implications of these impromptu announcements on the candidates is quite far-reaching.

"Usually, there's a general consensus that someone who had a less-than-ideal performance in the MAT can still try to turn things around in the BDS exam," he shares. "But since there will only be one unified exam this time, there's no second chance for anyone."

"Students usually set mental expectations for how their university admission journey will unfold, drawing from the timelines of previous years exams," says Azmayeen Sadat, an HSC 2025 examinee from Notre Dame College.

One might be inclined to ridicule the examinees for complaining too much, arguing that everyone had the opportunity to prepare for the admission tests since the HSC exams ended. But one must also keep in mind that HSC results are a big determining factor behind a candidate's university admission journey. For instance, someone who aspired to pursue engineering in BUET might've failed to achieve GPA 5 in HSC, causing them to reevaluate their dreams and start preparing for a completely different discipline.

The shortened preparation period and multiple changes to exam structures mean that they'll be starting on the backfoot compared to everyone else. And when tens and hundreds of students compete for a single seat, even the slightest disadvantage can cause their dreams to slip away from them.

CAREER

GEN-Z EMPLOYEE DIARIES

I got into corporate...and I hate it

CORPORATE BADDIE AND CORPORATE SADDIE

What do a job posting on LinkedIn that matches your qualifications and a profile of a potential date have in common? You immediately romanticise the hell out of it and form an idealised version of them in your head because it sounds really good on paper. Bonus points if it is a multinational corporation (MNC) or a globally recognised organisation (the romantic equivalent would be *jamai bideshe*). But we are here to give you a harsh reality check: dream jobs don't exist, and neither does *The One*. You only start spotting the red flags once you've actually spent time with them.

When you are a student, you may find yourself scrolling on social media, looking at posts announcing a new job, humblebragging about a promotion, or showing off some shiny accolade. Or you may be consuming interviews of famous professionals, aspiring to be like them, wondering when you will be able to reach those heights.

Let's assume you've earned a coveted spot at one of the best MNCs in the country. Life is good. You're earning well. The work is enjoyable. If you thought gracefully tackling your tasks and hitting every performance indicator meant your work was done and dusted, we urge you to think again.

ILLUSTRATION: **MONG SHONIE**

Through a very well-crafted employer branding strategy, this company has gaslit people into believing that it is a certified "great place to work". You'll see social media flooded with clips of book clubs, potlucks, and special events where the workplace transforms into a playground of sorts. However, there can sometimes be too much of a good thing.

This is a company that treats extracurricular activities like a matter of national security. Too seriously. Every cultural programme has to resemble an Oscar-winning production, and there are **a lot** of cultural programmes. It doesn't matter if you couldn't care less about the performing arts. Turning down the opportunity to perform, for any reason other than religious ones, is practically a crime.

It's fun when you actually want to jam with work friends and try out a new dance routine, but it's another level of absurd when you're told – last minute– to cobble together a medley of performances and have to spend your hard-earned weekend getting together to rehearse. The horrors of mandatory music and dance classes after school will come back to haunt you.

The ECAs don't stop there. There are countless other things you are expected to do in the name of engagement and fostering team spirit. I have spent the entirety of my undergraduate life avoiding joining a university club or even walking past those rooms, but the irony of fate persists.

On the flipside, the Gen-Xers and Millennials who are not in constant fear of youngsters overshadowing them are too overzealous about milking the fervour of youth. They treat every Gen-Z within arm's reach as an idea factory, forcing them to regurgitate ideas to revamp the company and its processes. It's all fun and games and pretty slide decks until they start taking you to upper management meetings and putting you on the spot to provide a "fresh perspective" into matters beyond your comprehension.

What do we know about anything? We only just graduated.

Let's pivot to another scenario, imagine you're working for another MNC: a shiny Software as a Service (SaaS) start-up. This company seems like the run-of-the-mill start-up with the fancy perks and work-life balance, and life is good for a while when you first join, but soon enough, cracks start to show in this glamorous facade.

This company used to pride itself on flexible working arrangements and the work-life balance it fostered in its culture – offering unlimited paid time off (PTO) packages and allowing employees to work from anywhere up to 45 days in a calendar year. Sounds amazing, right? Out of nowhere, though, Human Resources sends everyone an email stating that the unlimited PTO package will be discontinued next month, citing misuse.

Then, to make things worse, employees are required to show up to the office a minimum of three days a week moving forward. Now this understandably causes a stir, with everyone wanting some transparency on the decision. How does HR respond? They call a town hall meeting and guilt-trip everyone by pointing out that we have the most public holidays of all the operating regions, and we should be considerate of the problems the company faces due to the number of days off we take, and we should all be team players and just suck it up.

But the company still offers a flexible working setup, even without the unlimited PTO; that's a win, right? The main reason the company offers a flexible setup is due to the bizarre work hours they require their employees to work. Over half the office works in alignment with international hours, namely from 2 to 10 PM local time in Bangladesh, a horrible time slot that eats up your whole day, and leaves you no wiggle room for a social life. And let's be honest, everyone ends up working a couple of hours overtime, and in these cases, you work all day, and even into the night, with many people logging off closer to 3 AM than 10 PM.

Okay, fine, at least there's a swanky, cutting-edge office with catered lunch to return to. Turns out, when designing the layout, form was prioritised over function. More space was allocated to areas for lounging and games than for actual workstations, resulting in a daily fight for seats to sit and work at. Furthermore, the anthropological makeup of the workplace means that baddies will be seated next to coders who forget to put on deodorant, leading to a workplace more tense than your family getting ready to go to a wedding reception. Ultimately, it becomes a place where you can neither relax nor get work done.

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It seems like there's a farewell happening every other week, leading to a huge commotion that eats up a couple of hours of productive working time. But if you complain about this, you are practically shunned for being a downer and exiled as a social pariah. So, the next time you see a reel of a special event, know that no one actually had fun, but was administered – by brute force –to people who just want a paycheck.

So, if you haven't been able to read between the lines so far, let me spell it out for you. All that glitters is not gold. The grass isn't always greener on the other side. The IBA person in your friend list may be glamming it up on their stories, but it is more likely that they are crying themselves to sleep. There is more to life than corporate jobs, and maybe you should just get that STEM degree instead.

Corporate Baddie is still clocking in, serving looks, and complaining every single day.
Corporate Saddie is now funemployed, spiritually aligned, and living proof that you can quit your job and still complain about it everyday.