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**FAISAL BIN IQBAL**

*Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man* arrived on Netflix on March 20, and the audience reaction was mixed, with many, including myself, feeling that the film fell just short of the grand farewell the series and Cillian Murphy's Tommy Shelby deserved.

*The Immortal Man* opens with Tommy already deep into his self-imposed exile. In his absence, Tommy's son Duke Shelby, played by Barry Keoghan, has taken over as the leader of the new generation of the Peaky Blinders. However, due to certain circumstances, Tommy has to return to his old life and confront Duke, who seems to have taken a brutal approach in leading the Peaky Blinders gang as if it were 1919.

Let's start off with the movie's strongest

point – the actors. Being the leads, both Cillian Murphy and Barry Keoghan delivered stellar performances. While Cillian has been doing this role for a while now, Barry is new to this role, yet he manages to deliver a performance that's on the same level as his counterpart. The writing and plot of the movie are also exciting in their own right. The plot has the Birmingham Blitz — the bombing of Birmingham and surrounding towns in central England by Nazi Germany — as its backdrop while Tommy attempts to knock some sense into Duke regarding running the family business and handling a few other matters on the side.

As for the film's negatives, there are plenty. Without spoiling anything, let's just say it could've done a better job at managing a few of its character absences.

After all, Tommy isn't the only character in the series who deserved a proper sendoff. Pacing was another issue that bothered me. *The Immortal Man's* plot would've fitted in nicely into *Peaky Blinders'* six-episode season formula. But the film's two-hour runtime wasn't the best medium to deliver this story. And while viewers did have room to process the various events unfolding in the film, it still felt rushed.

*The Immortal Man* arrives not as a disappointment, but as a series that never quite justifies its own existence. The show had found its natural conclusion with season six. Instead, in what reads as a bid to clear the decks for a planned *Peaky Blinders* sequel, the creators have rushed through the motions, and in doing so, denied Tommy Shelby the farewell a character of his stature deserved.

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# Building job-ready graduates: inside UCBD's tech partnerships

**BUILDING JOB-READY GRADUATES  
INSIDE UCBD'S TECH PARTNERSHIPS**

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The expectations from a technology graduate have shifted decisively in recent years. Employers are no longer looking for potential alone; they are looking for proof of skills, familiarity with real systems, and the ability to contribute from the outset. Responding to this shift, Universal College Bangladesh (UCBD) is rethinking how students are prepared for the workplace by embedding industry exposure into academic life.

Through collaborations with leading technology firms including RiseUp Labs, Bdtask, RoseTech Solutions Limited, and Bondstein Technologies Limited, UCBD is building a model where learning extends beyond the classroom. These partnerships are structured to align academic knowledge with the practical demands of the IT sector, ensuring that students graduate with both theoretical grounding and applied experience.

This approach is reflected in how students engage with the industry during their studies. They are placed in live project environments, guided by industry mentors, and introduced to professional tools and workflows that shape modern software development. The aim is to reduce the disconnect that often exists between graduation and employment.

"Our focus is to ensure that students do not encounter

the workplace as something entirely new after graduation," said Kingshuk Gupta, Chief Operating Officer of UCBD. "When they have already worked on real assignments and understood how teams operate, they transition into professional roles with far greater clarity and confidence."

The structure of these partnerships supports that transition in practical ways. Students gain access to internships, job placement pathways, and professional training aligned with current industry standards. Regular knowledge-sharing sessions led by practitioners also expose them to evolving trends and expectations within the sector.

From the industry's perspective, this early engagement helps address a long-standing challenge. Many companies invest significant time in training new recruits before they become fully productive. By working with students earlier, that adjustment period can be shortened.

"Graduates often have strong academic foundations but limited exposure to real delivery environments," said Sumch Mohammad Tarek, Managing Director of Bdtask. "Through this collaboration, students begin to understand timelines, client expectations, and

problem-solving in real contexts, which makes them more effective when they formally enter the workforce."

Other partners view the collaboration as an opportunity to contribute to a more capable talent pipeline. Md. Imran Hossain, Managing Director of RoseTech Solutions Limited, pointed out that practical exposure helps students develop a clearer sense of professional responsibility. "When students work on real projects, they start to understand accountability, communication, and consistency. These are critical in any technology role but are difficult to teach through theory alone," he said.

A similar emphasis on adaptability was highlighted by Mir Shahrukh Islam, Managing Director and CEO of Bondstein Technologies Limited. "The pace of change in technology requires professionals who can adjust quickly. Early exposure to real work environments helps students build that mindset before they begin their careers," he noted.

For students and their families, the result is a more direct pathway from education to employment. For the industry, it ensures access to graduates equipped with relevant, job-ready skills. UCBD's model reflects a growing recognition that meaningful collaboration between academia and industry is essential to building a competitive and future-ready technology ecosystem.

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CAREER

# WORKING WITHOUT BORDERS

## The rise and risks of working for foreign companies remotely

After graduation, opportunities to meet university friends became limited, and meaningful social interaction became harder to come by. With family members often belonging to different age groups, the chance to engage in heart-to-heart, relatable conversations diminishes.

TAZRIN RASHID PRITHA

The Covid-19 pandemic brought about dramatic changes in work environments across the globe. According to the American Community Survey (ACS), remote work increased significantly across all major industries between 2019 and 2021. In response to these global shifts, Bangladesh has also kept pace with the rapid adoption of remote work practices.

However, work-from-home opportunities at companies operating in Bangladesh remain limited. As a result, a large proportion of remote workers in Bangladesh today are choosing to work at foreign companies over domestic organisations.

Some, like Mohsena Akter Drishty, an independent legal researcher, had embraced remote work even before it became widespread during the pandemic. "I got my first remote job back in 2018, when I was just a third-year university student," Mohsena shares. "I needed a side hustle to support myself, and the only employment opportunities typically available to students were tutoring, which felt very monotonous and exhausting. I was fortunate enough to secure a UK-based remote position with a professor, where I was able to make use of my passion for research and writing."

Having a similar experience, Rakib\*, a marketer, says, "I got my first remote job as a student. I had the opportunity to work

full-time during the gap between my HSC exams and starting university. In Bangladesh, there are very few opportunities for students to secure such roles, ones that allow them to sharpen their technical skill sets and gain relevant work experience to strengthen their CVs. Remote work helps to fill that dire gap."

For others, such as Subash Richard Soren, remote work has created opportunities to apply their academic knowledge within multinational organisations while working from the comfort of their homes. Subash holds a master's degree in accounting, so he found it quite easy to become certified as a virtual bookkeeper by both Xero and QuickBooks, leading cloud-based accounting platforms. "The study materials are readily available online, and one simply must sit for an online exam to obtain certification," he says.

Obtaining such certifications can open lucrative career pathways with competitive compensation across the globe, made possible by the flexibility and accessibility of remote work. However, the most prominent

reason many choose to work remotely for foreign organisations is the opportunity to earn at an international pay scale while working from the comfort of their homes. Higher compensation, when adjusted to the local cost of living, can significantly improve financial stability and quality of life.

Md Mahabub Alam, a senior operational analyst at Dependable Solutions, Inc., based in California, explains: "I now earn three times more than I would have if I were employed at a local company. This is partly because I am paid in US dollars, which translates into a substantial amount in Bangladeshi taka. More importantly, US companies tend to value their employees and make an effort to retain talent by offering attractive compensation packages."

Hiring processes at foreign organisations often differ significantly from those of domestic companies. These employers tend to focus less on formal credentials and more on practical competence and cultural fitness.

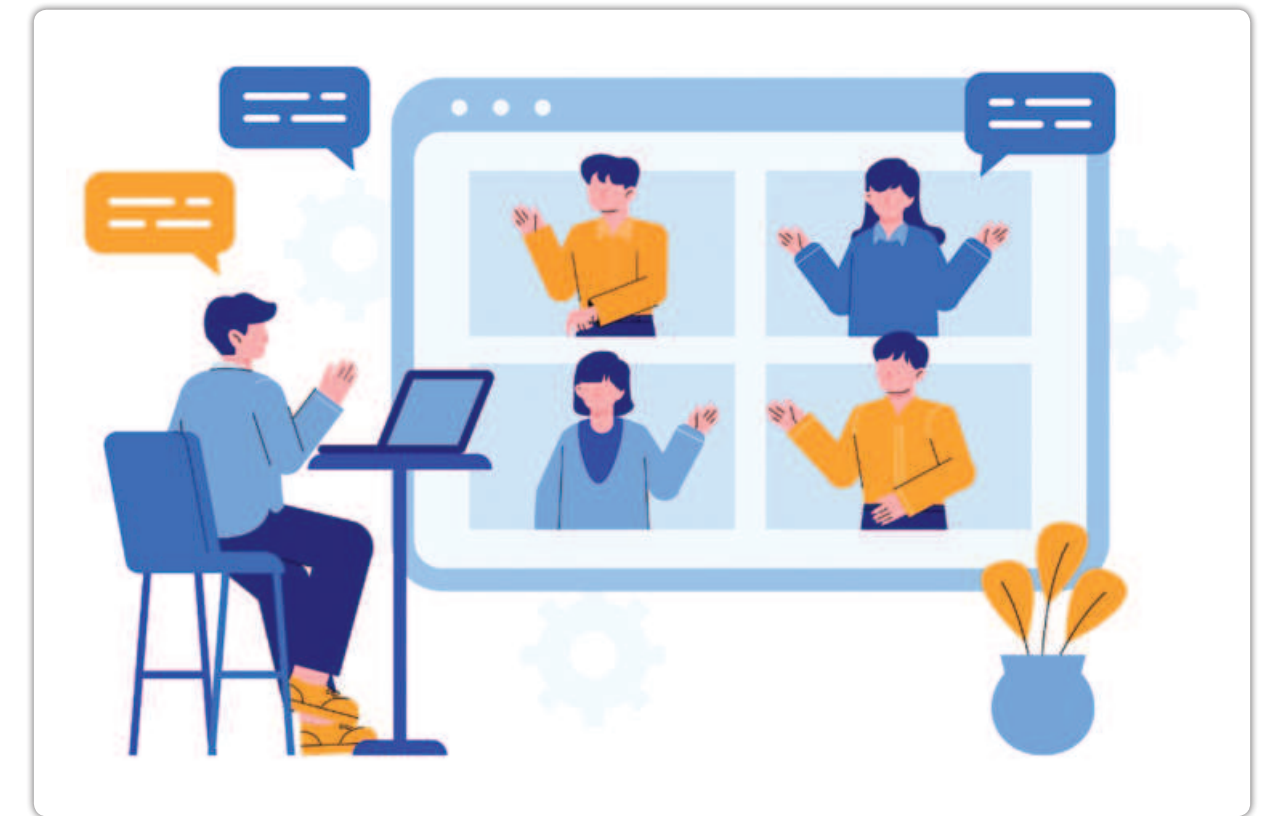
Mahabub shares: "Foreign companies assess whether a candidate possesses the specific skill sets required for the job and whether they align with the organisation's overall culture. In fact, I had to go through several rounds of interviews, including a technical viva. The aptitude test was based on a real-life case study where I had to analyse the situation and synthesise appropriate solutions to the problems presented. They also asked broader questions, such as how I view a case, how I view my life, and how I have risen above past failures. Not a single question was raised about my certifications or alma mater, which significantly reduces potential biases in the hiring process."

He further adds, "In Bangladesh, it is rarely possible to switch domains. Job circulars often require academic degrees that are directly relevant to the role. Even when companies do allow some flexibility, career progression is typically limited to junior positions, making it difficult to advance to senior roles. Thus, if I were restricted to local companies, I would neither have secured my current role nor been able to climb the promotional ladder in a tech company because I am a finance major. Local employers would rarely consider the additional training and education I pursued later. This creates a system where individuals are expected to remain within the same field for the rest of their careers, with limited opportunities to switch paths or redefine their professional trajectories."



Beyond flexibility, many remote employees report enjoying a healthy and empowering work culture at their respective workplaces. "From my experience, workplace culture is better, as foreign companies tend to treat employees with respect regardless of their designation," says Mohsena. "It helps with one's self-esteem and empowers them to speak their mind."

Mahabub echoes the same sentiment: "This is definitely one of the biggest perks that remote work has offered me. I have had the opportunity to work with both internal and external stakeholders. I can enjoy this responsibility because of the decision-making power and autonomy that my company entrusts me with."



Remote work opportunities have also brought significant relief to working parents. It reinforces that giving access to remote work opportunities can potentially support work-life balance for parents. Stakeholders in Bangladesh are also likely to benefit by adopting the same route.

Moreover, many women employees prefer remote work due to the inaccessibility and safety concerns associated with transportation. Commuting often requires constant vigilance, which can take a significant mental and emotional toll.

Despite its many advantages, remote work also comes with notable downsides, possibly instigating different physical and mental health challenges.

"Initially, it was fun," says Mohsena. "You get to be in your pyjamas and work from the comfort of your bed. However, I wasn't prepared for how strongly the wave of isolation would hit me."

After graduation, opportunities to meet university friends became limited, and meaningful social interaction became harder to come by. With family members often belonging to different age groups, the chance to engage in heart-to-heart, relatable conversations diminishes. In work-from-home arrangements, the absence of in-person workplace interactions can intensify feelings of loneliness and social disconnection.

To address this gap, Mohsena shared that her company makes conscious efforts to foster a sense of belonging. "They send us office merchandise like cups, pen drives, notebooks, and so on, so that we feel that we are part of the organisation," she says. "It is a small gesture, but it means a lot to me."

Mental health experts suggest that taking time out each week to socialise

with friends and family members should be made a priority if one wants to survive in this domain with good mental health. However, this poses a challenge, as remote workers must adjust to different time zones and often have routines that run in opposite directions to those of their loved ones.

Mohsena shares that she sadly missed out on recent social events with her loved ones. Working overnight left her utterly exhausted, forcing her to spend the daytime hours catching up on sleep just to function. She informed that this is a regular occurrence for her.

The cost of functioning against the body's natural circadian rhythm is rarely acknowledged. Consistently working during the night and sleeping during the day

can cause long-term irreparable impacts on the body's functionality.

Lastly, remote workers are left in a vulnerable state as labour laws of both Bangladesh and the respective foreign countries can be bypassed via this arrangement. Rakib shares: "My payment terms were not communicated clearly to me. I was given the idea that I would be salaried monthly, but 20 days into my work, I learned from my colleagues that this is a commission-based job."

Apart from a lack of clarity observed in some instances, many foreign companies prefer to hire remote employees on renewable contracts rather than offering permanent positions. Mahabub shares that he has been working under such an arrangement for the past four years. While this provides continuity, it also means that employees like him often miss out on benefits typically available to full-time staff, such as paid leave, health insurance, retirement contributions, structured career progression, and bonuses. Over time, this contractual model can create a sense of uncertainty despite long-term service.

However, the most concerning issue is the absence of an entity for remote employees to report grievances in case a mishap occurs. This is alarming given the fact that remote workers across the globe have seen a 30 percent increase in digital harassment as this job modality grows more popular.

Rapid expansion of remote work in Bangladesh, while being beneficial mostly, has also exposed significant regulatory and structural gaps present today. Meaningful reforms are necessary to ensure that the future of work is not only flexible and profitable, but also fair, secure, and sustainable for those who power it.

\*Name has been changed to protect privacy

Tazrin would probably not say no to a remote work side-quest. Reach out to her at rashid tazrin1@gmail.com

## ■ OFF CAMPUS ■

# What about our parents' screen time?



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

**TINATH ZAEBA**

There's a TV blaring loud enough to be heard from all corners of the house, and a phone in my father's hand. Two different screens with two distinct things playing on each of them. My mother, on the other hand, averages 12 hours of screen time. What does she do on her phone? She sends me AI generated reels, which I always have to remind her aren't real.

This entire ordeal makes me feel more like a parent, one who has been tasked with the insurmountable task of reminding my parents to put their phones away during dinner, except I continue to be reprimanded like their child.

It's strange growing up in a time when children are warned about screens, yet somehow, it's the parents who seem just as glued to them, if not more. When we were younger, it was us who were warned about how much time we could spend in front of the TV, urged instead to focus on books instead of devices. Now the TV runs in the background while they watch videos on their phones.

What worries me isn't just the time they spend on their phones, but the fact that

they were suddenly exposed to the internet without ever really learning how it works. We grew up alongside it and learned what spam looks like, what fake news sounds like, and what not to click. To various degrees, we learned to scrutinise what we saw online, to double-check headlines, and to assume that not everything that is on the internet is true. For our parents, the internet arrived all at once: fully formed, overwhelming, and so very interesting.

Another thing that makes all of this harder now is how difficult misinformation and AI content have become to detect. Videos have realistic voices, clear visuals, and confident narration; nothing immediately feels suspicious. AI can generate faces, news clips, and even "expert" explanations that seem completely real at first glance. For someone who didn't grow up closely analysing online content, it's easy to get swept up by how pristine and professional something looks – signalling its authenticity and thus, how much it can be trusted.

Naturally, for my parents, who are already trusting by nature and not used to double-checking sources, it's even harder to tell what's real and what's made up.

They're also the perfect target for ads. Advertisements don't even look like advertisements anymore. Instead, they're disguised as normal videos, recommendations, or someone casually raving about a product. At that point, it feels more like advice than marketing, which can potentially take away some of the scepticism that consumers usually reserve before making any purchases. This is especially true for my parents who might not even question why something is being shown to them or who is trying to sell it.

If a video confidently says a gadget works or a supplement fixes everything, they're more likely to believe it. Sometimes they'll show me products they're thinking of buying that clearly came from a sponsored post, which they don't even realise is an ad. The algorithms quickly learn what they click on and continues to feed them similar content, keeping them in a loop. The more they watch, the more the algorithm realises what works, and the easier it becomes to retain their attention.

What is particularly concerning is that this doesn't necessarily bother them. In fact, I am starting to suspect that it might be

somewhat enjoyable for them. The phone has become more than just a device; it's entertainment, connection, and comfort all wrapped up in one. It's how they relax after a long day, how they keep up with relatives, and how they escape boredom. So, when I try to say anything against their phone habits, it feels hypocritical. After all, I use my phone too. I scroll, watch videos, and text my friends. Who am I to lecture them about screen time when I'm not exactly screen-free myself?

While I may have learned how to navigate the tricky terrains of the internet, I haven't exactly learned how to go about my way without it. And maybe that is what I can teach them: not to completely forego their devices but to help them figure out how to use them more mindfully. The roles may have reversed but the sentiment that compels us to care for each other perseveres. No amount of blaring of television sets nor mind-numbing reels can take that away.

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