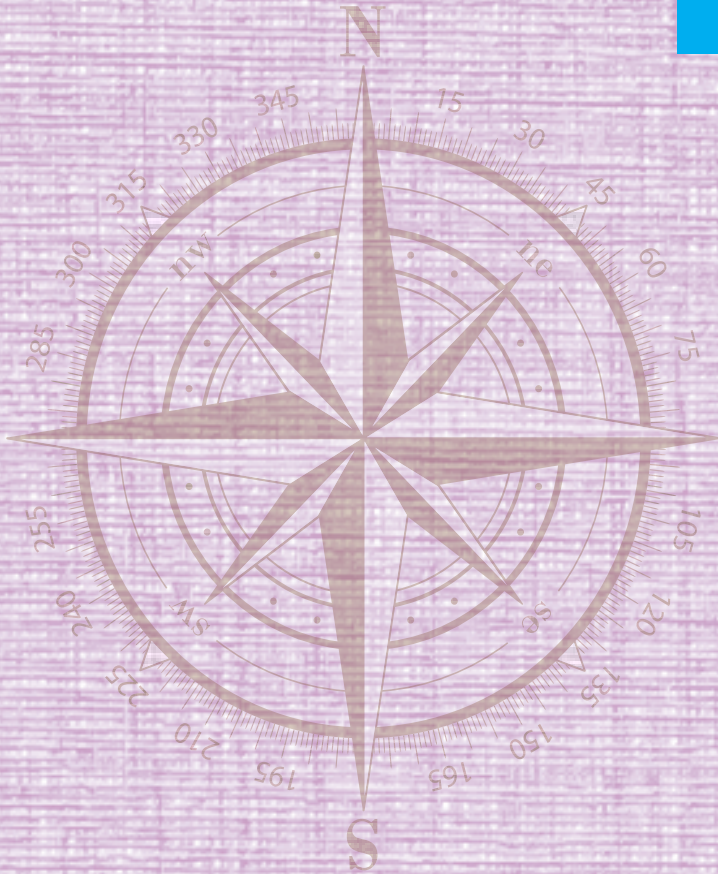




# NSU NEWS

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**North South University**  
*Center of Excellence in Higher Education*



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With the pandemic raging through our lives, a new normal seems to be settling in. Extracurricular initiatives have increased, and the online classroom has become the new safe place for activity and exploration. The switch to online classes, which took place six months ago, has become the new reality for both digital natives and digital migrants alike. While discussions and debates regarding the efficacy of online education continue, the academic term forged ahead for students, researchers, faculty, and the NSU community at large; the conditions might not be ideal, but all concerned continued to learn, teach, produce, and progress, and thus, even during this pandemic, NSU remains committed to its mission and vision.

September saw scholars, researchers, and experts tackle current challenges in several webinars at NSU. The Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences discussed the importance of oral hygiene in the time of Covid, demonstrating how minor changes can have a multiplier effect in boosting immunity and overall well-being. The Center for Peace Studies and the SIPG hosted a forum of academics, development practitioners, and UN and Bangladeshi diplomats to discuss the growing geopolitical influence of Bangladesh and its importance in democratizing the United Nations. Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen expressed Dhaka's frustration with the UN's failure to ensure the repatriation of the Rohingya people to Myanmar at the forum.

Dhaka Reporters Unity, in collaboration with North South University, hosted a virtual discussion program, "The Reality and Challenges of Higher Education in Bangladesh," with Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Honourable Minister, Ministry of Education, as the Chief Guest, and Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chairman, BOT, as the Special Guest. The Department of Economics, in association with the Young Economists Forum (YEF), held a special talk titled "COVID-19: The Health and Wellbeing Concerns of Households in Bangladesh." The talk was given by Dr. Asad Islam, Director of the Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability and a Professor at the Department of Economics at Monash University, Australia.

Not letting the pandemic dampen the creation of valuable and long-lasting partnerships, NSU and the state-owned Power Grid Company, Bangladesh (PGCB) signed an MoU providing a two-year research grant of BDT 2,33,47,600 received by the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department from the Government of Bangladesh to make the national power grid more secure and reliable.

These events, along with several other milestones, are described in fuller detail in this issue. These achievements, along with the steady progression of a full slate of online classes, display the indomitable spirit of the NSU community. As for us, the *NSU News* team, we will continue to gather the most inspirational achievements of the university community even in these trying times.

Stay safe.

-Editor



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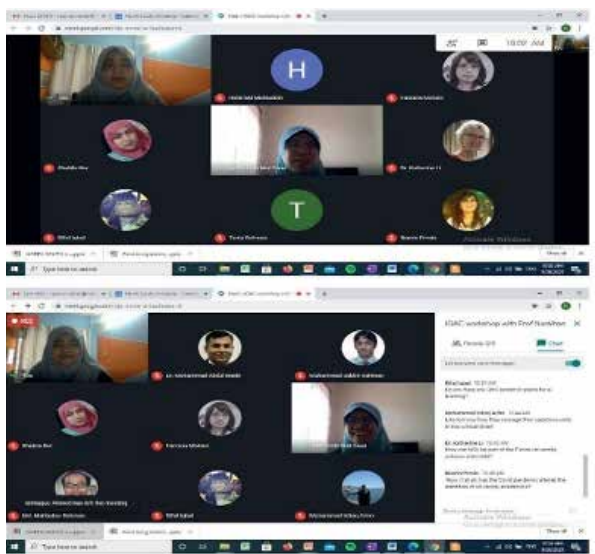
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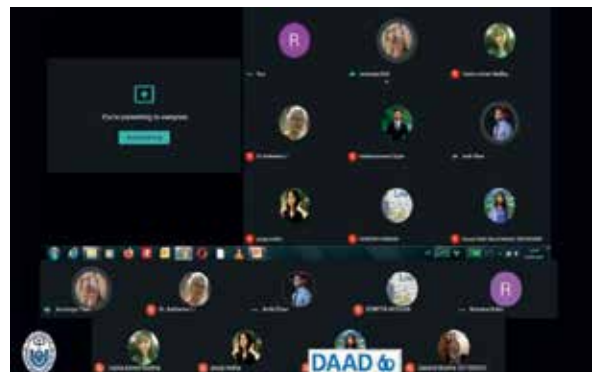
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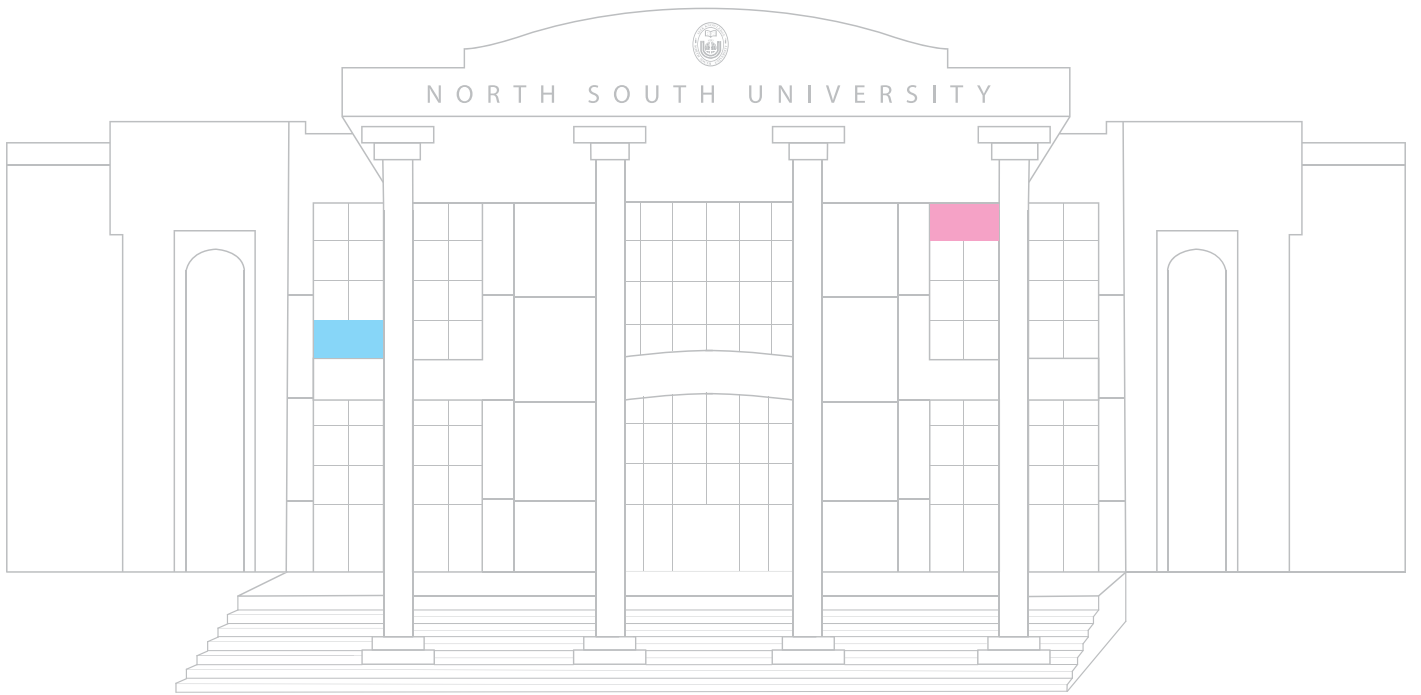


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# Father of the Nation



**North South University**

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## Bangladesh: A Key to Democratizing the UN



Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen, Resident Coordinator of the UN in Bangladesh Ms. Mia Seppo, Vice-Chancellor of NSU Professor Atiqul Islam along with other notable speakers at the webinar.

Asia's rising nations, including Bangladesh, are the key to democratizing the United Nations, a forum of academics, development practitioners, and diplomats agreed at a recent international webinar. They insisted that civil society organizations (CSOs) and the corporate sector should be incorporated into the process of the ongoing transformation of the UN to make sure that communities, rather than only nation-states, are served. They answered questions from the audience on how the people's voice could matter in the functioning of the UN at the two-day webinar titled "The UN in Time of People's Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism," hosted by North South University's Center for Peace Studies (CPS) and the United Nations Bangladesh in September.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen expressed Dhaka's frustration with the UN's failure

to ensure the repatriation of the Rohingya people to Myanmar: "We're deeply frustrated that the UN system would not ensure the repatriation of the Rohingya people," he said, adding that the government would raise this issue again and also focus on post-COVID-19 assistance for Bangladesh. The diplomat, who was formerly posted at UN headquarters, acknowledged that increasing the involvement of CSOs in the UN system is irreversible. He added that COVID-19 had exposed the UN system's loopholes as well as national inadequacies.

Resident Coordinator of the United Nations in Bangladesh Dr. Mia Seppo expressed her views that the civil society voice would be accommodated at the UN only if civic space is there within the member states.

Dr. Samir Saran, President of the Observer Research Foundation, praised the power of new champions in

▶▶ Continued on Page 11



# The Reality and Challenges of Higher Education in Bangladesh



Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of NSU speaking at the event.

Dhaka Reporters Unity (DRU) in collaboration with North South University, hosted a virtual discussion program titled "The Reality and Challenges of Higher Education in Bangladesh" on September 2.

This program included a ceremony to honor the children of the members of the DRU who passed the PSC, JSC, and SSC Examinations in 2020.

Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh was present as the Chief Guest.

Md. Mahbub Hossain, Secretary, Secondary and Higher Education Division, Ministry of Education, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Mr. M. A. Kashem, Former President of FBCCI and Chairman, Board of Trustees, North South University, and Mr. Saiful Alam, President, Bangladesh National Press Club and Editor, The Daily Jugantor were present as Special Guests. Mr. Rafiqul Islam Azad, the President of the DRU, chaired the event.

Honorable Minister Dr. Dipu Moni, MP thanked the DRU and NSU for organizing this timely virtual seminar on higher education in Bangladesh.

She also wished a bright future to the children of the members of the DRU.

Mr. M. A. Kashem said, "Because of the Corona situation, educational institutions are not going to be kept open, but if a student stays away from taking lessons for a long time in this way, it will hinder the development of their merit. For this, students need to be encouraged to learn online. Using technology in the current situation, we have been running our classes online since March."

He also lauded the government's adoption of the digital approach in the education sector and highlighted how we are benefitting from it and the need to find solutions to this global crisis. At this time, he said to the students, "you have to keep your mind strong, do not lose morale, take care of yourself and your family and do your job well."

Finally, referring to 15 August, the death anniversary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and his family members, he prayed for the forgiveness of their souls and mentioned that Father of the Nation Bangabandhu "dreamed of a happy, prosperous, and developed

▶▶ Continued on Page 09

## Information Session on Higher Studies in France

North South University Office of External Affairs organized a webinar on Higher Studies' Opportunities in France on September 30, 2020. The seminar was conducted through Google Meet and streamed live via the official Facebook page of NSU Office of External Affairs. The purpose of the event was to provide a broader view and clearer idea about higher education opportunities in France to the students who are interested to learn about the prospects of pursuing higher studies in France. Ms. Atia Ayesha Khan, the Councilor of Campus France Bangladesh was the guest of the seminar. The event was hosted by Ms. Samina Alam Miti, the International Affairs Officer of NSU Office of External Affairs.

Ms. Atia started the session with a brief introduction and description of France, its culture, and its

education system. She described France as the heart of Europe and to be comparatively convenient and more affordable than other countries in Europe for students. According to her, proper shortlisting of universities and timely application to preferred universities can offer students a good chance of getting enrolled in any good university in France. But for that, students must collect adequate and accurate information from reliable sources about offered programs,

application procedures, offered scholarship schemes, and other relevant admission processes of French universities. This is where Campus France provides support and assistance to the international students who intend to pursue higher studies in France. Campus France is a French public institution in charge of promoting higher studies in France and facilitating the mobility of international students, researchers, and experts. Campus France Bangladesh is the



Ms. Atia Ayesha Khan, Councilor of Campus France Bangladesh speaking at the seminar.

Bangladesh branch of the French Government organization that focuses on the local students here and assists them with information about study fields for bachelors, masters, and Ph.D. programs in France. Campus France Bangladesh started its journey in the year 2011 and since then has helped a lot of Bangladeshi students with information and suggestions regarding university admission in France.

Through the event, Ms. Atia provided some general

suggestions about applying to French universities for the interested students. First, she gave a briefing about the requirements, especially the language requirements of applying to universities in France. She mentioned that there are a good number of international courses available in France in English, so proficiency in the French language is not a must to pursue education in France. Students just have to find and apply to their preferred subject and program according to their language proficiency and preference. She also provided details like duration, cost, etc. on offered programs of bachelors, masters, and Ph.D. programs in various educational fields in different universities of France. Ms. Atia also discussed the work permit process and visa-related matters for international students according to the French education policy.

At the end of the session, she provided the contact details of Campus France Bangladesh and encouraged interested students to communicate with them for further information about the discussed topics. NSU hopes to arrange many more such helpful web seminars to further enrich its students with adequate knowledge about pursuing higher education abroad, all to achieve excellence in all sectors of society.

# The UN in Times of People's Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism



Mr. Mohammad Abdul Mannan, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Planning, Mr. Shahriar Alam, MP, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, Ambassador Mr. Shahidul Haque along with Ms. Mia Seppo, Resident Coordinator of the UN, Bangladesh sharing their insights at the international webinar.

On September 16-17, the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) under the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of North South University and the United Nations in Bangladesh co-hosted an international webinar titled "The UN in Times of People's Needs: Rethinking Multilateralism."

The webinar aimed to identify aspects of the successes and challenges faced by the UN since its founding, intending to draw from the lessons learned over the last 75 years and provide recommendations on the way forward.

In the inaugural session, HE Fabrizio Hochschild, Under Secretary General of the UN and Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General on the Commemoration of the United Nations' 75th Anniversary, and Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chairman of the Board

of Trustees, attended as the Special Guests.

The webinar consisted of five substantive sessions focusing on different themes relating to the UN's areas of work. These sessions focused on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) in the context of COVID-19, human rights in times of crises, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, humanitarian action, and civil society's perspectives on the UN.

The general view that emerged from the webinar was that the UN has made notable contributions toward fulfilling its charter obligations, particularly regarding helping people achieve larger freedoms. Participants also remarked that, despite the many achievements of the UN, much still needs to be done for the global population.

▶▶ Continued on Page 09

## NSU Working with the Government on the Nation's Power Grid



Dr. Hafiz Abdur Rahman, Professor, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, NSU along with other dignitaries from PGCB and NSU at the agreement signing event.

North South University and the state-owned Power Grid Company, Bangladesh (PGCB) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on September 7. This contract is a part of the large two-year research grant of BDT 2,33,47,600 received by the Electrical and Computer Engineering Department from the Government of Bangladesh to make the national power grid more secure and reliable. Professor Hafiz Abdur Rahman is the principal investigator of the project, and he signed the contract on behalf of NSU.

Professor Hafiz and his team will work on an intricate project related to the national power grid's security and reliability. The PGCB will work closely as a research and implementation partner of this project, which is funded by the Energy and Power Research Council, Ministry of Power, Energy, and Mineral Resources, Government of Bangladesh.

Regarding the project, Professor Hafiz noted that "The usefulness of

our research comes from the systems' ability for precise energy auditing, flow monitoring, and rapid identification of instability in the national power grid and to trigger remedial actions in time to prevent major power system outages. According to a recent survey by Cintuglu et al. (2017), the CPS Testbed we will be building in this project will be the first in South Asia. The system will bring great benefits for the research community and academia for vulnerability assessment, impact analysis, system testing, attack-defense exercises, and operator training."

Dr. Hafiz Abdur Rahman is a Professor of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering and has more than twenty-five years of experience in research. As an engineer, he has worked on some very prestigious engineering projects. Dr. Jahangir Hossain of UBC, Dr. Atula Kulatunga of Purdue University Northwest, and Dr. Sohana Rahman Deeba and Ms. Rumana Rahman of NSU are also part of this project.

## NSU Emphasizes Dental Health during Covid-19



Professor Dr. Hasan Mahmud Reza, Dean, SHLS, Dr. Mamunur Rashid, a renowned dentist of Bangladesh, and other esteemed guests discussing the importance of dental health during Covid-19 at the webinar.

Amidst this COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, in collaboration with UNILEVER Bangladesh, recently held two webinars.

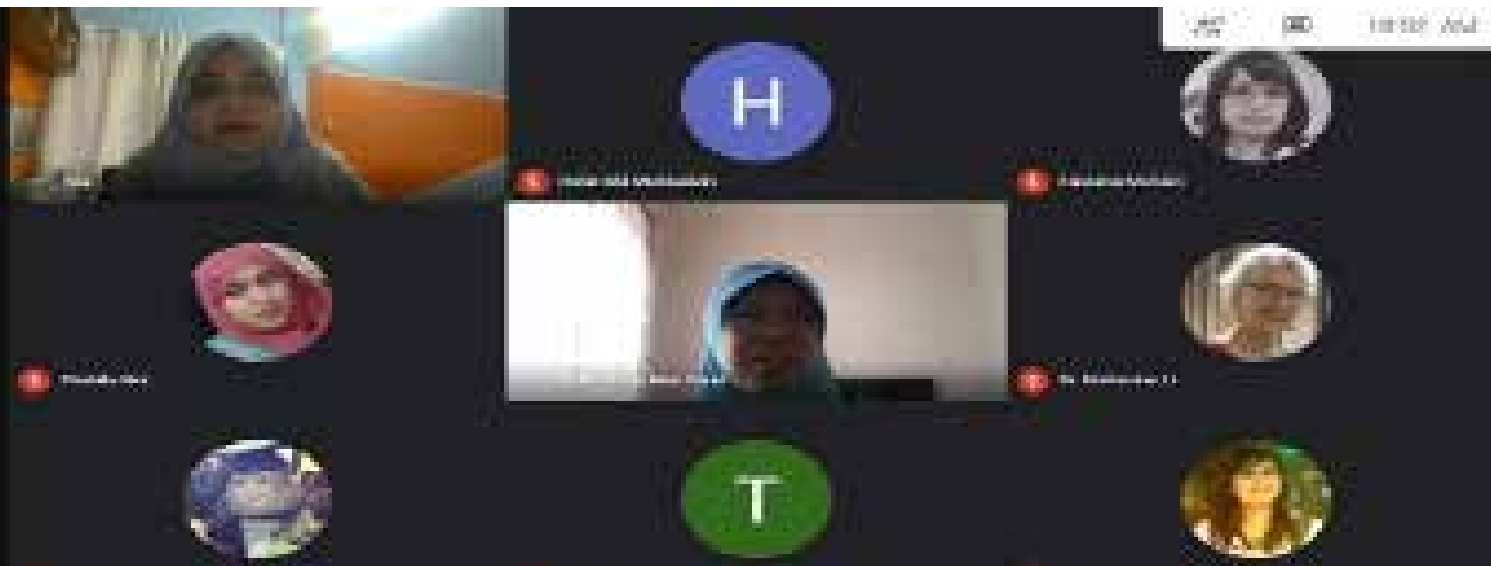
The first was titled "Dental Awareness in the COVID-19 Situation." In this program, one of the most renowned dentists of the country, Dr. Mamunur Rashid, presented a keynote speech focusing on how we should maintain dental and oral health during this pandemic situation. He elaborated on different preventive measures and practices for the webinar attendees and answered numerous questions from the participants. In this session the Dean of the School of Health and Life Sciences, Professor Dr. Hasan Mahmud Reza, and Dr. G.M.Sayedur Rahman, Chair of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, were present

as panel members.

In the second webinar, the Pharmaceutical Sciences Department Chair presented a slideshow on the department's MPharm (Master in Pharmacy) program. The presentation included a description of the amenities and the facilities of NSU and the career prospects for MPharm graduates. This presentation made a huge impact on its attendees, and this is reflected in NSU's MPharm Fall 2020 admissions. The program received a record number (109) of applications, which is extraordinary considering the current pandemic situation.

NSU's Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences would like to thank Professor Atiqul Islam, Honorable Vice-Chancellor, for the kind support he provided to plan, organize, and execute this successful webinar.

## Webinar on the Quality of Teaching Materials and Strategies



Professor Dr. Nuraihan Mat Daud, International Islamic University, Malaysia sharing her views on online pedagogy at the webinar.

The IQAC at North South University held a webinar titled “Instructional Planning: Quality of Teaching Materials and Strategies” on September 26. The session ran for an hour and a half and a notable number of NSU faculty members participated.

The primary objectives of the webinar were to find out how the quality of teaching materials can be improved and to develop effective strategies for their implementation. This is especially important now as the pandemic has brought new challenges to the field of teaching and quality education.

The webinar began with a welcome address by Professor Dr. Nazmun Nahar, Director, IQAC, NSU. Professor Dr. Nuraihan Mat Daud from International Islamic University, Malaysia (IIUM) was

present as the facilitator in the webinar. In her presentation, she highlighted the program standards developed at IIUM and the learning outcomes of each program. She also discussed curriculum structure and pedagogical approaches.

Later, she suggested forms of assessment for a language program, to assure proper application of what is taught, and outlined the teaching and learning platforms used by IIUM. There was an open discussion session towards the end of the webinar.

NSU’s IQAC plans to hold similar webinars in the future. These future seminars will go even more deeply into assuring the quality of teaching materials and the application of teaching strategies for online pedagogy.



## NSU Conference Travel & Research Grant

Schools	Projects	CTRG Approved Amount
School of Business & Economics	26	BDT 9,640,850.00
School of Engineering & Physical Sciences	20	BDT 8,745,290.00
School of Health & Life Sciences	31	BDT 14,945,300.00
School of Humanities and Social Sciences	7	BDT 3,583,000.00
Total	84	BDT 36,914,440.00

The North South University Conference Travel & Research Grant Committee (CTRG) has recommended BOT approval of a total of BDT 38,185,130.00 for Research Grants, Travel Grants, and Article

Processing Charges for the cycle of CTRG 2020-2021.

A total of 84 research proposals were recommended by the School Scientific Review Committees (SRC) and were approved by the Conference Travel and Research Grant Committee (CTRG) on 29 September 2020. A breakdown of research grants for each school has been given above.

Additionally, 16 travel grant applications were approved by the CTRGC, amount BDT 993,341.00. 4 applications for Article Processing Charges were approved by the CTRGC, amounting to BDT 277,349.00.

## The Reality and Challenges of Higher Education Cont'd...

Bangladesh.

Following this ideology, Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the worthy daughter of the Father of the Nation, is taking the country forward with her strong leadership.

We also want to stand by her

as a partner in the development of education and take the country forward."

The program was moderated by Mr. Jamil Ahmed, TV Presenter and Director of the Public Relations Office at NSU.

Among others, Mr. Reaz

Chowdhury, General Secretary, DRU, Mr. Khalid Saifullah, Welfare Secretary, DRU, media representatives, journalists, students, and parents were also present at the program.

## The UN in Times of People's Needs Cont'd...

In the spirit of an interactive event, the participants were encouraged to ask the speakers questions.

The participants raised questions about the UN's effectiveness in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. Participants further noted that the UN is the embodiment of a rule-based, open, multilateral system and that its effectiveness and usefulness are determined by those who make it the UN is what its member-states wish it to be.

After two days of insightful discussion, this international webinar concluded with the presence of Mr. M.A. Mannan, MP, Honorable Minister of the Ministry of Planning, Mr. Shahriar Alam, MP, Honorable State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Mia Seppo, Resident Coordinator of the UN, Bangladesh, and Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of North South University.

The concluding session was moderated by Senior Fellow of

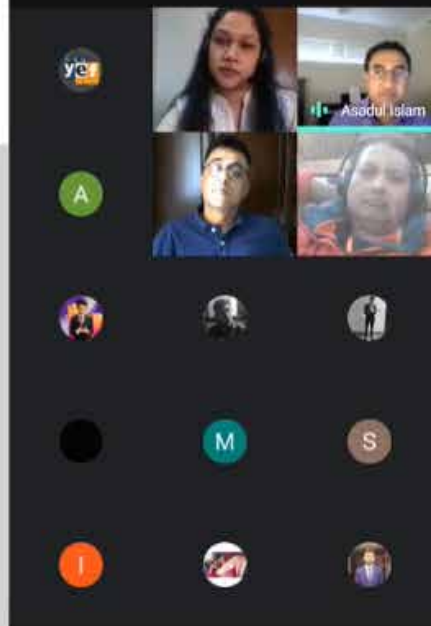
SIPG, Mr. Shahidul Haque. A joint statement prepared by the United Nations and North South University was delivered in the closing session.

Following this successful event, more interactive webinars can be hoped for in the future. Awareness of and planning for such humanitarian issues is crucial for the advancement of the world and its people.

# Special Talk on COVID-19: The Health and Well-Being Concerns of Households in Bangladesh

## Outline

- Income loss, food insecurity and anxiety during covid19: an overview
- Determinants of food insecurity and it's dynamics over the time
- Determinants and dynamics of anxiety about food, finance and health
- How does the dynamics in income shocks affect people's wellbeing?
- How the people are coping during the crisis?
  - Mental health, lockdowns, food security
- RCTS on:
  - Awareness campaign and Compliance on Covid19 health behavior (India and Bangladesh)
  - Mental health
  - Stigma, discrimination (India)
  - Educational gap due to school closure



Dr. Asad Islam, Director of the Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability and Professor at the Department of Economics at Monash University, Australia, sharing his insights at the event.

The Department of Economics of the School of Business and Economics, in association with the Young Economists Forum (YEF), held a Special Talk titled "COVID-19: The Health and Well-Being Concerns of Households in Bangladesh" on September 29. The talk was given by Dr. Asad Islam. He is Director of the Centre for Development Economics and Sustainability and Professor at the Department of Economics at Monash University, Australia.

Dr. Kanti Ananta Nuzhat, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, was the host and moderator of the event. It was an open talk and researchers from Australia and other universities of Bangladesh were present along with faculty members and students of North South University.

In the face of the threat of COVID-19,

salvaging economic growth appears to be the foremost concern of policymakers in Bangladesh. Dr. Islam's recent applied research emphasizes the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on health degradation and food insecurity among the rural poor of Bangladesh that may lead to increasing poverty nationwide. Dr. Islam's talk focused on the cause and effect relationship between income loss and the declining physical health of rural households, and also on the mental health and anxiety among farmers and day-laborers resulting from their low income. His lecture provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the recent trends and findings related to COVID-19 research in Bangladesh.

The question and answer session was very interactive and raised awareness regarding the effects of the pandemic

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## Bangladesh: A Key to Democratizing the UN Cont'd...

"young Asia" to pressure the "old" UN to ensure democratization, saying that apart from China and India, Bangladesh has a strong role to play. "The future of the UN will be resolved in Asia," he observed, adding that Asian nations will likely come up with the freshest ideas. He also hopes for future multilateralism: "The UN has to serve the communities instead of serving the nation-states."

Professor of International Relations at Dhaka University Dr. Imtiaz Ahmed observed that the geopolitics that led to the creation of the UN after 1945 are no longer there.

He also regretted that democracy, which used to function across the world, is on the decline. The analyst also pointed out that emphasis should be on accommodating the needs of all of the people of the world rather than simply replacing Europe and America with Asia.

Referring to the recognition of Bangladesh's development performance, Ambassador and Head of Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh Rensje Teerink said that the country is already a model. She also said that the EU supports multilateralism, and to this end, the EU countries are going to organize a global health summit soon.

NSU's Vice-Chancellor Professor Atiqul Islam also underlined the importance of the democratization of the UN, saying that the authority to make decisions should be vested with the UN General Assembly.

Stressing the need for the UN to emphasize common people's interests, Shahidul Haque, senior fellow of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at NSU, said no longer should the UN serve member-states only.

He also moderated the first session, which was titled "Colloquium on Civil Society Perspective on the Future of United Nations."

The Chairman of the Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation Dr. Qazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad, Policy Advisor to Access to Information (a2i) at the PMO Anir Chowdhury, Lead of the Asia Pacific Center for Geopolitics and Regional Affairs at the World Economic Forum, Geneva, Sheikh Tanjeb Islam, and President of the United Nations Youth and Students Association of Bangladesh Shammy Wadud also contributed to this session.

The other session, "United Nations in Humanitarian Agenda for a Subtle and Self-Reinforcing Humanitarian Development Nexus," was chaired by Dr. Rizwan Khair and moderated by CPS member Dr. Ishrat Zakia Sultana. The additional speakers of this session were Special Envoy of the Climate Vulnerable Forum of Bangladesh Abul Kalam Azad, Secretary at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief Md. Mohsin, Country Director of the World Food Program Richard Ragan, Professor of Urban Planning at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Dr. Ishrat Islam, and Hong Kong Baptist University's Dr. Kwun-Sun Lau.

## Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Program Jointly Arranges a Webinar with OEA



Mr. Tomiruzzaman, Program Officer, Duke of Edinburgh Award Program, presenting various aspects of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award at the web seminar.

North South University Office of External Affairs has recently arranged a web seminar with the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Program Association through video conference, with the presence of the representatives from the Award Program Association and members of the OEA. The event was held on September 21, 2020, and was conducted via Google Meet. The event was also streamed live via the official Facebook page of the NSU Office of External Affairs. Mr. Khalid Shahrion, Program Manager, and Mr. Tomiruzzaman, Program Officer, the Duke of Edinburgh Award Program were present as guests and speakers

in the seminar. Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs was present during the program. Ms. Samina Alam Miti, the International Affairs Officer of the Office of External Affairs hosted the event.

The speaker of the event, Mr. Tomiruzzaman started his presentation with an introduction of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award mentioning it to be a self-development program for young people, which was established in 1956 by His Royal Highness Prince Philip. The program is all about personal growth and overcoming personal challenges. People between the ages of 14 to 24 are eligible to participate

▶▶ Continued on Page 17

## Dr. Shiblee Barua Researches Atmospheric Chemistry of Titan at NASA

Dr. Shiblee Ratan Barua is an Assistant Professor (on Research Leave) at the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology at North South University. He was admitted to the NASA Postdoctoral Program Fellowship (2017-2020) at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland, USA, to study the atmospheric chemistry of Titan. Titan is the largest moon of Saturn, and it is the only moon in our solar system known to have a thick atmosphere. What makes Titan even more unique is that it is the only place besides Earth known to have liquids in the



Dr. Shiblee Ratan Barua Assistant Professor at the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology, NSU.

recombine randomly to produce large aerosol molecules and organic haze. This thick organic haze is what gives Titan its characteristic orange glow. Planetary scientists and astrobiologists consider three factors--organic molecules, an energy source, and the presence of liquid--to be essential for life to flourish, and it turns out that Titan has all three! The thick organic haze formed in Titan's atmosphere is the source of the organic molecules, The sun and volcanoes act as the energy source, and the methane and ethane lakes on Titan's surface satisfy the presence of liquid criterion. Dr. Barua's photochemistry research is important in understanding how many of these organic molecules are produced in Titan's atmosphere and how these molecules descend to Titan's surface to possibly contribute to the formation and evolution of possible alien microorganisms in Titan's lakes and rivers.

Dr. Barua works in close collaboration with NASA's Cassini Mission scientists, planetary scientists, astrobiologists, ocean experts, and exoplanet scientists. Apart from Titan science, Dr. Barua's current research also includes an investigation of the atmospheres of hot exoplanets and the chemical reaction kinetics of cold interstellar clouds. He has presented his research work at various national and international conferences such as the American Astronomical Society Division for Planetary Sciences Meeting 2018, the European Planetary Science Congress 2019, and the Japan Geophysical Union Meeting 2019. North South University has always made such research a priority in its academic programs, acknowledging the vital role of collective research for the advancement of humanity. North South University is extremely proud of the accomplishments of Dr. Barua and wishes him success in his research.

form of rivers, lakes, and seas on its surface. For his postdoctoral research at Goddard, Dr. Barua employed his Computational Quantum Chemistry expertise to understand the photochemistry (chemical reactions initiated by sunlight) of the atmosphere of Titan. The sun's ultraviolet light breaks down small gas molecules in Titan's atmosphere into smaller molecules and atoms, which then

## Economics Department Holds Seminar on Recent Bangladeshi Agricultural Production

### Descriptive Statistics

	Exposed to disaster	Not exposed to disaster
Number of households	178	125
In percent	58.75%	41.25%
1-time exposure (number of households)	38	
2 times exposure(number of households)	69	
3 times exposure(number of households)	36	
More than 3 times exposure (number of households)	35	



Dr. Syed Mortuza Asif Ehsan, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, presenting inefficiency in rice production in Bangladesh at the seminar.

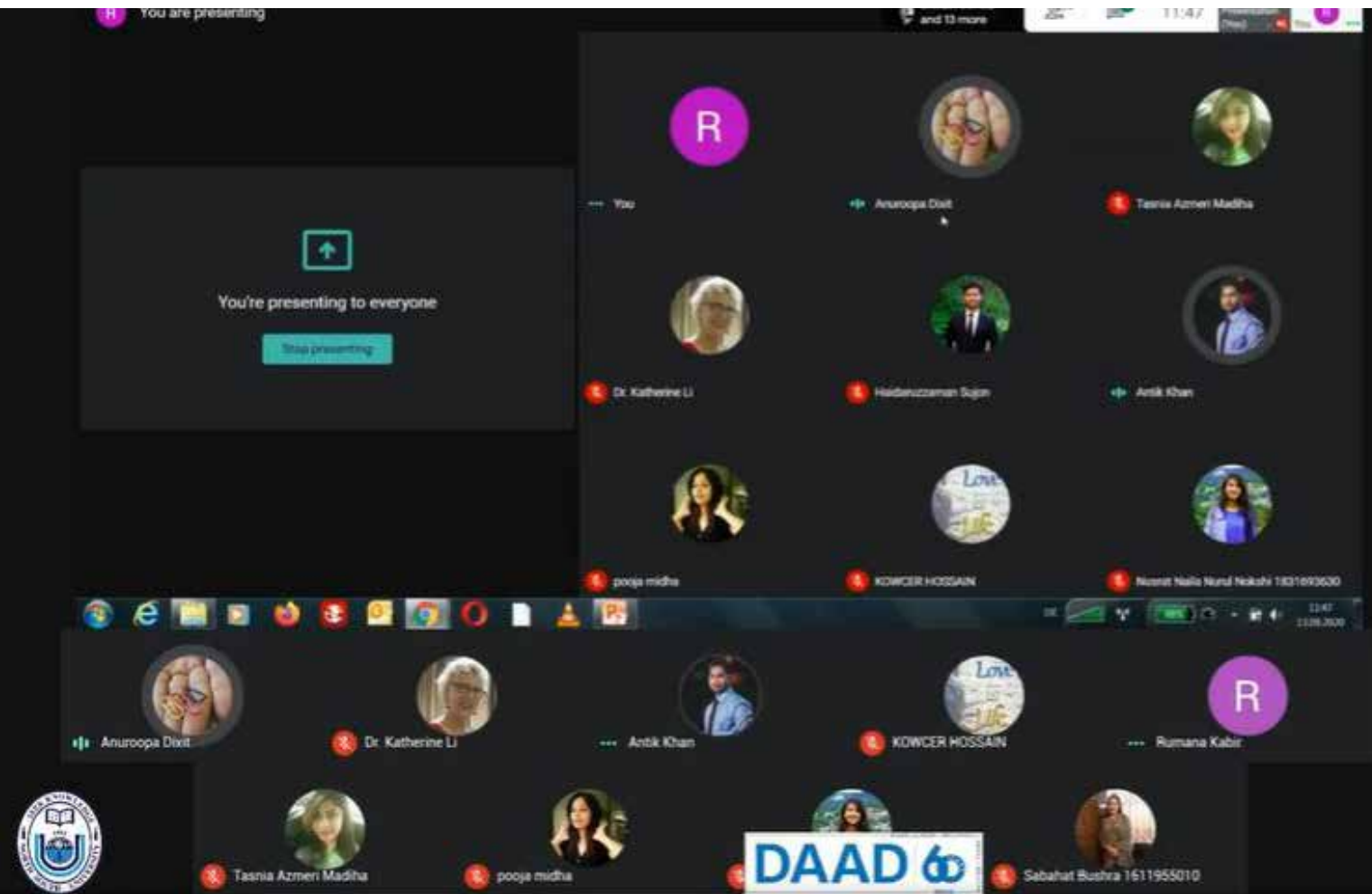
The Department of Economics held an event from its Brown Bag Seminar Series on September 3. In this series, faculty members of the department, as well as academics and researchers from outside NSU, present their research work to share their research ideas and findings, engage in scholarly discussion and get feedback, and, most importantly, stimulate the research environment of the department in line with NSU's vision and mission.

The speaker for this event was Dr. Syed Mortuza Asif Ehsan, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics. He presented his paper, written with Dr. Md. Jakariya, titled "Disaster Induced Agricultural Productivity in Coastal Regions of Bangladesh: A Stochastic Frontier Analysis Approach." The paper contained a data set collected from a project that was supported by the Bangladesh Climate Change Trust. The paper defines the sectors of the Bangladeshi economy and highlights

the distribution of GDP in the primary sector. The paper gives insights into the influence of Covid-19 on the growth of the primary sector. The paper is focused on agriculture and, especially, rice productivity in coastal areas. The translog production function is used to estimate the technical efficiency part. Two tests check for the existence of inefficiency in rice production: Schmidt and Lin's Skewness Test and Kodde and Palm's Likelihood Test Ratio. Both the tests indicate inefficiency in the rice production practices of Bangladesh. The paper contains a very detailed, descriptive data set.

After Dr. Ehsan presented his paper, a question-answer and feedback session took place. This generated a lively discussion that was greatly appreciated. The event was moderated by Dr. Samiul Haque, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, and hosted by Dr. Ahmed Tazmeen, Chairman, Department of Economics.

# Opportunities of Higher Studies in Germany



Delegates of DAAD and Members of the Office of External Affairs, NSU, attended the informative session on DAAD Scholarship Program on Google Meet.

North South University Office of External Affairs organized an exciting web seminar with DAAD Bangladesh on September 13, 2020. The informative seminar was conducted through Google Meet with the participation of the delegates of DAAD from national and international sectors and members of the Office of External Affairs. Mrs. Anuroopa Dixit, the Program Officer, DAAD Regional Office New Delhi, Mrs. Pooja Midha, the Program Officer, DAAD Regional Office New Delhi, and Ms. Rumana Kabir, the Information and Office Manager, DAAD Representative Bangladesh were present at the event as speakers and representatives of DAAD

Scholarship Program. On other hand, Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs, and Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha, the Coordination Officer, Office of External Affairs from NSU attended the event.

The meeting streamed live from the official Facebook page of NSU Office of External Affairs through Facebook live so that it reached interested students easily. The purpose of the event was to inform students about the application requirements and criteria for studying in Germany under DAAD scholarship programs. The first speaker of the seminar was Ms. Rumana Kabir who introduced DAAD as a self-governing

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## Journal Articles Published in 2020 Related to COVID-19 Pandemic

- Swazo, N. K., Talukder, M. M., Ahsan, & M. K. (2020), "A Duty to Treat? A Right to Refrain? Bangladeshi Physicians in Moral Dilemma during COVID-19", *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*, 15:7, 1-23, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13010-020-00091-6>.
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- Islam, A. K. M. N., Laato, S., Talukder, S., & Sutinen, E. (2020). "Misinformation sharing and social media fatigue during COVID-19: An affordance and cognitive load perspective". *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 159, 120201. (ABDC: A; AJG: 3; IF 5.846, Cite Score: 8.7, Rank: Q1).
- Khan, M. M., Shams-E-Mofiz, M., Sharmin, Z. A., "Development of E-Commerce Based Online Web Application for Covid-19 Pandemic." *i-Business*, (Accepted due for publication 2020).
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- Ali, M., Ahsan, G.U., Khan, R., & Hossain, A. "Immediate impact of stay-at-home orders to control COVID-19 transmission on mental well-being in Bangladeshi adults: Patterns, Explanations, and future directions". *BMC Research Notes* (Springer Nature), 13, 494 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-020-05345-2>
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- Kibria, M. G., Islam, T., Miah, M. S., Ahmed, S., & Hossain, A., "Barriers to healthcare services for persons with disabilities in Bangladesh amid the COVID-19 pandemic." *Public Health Practice* (Elsevier), July 2020, 100027. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.puhip.2020.100027>
- Islam, M. R. "Promptly Notifying Infectious Diseases Likely to Cause Pandemics: Individual State Responsibility, Shared Collective Burden." *56 Texas International Law Journal* (2020-2021) (forthcoming).
- Khan, A. "Protecting Human Rights: Situation of Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh during Covid-19" (2020). *4 PKI Global Justice Journal* 30, Queen's University, ON, Canada. (<https://globaljustice.queenslaw.ca/news/protecting-human-rights-situation-of-rohingya-refugees-in-bangladesh-during-covid-19>)
- Khan, M. I., Hasan, K. N., Sufian, A., Hosen, M. B., Polol, M. N. I., Khaleque, M. A., Rahman M. M., Chowdhury, M. S. M., Haider, H. U., Razu, M. H., Khan, M., Rabbi, M.F. "Reports of Coding-Complete Genome Sequences of Five 2019 Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) Strains Isolated in Bangladesh." *Microbiology Resource Announcements*, 2020. 9(31): e00692-20. doi: 10.1128/MRA.00692-20. PMID: 32732236
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- Khan, M. M., Khan, M. N., Mustagir, M. G., Rana, J., Haque, M. R., Rahman, M. M. "COVID-19 infection during pregnancy: a systematic review to summarize possible symptoms, treatments, and pregnancy outcomes. *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*" (Under review). *MedRxiv*. 2020 April 10. Preprint Link : <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.03.31.20049304v2>

## Book on Gender Mainstreaming Virtually Launched

The South Asian Institution of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of NSU held a Virtual Book Launching on September 12. The title of the book, Gender Mainstreaming in Politics, Administration and Development in South Asia, was successfully unveiled in this session. The book talks about the issue of gender mainstreaming from a policy and governance perspective. It also explores the initiatives of the government to promote gender mainstreaming and the challenges and results of such initiatives. Most of the chapters of the book were first presented as papers at the Conference on Gender Mainstreaming in Politics, Administration, and Development

in South Asia in 2017, held at NSU. The book includes chapters on several South Asian countries- Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Virtual Book Launching began with a welcome address from Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director, SIPG, NSU. Professor Ishtiaq Jamil of Norway's University of Bergen later gave a speech on behalf of the editorial panel. Professor Krishna Menon of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University, New Delhi, and Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, also discussed the content of the book. Professor Atiqul Islam, the Vice-Chancellor, graced the virtual

program as the esteemed Chief Guest.

Speakers of the program shed light upon the diverse topics and broad range of issues related to gender mainstreaming. According to one of the speakers, "The chapters of the book focus on the process of incorporation of gender issues in policy formulation and governance. The authors have presented their arguments with empirical evidence and have used different frameworks to analyze gender mainstreaming at micro and macro levels." It was also highlighted in the program that the book is relevant not only to academics, but also to policy formulators and implementers.

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## Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Program Cont'd...

in it. The award program is arranged by organizations working for the development of young people around the world and currently is recognized as one of the world's leading initiatives for the welfare of young people. The program started its operations and functions in Bangladesh in 2008 with only 14 institutions. But now, a total of 94 institutions are associated with the award program including North South University. Since the beginning of its journey in our country, so far nearly 20,000 students have enrolled in the award program. The activities of the program are established in three levels which are bronze (6 months), silver (6 months), and gold (12 months). The sections included under the levels are skill, service, physical

recreation, adventurous journey, and residential project. Currently, the activities of the award program have been redesigned and converted to home-based activities due to the lockdown situation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Mr. Tomiruzzaman mentioned, this initiative aims to encourage young people to develop their interests and practical skills.

Other than personal development, attaining Duke of Edinburgh's International Award can help young people to get academic scholarships abroad, ensure preference in the job sector, create and broaden networks, improve communication skills, enrich CVs, and more. Mr. Tomiruzzaman ended his

presentation by mentioning the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Program website where more detailed information and guidelines can be found about the process and advantages of the program.

The ending remarks of the event were presented by Dr. Li. She praised the innovative, empowering, and very helpful initiative of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Program for the development of young people.

She also thanked Mr. Tomiruzzaman for his organized and informative presentation and hoped that this event would be of help to NSUers. NSU hopes and expects its students to take part in programs such as the one aforementioned.

## Tête-à-tête with the Goalkeeper of Bangladesh National Football Team

Anisur Rahman Zico, the custodian of the goalpost of the Bangladesh National Football Team and Bashundhara Kings, is a student of North South University (NSU). He is currently studying in the Environmental Science and Management of NSU. NSU News Team invited him for an interview session where he voiced his wish to establish himself as the best goalkeeper of Asia. Zico made a memorable debut in his maiden international club match in the Group E opener of 17<sup>th</sup> AFC Cup 2020 as Bangladesh Premier League Champions Bashundhara thrashed former Dhivehi (Maldives) Premier League Champions TC Sports Club at Bangabandhu National Stadium. The Bangladeshi side also has a stunning debut as they outplayed TC Sports Club by 5-1 goals in their AFC debut. Due to his eye-catching performance, the 22-year-old goalie was included in the list of AFC Top Performer of the Week along with his teammate Argentine forward Hernan Barcos and the other three booters. Zico also bagged the highest 75 percent of public votes while Barcos got 14 percent. Later, AFC gave him the second slot of their list of top 5 penalty saviors in AFC since 2017. He became the first Bangladeshi goalkeeper who achieved both feats. But his journey from Cox's Bazar to AFC was full of obstacles.

Here are the excerpts of the conversations:

**NSU News:** Due to the stunning performance, you secured your place in the list of AFC Top Performer of the Week along with your teammate forward Hernan Barcos. You got the highest 75 percent of public votes there. How did you feel after accomplishing the feat?

**Zico:** First, I want to thank all of my fans who voted for me. It was

amazing; this was indeed the most memorable event of my life. I can't explain my feeling in words; these are big achievements. It was my first international match for any club and I saved penalties. Saif Sporting Club played the preliminary round of AFC Cup 2018. I was in the Saif SC squad that time but didn't get the chance to be in the final 18-man squad. Rana Bhai (Ashraf Islam Rana) got the chance.

**NSU News:** Do you feel your performance in AFC will help you to cement your place in the national team?

**Zico:** Club and the national team are not the same. I have been playing on the national team for three years. I am always ready for the national team; I am working hard and getting prepared. Now it depends on national team management. I made my debut for Bangladesh in March 2018 during a FIFA-friendly match against Laos under British-Australian coach Andrew Ord.

**NSU News:** Your journey from Cox's Bazar to AFC was full of obstacles. Would you tell us the story? How did it begin?

**Zico:** I never even thought of becoming a professional footballer, but I loved football. My seniors always made me a goalkeeper because no one liked to be that. I had played some local matches and tournaments



Anisur Rahman Zico, Goalkeeper, Bangladesh National Football Team, is a student of Environmental Science and Management of NSU.

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as a goalkeeper. Some of my seniors were impressed with my skills; they inspired me to continue. This was the beginning. In 2012, Choton Bhai (Head Coach of Bangladesh Women's Football team) conducted an Under-16 camp. I was selected for the final trial, but my family didn't allow me to take part because they didn't want me to be a footballer. Finally, local referee Ali Bhai convinced my father and I went for the final trial in Cox's Bazar Stadium. After that, I joined a second division club 'Kollol Shangha' in 2013 and I did very well there. In 2014, I came to Dhaka with one of my seniors. One of the Bangladesh Championship League (BCL) clubs Farashganj Sporting Club recruited me after a short trial. I didn't get the chance to play in the first seven matches. Two teams Farashganj and Rahmatganj Muslim Friends Society got promoted to Bangladesh Premier League that year. I got a call from BPL club Muktijoddha Sangshad Krira Chakra in the same year because Aminul Bhai (Goalkeeper Aminul Hoque) got injured. But Farashganj didn't let me leave. I finally joined Muktijoddha in 2015. I also got a call for Bangladesh Under-19 and Under-23 squad at the same time. I played in SAFF Under-19 Championship 2015 in Nepal which was my maiden international tournament. I was also in the squad for AFC Under-19 qualifiers. Then, I went on to play the first edition of Sheikh Kamal International Club Cup 2015 for Chattogram Abahani Ltd. On loan, but unfortunately, I missed the tournament because of jaundice. Chattogram Abahani emerged as the champions of the tournament. 2018 was a bad year for me. I joined Saif SC, but unfortunately, they

were knocked out of AFC. Club Officials accused us of playing 'Khep' (playing on loan or hire). I didn't get any call from any club for a long time. I was then part of Bangladesh squads for Laos and Asian Games 2018. During that camp, I got offers from Muktijoddha, Mohammedan, and Bashundhara Kings; I chose Bashundhara. I made my debut for Bashundhara in November 2018 during the group match of Federation Cup against Lt. Sheikh Jamal Dhanmondi Club Ltd. I was adjudged the man of the match. That was the turning point of my career. I gave the



Anisur Rahman Zico deflecting the football.

best performances of my career in the Independence Cup.

**NSU News:** You have been playing in the domestic circuit since 2014. What do you think about the future of club football in Bangladesh?

**Zico:** I think we need some more professional football clubs like Bashundhara Kings. They provide the best facilities for their booters.

**NSU News:** Which was the most memorable game of your career so far?

**Zico:** Two matches namely AFC

match against TC Sports Club and AFC Under-23 Qualifiers in 2019 against the host Bahrain. We conceded 0-1 goal defeat to the home side, but I performed very well in that game.

**NSU News:** Who is your favorite footballer?

**Zico:** I love Cristiano Ronaldo; I love his football. Among the goalkeepers, I like Everton's Jordan Pickford, Barcelona's Marc-Andre ter Stegen, and Liverpool's Alisson Becker. Among the Bangladeshi goalkeepers, I love Aminul Bhai (Aminul Hoque). He is the best Bangladeshi goalie I have seen to date.

**NSU News:** You are playing football for years, so what is the common factor you observed in the matches?

**Zico:** We call football a team game because sometimes star players can score goals or defend well to win matches but not every time against a well-organized team. Every team needs the right balance, right command, a good captain who motivates the team whether they are winning by 4-0 or losing by 4-0. There need to be a good understanding between the players so that even eye

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## Opportunities of Higher Studies in Germany Cont'd....

organization of German universities for providing academic exchange service. DAAD mostly works to guide and help international students to locate the best opportunities to attain scholarships in German universities. The webinar covered topics ranging from a breakdown of monthly estimated costs for an international student to methods of finding a host. Ms. Rumana mentioned the pros of choosing Germany for higher education and elaborated on their offered scholarship programs available in different subjects. In this context, one important detail that she shared was that many German universities are now offering courses

of Master's programs in several subjects in English, which broadens the possibility and convenience for international students to apply and attain scholarships in Germany. The German Education Ministry also permits job facilities such as part-time jobs while studying or one and a half year post-study work permits, etc. for international students.

The latter part of the seminar was presented by Mrs. Pooja. She started off her presentation by providing information about the various cost-covering structures and spans of the scholarship programs offered and arranged by DAAD. She emphasized that a timely decision and calculated

timeline are required to prepare and apply for desired scholarship programs. The last portion of the event was open to questions from participants. Interested students are welcome to contact both DAAD and NSU Office of External Affairs through the contact details provided for further clearance and knowledge of the scholarship programs and opportunities. NSU has always put the interest of its students as a priority and this webinar is an example of how NSU provides the best opportunities for its students not only in the country but abroad as well.

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## Special Talk on COVID-19 Cont'd...

on our economy. The talk opened platforms for researchers of NSU to collaborate with Monash University in the future. The event also had the

objective of assisting the participants of EconFest 5.0, an annual economic summit organized by the YEF. The discussions and findings helped

the participants to enhance their knowledge and hear directly from an expert economist.

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## Tête-à-tête with the Goalkeeper of Bangladesh National Football Team Cont'd...

contact says what message he is conveying.

**NSU News:** Who is your lucky charm that supported you in your life the most?

**Zico:** That is a brilliant question. You asked "who" not "what". That's brilliant because my lucky charm is a Person. God is my lucky charm.

He works wonderfully well. You should try Him sometimes. Here is a taste of His magic: No matter what happens in my life, I can take it without losing balance. My joy is not dependent (or increasingly less dependent) on my circumstances. So, no matter

what happens, I can retain my joy. I am always lucky because God is my lucky charm.

**NSU News:** How is NSU standing for your betterment in your game?

**Zico:** If you're a promising athlete, picking North South University with a strong sports program could be the difference between you turning your natural ability into a successful career or it only being a hobby because NSU prides itself on providing all the opportunities a student can avail during his/her university period.

**NSU News:** Define NSU and

NSUAC as a student and club member. And what are your expectations and suggestions from them and for them?

**Zico:** NSU strives to maintain a healthy academic atmosphere on its campus.

The students are expected to do their part in achieving this goal by attending classes regularly, making appropriate use of all campus resources in a way as to enhance their academic achievements, maintaining discipline, keeping the campus clean, and being good neighbors and models of good citizenship.





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