



NSU NEWS

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Center of Excellence in Higher Education

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Editorial

The year 2020 will be remembered as a year of losses. Many lost family members, relatives, and friends, and others lost jobs and livelihoods as a direct or indirect consequence of the pandemic. We at NSU lost a guardian, Mr. M. A. Hashem, Founding Member and Former Chairman of NSU, Founding Chairman of Partex Group, and Former Member of Parliament. We lost Mr. Nurul H. Khan Founder General Member, NSU Trust, Former Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh, Former Chairman of the National Board of Revenue. We also lost Professor Partha Pratim Dey, who joined NSU as an Assistant Professor in the ECE (former EECS) department in 1998. He had been serving as the Chairman of the Department of Mathematics and Physics (DMP) since its inauguration in August 2014. Mr. Syed Mahtab Ahmed, Program Officer, Department of Architecture, who joined NSU in 1996, also passed away this year after 25 years of service and dedication to the NSU family. While we continue to mourn their loss deeply, their dedication to this university will be remembered.

In the somber gloom of the pandemic, we also remembered the great intellectuals who were martyred in December of 1971, just a few days before our Victory Day. NSU organized a virtual discussion session and cultural program to commemorate the country's 50th anniversary of independence, along with the birth centenary of our beloved Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. These two events reminded us of the resilience and spirit of the Bangladeshi people in overcoming the oppression, poverty, and both natural and man-made calamities of their time.

Their courage inspires us to meet hardship and loss similarly in our own day with resilience and an indomitable spirit.

This spirit that urges us never to stop progressing in any circumstances led to major webinars and online sessions for NSU and its students this month. On December 12, NSU and the Department of Economics jointly hosted a webinar titled "Socio-economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women of Bangladesh." The informative session focused on the participation and contribution of women in different sectors of Bangladesh during this difficult Coronavirus period. Another significant webinar, titled "Bangladesh - Republic of Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties," was hosted by the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea on December 15. December was also important for university collaborations and affiliations. Finally, many online sessions were held with different foreign universities for the benefit of NSU's students.

This year was incredibly difficult, to say the very least. While we continue to remain off-campus and take classes online, it seems that most of our activities in virtual space will continue there well into 2021. Whatever may come, we certainly will continue to work together to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic and strive towards a brighter future.



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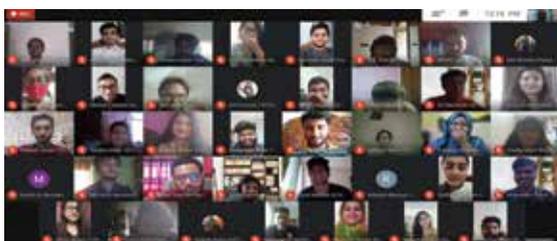
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Father of the Nation



North South University
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

We Mourn the Loss of Late Mr. M. A. Hashem

North South University recently held a virtual discussion session titled "Remembrance and *Dua Mahfil*" for the recently deceased Founding Member and Former Chairman of NSU, Founding Chairman of Partex Group, and Former Member of Parliament the Late Mr. M. A. Hashem on December 30, 2020.

The program started with a *Khatam ul Quran* for the forgiveness of the soul of the deceased from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. After that, a discussion session on the life of Mr. Hashem started with a recitation from the Holy Quran. During the session, his ideals and working life were discussed and speakers shared various memories of him. Members of the Board of Trustees and members of the NSU team expressed deep grief over his death. They solemnly expressed that the death of Mr. M. A. Hashem was an irreparable loss for the NSU family. With this tragic demise, NSU has also lost a true friend. Undoubtedly, his death was a great loss to NSU and the nation as a whole.

Former President of the FBCCI, Founder Chairman of Southeast Bank, and Chairman, Board of Trustees, North South University, Mr. M. A. Hashem, along with other members of the Board of Trustees Mr. Azim Uddin Ahmed, Mr. Benajir Ahmed, Mr. Mohammed Shajahan, Ms. Rehana Rahman, and Ms. Yasmin Kamal, were present as Speakers. Prominent

industrialist Mr. Aziz Al Kaiser, Chairman, City Bank, Vice-Chairman, Partex Star Group, and the eldest son of the Late Mr. M. A. Hashem, Mrs. Tabassum Kaiser, Director, City Bank and daughter-in-law of the Late Mr. M. A. Hashem, and Mr. Amman Al Kaiser, grandson of the Late

played a leading role in the spread of higher education at the private level in Bangladesh. For this, the private sector of Bangladesh and Bangladesh herself will be forever indebted to him. He was a true friend of NSU, his contribution to the development of NSU will be remembered by all with gratitude."

Professor Atiqul Islam, the Vice-Chancellor, said that North South University will be deeply in debt to Mr. M. A. Hashem. He also stated that the contribution of Mr. M. A. Hashem from the initial birth plan of the university to this day is immeasurable. The Vice-Chancellor expressed that Mr. Hashem was a kind-hearted, far-sighted, and determined individual. He



Late Mr. M.A. Hashem, Founding Member and Former Chairman, NSU.

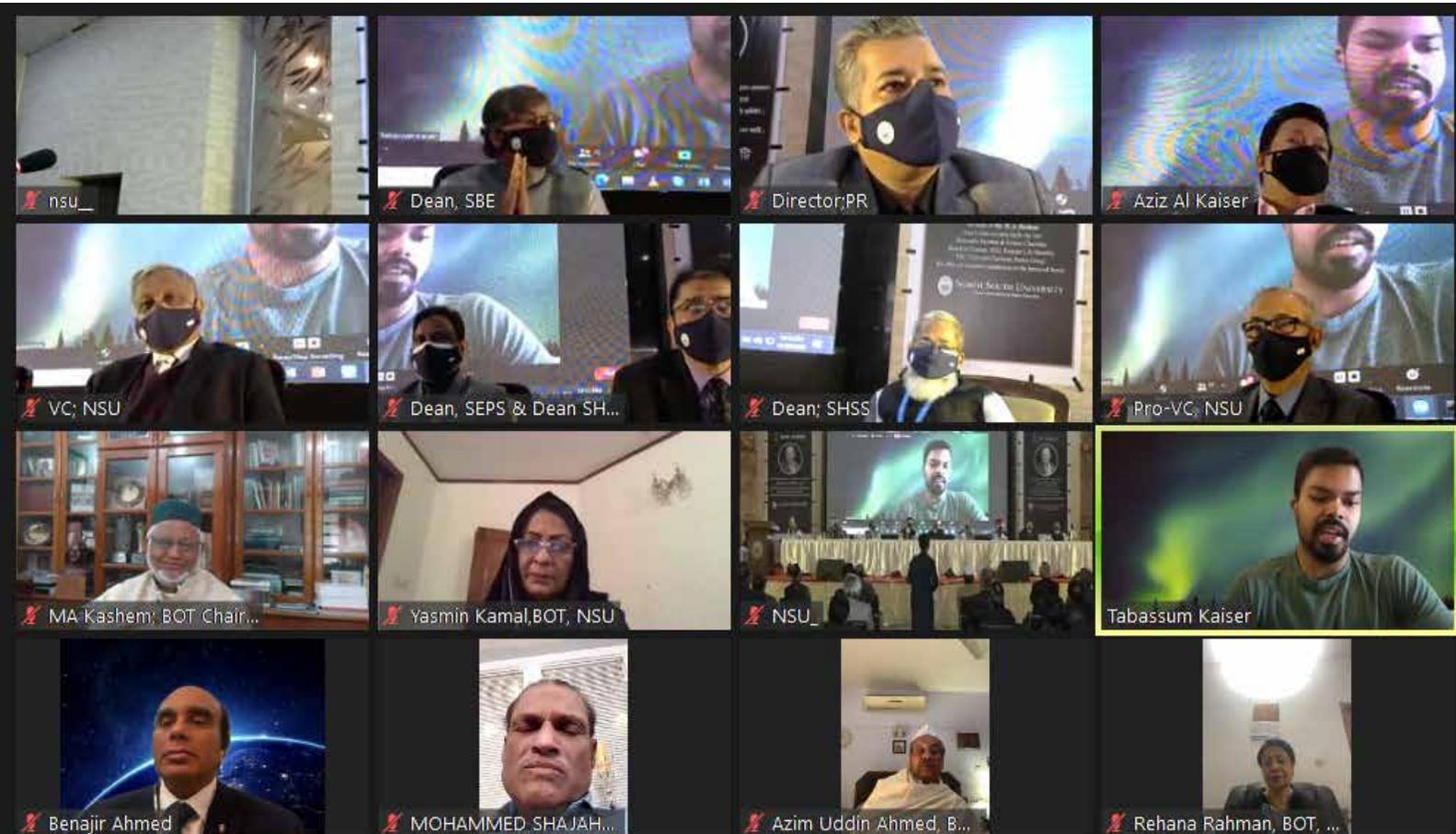
Mr. M. A. Hashem were also present. Professor Atiqul Islam, the Vice-Chancellor, presided over the discussion session. The discussion session was moderated by Mr. Jamil Ahmed, TV Presenter and Director of the Public Relations Office. Dua and Prayers were conducted by Islamic scholar Maulana Mahbubur Rahman, Respected Khatib of Gausul Azam Jame Masjid at Mohakhali.

Mr. M. A. Hashem said that the "Late Mr. Hashem has taken the private industry of Bangladesh much further by leading from the front. He has

further added that the success of Mr. M. A. Hashem could be attributed to his extraordinary ability to take risks and that this hard-working and impeccably efficient individual will always be a role model to the people of this country.

Mr. Aziz Al Kaiser said that "North South University was my father's favorite place. He always gave North South University the most importance among all of his works. I think his dream will come true if the members of the Board of Trustees, the faculty members, and the staff members all still

Remembrance and Prayers for Recently Deceased Founding Member and Former Chairman of NSU, the Late Mr. M. A. Hashem



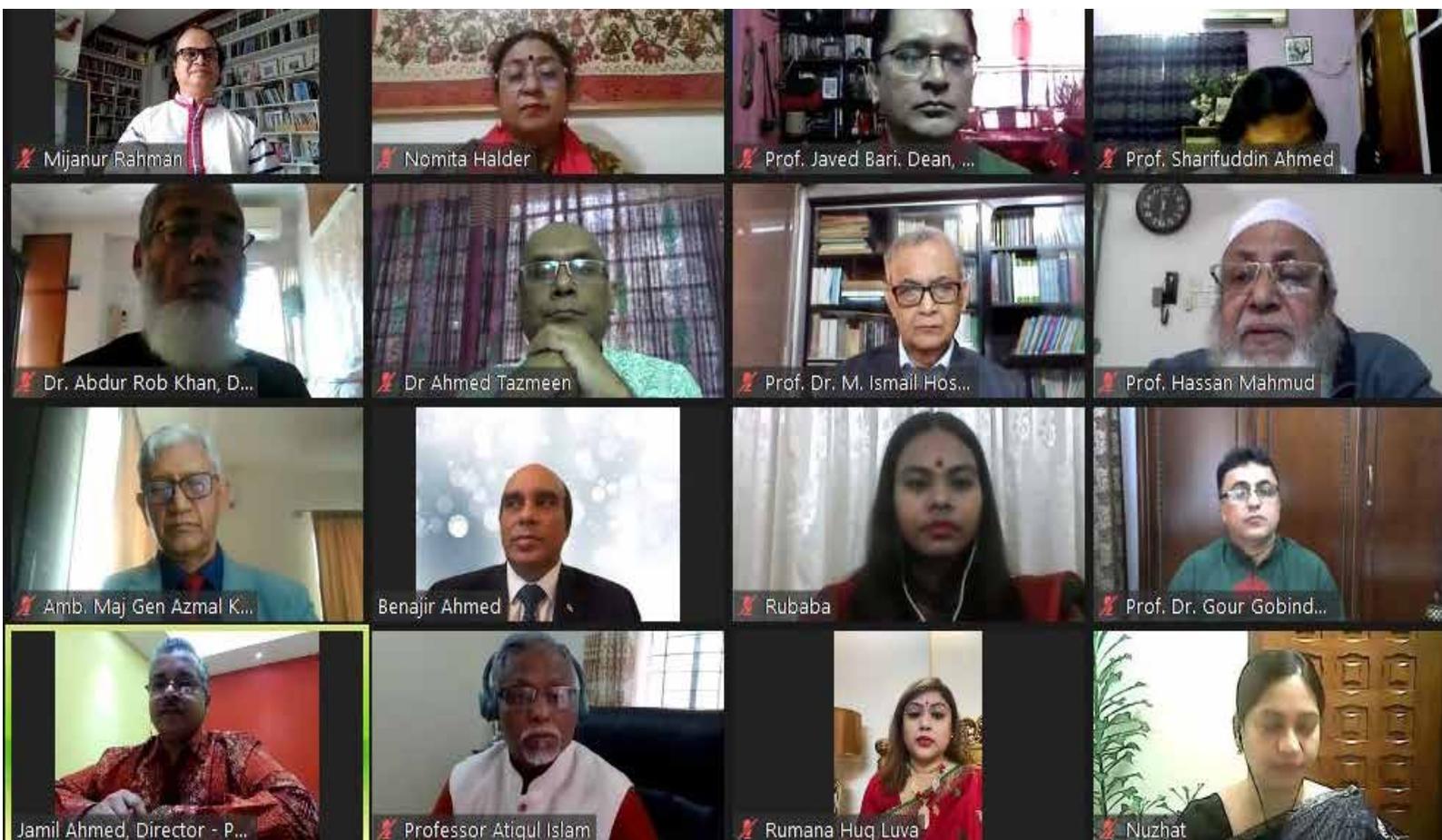
Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chair, BOT, NSU, along with other Members of the BOT, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, and respected family and faculty members at the Dua Mahfil of the Late Mr. M.A. Hashem.

have those things in their minds and move the university forward in a much farther way. He was a successful entrepreneur, and he had a very happy family life. He always worked in the service of society as well as for the people of this country. This is why he was engaged in various social work."

Among others, Professor Dr. M. Ismail Hossain, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Deans of various schools, faculty members, and officials were present at the

virtual discussion session. A large number of parents and students were also connected through the online live broadcast on the NSU Official Facebook Page. It is worth mentioning that Mr. M. A. Hashem passed away on Thursday, December 24, 2020 (Inna lillahi wa inna ilayhi raji'un). We pray to Almighty Allah for the release of the soul of the deceased and for the courage and sympathy of the bereaved family members to bear this loss.

Virtual Discussion Held on ‘Martyred Intellectuals Day’ and ‘Victory Day’



Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Vice-Chancellor, Jagannath University, Mr. Benajir Ahmed, Former Chairman and Member, BOT, NSU, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, Dr. Nuzhat Chowdhury, Professor, BSMMU, along with other distinguished guests speaking at the virtual discussion.

The first private university and the number one ranked private university of Bangladesh North South University (NSU) organized a virtual discussion session and cultural program on the ‘Martyred Intellectuals Day’ and ‘Victory Day’ on Wednesday, December 16, 2020, at 11:00 a.m. The program was broadcast live from North South University’s Official Facebook page and Zoom Online Platform at 11:00 a.m.

Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman, Honorable Vice-Chancellor, Jagannath University was present as the Chief Guest. Freedom Fighter Lion Mr. Benajir Ahmed, Former Chairman and Member, Board of Trustees (BOT), North South

University and Dr. Nuzhat Chowdhury, Professor, BSMMU, and the daughter of martyred intellectual Dr. Abdul Alim Chowdhury were present as Special Guests. Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, chaired the session. After the discussion program, there was a cultural program organized by NSU *Sanskritik Sangathan* (NSUSS).

Speaking as the Chief Guest, Professor Dr. Mizanur Rahman said, “Today’s Victory Day is very significant because we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of independence and it is also the birth centenary of Bangabandhu. Today, the anti-independence forces are using religion to get political advantage. They

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An Irreparable Loss to NSU Family

Mr. Nurul H. Khan, an esteemed Founder General Member of NSU Trust, expired on December 9, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. at United Hospital, Dhaka at the age of 85 after suffering from old-age complications for the last few months (Inna Lillahi Wa Inna Elaihi Rajeun).

The members of the Board of Trustees of North South University (NSU) expressed their deep shock at the demise of Mr. Nurul H. Khan. His Namaj-E-Janaja was held at Gulshan Azad Mosque on December 10, 2020 after Johr prayer. His death is an irreparable loss to NSU family.

His immense contribution to the growth of NSU will always be



Late Mr. Nurul H. Khan Founder General Member, NSU Trust.

remembered. Apart from being the Founder General Member of NSU, he had a long and glorious contribution to the Bangladesh Civil Service. He served as Secretary to the Government of Bangladesh in different Ministries. He was also the Chairman of the National Board of Revenue.

With this sad demise, North South University has lost its true friend. Undoubtedly, his death is a great loss for NSU and the nation as a whole.

NSU prays to the Almighty Allah (SWT) for the salvation of his departed soul and to give courage and fortitude to the members of the bereaved family to bear the loss.

Virtual Discussion Held Cont'd.....

didn't stop killing Bangabandhu, now they are showing courage to break the sculpture of Bangabandhu. Their real purpose is not sculpture, but to use religion to achieve hateful political purposes. If we look at Islamic countries, we see that there are various sculptures in all countries. This anti-independence force is continuing its conspiracy to turn us into a radical state. Our new generation has to stop all these evil forces, and they have to work hard to build a happy and beautiful Bangladesh by embracing the ideals of Bangabandhu. Because of the contribution of Bangabandhu to the country, today we have been able to present ourselves as a prosperous nation in the world."

Speaking as the Special Guest, Former Chairman and Member, Board of Trustees (BOT), NSU Mr. Benajir Ahmed said, "The people of this country and especially those of us who were able to participate in the liberation war, today is the day to fulfill our dreams. Bangabandhu is the embodiment of the independence of this country. He was the savior of the destiny of the helpless and oppressed

people of this country." He also said, "All directions of the management of this country existed in the speech of 7th March of Bangabandhu and all the development and progress we are enjoying today has become possible because of the long-term dream of Bangabandhu."

Speaking as the Special Guest, Dr. Nuzhat Chowdhury said, "It is subtle politics that some anti-independence forces are abusing Islam by using it to get political advantage. As a nation, we are generous and tolerant, we are not bigoted. We can embrace everyone irrespective of caste and creed, which is the identity of our Bengalis. I am requesting our young generation to fight the ideological battle to snatch both their own identity and the identity of the people as a whole. Bangabandhu said, he is a human, he is a Bengali, he is a Muslim. There is no conflict between these three identities. The identity of the people we are in today is thrown into crisis because it is subtle politics, a conspiracy. This conspiracy has been made to erase the name of Bangabandhu from history. We are all human beings first; this evil force

is shortening Islam by misinterpreting Islam. To take our country step forward, all of us have to strongly resist this evil force and take the country forward keeping the ideology of Bangabandhu in our mind."

Honorable Vice-Chancellor of NSU Professor Atiqul Islam said, "If we had not won under the leadership of Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, then the strong position we have taken in the present world through economic and social development would never have been possible." Bangabandhu dreamed of a secular country where everyone would join hands and take the country step forward in the world. Those who mix religion with politics, never bring any good to a country. Some anti-independence forces in our country are trying to create an unpleasant situation in the country by misinterpreting religion with politics. We should all resist them together.

Among others, Deans of different schools, researchers, media representatives, faculty members and students, Directors, and officials of NSU were also present in the webinar.

Socio-Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Women of Bangladesh



Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chairman, BOT, Ms. Rehana Rahman, and Ms. Yasmin Kamal, Members, BOT, along with other distinguished speakers sharing their insights into the socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on Bangladeshi women.

North South University and the Department of Economics, School of Business and Economics, NSU jointly hosted a webinar titled "Socio-Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women of Bangladesh" on December 12. The webinar was broadcast live on the official Facebook page of NSU. Mr. M. A. Kashem, Chairman, Board of Trustees, was present as the esteemed Chief Guest. Ms. Rehana Rahman and Ms. Yasmin Kamal, Members of the Board of Trustees, were present as Special Guests. The webinar was moderated by Dr. Kanti Ananta Nuzhat, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics.

During his speech, Mr. M. A. Kashem said, "Despite some challenges, it is very encouraging to see that the participation of women

has increased in the social and economic sectors of Bangladesh. It should be noted that alongside mass health issues, the adverse effects of COVID-19 are also being felt in the economic and social sectors. This factor is also creating problems for women employees in different industries. Nevertheless, the immense roles and contribution of Bangladeshi women must be recognized."

Ms. Rehana Rahman expressed during her speech that "the COVID-19 pandemic has had a more serious impact on women than it has had on men globally. Women, both in the formal sector and informal sector, are facing challenges at the workplace as well as home due to increased workload. As a result, they are facing both mental and physical difficulties."

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Bangladesh-Republic of Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties



Mr. Lee Jang-keun, Ambassador, Republic of Korea, Ms. Abida Islam, Ambassador of Bangladesh to the Republic of Korea, Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary, Bangladesh, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, along with other esteemed guests discussing the relationship between Bangladesh and South Korea at the webinar.

A webinar titled “Bangladesh-Republic of Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties” was hosted by the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) of NSU and the Embassy of the Republic of Korea on December 15. The webinar consisted of distinguished panelists who discussed the relationship between Bangladesh and South Korea from political, economic, and cultural perspectives. Professor Atiqul Islam, the Vice-Chancellor, attended the virtual session and he highlighted North South University’s interest in policymaking regarding the relationship between the Republic of Korea and Bangladesh.

Dr. Sk. Tawfique M. Haque,

Director, SIPG, commenced the webinar with his welcome address. The webinar was moderated by Mr. Shahidul Haque, Senior Fellow of the SIPG and former Foreign Secretary. During the inaugural session, Mr. Masud Bin Momen, Foreign Secretary, Bangladesh, thanked South Korea for supporting Bangladesh during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Momen also spoke about Rohingya repatriation procedures, regarding which he hopes to see a more proactive role from the Republic of Korea.

Later on, Mr. Lee Jang-keun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, gave a comprehensive introduction on the historical similarities between the Republic of Korea and Bangladesh.

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What Can Bangladesh Expect from the New Mega Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership?



Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, Mr. MJH Javed, Director General, South East Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Taufiqur Rahman, Head, Development Division WTO, Geneva, and other distinguished speakers exchanging their views on the expectation of Bangladesh from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and the School of Business and Economics (SBE) of North South University organized a webinar titled "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Challenges and Options for Bangladesh" on December 10, 2020. Distinguished panelists discussed in depth what the Asian regional/sub-regional trading initiatives challenges are and what it holds for bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) across Asia-Pacific.

RCEP is a manifestation of the ASEAN countries' willingness and ability to expand their economic sphere and engagements in complex, evolving, and dynamic geopolitical formations. Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Dean, School of Business and Economics,

North South University and Dr. Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director, SIPG, North South University delivered the welcome speech.

From the panel, Professor Gour Gobinda Goswami of the Department of Economics, School of Business and Economics (SBE), North South University, pointed out how RCEP will create new challenges for Bangladesh due to the import relations it has with the member countries. He emphasized that even if this partnership may not seem to be a potential channel of growth for Bangladesh in the short run, we should research the benefits the country can reap in the future from this mega-regional partnership.

Barrister Nihad Kabir, President, Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI), addressed

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NSU Celebrates the Signing of an MoU with the University of Kent, UK



Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Dean, School of Business and Economics of NSU, Dr. Anthony Manning, Dean, Internationalization and Higher Education, University of Kent, UK, Dr. Zaki Wahhaj, Reader in Economics, University of Kent, UK, and other esteemed guests at the virtual MoU signing ceremony.

North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA) has recently signed an MoU with the University of Kent, UK, and held a virtual MOU signing ceremony on December 14. The event was attended by Dr. Anthony Manning, the Dean of Internationalization and Higher Education, Primrose Paskins, Senior International Partnerships Officer, Andrey Launov, Research Fellow, and Dr. Zaki Wahhaj, Reader in Economics from the University of Kent and, from NSU, the Dean of the School of Business and Economics, Professor Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury,

then Chair, Economics, Dr. Ahmed Tazmeen, and from the Office of External Affairs, Dr. Katherine Li and Dr. Hasanuzzaman. The collaboration plans include joint research projects, collaborative teaching and research supervision, staff exchange, and student mobility.

The interaction between North South University and the University of Kent started back in January 2020 when Dr. Zaki Wahhaj visited NSU to conduct a discussion session with the students, faculty, and high officials of NSU's Department of Economics. In addition to discussions on academic

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Maryland-Nottingham-NSU-ICDDR,B Workshop on Fighting Antimicrobial Resistance, Cholera, and COVID-19



Professor Rita R. Colwell, Environmental Microbiologist and Scientific Administrator, University of Maryland, USA, Professor Anwar Huq, University of Maryland, USA, Professor Hasan Mahmud Reza, Dean (Acting), School of Health & Life Sciences, NSU, along with other scientists on a virtual workshop.

North South University, in collaboration with the University of Maryland, the University of Nottingham, and icddr,b organized a two-day virtual workshop on cholera and COVID-19 on December 4 and 11. The workshop is a part

of the ongoing, collaborative research project "Cholera Antibiotic Resistance in Bangladesh: Big Data Mining and Machine Learning to Improve Diagnostics and Treatment Selection." This program is being funded by the Research England--

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In Conversation with the Head of Admin, NSU

Ambassador Major General Azmal Kabir, OSP, psc (Rtd.) has been appointed as Director of Administration, North South University, in December, 2020. He had an impressive career in the Bangladesh Army where he worked as the Commander/Commanding Officer several times. Before joining NSU, he was the Ambassador of Bangladesh to Indonesia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also served as the Commandant of Bangladesh Ordnance Factories and Bangladesh Tea Board Chairman. He served three UN missions in Bosnia-Herzegovina, East Timor, and Liberia. Mr. Azmal Kabir graduated from Bangladesh Military Academy under Chittagong University and completed his B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from BUET. Here is an excerpt of an interview with Mr. Azmal Kabir.

NSU News: What is your vision for NSU from an administrative position?

Mr. Kabir: Being the Head of the Department of Administration, I will always uphold North South University as a center of excellence in higher education squarely. Given that, we have to work hard to maintain and expand our capability for administrative and logistics support to achieve NSU's vision, to gain recognition, nationally and globally, and to attract students, faculty members, and staff from all parts of the world. The mission of the Department of Administration is to provide the most effective and timely support related to HR, classical administration, logistics, transport, security, and medical services to academic, non-academic, and extra/co-curricular activities, and to facilitate producing competent graduates in their selected disciplines who will have productive careers or choose to engage in advanced/higher studies. To achieve the vision and mission of the Department of Administration,

we need world-class, modern technology, resources, and a skilled workforce compatible with NSU's vision and mission, excellent coordination among officers/departments, and the ability to provide services to departments, programs, and offices on a priority basis.

NSU News: What has been your experience in managing administration in the new circumstances?

Mr. Kabir: During my long 37 years of service experience in the Bangladesh Army, I held



Ambassador Major General Azmal Kabir, OSP, psc (Rtd.)

various important and senior-level appointments/positions both in civil and military administration. I was the Chairman of the Bangladesh Tea Board. Most recently, I served as Bangladesh Ambassador to Indonesia (while I was an active, serving Major General in the Bangladesh Army) for almost 4 years with great success. I could successfully arrange a state-level visit of our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Indonesia and, vice versa, of the Honorable President of Indonesia Joko Widodo to Bangladesh. I have earned adequate knowledge in administration during

my entire service life. I also carried out my duties and responsibilities very successfully and have religiously implemented various target-oriented goals of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. Immediately after retirement from the Bangladesh Army and as Bangladesh Ambassador to Indonesia, I am thankful to Almighty Allah (SWT) and grateful to the authority of NSU to have joined as Director of Administration. I hope that I will get wholehearted cooperation from all concerned and definitely, I will be able to utilize my experience to implement NSU's vision and mission in the new circumstances.

To fulfill the goals of NSU as well as the Department of Administration, I have already undertaken initiatives to create a quality and efficient administrative workforce, develop individuals' performance levels corresponding to their tasks and responsibilities, create a conducive relationship among all the departments' (academic and non-academic), officers' and staff members' professional development through comprehensive training, good governance, and a technology-based HR system that will create and maintain a safe and more secure environment on the NSU campus.

NSU News: Where did you pursue your higher education? Where did you serve before you joined NSU?

Mr. Kabir: I pursued my higher education in Civil Engineering from Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. Besides, I am a B.Sc. graduate from the University of Chittagong (now Chattogram) and a graduate of the National University when I was undergoing a Defense Services Command and Staff Course. Before I joined North South University, I served as the Bangladesh Ambassador to Indonesia while I was an active, serving Major General of the Bangladesh Army.

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DEML Discourse Series Webinar in December 2020

The Department of English and Modern Languages (DEML) of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences held a webinar in December 2020 as a continuation of its Discourse Series of lectures on December 5. The title of the webinar was "Identity Co-construction in Flirting." In this session, Dr. Kadek Ratih Dwi Oktarini of Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, spoke. Dr. Oktarini holds her Ph.D. in Humanities from the Department of Linguistics and Multilingual Studies, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Dr. Oktarini



Dr. Kadek Ratih Dwi Oktarini, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow. She is currently working on a project analyzing clinical communication in collaboration with a specialist clinic in one of Singapore's Public Hospitals. She completed her Ph.D. in 2017. Her Ph.D. thesis is titled "Flirtatious Sequence in Indonesian: A Conversation Analytic and Membership Categorization Analytic Approach." Her interests are mainly studying the detailed organization of conversational interaction and the colloquial Indonesian language.

Her presentation was based on her dissertation that analyzed an act of flirting in great detail.

In Conversation with the Head of Admin, NSU Cont'd...

NSU News: What do you think we need to do in the short term to progress more? Also, do you have any plans for the long term?

Mr. Kabir: North South University is the number one private university in Bangladesh because it has been promoting effective teaching, quality research, and service by providing appropriate physical facilities including classrooms, labs, and a library with state-of-the-art educational technology. But, in the changing condition of the pandemic, we all need to make changes and adapt to the "new normal" way to achieve our goals. The classes at NSU are taking place online with all possible technical support. Even in this pandemic, NSU can live up to its promises to provide a quality education because every faculty member and official works diligently and in harmony with the utmost professionalism to achieve that goal. The Department of Administration will provide all kinds of support to maintain that efficiency as these short-term actions will help NSU to achieve its long-term goals.

Though classes are taking place virtually, sooner or later these classes will be held in the classrooms with students. Labs and the library will be busy again providing physical services. The Department of Administration, along with other departments of NSU, are ready to work together in harmony to provide the best possible service to our students even in the changed situation. There are plans already in place so that classes can be held maintaining all the protocols of COVID-19. The Department of Administration is ready with all its administrative, logistical, transport, security, and personal and medical support to achieve and maintain that long-term progress.

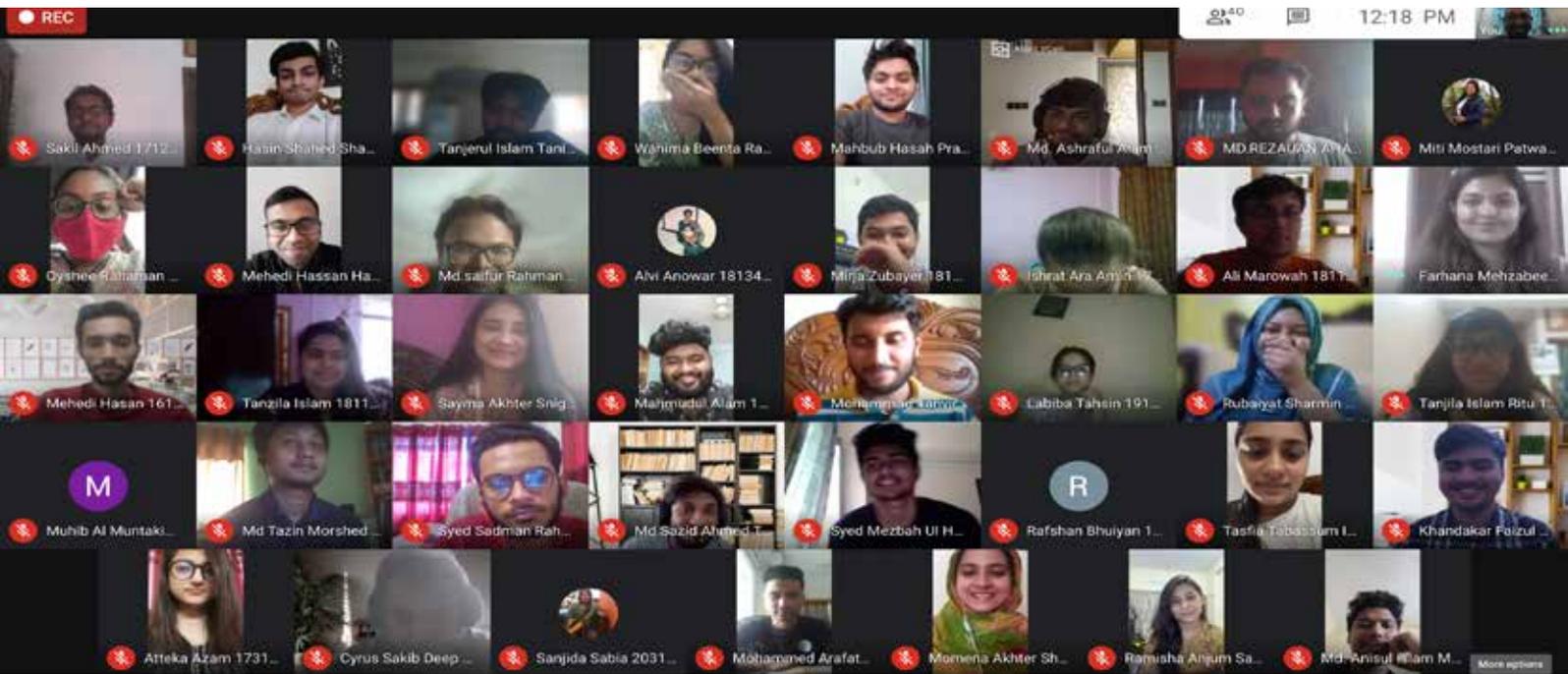
For long-term progress, we have a plan to develop administrative and human resource policies and regulations and to implement them accordingly. Thus, we are planning to assess the actual manpower needs, their allocation, and job distribution, review the existing organogram, review the existing rules, regulations, policies, and practices, and we will

suggest improvements from time to time in consultation with the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor with the kind approval of the Board of Trustees and Academic and Administrative Heads. We also plan to implement and monitor performance management to ensure efficiency in administration and human resource management, and work performance to create and retain required posts, and ensure proper allocation of responsibility, as well as assist and develop manpower planning based on the future vision of North South University.

NSU News: How are you liking this job?

Mr. Kabir: Yes. Definitely, I am liking this new challenge, which will add further laurels to my long professional career. I particularly like the educational environment and atmosphere of the pioneer and the simultaneously premier private university of Bangladesh, where I can contribute to the good of this glorious institution and the young, budding, brilliant students.

Online Class from a Student Perspective



A batch of students in a lively online class.

The COVID-19 pandemic took the entire globe by surprise. Initially, everything came to a standstill-- organizations closed, projects were delayed, and educational institutions shut down. As the world seemed to have come to a halt, so did NSU.

However, in time, institutions adapted and many students now continue their education through online, distance learning via video meetings with teachers. This model is presently the most effective alternative to keeping educational institutions open, which would still pose a significant safety risk for students, teachers, and staff alike. Many institutions in many countries have switched to this approach.

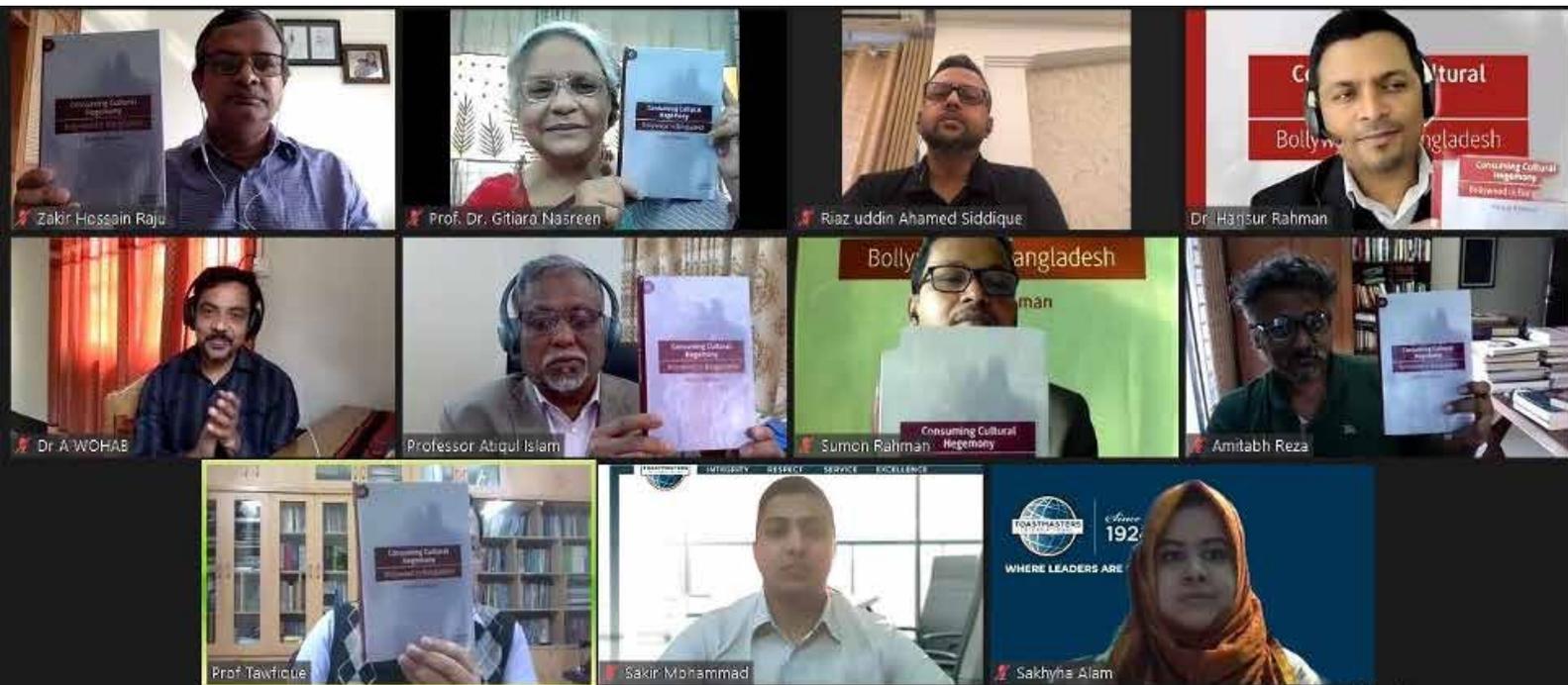
When COVID-19 cases were beginning to surge, Bangladesh went through a phase of uncertainty. When authorities finally announced that all schools, colleges, and universities were to be closed, almost all of them were not prepared to apply for home learning programs yet. However, many adopted in due time and got

on board with recent technological tools to make it possible to continue country-wide learning. From the students' perspective, attending online classes has been confusing and difficult to adjust to, as most had no prior experience. Some students have reported that the home-learning program has often been more stressful than regular classrooms. Common reasons for this include the fact that there was no campus time to mitigate the stress through socializing and students are stuck alone with nothing but assignments.

The workload of online classes is also larger than that of on-campus classes. Professors tend to underestimate the workload of students and the pressure from their home environments that negatively impact their performance. Furthermore, the inconsistent internet connectivity and power supply in Bangladesh also make for additional stress. Students who are from less fortunate situations are facing more difficulties due to these problems.

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Hindi Films in Bangladeshi Cinema Halls: A Boon or Bane?



Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, Amitabh Reza Chowdhury, renowned Bangladeshi Filmmaker, Riaz Ahamed, Bangladeshi Actor and Producer, and other distinguished academics unveiling the book of Dr. Harisur Rahman, Assistant Professor of the PSS Department, at the webinar.

The Department of Political Science and Sociology (PSS) hosted a webinar titled "Hindi Film in Bangladeshi Cinema Hall: A Boon or Bane?" on December 19. In the program, a book, *Consuming Cultural Hegemony: Bollywood in Bangladesh*, written by Dr. Harisur Rahman, Assistant Professor of the PSS Department, was discussed and formally launched. It is worthy to note here that because of the impact of COVID-19 on the film industry, the Government of Bangladesh has considered premiering Hindi films in Bangladeshi cinema halls simultaneously with their release in India. Apart from a group of Bangladeshi film artists, most members of the film industry support the government's move to save the dying cinema halls, which have failed to draw an audience. Against this backdrop, this webinar discussed the impact of COVID-19 on the film industry and Bollywood's impact on

the Bangladeshi film industry, society, and culture. Renowned film scholars, filmmakers, producers, directors, and film artists joined the webinar and reflected on these issues.

Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Chair, PSS, and Director, SIPG, began the program by greeting the audience. As the Moderator of the program, he emphasized the fact that if Bangladeshi private universities and the garments industry can survive competition, the Bangladeshi film industry can also succeed.

In his brief speech, Dr. Harisur Rahman said that his book explores the circulation and viewership of Bollywood films and film modernity in Bangladesh. It reports the results of ethnographic research conducted primarily in Dhaka and interviews with film viewers, circulators, actors, directors, producers, exhibitors, and critics. There is an

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Sessions Held with the University of Newcastle, Brock University, and Western Sydney University

North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA) held three webinars with three different universities during December. The webinars gave students a clear idea about application procedures, requirements, scholarship schemes, academic structure, and other important information about the universities. The interactive sessions were conducted through Zoom and shared through Facebook Live from the official Facebook page of the OEA.

the university. Mr. Joseph mentioned that the university is one of the top regional universities in Australia. During the session, Mr. Joseph also elaborately described the academic structure, offered undergraduate and post-graduate programs, and research and Ph.D. opportunities at the university. Additionally, he mentioned the online academic activities and strategies applied by the university during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, Mr. Joseph informed the audience about the university's credit transfer policies and study tour programs for international students. At the end of the session, he notified the audience of the tremendous work opportunities for graduates in Australia.

Another information session was hosted by the OEA on December 14, this time with Brock University, Canada. Ms. Megha Srivastav, Relationship Manager-India and South Asia, and Mr. Nigel Dixon, Head of Special Projects, were present in the session as distinguished guests. The webinar enlightened students about the higher education opportunities at Brock University. The event started with a brief overview of the university from Ms. Megha where she shared comprehensive information about the academic structure, ranking, campus culture, and many other relevant aspects of the university. "Brock University offers more than 120 undergraduate and graduate-level programs across 7 diverse academic faculties for the students," mentioned Ms. Megha during her speech. During his speech, Mr. Dixon discussed the credit transfer options for Brock University and highlighted the scholarship opportunities for international students. According to Mr. Dixon, "Brock University does not just provide quality education to



Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs, Ms. Namrata Anand, Senior Regional Manager for South Asia, along with other personnel speaking at the informative session.

On December 8, the OEA hosted an information session with the University of Newcastle, Australia. The Guest of the informative session was Mr. Antony Joseph, Senior Recruitment Adviser, University of Newcastle, Australia. The online event commenced with a brief overview of

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Informative Webinar with Yuan Ze University, Taiwan



Mr. Trevor Wu, Director, International Cooperation Unit, Global Affairs Office, Yuan Ze University, Dr. Katherine Li, Director, Office of External Affairs, and other distinguished officers speaking in the online session.

North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA) hosted a webinar with Yuan Ze University, Taiwan, on December 2. The session was conducted by Mr. Trevor Wu, Director, International Cooperation Unit, Global Affairs Office, Yuan Ze University. Two of the Bangladeshi students from the university were also present during the session as Guest Speakers. The main target of the information session was to inform students about the application process, requirements, academic structure, and scholarship schemes of Yuan Ze University. The interactive session was conducted through Zoom and was shared through Facebook Live from the official Facebook page of the OEA.

The event commenced with a brief introduction to Yuan Ze University from the guests. The introduction and description included the background and history of the university. The speakers mentioned that Yuan Ze University possesses a high place in Asian university rankings as well as world university rankings. The speakers highlighted the fact that Yuan Ze University has long been one of the top choices for international students who aim to pursue their higher studies in East Asia. During his speech, Mr. Trevor Wu mentioned that "over the years, Yuan Ze University has built adequate affiliations and accreditations with several educational institutes and organizations. These affiliations have

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Bangladesh-Republic of Korea: The 47th Anniversary of Diplomatic Ties Cont'd...

Mr. Jang-keun mentioned that Korea is a major development partner of Bangladesh and is the third leading FDI investor in the country. Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Dean, School of Business and Economics, also spoke at the webinar and he highlighted the importance of collaboration in terms of knowledge, technology,

and skill transfers.

The session was also attended by Professor Delwar Hossain, Department of International Relations at the University of Dhaka, and he addressed the challenges and opportunities of the Bangladeshi-South Korean relationship in terms of geopolitics. Ms. Abida Islam, Ambassador

of Bangladesh to the Republic of Korea, mentioned during her closing remarks that "the businesses of both the countries need to participate more in trade partnership and collaboration. The two countries can also invest in ventures related to cultural exchange."

Maryland- Nottingham-NSU- ICDDR, B Workshop Cont'd...

Global Challenge Research Fund.

Professor Rita R. Colwell from the University of Maryland was the Keynote Speaker. Professor Colwell is one of the most prominent cholera scientists in the world. She delivered a presentation on climate change, microbial status, and human health, and also explained what cholera can teach us about COVID-19. Professor Anwar Huq, also from the University of Maryland, spoke about cholera prevalence, prevention, and public health measures. Professor Hasan

Mahmud Reza, Dean (Acting), School of Health & Life Sciences presented the current challenges that may affect the success of COVID-19 vaccination.

Dr. Munirul Alam, Senior Scientist, icddr,b, was a Keynote Speaker on the second day. He discussed the status of vibrio cholera, past and present, in Bangladesh. Dr. Tania Dottorini, Associate Professor in Bioinformatics at the University of Nottingham, in her presentation described how data mining and machine learning can improve

diagnostics and treatment selection. Dr. Muhammad Maqsood Hossain, Director, NGRI, made a presentation on pathogen genomics as a diagnostic tool in developing countries.

Both parts of the workshop were attended by a large audience, and they participated in a question and answer session on both days. The speakers answered and discussed most of the questions that were asked by the participants. The participants seemed very enthusiastic regarding the topics of discussion.

Sessions Held with the University of Newcastle, Brock University, and Western Sydney University Cont'd...

its local and international students, but it also provides vast knowledge regarding the corporate world and job market."

On December 21, the OEA held another information webinar with Western Sydney University. The Guests of this session were Ms. Namrata Anand, Senior Regional Manager for South Asia, and Ms. Rabani Puri, Assistant Recruitment Manager. The online session provided adequate information about the application processes, requirements,

programs, scholarships, and other opportunities offered by Western Sydney University. After a brief overview of Western Sydney University, Ms. Namrata spoke about the history of the university and its academic structure. She informed the audience that Western Sydney University is one of the top-ranked universities in Australia and around 14% of the university's students are international students. During the information session, Ms. Namrata also provided details

about the admission requirements and processes of Western Sydney University. She enlightened the audience about the offered programs and subjects of the university. Most importantly, she informed interested students about the scholarship schemes, study abroad programs, and student exchange programs offered by the university. The informative event concluded with an interactive question/answer session.

Socio-Economic Impact Cont'd...

According to Ms. Yasmin Kamal, "Newspapers and media are regularly reporting that the impact of COVID-19 has been detrimental towards women. Apart from economic losses, many women are still victims of societal problems such as domestic violence, child marriage, illiteracy, and unemployment. We all need vision and cooperation so that inequalities

between genders do not exist in the society."

Other notable speakers in the online session included Dr. Fahmida Khatun, Executive Director, Centre for Policy Dialogue, Dr. Nazneen Ahmed, Senior Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, and Ms. Nobonita Chowdhury, Director, Gender, Justice, and Diversity

and Preventing Violence Against Women Initiative, BRAC. Each of the speakers emphasized the challenges faced by women in the COVID-19 pandemic period and how these challenges can be mitigated by certain precautionary steps. Among others, many researchers, media representatives, faculty members, Directors, and officials of NSU were also present in the webinar.

What Can Bangladesh Expect Cont'd...

how Bangladesh is unfortunately not a member of many effective bilateral/ regional trade agreements. She urged that we need to acknowledge our successful records and be bold and proactive when it comes to the fast pace trade agreements taking place in the global arena.

In his discussion on the role of a social clause in trade, Mr. Farooq Ahmed, Secretary General, Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), said how trade and politics are inseparable. Mr. MJH Javed, Director General, South East Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh urged not to look into FTAs only in terms of tariff. There are bigger multiple factors that thus make this a regional partnership.

Mr. Taufiqur Rahman, Head, LDC Unit, Development Division

WTO, Geneva, said that from the trade perspective Bangladesh may not be impacted negatively in the short run; however, since it is an economic partnership, in the long run, there will be more factors other than the trade that benefits the member countries of RCEP.

Dr. Selim Raihan, Professor, Department of Economics of the University of Dhaka and Executive Director, South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), shared one of his concerns of Bangladesh losing competitiveness because of the internal trade flexibility between the member countries of RCEP. He added that Bangladesh has a lot of work to do now to attract large FDIs in the future. He also urged for the need to enhance the current Intellectual Property Rights structure.

Mr. Iftakharul Islam, Chairman

and Co-Founder of Asian Tiger Capital Partners, mentioned how RCEP will have a profound impact on regional and global chains, and it is more crucial for Bangladesh to now diversify the export industries, utilize the current structures, and link it with these new global chains.

SIPG's Senior Fellow and former Foreign Secretary Mr. Shahidul Haque moderated the discussion. He mentioned that this agreement might open windows of collaboration and benefits for Bangladesh. Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU and the Chair of the webinar, said that Bangladesh should consider being part of RCEP as it might help the country to gain a more international profile. He encouraged the experts to produce the necessary policies that support this integration.

Online Class from a Student Perspective Cont'd...

On the other hand, some students are content with this new method of classes as they can attend their classes in the comfort of their room, and they no longer need to waste time stuck in traffic. The recordings provided by professors are also making it easier to follow

lectures. Overall, students have more free time and many students can better explore their hobbies.

There is a plethora of factors to consider. The government needs to take concerted, well-informed action to augment the positive sides of online learning

and mitigate the negative sides and make it easier for less privileged students to participate. Education pioneered in this period will have lasting effects; many institutions and students might even lean towards online learning over traditional learning in the future.

China-South Asia Center for Socio-Cultural Studies at the Department of Political Science and Sociology

Historically, China and South Asia have a lot in common and a long history of social-cultural, economic, and political transactions and exchanges. Ethnologically, South Asia is diverse in terms of its different ethnic communities, languages, cultures, tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and identity, and so is China. Because of globalization and market forces, no country is isolated. Given the movement of people, finance, technology, ideas, and media, socio-cultural exchanges constantly occur between the nation-states in South Asia and China. Though there have been recent, well-publicized geopolitical and economic contentions between different nation-states in South Asia and China recently, relatively little attention has been paid to the connections and relations between the various ethnic communities and their culture and identity in different parts of these two regions. An academic center is one powerful way to address the dearth of scholarship on China's and South Asia's diverse and profound connections.

In the middle of December 2019, a delegate from the School of Ethnology and Sociology, Yunnan University, visited North South University and participated in a day-long seminar entitled "Protection and Inheritance

of Cultural Heritage in China and Bangladesh." This delegate also signed an MoU with the Department of Political Science and Sociology (PSS) of NSU proposing a future collaboration.

Following this visit, in early 2020, the Vice President of Yunnan University, Professor Dr. Li Chenyang, wrote a letter to the Vice-Chancellor of NSU, Professor Atiquil Islam, with a unique proposal for establishing a China-South Asia Socio-Cultural Research Center at both NSU and Yunnan University. The two sides reached a consensus in early 2020 to establish this center, the China-South Asia Center for Socio-Cultural Studies (CSCSS) at both the universities to carry out research and share knowledge, training, and advocacy on various social and cultural issues. In late 2020, the center was approved by the authority of NSU.

The China-South Asia Center for Socio-Cultural Studies will be an interdisciplinary initiative that aims to facilitate the academic study of socio-cultural issues through evidence-based and empirical research. The CSCSS aspires to be a platform for academics, researchers, and practitioners from diverse academic backgrounds to work together to create cutting-edge scholarship on socio-cultural issues across China and South Asia in general

and Bangladesh in particular. The CSCSS at North South University will be under the Department of Political Science and Sociology.

The CSCSS will initiate cutting-edge research, partnership, training, and advocacy to create critical scholarship on various socio-cultural issues in China and South Asia. The vision of the CSCSS is to become a recognized platform where academics, scholars, researchers, and practitioners join together to create socio-cultural impact and bridges between China and South Asia. The CSCSS will be established very soon and will work to achieve the following goals:

To promote and produce interdisciplinary research on socio-cultural issues such as tangible, intangible cultural heritage and protection.

To create a connection between cultural heritage, tourism, and business.

To become the leading center on socio-cultural issues in China-South Asia and beyond.

To develop multi-sited and multimodal ethnographic researchers.

To create a collaborative network of socio-cultural research, training, and dissemination.

NSU Celebrates the Signing of an MoU Cont'd...

interests and research, Dr. Zaki also highlighted collaboration opportunities between NSU and the University of Kent during the session. After that, the two institutes gradually proceeded towards extending collaboration agreements, which finally resulted in a settled memorandum of understanding at the end of 2020. The commencement of this new partnership and the shared journey between these two universities

was celebrated through the virtual conference held on December 14.

Another aspiring joint program that has been agreed upon between NSU and the University of Kent is a joint M.Sc. program opportunity for the students of both universities. Under the current agreement, students will have the opportunity to study for the first 3 semesters at the University of Kent and one semester at NSU, where they will write their thesis under

the supervision of professors from both institutions. In the future, it is expected that this will take the form of a joint degree; however, the activation process for a joint degree program requires official approval from the University Grants Commission (UGC). As soon as the approval is granted by UGC, NSU can continue the process of formalizing this proposal. Such a joint degree would be the first of its kind at NSU.

Hindi Films in Bangladeshi Cinema Halls Cont'd...

extreme dearth of research on Bollywood film's circulation and viewership across South Asia. The book addresses some fundamental questions, such as what it means to be a Bangladeshi in South Asia, what it means to be a Bangladeshi fan of Hindi film, and how popular films reflect power relations in South Asia. He argues that the partition resulted in India holding hegemonic power over all of South Asia's nation-states at the political, economic, and military levels, a situation that has made possible its cultural hegemony.

As a discussant, actor Riaz Ahamed said that the film industry needs institutional infrastructure, and also long-term planning to make Bangladeshi films better and more competitive. He said that they need to keep the right people in the right places as well as produce better content. He also talked about the construction of cinema halls and the incentives for the film industry.

Renowned filmmaker Amitabh Reza Chowdhury said that Bangladesh needs to have a "Film Commission" that will act in the same manner as the Election Commission or Anti-Corruption Commission and the industry also needs to thrive through competition. His movie *Aynabaji* was remade in the Telugu language, which might make it the first Bangladeshi film

to be remade in Telugu. He also talked about building new multiplexes for cinemas and how cinema hall owners deprive film producers of a significant stake in their profit, referring to how he could not reap much compensation from the hall owners for his film despite it being a super hit.

Against the question of why they were against Hindi movies in 2011 and 2014 but now they support the release of Hindi films in Bangladeshi cinema halls, Mushfiqur Rahman Gulzar, President, Bangladesh Film Directors Association, said that until Bangladeshi films can stand on their own, Bangladesh needs to allow the screening of Hindi movies as it is a question of survival.

Dr. Gitiara Nasreen, Professor, Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, University of Dhaka, said the film industry needs institutional education. It needs to systematically analyze and study production and distribution. Simultaneously, the media industry needs to create its narratives from stories seen in the Indian regional film industries.

Dr. Zakir Hossain Raju, Professor, Department of Media and Communication, Independent University, Bangladesh, said that cricket stars like Shakib Al Hasan and Mushfiqur Rahim are the results of

the existing structure of Bangladeshi cricket. To get the same results, the Bangladeshi media industry needs to take long-term strategies.

Dr. Sumon Rahman, Professor, Department of Media Studies and Journalism, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said that Bangladeshi filmmakers have misidentified the audience. Although the filmmakers thought vulgarity would attract the lower middle class, they have rejected those films because of the same vulgarity. The lower middle class instead consumes Indian Bangla movies. He also said that to save the Bangladeshi film industry, we need to vernacularize the movies. This process will attract a new audience.

The Chair of the session, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, said if Bollywood can survive despite Hollywood's hegemony, why wouldn't Bangladeshi cinema be successful? At the same time, French and Spanish movies have also maintained uniqueness despite Hollywood hegemony. The cinema industry should be like an open book exam where students can invent new ideas even though the book is open. He also said Bangladesh should maintain its principle of secularism to save the film industry. Professor Atiqul Islam then unveiled Dr. Harisur Rahman's book and concluded the ceremony.

Informative Webinar with Yuan Ze University Cont'd...

helped the university to grow and facilitate its students with better opportunities." Yuan Ze University also has a background of proficient research and is currently offering students the opportunity to pursue research programs with them.

Throughout the online session, the guests thoroughly informed the audience regarding the university's application procedures and the application requirements for international students. The academic structure

of the university was also explained in detail during the session. The guests made sure that the audience learned about the different university departments and the highly trained faculty members of the university. Last, but not least, the speakers emphasized the fact that Yuan Ze University has a very high placement and employment rate among its graduates.

In the last segment of the session, the guests talked about the visa process and collection

procedure for Taiwan. Mr. Trevor Wu encouraged students of North South University to apply for Yuan Ze University for further studies. Numerous students and teachers tuned into the online program to know about Yuan Ze University and its opportunities. The event ended with an interactive question/answer session during which the guests took questions from the audience.



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