



(From left) BKash CEO Kamal Quadir, ULAB VC Prof. Imran Rahman, Chief Guest Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, ULAB BoT President Dr. Kazi Anis Ahmed and UGC Chair Prof. Dr. Muhammed Alamgir on stage

Photo: ULAB Communications

ULAB HOLDS SEVENTH CONVOCATION

The ULABian Desk

ULAB marked a momentous occasion on Tuesday, May 7th, 2024, as we held our 7th Convocation at the Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Center. The ceremony, themed "New World Opportunities," celebrated the achievements of 2,976 graduates, including 2,320 undergraduates and 656 graduates.

The Chancellor's Representative, Dr. Kamal Abdul Naser Chowdhury, Education and Cultural Affairs Advisor to the Honorable Prime Minister, presided over the ceremony. Professor Dr. Muhammed Alamgir, Acting Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh, graced the ceremony as the special guest. Mr. Kamal Quadir, Founder and CEO of bKash, delivered an inspiring convocation speech. Graduates were also addressed by Dr. Kazi Anis Ahmed, President of the ULAB Board of Trustees, and Professor Imran Rahman, Vice Chancellor of ULAB.

Among the graduating class were eight exceptional students recognized as Gold Medalists. Shahad Muktadir, a Gold Medalist and now a lecturer at BRAC University's English and Humanities Department, shared a powerful message with the ULABian's editorial team in a recent interview:

"As we speed past another milestone," Shahad began, "and a new world of opportunities opens up to us, it might be helpful to slow down and reflect. While it may feel necessary to resort to apathy and blind conformity to cope with the current state of the world, it is more important now to not shirk from personal responsibility, and to try and change things for the better."

Shahad's message resonated with the theme of the convocation, urging his fellow graduates to embrace the challenges and uncertainties of the future. He encouraged

them to persevere in the face of doubt and anxiety, emphasizing that the act of trying, itself, holds immense value.

"Success at any endeavor," he continued, "is dependent on interpretation, social framing, and other forces both powerful and outside our control. The best we can do is to take things slow, stay hydrated, and try our level best. At the butt-ends of our days, the reverent, and perhaps slightly shame-tinged warmth of having tried and failed will far outstrip the cold, uncompromising regret of having never tried at all. And if you have tried and failed and are about to throw in the towel, I implore you to try just one more time."

Another Gold Medalist, Sahedul Islam Hira, who is now a Fellow at Teach for Bangladesh, echoed the sentiment of seizing the present when approached by our campus reporters. Hira, emphasizing

the importance of living in the moment, shared, "Putting things off is the biggest waste of life: it snatches away each day as it comes, and denies us the present by promising the future. The greatest obstacle to living is expectancy, which hangs upon tomorrow and loses today."

Hira's words urged his fellow graduates to break free from procrastination and embrace the "New World Opportunities" theme. "Do not wait for the perfect moment", the graduates were challenged to dive headfirst into their passions and make the most of every opportunity that this new world presents.

The 7th ULAB Convocation proved to be a day of celebration, reflection, and inspiration. As the graduates embark on their journeys in this "New World," they carry with them the invaluable lessons learned at ULAB and the unwavering spirit of their fellow classmates, all ready to embrace the boundless opportunities that lie ahead.



Various moments of ULAB's seventh Convocation
Photo: ULAB Communications



Roohama An Naba

Have you cut over the hang of the trendy popular American ‘Met Gala’ yet? Or have you moved on to the royal coronation to obsess over the fête already? Deceiving our minds behind the curtains of pop culture in the middle of our busiest youth has been an unconscious practice with the emergence of the internet, thanks to social media networks for bringing us all into the lives of other people to peep through.

Pop culture never fails to offer something new, something fresh straight out of the box every day. With every scroll down the Instagram feed, there is a new rumour waiting around to peep in. It is like opening up a jar full of gossip, dramas, fads and whatnot! Even the dull memes are forged out of a certain context we did not get a heads up of. Clearly once you get into the cycle, there is no end to it.

Why are we so interested and invested in this again? Is it the FOMO (fear of missing out) or just to stay relevant? While it is never a dull moment on the internet, as netizens might put it, keeping up with pop culture can be draining for the most part. It exhausts our brain and also tires our tastes. After all, how long can these be tempting for our leisure time?

Being a pop culture junkie is a lot harder than our presumptions. Unlike the gossip girl bubble, it drains one’s energy and leaves us with an empty bucket. At this point, this whole realm does not take lead on how invested anyone is, rather allures people into this empire. The sooner you are

done with bingeing the latest most-talked-about show to get into the loop, another one pops out, and people with limited screen time definitely lose track and fall behind in the race.

Another thing comes up for consideration. No matter how quickly you jump into the avant-garde fashion trend inspired by Julia Fox or Paris Hilton, the internet expedites into something more challenging popping out here and there, perhaps that is why the arena is labelled as ‘Pop Culture’. And without any doubt, pop culture is a lot to take in as much as it takes a lot from us.

Needless to say, the dimension of ‘culture’ gets wider and juicier each time with minor inconveniences on the Twitter (now X) or TikTok that ultimately leaves our mind weary. It consumes an obnoxious amount of time and leaves a void in our souls. It can be a sequence of phases that may lead us to things like updates on pop idols, celebrities, scrutinising them from head to toe, checking out paparazzi clicks, gossip-mongering pages all full of unwanted data that makes no sense to devour. Nonetheless, people worldwide consume it habitually.

Another point worth mentioning is that our brains get rationally unhealthy with the amount of unnecessary information junk. How does this add to our day knowing Kim K’s eye lens has been a consistent fashion choice over the past 10 ‘Met’ galas she attended? So unnecessary, yet she managed to get our 45 seconds of life and a million views, and now stuck in our heads we don’t know for how long. These

overloads of details, opinions and notions keep people occupied and may lead to their cognitive paralysis with piles of contents.

Excessive screen time on smartphones and other gadgets is one of the major issues these days that needs to be taken into account. To add cherry on top, pop culture does not let people put their phones or sets down for even an hour. The latest hot takes on the net, likes on comments, discussion over Grammy nominations are all to dig into. This presence of know-it-all drains energy so much that leaves no room for interacting with the reality of our surroundings, drives oneself out of the greater aspects of life.

The delusional remarks that keep building surrounding the passing fads have to do with unrealistic standards, insecurity, self-diagnosed disorders and comparison, the chain grows and grows with the influence of pop culture.

Pop culture does not come to an end only if people choose to ignore it, as the advertising, marketing and public relations all revolve around their references in order to fit in or hug the limelight during any debate. So, competition within oneself trumps all other gruelling.

No one is able to pour more if one’s cup is not filled enough. Therefore, rejuvenating from all the exhaustion is also required to stay relevant and up-to-date. Time to time pop culture detox is as mandatory as any other exercise. Contemporary pop culture lingos can wait, but sustaining treatment for the mind at stake cannot.

The ULABian requests its readers to send views, comments and press releases via email to the following address: theulabian@ulab.edu.bd. The campus paper greets photographs, features, and stories from the university students. Your best story will be printed after selection. So you, our interested candidates may be called to unite with the ULABian. Your submissions are subjected to editing.



Photo Credit:
CinemaScope ULAB



LEAPING INTO AWARENESS
ONE MORE JUMP

Film Screened at ULAB by Cinemascope and Cinema Palestine

The ULABian Desk

The ULABians found themselves immersed in a captivating cinematic journey as Oliur Sun, from the Department of English and Humanities, through his Cinema Palestine Bangladesh platform brought the 'One More Jump' film to our screens last year. Partnering with Cinemascope, the event aimed at shedding light on the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza Strip.

The film tells an emotion-charged story of Abdallah, founder of the Gaza Parkour Team, who escapes Gaza, leaving his friend Jihad behind. Jihad, amidst the conflict, trains young athletes for whom sports represent the only hope. The film poses a poignant question: "Is it better for one to pursue personal dreams abroad or stay and fight for one's own country?"

After the screening, Oliur Sun led a dynamic film discussion circle where students delved

into the film's layers. The partnership between Cinemascope and Cinema Palestine ensured a cultural touch, creating a space for a meaningful dialogue about activism and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

This event highlights the power of cinema to raise awareness and inspire socio-political activism. As students passionately discussed the film, it became clear that such screenings are not just about entertainment, but also about fostering a deeper understanding of global issues.

Keep an eye out for upcoming screenings by Cinemascope as its events promise to be more than just screenings. There are ample opportunities to connect, discuss and contribute to raising awareness of critical issues. Do not miss the boat to be part of these enriching experiences that go beyond the screen.

AI INTEGRATION

Enhancing Campus Life or Diminishing Human Ingenuity?

The ULABian Desk

In the world today, artificial intelligence (AI) or human intelligence in machines has become an integral part of our everyday life, offering a myriad of possibilities to streamline tasks, spark creativity and even challenge our perspectives. Free-to-use AI tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney have found their way into various facets of campus life, revolutionising how we learn, communicate and collaborate, and how things work in our daily life.

One notable application of the generative AI system in the student community is the use of ChatGPT or Midjourney to facilitate 'Dungeons and Dragons' sessions. By cutting down on the preparation time and generating cost-effective images as well as providing detailed descriptions, blow-by-blow narratives of scenes, AI makes it easier for students to organise and participate in collaborative role-playing adventures. By leveraging AI, students can delve into fantastic realms, hone their problem-solving skills and foster social connections through shared narratives.

Moreover, the AI-powered journaling platforms offer students a novel way to reflect on their experiences, set goals and track personal growth. With features such as prompts tailored to spark individual interests and sentiment analysis, these tools empower students to cultivate self-awareness and enhance their emotional well-being. By integrating AI into journaling practices, students can develop healthier habits and gain deeper insights into their thoughts and behaviours.

Another compelling use of AI on the campus is its role in challenging biases and expanding perspectives. Through an interactive dialogue and content recommendation algorithms, AI platforms can expose users to diverse viewpoints and encourage critical thinking. By engaging with the AI-powered tools that present alternative perspectives, students can confront their own biases, broaden their understanding of complex issues and cultivate empathy towards others.

What is more, the AI-enabled brainstorming and iteration tools provide students with invaluable support in their creative endeavours. Whether brainstorming ideas for a group project or refining a design prototype, AI algorithms can generate suggestions, identify patterns, and iterate on concepts at a rapid pace. By harnessing the power of AI in the creative process, students can overcome their mental blocks, explore innovative solutions and unleash their full creative potential.

In addition, AI-based writing assistants offer students constructive feedback and guidance in refining their written oeuvre. By analysing grammar, style and coherence, these tools help students improve their writing skills and communicate more effectively. Whether crafting essays, reports or creative pieces, students can leverage AI with an eye to refining their ideas and polishing their prose, ultimately enhancing their academic performance and professional growth.

Despite reaping numerous dividends of AI in campus life, it is essential to recognise and mitigate potential downsides of the computer-controlled robotic functions. Relying too heavily on AI for decision-making or problem-solving can lead to

promise in enhancing productivity, fostering creativity and challenging our preconceptions on the campus and beyond. By harnessing the power of AI-driven tools like ChatGPT and Midjourney, students can unlock new opportunities for learning, collaboration and personal progress. However, it is imperative to balance the benefits of AI with a critical awareness of its limitations and potential pitfalls. Through careful integration and responsible usage, AI has the potential to enrich our campus community and empower students to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

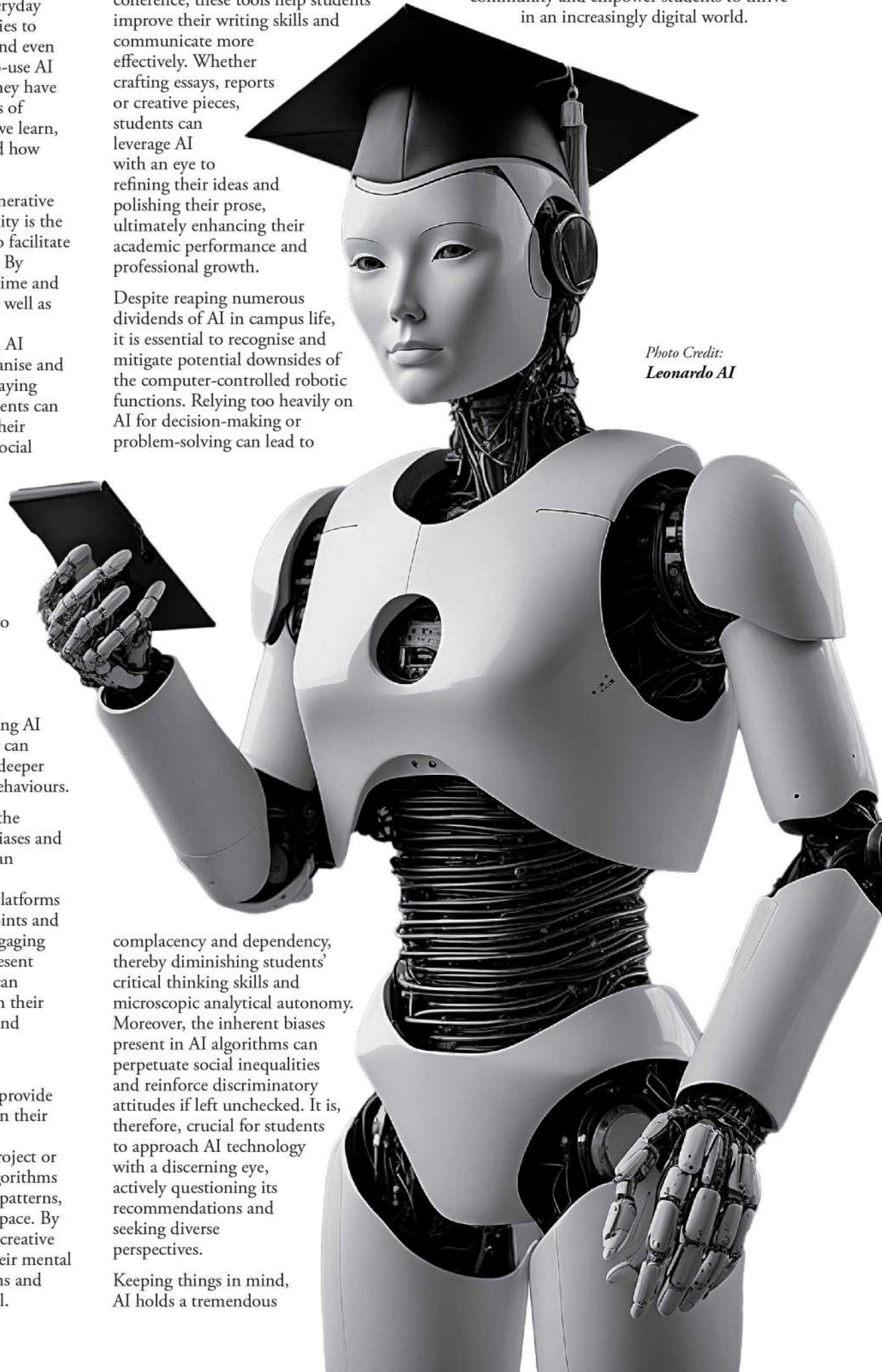


Photo Credit:
Leonardo AI

complacency and dependency, thereby diminishing students' critical thinking skills and microscopic analytical autonomy. Moreover, the inherent biases present in AI algorithms can perpetuate social inequalities and reinforce discriminatory attitudes if left unchecked. It is, therefore, crucial for students to approach AI technology with a discerning eye, actively questioning its recommendations and seeking diverse perspectives.

Keeping things in mind, AI holds a tremendous



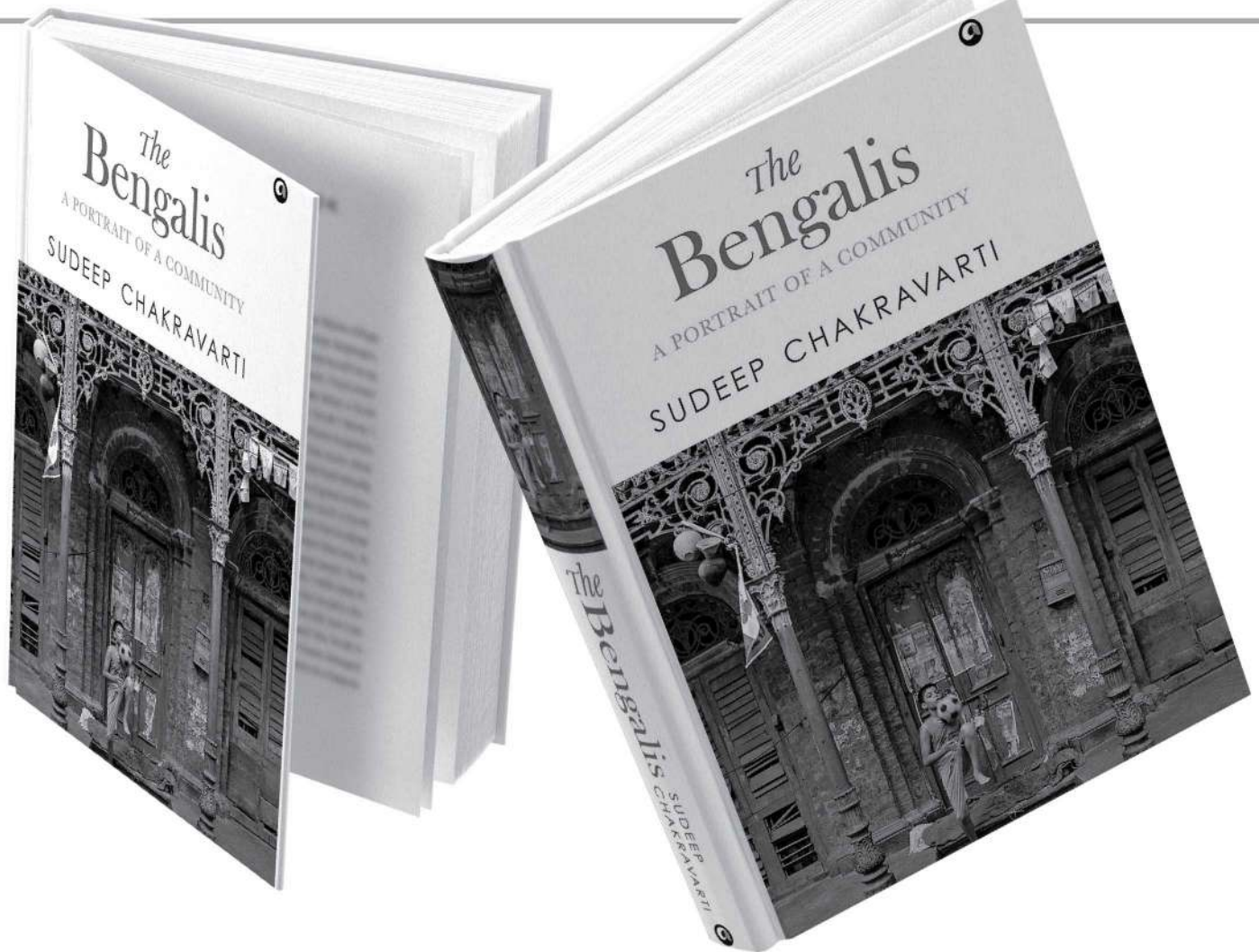
In the Depths of a
RESTLESS MIND

Talal Mohammed

In the depths of a restless mind,
A girl with dualities entwined.
Bipolar whispers, its tempests brew,
Two personalities, each with its hue.
In her kaleidoscope of moods,
A fragile balance, often eludes.
The pendulum swings, wild and free,
Revealing shades unseen, yet to be.
In the light of dawn, her spirit soars,
A radiant soul with dreams that pour.
Her laughter dances like sunlit beams,
As she paints the world with vibrant schemes.
The Good, a beacon, warm and kind,
A gentle voice with love enshrined.
She spreads compassion like fragrant flowers,
Embracing souls in her tranquil hours.

But shadows lurk within her core,
The Bad, a storm, unleashed and raw.
A tempest rages, tearing at her seams,
Engulfing her in turbulent, nightmarish dreams.
In moments of dark, her heart, a void,
Struggles to escape the chaos deployed.
Her words become daggers, sharp and cruel,
Inflicting wounds that only time can heal.
The world bewildered, witnessing this strife,
Torn between the two halves of her life.
Yet through the storm, a flicker of grace,
A yearning to find a tranquil space.
She battles demons with all her might,
Seeking solace in the darkest night.
Therapy's embrace, a guiding hand,
Navigating a labyrinth, shifting sand.

For she is not defined by her condition,
But by her resilience and intuition.
With strength she weaves a tapestry bold,
A story of triumph yet untold.
In the ebb and flow of her tides,
She finds strength within where hope abides.
And though her path is fraught with strife,
Her spirit, resilient, seeks a balanced life.
So, let us not judge her but lend a hand,
A compassionate heart ready to understand.
For beneath the layers of her soul's divide,
A girl, whole and beautiful, resides.



Books as Balm

HOW READING LITERATURE SAVED MY LIFE

Sakibur Rahman Arnab

In the midst of life's ebb and flow, one inevitably encounters trials, tribulations and the sheer weight of grief. In such trying moments, the gleam of joy and the warmth of love may seem distant, if not altogether obscured. Yet, it is during these periods of uncertainty that one must seek solace, seeking sources of solace that illuminate the path with love, hope and profound fulfilment. For me, this beacon of solace has been found within the pages of literature, where each tome becomes a portal to a realm of boundless inspiration and renewal.

Whether delving into the realms of fiction or immersing in the depths of non-fiction, the act of reading bestows upon me a transformative journey, instilling in me a sense of anticipation and promise for personal growth. Literature, in its myriad forms, serves as a catalyst for self-renewal, igniting within me a fervent desire for self-discovery and evolution. Moreover, amidst the stark realities of existence, literature offers a ray of hope, a beacon guiding me through a labyrinth of deep despair as well as adversity.

My existence finds profound resonance within the embrace of books and literature. During those harrowing days of the Covid-19 pandemic, as the world grappled with collective trauma, quarantine as well as isolation, literature stood as a constant

companion, offering some relief amidst that superbug. In the sanctuary of books, I found a sort of refuge from the anguish that plagued our world, seeking solace in the timeless wisdom and boundless imagination that each page beheld. Books became my sanctuary, a bastion of hope in a world besieged by gloom and despondency.

In my pursuit of a life imbued with tranquillity, books serve as a cornerstone of my existence, offering a sense of completeness amidst life's fragmented texture as well as tapestry. With each page turned, I embark on a journey of exploration, guided by the hand of the author as they unveil the frontiers of human knowledge and the intricacies of human experience. Through their words, I find solace, discovering and rediscovering fragments of myself amidst the narrative tapestry they weave.

As an avid reader, I must say Ken Follett's magnum opus, 'The Pillars of the Earth', stands as a testament to the profound impact of literature on the human spirit. Through the lens of his gripping narrative, I have found an inspiration to transcend my own tribulations, embracing a newfound sense of purpose and resilience. Similarly, Sudeep Chakravarti's poignant exploration of the Bangalee culture in 'The Bengalis'

provides a lifeline of affection and understanding in times of emotional tumult.

Books possess a vitality that transcends the confines of the printed pages, imbuing each narrative with a soulful resonance that speaks volumes directly to the reader's heart. In the words of Sunil Gangopadhyay, I find echoes of my own struggles and aspirations, as his prolific writings serve as a guiding light through a labyrinth of life.

In the grand tapestry of literature, moral truths intertwine with the fabric of storytelling, offering profound insights into the human condition. Stephen King's 'IT' serves as a poignant reminder of the magical, transformative power of unity in the face of adversity, thus illuminating the path towards collective healing and redemption.

There it stands to reason that books stand as timeless companions, offering solace and inspiration in equal measure. With each page turned, I find myself drawn deeper into a world of enchantment and wonder, where the boundaries of reality dissolve and the soul finds respite amidst the travails and twinges of life. Books are not mere vehicles of knowledge, but guardians of the human spirit, guiding us through the darkest of nights towards the dawn of a new day.

Shorter Days on Earth

Y O U R E X C U S E N O T T O S T U D Y

Nahian Jamal Joyeeta

Scientists have come up with the perfect excuse for you not to study: the Earth's rotation is slowing down, which means feeling like there just are not enough hours in the day to get everything done might not just be your imagination. That's right, the time to ditch your textbooks and hit the snooze button is here. The earth seems to be embracing its inner sloth, which means you can too!

Even though the number of seconds that the days are getting shorter each year may only be a fraction, it will make a noticeable difference over time. Just consider how much time will be lost to darkness over the course of a decade. You can spend more time indoors, curled up with a good book (or binge-watching your favourite show on Netflix). If you are still feeling guilty about procrastinating, remember that everyone's sleep patterns are affected by the Earth's rotation. Therefore, you are not the only one mere mortal.

The Earth now rotates once in 1.78 milliseconds less time than it did a century ago, according to a recent study by researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Despite the fact that at first it may not seem like much, it can add up and shorten a day over time. The length of the day affects our body clocks. So, if the days get shorter, it might affect our circadian rhythms. This may have a particularly negative impact on teenagers,

who already have difficulty sleeping due to early school start timings. As a result, schools may eventually need to change their respective academic schedules.

Mother Earth, however, will not always have a good time. Temperature, precipitation, agriculture, food production, water resources, natural habitats and sea levels can all be affected by changes in the length of a day brought on by the Earth's rotation. We are observing changes in the monsoon season in Bangladesh. We already experienced devastating effects last year as a result of climate change due to our low-lying geography. As the days get shorter, the monsoon season arrives earlier, resulting in more intense rainfall and flooding.

Therefore, even though we may be relishing the extra free time, it is incumbent upon us to understand the potential effects of these changes and take action to safeguard our planet. We can all do our part to protect the environment by reducing our carbon footprint, conserving water and preserving natural areas. With immediate efforts, we can reduce the effects of changes in the Earth's rotation on our climate and the future.

In short, it is probably not your fault if you are scrambling to meet a deadline or trying to fit everything into a crammed schedule, but don't stretch it. And now, if you'll excuse me, I have a Netflix marathon and a nap to catch up on!

UNLEASHING BRILLIANCE

CES WORKSHOP SPARKS

CRITICAL THINKING REVOLUTION AT ULAB

 The ULABian Desk



Organizers and facilitators poses for a post-event photograph,

Photo: CES-ULAB

In a world with a glut of information and constantly evolving challenges, the ability to think critically is not just a life's skill but an absolute necessity. Recognising this imperative, the Centre for Enterprise and Society (CES) at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) organised a transformative workshop styled 'Critical Thinking: Thought Leadership In Business'. The event, graced by the presence of Saleh Chowdhury, a distinguished cloud expansion strategist from Google, the USA, left an indelible mark on the attendees, underscoring the significance of critical thinking in shaping successful careers.

The workshop, hosted on the ULAB's permanent campus in Dhaka city, became a beacon of enlightenment for more than 60 students, offering them a unique opportunity to delve into the realm of critical thought under the guidance of an industry luminary. As the CES director, Sajid Amit, aptly pointed out during the inauguration, the workshop was not merely about acquiring knowledge. It was about cultivating a mindset crucial for navigating the complexities of the professional world.

Drawing from his extensive experience at Google, Amazon and other prominent tech organisations, Saleh Chowdhury initiated the session with an engaging discourse on the essence of critical thinking. Through interactive exercises, he challenged the participants to transcend the confines of conventional wisdom, urging them to explore beyond the surface and question assumptions. This approach, rooted in analytical thinking and problem-solving, resonated deeply with the audience, igniting fervour for intellectual curiosity.

One of the most striking features of the workshop was its emphasis on practical application. Mr Saleh emphasised the importance of assessing problem scope, defining relevant metrics and maintaining flexibility in seeking solutions — invaluable lessons for aspiring professionals. By incorporating thought-provoking exercises,

such as re-evaluating the purpose of pursuing an undergraduate programme or dissecting the qualities of a good graduate degree, the workshop fostered a culture of introspection and inquiry.

Moreover, Mr Saleh's insights transcended the boundaries of academia, offering a glimpse into the dynamic landscape of the corporate world. His journey from finance and marketing to spearheading cloud expansion strategies at tech giant Google served as an inspiration, illustrating the transformative power of critical thinking in propelling one's career trajectory.

Meanwhile, the presence of Edith Miriam Homonnai, the chief of human resources (HR) department at the UNICEF, further enriched the session, highlighting the real-world relevance of the skills imparted. As students became engrossed in stimulating discussions and practical exercises, they were not just passive recipients of knowledge but active participants in their own intellectual growth.

In retrospect, attending the CES workshop on critical thinking was nothing short of a revelation for the students of the ULAB. Beyond equipping them with essential soft skills for professional success, it instilled in them a newfound sense of empowerment — a realisation that they possess the tools to navigate the complexities of the modern world with full confidence, acumen and alacrity without ennui.

As we reflect on the impact of this workshop, one thing becomes crystal clear: the significance of such initiatives cannot be overstated. In a rapidly evolving landscape where adaptability and innovation reign supreme, fostering a culture of critical thinking is of paramount importance. The CES workshop stands as a testament to the ULAB's commitment to nurturing not just competent professionals but visionary leaders equipped to confront the challenges of tomorrow.

*Google USA cloud expansion strategist
Saleh Chowdhury*



Photo Credit Dhaka International Mobile Film Festival

MoU between ULAB and UNHCR

Mobile Filmmaking Workshop Highlights Refugees' Perspective

Tahia Anjum Ema

The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) on 01 December 2023. This marked the end of a five-week mobile filmmaking workshop — the learning component of the Dhaka International Mobile Film Festival (DIMFF).

The speciality of this workshop was that it focused on encouraging rising filmmakers to produce and create compelling storytelling through the lens of mobile phones. Their most recent rendition of mobile filmmaking for 2024, held from October 13 to November 11, revolved around the concept of “Forced to Flee”, sponsored by the UNHCR. The concept was given to young students to bring out and highlight the struggles of refugees and showcase their plight and perspective, through their compelling storytelling. Under the given theme of “Forced to Flee”, three films were successfully written, produced and directed by student filmmakers. Two of the three were fictions named “Unsent Letters” and “The Unbreakable Wall”, and the third was a docu-fiction headlined “Slang”.

ULAB Pro-VC Prof Dr Jude Willian Genilo inaugurated the event with a warm welcome speech and UNHCR Bangladesh Country Representative Sumbul Rizvi signed the instrument on behalf of their respective organisations with an eye to promoting filmmaking as a tool for amplifying refugee narratives, marking a significant agreement in the region.

Ms Rizvi, the honourable chief guest of the event, shared her valuable insights into the world of filmmaking and the role it plays in presenting refugee stories as well as the transformative impact of mobile films in capturing the nuances of forced displacement and human resilience. Following that, she presented certificates to the committed student filmmakers of the workshop. Afterwards, all three films were screened there.

The mobile filmmaking workshop in Bangladesh is unique due to some advancement in mobile phone technology, particularly when it comes to the issue of camera quality. This has allowed new voices to enter the filmmaking world, creating scope for even a small child to make a film, building it as a new tool for a new generation, according to ULAB instructor Zahid Gogon, who has been leading this workshop for the past five years.

The signing of this MoU between the ULAB and the UNHCR marked the start of a joint venture to harness the power of filmmaking with a vision to voice the struggles, sorrows and pains of the stateless refugees, and also aspire emerging and talented student filmmakers to raise awareness and empathy towards those displaced.





Navigating Literary Frontiers

ULAB Press Turns to be a Stepping Stone for New Writers

AbRAR Farhan Zaman

In the world of contemporary literature, the ULAB Press stands as a distinguished entity, transcending territorial boundaries and fostering a vibrant literary community within and beyond Bangladesh. Formerly known as Bengal Lights Books (BLB), the ULAB Press, the publishing imprint of the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), has carved out a niche for itself in the domain by championing both academic and creative voices, building bridges through translation and establishing global literary connections.

Embarking on a Literary Odyssey

Officially launched in August 2021 with the bilingual release of the volume “Commemorating Sheikh Mujib: The Greatest Bengali of the Millennium”, the ULAB Press has since become a pivotal platform for both established and emerging home-grown writers. They are also looking for new genres and forms of narrative, particularly non-fiction and memoirs.

The Power of Translation

One distinctive aspect of the ULAB Press is its commitment to bridging linguistic gaps through creative translations. Collaborating closely with the ULAB’s Dhaka Translation Centre (DTC), which is run by Dr Kaiser Haq, the press seeks to produce world-class translations of literary works from Bangla into English and vice versa. This initiative not only preserves the cultural richness of Bangladesh, but also facilitates global literary connections.

Global Outreach and Collaboration

In pursuit of its mission to elevate Bangladeshi literature on the global stage, the ULAB Press has formed strategic

partnerships with like-minded publishers abroad such as the US-based Unnamed Press and Phoneme Media. This close collaboration and joint venture provide a platform for Bangladeshi writers to find a wider readership, fostering cultural exchange and understanding through literature.

Empowering Emerging Voices: A Personal Journey

For many, the ULAB Press serves as a stepping stone into the literary world. My own journey is intertwined with the press through my internship at Dhaka Tribune, where I had the privilege of learning from Rifat Munim, a seasoned professional who did the editing for the then BLB and introduced me to them. Mr Munim played a pivotal role in helping me secure my first major book review — a graphic novel featuring Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — an experience that laid the foundation for my literary exploration. Additionally, Dr Fakrul Alam, a prominent figure in the literary landscape of the country, published five of my poems in Six Seasons Review, marking my debut as a young poet. The ULAB Press, through its multiple associations and commitments, played a crucial role in shaping my early career in the literary sphere.

Empathy through Literature

Beyond the realms of academic and creative pursuits, the ULAB Press has also become a platform for powerful narratives that resonate with striking themes at a deeply human level. In two novellas by Imdadul Haq Milan, the press highlights the trials and tribulations of migration and immigrants’ experience. Drawing from his

own experiences, the writer has vividly portrayed the everyday struggle of two Bangladeshi men who have migrated to Germany in search of a better life.

Reading these two short novels was a transformative experience for me. It spawned a profound empathy for the plight of migrant workers and made me a more conscientious citizen, deeply concerned about the rights of my fellow human beings. Milan’s narratives shed light on the harsh realities faced by Bangladeshis abroad, revealing a complex intermingling of longing, helplessness and the yearning for the familiar faces.

Celebrating Trailblazing Voices

The ULAB Press has been a platform for trailblazing authors like none other than Saad Z Hossain. Known for his exceptional works such as “Djinn City”, “Cyber Mage” and “The Gurkha and the Lord of Tuesday”, Mr Hossain has carved out a niche for himself in science fiction fantasy. The commitment of the ULAB Press to showcasing such exceptional talents adds a unique dimension to Bangladesh’s literary landscape.

In light of the aforementioned points, the ULAB Press is not merely a publishing imprint, but it is also a catalyst for literary exploration and cultural enrichment. Its dedication to nurturing talent, fostering global connections and celebrating the diversity of voices positions it as a vital force in shaping the literary narrative of Bangladesh. As I reflect on my own journey, I remain eternally grateful to the ULAB Press for providing the perfect launching pad that propelled me into the captivating world of words.

Embracing the Oubaitori Spirit

Blossoming at Your Own Pace at ULAB

The ULABian Desk

When it comes to spending student life at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB), the journey is as unique as the ancient Japanese idiom, Oubaitori. This idiom, grounded in the blossoming of four distinct trees in spring — cherry blossom, plum, peach and apricot — captures the diverse paths each student travels during their academic adventure. Just as these flowers bloom in their own sweet time, students at the ULAB also embark on their academic journeys at their own sweet pace.

Life, however, is not always a straightforward march, and the road to graduation may involve unexpected turns for some students, be it financial hurdles, mental health breaks or any unforeseen circumstances. All these common things can disrupt the academic journey, prompting some to take necessary semesters off. It is essential, though, for these students to recognise that their path is not dictated by the calendar but by the growth experienced along the way.

In the spirit of the timeless Oubaitori, the ULAB cultivates an environment that encourages its students to embrace their

individual timelines. The university understands that life's challenges may necessitate breaks, yet it firmly believes in the resilience and potential of every student. Falling behind does not signify a shortfall, as it rather represents a temporary pause in a narrative that is far from being over.

Financial constraints, for instance, should not be viewed as an insurmountable obstacle but rather as a chapter that adds depth and character to one's academic story. The ULAB is here dedicated to supporting its students in overcoming these challenges through multiple flagship financial aid programmes, scholarships and counselling services. The university acknowledges that the pursuit of knowledge is not about academic achievements only, but also about personal growth through overcoming adversities.

Similarly, mental health breaks are recognised as a valid and essential aspect of student well-being. The ULAB places great emphasis on mental health resources through providing counselling services, and arranging support group discussions and workshops to equip students with the tools they need to

navigate the complexities of both academic and personal life. It is a reminder that taking care of one's mental health is not a detour from the academic journey but an integral part of the path to success.

To pep up students who may feel they have fallen behind, remember the Oubaitori spirit that defines life on the ULAB campus. Just as cherry blossom, plum, peach and apricot bloom in their own times, your academic journey is uniquely yours. There is no need to compare your progress with others or conform to arbitrary timelines. Ultimately, it is the richness of your experiences, the resilience you have demonstrated in the face of challenges and the personal growth you have undergone that truly define your academic journey.

The ULAB is not just a place of learning. It is a community that understands and celebrates the diverse narratives of its students. So, take the time you need, seek the support available and remember that your journey is unfolding just as it should be like the blossoming of the four trees in spring, each in its own time.

I N T U N E W I T H G R E A T N E S S

The Naquib Khan Story

The ULABian Desk

In the domain of music, business and personal integrity, few individuals stand as exemplars of excellence quite like Mr Naquib Khan, a leading light of Bangladesh whose multifaceted journey through life serves as a beacon of inspiration to students at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB). With a résumé of this luminary spanning from a legendary keyboardist to an esteemed corporate professional, Mr Khan embodies the essence of perseverance, passion and compassion.

Musical Virtuoso and Corporate Maven

As the celebrated keyboardist for the renowned band Renaissance, Mr Naquib Khan has carved out a legacy in the music world of Bangladesh that reverberates through generations. Simultaneously, he has made significant strides in the corporate world first as a distinguished Supply Chain Director for Nestlé Bangladesh and then as an accomplished Corporate Affairs Director showcasing an unparalleled dexterity in balancing artistic expression with strategic acumen.

Cultivating Talent and Empowering Lives

Beyond his professional achievements, Mr Naquib Khan's philanthropic endeavours have left an indelible mark on

countless individuals in Bangladesh. His establishment of the esteemed music school, "Blue Note", has nurtured budding talents like Iqram Zaman who works for Pathao's finance team and plays the piano in recitals, demonstrating his commitment to fostering the next generation of musicians.

Moreover, Mr Khan's accomplished daughter Faabiha Khan, through her impactful coaching services, continues to empower individuals to realise and explore their full potential in both their personal and professional lives. This proves that the Khan family as a whole uplifts others and empowers them to be their best selves.

Championing Inclusivity and Compassion

Mr Naquib Khan's unwavering dedication to his family, particularly to his son Zarif Khan who has special needs, serves as a poignant reminder of the power of empathy and unconditional love. His

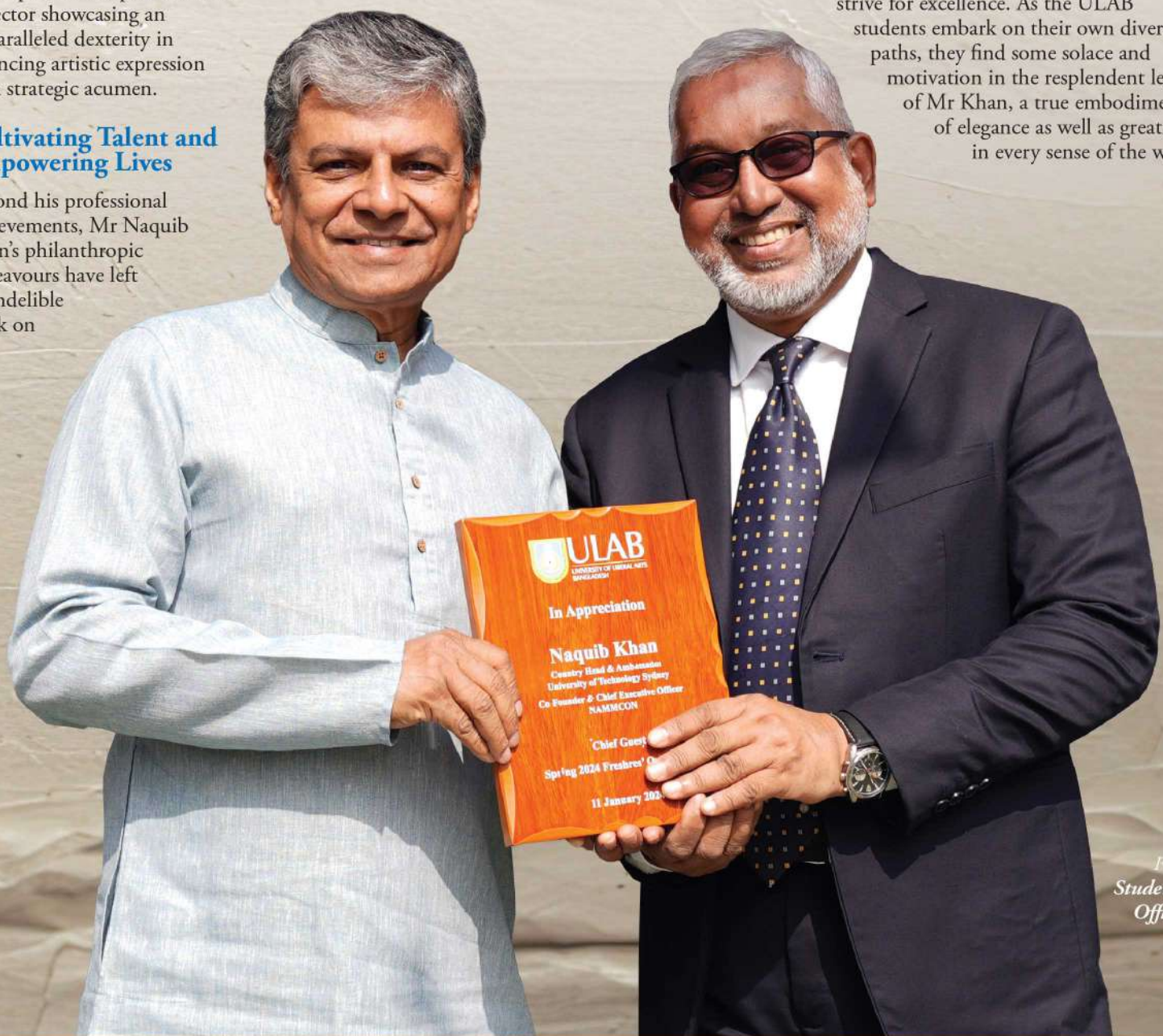
compassionate approach to parenting not only resonates with the ULAB students, but also inspires a deeper understanding of inclusivity and acceptance within the community.

An Inspirational Figure at ULAB

Recently honoured as a distinguished guest at a ULAB freshers' orientation, Mr Naquib Khan, alongside ULAB Vice-Chancellor Professor Imran Rahman, captivated the audience with their collective wisdom and passion for excellence in the world of work. His presence as a motivator not only invigorated the students, but also ignited a fervent spirit of aspiration and ambition.

Role Model

It goes without saying that Mr Naquib Khan emerges as a towering figure of inspiration, weaving together the strands of musical brilliance, corporate success and unwavering compassion. His journey serves as a testament to the limitless possibilities that await those who dare to dream and strive for excellence. As the ULAB students embark on their own diverse paths, they find some solace and motivation in the resplendent legacy of Mr Khan, a true embodiment of elegance as well as greatness in every sense of the word.



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Student Affairs
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