

2008/april

## **BRACU Writing Lab Workshop**

The BRAC University Writing Lab organized a workshop entitled "Aceing IELTS: Effective Test Taking Techniques" on the 9th of April 2008. The workshop was conducted by ATM Sajedul Huq (Coordinator BUWL/IELTS Writing Examiner), Nudrat Lohani and Namrata Arif (BUWL Tutors) and was conducted for BU students intending to take the IELTS exam. Out of the three participants who took the IELTS test on 12th April two scored 8 and one 8.

## **Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MNS) Department**

### **Visit of UGC Team for BS in Applied Physics and Electronics Programme**

A team from the Bangladesh University Grants Commission (UGC) led by its Member Professor Ehsanul Haque, visited BRACU on April 3, 2008 in connection with BRACU's proposed BS programme in Applied Physics and Electronics. The other members of the team included Professor Rezaul Karim Majumder of the University of Dhaka and a couple of officials of the UGC. The team first made a call on the Vice-Chancellor of BRACU, Professor Jamilur Reza Choudhury. Professor Sayeed Salam and Professor Mumit Khan from the CSE Department and Professor Mofiz Uddin Ahmed and Professor A.A.Z. Ahmad from the MNS Department and the Registrar of BRACU Mr. Mahmood Hasan were also present. The UGC team later visited the MNS Department to meet the faculty members and had discussion with them on various activities of the Department. Later on the team visited the Applied Physics Lab and expressed their satisfaction.

### **Discussion on Science Education in Bangladesh with the Daily Star Team**

Professor A.A.Z. Ahmad and Professor Naiyyum Chowdhury participated in a discussion meeting on Science Education in Bangladesh at the Daily Star office on April 5, 2008. Mr. Mahfuz Anam and Mr. Shahnoor Wahid from the Daily Star and Professor M. Shamsheer Ali, Professor Ali Asgar, Professor Ahmed Shafee, Professor M. Kaykobad and Dr. A.M. Chowdhury also participated.

### **3rd Bangladesh Astro-Olympiad**

The national level competition of the 3rd Bangladesh Astro-Olympiad arranged by Bangladesh Astronomical Association was held in the Green Herald School, Dhaka on April 11, 2008. About 70 contestants selected from the divisional level competitions took part. Professor A.A.Z. Ahmad spoke in the Certificate and Prize Awarding Ceremony presided over by the Principal of the school, Sister Asha Gomes. Other speakers included Dr. A.R. Khan, Former Professor of Applied Physics and Electronics, DU, Mr. Abdul Quaiyyum, Joint Editor of *Prothom Alo* and Dr. Rezaur Rahman, President of the Bangladesh Astronomical Association.

### **International Plant Tissue Culture and Biotechnology Conference 2008**

Professor Naiyyum Chowdhury and Dr. Aparna Islam participated in the 6th International Plant Tissue Culture and Biotechnology Conference organized by the Bangladesh Association for Plant Tissue Culture & Biotechnology (BAPTC&B). The Conference was held at the Department of Botany, University of Dhaka on 11-13 April, 2008. BRAC University was one of the sponsors of this Conference as part of its endeavor to promote biotechnology research and biosafety in Bangladesh.

Professor Naiyyum Chowdhury also presided over the Scientific Session IV entitled "Biosafety and Biotechnology". Dr. Aparna Islam who is a life member of the Association was the rapporteur at the Scientific Session I entitled *"Molecular Targeting & Drug Discovery in the Post-Genomics Era"*. Dr. Zaheed Husain, of the Harvard Medical School, USA was the keynote speaker of the Session. Scientists and researchers from home and abroad affiliated with different R&D institutions and universities attended the Conference.

## **Institute of Governance Studies (IGS)**

Manzoor Hasan presented a paper Public-Private partnership in rebuilding accountability: The missing link at the Bangladesh Heritage Foundation. The Institute has developed a Scope of Work (SoW) with the Parliamentary Secretariat to providing training on the PROGATI project organised by Development

Alternatives Inc (DAI). A Training Needs Assessment was carried out with the Parliamentary Secretariat prior to the SoW. The Institute has been requested to develop the Centre for Investigative Journalism by DAI, supported by USAID. The Centre will aim to enhance the capacity of journalists throughout Bangladesh through training and teaching modules.

Manzoor Hasan and Shahnaz Karim met with officials from the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Dhaka to discuss the 3rd batch of graduate programme at the Institute. The Institute hosted two Research Fellows, Barrister Larry Taman from Canada and Mr Niall Johnston from Ireland. Barrister Taman was once the head of the Ministry of Justice in the province of Ontario, Canada and Niall Johnston is a parliamentary consultant with more than 15 years experience of working in and with parliaments and political parties and latterly Director of Programmes at the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

The Institute began its national consultations as part of the National Integrity Strategy (NIS). This started with focal group discussions in Dhaka with target groups including Youth, Academicians, Lawyers, Bureaucrats, Politicians, and civil society. For this month it culminated with discussions with discussions with the same group of individuals in Mymensingh hosted by the DC of the district. Manzoor Hasan held a meeting with the Chief Advisor to provide further information on the progress made on the NIS and the Institute. The team has also developed a theatre presentation for upazilla level consultations.

Haydory Akbar Ahmed was invited by the Jadavpur University in Kolkata, India and UNCTAD (Delhi) to present his paper on Exports, Imports, Remittance & Growth in Bangladesh: An Empirical Analysis at the workshop ♦Developing Nations in the World Economy: Recent Issues in International trade and the WTO♦.

## **Institute of Educational Development (IED)**

### **Celebrating Global Action Week**

The event of Global Action Week on ♦Education for All♦ took place from April 21-27, 2008, which is organized by the Global Campaign for Education (GCE) each year. The members of the GCE include a broad spectrum of NGOs and organisations active on education issues. The theme of Global Action Week 2008 was ♦Quality Education to End Exclusion'. To mark the occasion, IED collaborated with the British Council and Suravi, a national NGO. The Non-Formal Education/Life Long Learning (NFE/LLL) team of IED organized a daylong program for Suravi♦s school children on April 27, 2008. School children of Suravi spent the entire day at children learning centre of the British Council and as a part of the program, the children were introduced to the information technology and shown some documentaries on educational equipment. Prof. Dr. Anisuzzaman and Prof. Dr. Amirul Islam were present at the program.

### **Workshop on Experience Sharing with Five NGOs**

The Non-Formal Education/Life Long Learning (NFE/LLL) team of IED arranged a daylong workshop on 29 April, 2008 to share relevant experiences with five other NGOs who are responsible for implementation of pilot project of NFE-2. Participants, a total of 10 NGO executives, presented their experiences and lessons learned from the PLCE pilot experimentation, followed by a question-answer session. The workshop was coordinated and facilitated by Jannatun Naim, the technical team member of the NFE/LLL team. After the evening session, the participants came to a decision to start the initial work through assessment in the concerned area of PLCE or community learning centre and they also finalized the date for the follow-up workshop to be on June 09, 2008.

### **Agreement between ECDRC and Aga Khan Foundation**

A partnership agreement has been signed between Early Childhood Development Resource Center (ECDRC) at IED and the Aga Khan Foundation, Canada. The Foundation agreed to support ECDRC for five years in professional development, research and policy advocacy. The agreement period starts from April 2008.

### **Primary Education Teacher Certification for former BEP teachers**

Teacher Development Group, IED-BRACU has started a professional development programme for former BEP teachers so that they can contribute to the national education system with their practical knowledge and experience. Through a diagnostic test and oral interview, two groups of former BEP teachers, 26 from

Rangpur and 24 from Pabna were selected for the programme. The programme has started on 12 January, 2008 in Rangpur and on 16 February, 2008 in Pabna. The six-month long program is designed to be implemented in three modules (2 months each), with face-to-face instruction for three weeks and five months of supervised practice teaching and assigned self-learning including bi-weekly workshop.

### **Language Education Development Forum**

The first meeting of the Language Education Development Forum was held on April 23, 2008 at the IED premise. The idea of creating a Language Education Development Forum originated from the work on raising awareness on the importance of language literacy development that was collaboratively carried out in March 2008 by IED and the International Reading Association (IRA).

The purpose of this forum is to create a forum which would consist of public, private and international entities in order to develop the language skills of the learners of Bangladesh. Professionals related to language development work from different organizations, such as NCTB, NAPE, TQI, IER-DU, BEP, Scholastica, government primary schools, participated in the meeting.

It was unanimously decided that the forum will be named as Language Education Development Forum and work as a non-political and non-profitable entity to support the programs initiated by the Government of Bangladesh. All the forum members will have equal rights to speak. The forum will not criticize other organizations, but will rather provide constructive suggestions. Its approach should be diagnostic rather than judgmental.

### ***World Adult Education Conference:***

#### **IED to Prepare Asian Regional Report**

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Director of IED, has been assigned the task of preparing the regional report for Asia and the Pacific, comprising 48 countries, on the state of Adult Learning and Education to be presented to the Sixth World Conference on Adult Learning and Education. The conference will be held in May 2009 in Brazil. The draft of the Asia Pacific report will be first discussed at an inter-governmental regional conference in Seoul, South Korea in October this year.

A preparatory meeting held at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning in Hamburg on 24-25 April considered the preparation of the materials for the World Conference, including the regional reports. Dr. Ahmed attended the preparatory meeting in Hamburg.

#### **IED at the Open Society Institute Advisory Board on ECD**

Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Director of IED, attended the first meeting of the advisory board of the Open Society Institute (OSI) on Early Childhood Development, held in London on 27-28 April. Dr. Ahmed was earlier appointed a member of the international advisory board. OSI, sponsored by the Soros Foundation, is one of the foremost providers of technical and financial support for promoting democratic values through education, including early childhood education. OSI has been supporting the professional development course on ECD offered by IED.

### ***IED Visitors***

#### **Dr. Cassie Landers**

Dr. Cassie Landers (Associate Professor, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University) visited IED from April 22-25, 2008. Dr. Landers is acting as an International Faculty and an International Coordinator of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Academic Program offered by IED. During her visit she worked with the ECD team members and had meetings with the national faculties of the ECD Academic Program. She also met the students of the first batch of ECD Certificate Program.

#### **Subir Shukla**

Subir Shukla visited IED on April 2-4, 2008. Mr. Shukla is a Delhi-based resource person in elementary education. The focus of his work is on improvement of the quality of primary and elementary education systems (which has involved engagement with the government sector) and the development of feasible models, including those for literacy, to enable quality education to access the more deprived groups (which has required greater work with the NGO sector). He has extensive working experience in India, Bangladesh,

Afghanistan, USA, Vietnam, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Mr. Shukla's visit to IED was to do with providing technical inputs into the Strategic Planning for the next phase of the institute, with a specific focus on curriculum and materials, teacher development, training and mainstream education system quality improvement.

### **Dr. Mainus Sultan**

As a part of the Strategic Planning and Proposal Development process for the next phase of IED, Dr. Mainus Sultan worked with the institute from April 6-10, 2008. Dr. Sultan is an adjunct faculty at the University of Massachusetts, USA. Dr. Sultan has extensively worked in the USA, Laos, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe and his work concentrates on management capacity building, non-formal education, qualitative research, assessment and evaluation, teacher training & curriculum development.

Dr. Sultan's visit was in connection with providing technical assistance to the Academic and Training section of IED to develop its capacity and assisting in building up a core Training Team in IED that will undertake the task of training of trainers and provide training support to the various activities of IED. Dr. Sultan also provided technical assistance to the Research and Development section of IED to develop its internal capacity.

## **School of Public Health**

### **Courses**

The modules ♦Epidemiology♦ and ♦Biostatistics♦ were completed in April. The Biostatistics course was taught by Dr. Ataharul Islam and Dr. Wasimul Bari visiting faculty from Dhaka University. The course on Epidemiology was taught by adjunct faculty Dr. Shams El Arifeen and Dr. Kazi Mizanur Rahman. Tarique Mohammad Nurul Huda were the teaching assistant for both courses. The Health Systems Management module commenced on 27th April which was facilitated by Dr. Anwar Islam, who was assisted by Dr. Tanvir Ahmed.

### **Mixed Methods Research Workshop**

A workshop on mixed methods research was organized by the Centre for Qualitative Research Methodology (CQRM), James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University for three days, 28-30 April 2008 in BRAC, TARC, Savar. The CQRM is a cooperating site of the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology, University of Alberta. This workshop

marks the first activity of this centre and perhaps the launch of a new initiative for generating knowledge in this region of the world. The focus of this workshop was to understand mixed method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methods and to learn how to use the mixed method tools for public health research.

There were eleven participants from JPGSPH, BRAC-RED and University of Heidelberg. The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Manuela De Allegri from Department of Tropical Hygiene and Public Health, University of Heidelberg, Germany.

### **Faculty News**

Dr. Sabina Faiz Rashid participated in Sexuality and Rights training organized by CREA from April 7-14, 2008 in New York, USA. Her travel was funded by International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC).

## **Student Affairs: Co-Curricular Activities**

### ***BRAC University Computer Club (BUCC)***

### **Course Help Desk**

Several help desks for CSE110 and CSE111 were held throughout Spring 2008. It concluded on Saturday, April 19. Thanks to Md. Imran Hossain (08101025), Md. Eftakhairul Islam (07310001) and Kalyan Banik (06310035) for volunteering in different help desks. Help desks were instructed by Annajat Alim Rasel (04101017). It may be noted many of the workshop attendees obtained 'A' or 'A-' grades.

### **Meeting on Tiger Project, Sundarban**

A meeting was held with representative from Tiger Project, Sundarban working for British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in AH 104 during 4:30pm --> 6:30pm on Sunday, April 13. Total 13 participants willing to work with the project were present. Naimul Islam Opu from the organization briefed us about the project on behalf of Christina Greenwood and Adam. He also told some students from Dhaka University are going to work for the project as well! Fayyaz Mushtaque (07301002), Md. Intekhabul Hafiz (05101021), Nur-Ul-Arafat Shomik (05101029), Fahmida Wadud Chaity (06310052), Md. Eftakhairul Islam (07310001), Md. Arafat Azam (08101001), Kalyan Banik (06310035), Md. Imran Hossain (08101025), Shoman Bhuiyan (02201046), Mritunjoy Chandra Saha Roy (03101041), Sheikh Sadik Shahriyar (02201040), Khandaker Wasim Reza Tonmoy (04101021), and Annajiat Alim Rasel (04101017) were present during the meeting. Another meeting will be held on May 2008 in presence of Chris and Adam. More details on the Sundarban Tiger Project (STP) can be found in this website, <http://www.sundarbantigerproject.info>

### **PHP Workshop**

The semester long BUCC PHP Workshop instructed by Mr. Fazle Munim Sayket, Director, IT of [www.kkairos.com](http://www.kkairos.com) concluded on Saturday, April 12 with a 3-hour long test.

### **BUCC tests Student Affairs' website**

Md. Eftakhairul Islam Rain and Annajiat Alim Rasel volunteered to give some feedbacks on some parts of the website for Student Affairs' website that covers all clubs and forums of BRACU.

### **Programming Contest Training**

BUCC members had started training for upcoming programming contests before the last semester ♦ Spring 2008 ♦ began. Two classes were held on 8th and 13th of January.

BUCC Google Group message statistics (non-conclusive):

Job Notices for Companies:

- Banglalink (for ECE graduates)
- Bangladesh Internet Press Ltd. (BIPL)
- STEERWEB
- Vantage Laboratories
- Cisco United Nations Volunteer (UNV)
- Therap Services, LLC, [www.TherapServices.net](http://www.TherapServices.net)
- Stall Representative for a Japanese Software Firm, SoftExpo 2008, BC FCC
- Student worker for BRACU website development
- Internship at Bording Vista
- Internship opportunity at M&H Informatics (BD) Ltd.

Book Review: A to Z of Ajax Web Portals: An Aiubian's endeavour

Competitions:

- Apple Design Awards, <http://developer.apple.com>
- AMD Multicore Threadfest, <http://www.topcoder.com/threadfest>
- Google Summer of Code 08, <http://code.google.com/soc/2008>
- Mathematical Programming contest MathematiKa (Q3D) '08, [felicity.iiit.ac.in/~math](http://felicity.iiit.ac.in/~math)
- Jigyasa08, <http://www.jigyasa.org>
- kurukshetra 08, <http://kurukshetra.org.in>
- TROIKA 08, <http://dcetech.com/events/troika>
- Techkriti 08, <http://www.techkriti.org>

Conferences / Symposium:

- NWeSP 2008: International Conference on Next Generation of Web Services, <http://nwesp.org>
- ICSET2008: IEEE International Conference on Sustainable Energy Technologies, <http://www.icset2008.org>
- TENCON 2008: <http://www.tencon2008.org>

- CSSE 2008: International Conference on Computer Science and Software Engineering, <http://www.highsci.org/csse>
- IDCS 08: International Workshop on Internet and Distributed Computing Systems
- ICCIT 2008: KUET, Bangladesh
- EIC 2008: International Symposium on Energy, Informatics and Cybernetics, <http://www.sciis.org/eic2008>

Exhibition: ArtBots 2008, <http://artbots.org>

Training/ Seminar / Presentation / Talk:

- Summer School on Natural Language Processing and Text Mining, <http://cse.iitkgp.ac.in/nlpschool>
- 2nd IASNLP 2008 IIIT-H Advanced School on Natural Language Processing, <http://ltrc.iiit.ac.in/iasnlp2008>
- Monthly Talk on Game Programming, Bangladesh Open Source Network (BdOSN), <http://www.bdosn.org>
- Therap - Presentation at BRAC University
- Cellular Mechano-Sensitivity ♦ a new paradigm in the understanding of learning and memory, Prof. Taher Saif, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign held at BRACU
- SQL Server 2008 virtual event, [events.unisfair.com/index.jsp?eid=157&seid=291](http://events.unisfair.com/index.jsp?eid=157&seid=291)
- Wireless Communication and RF Sensor Research Activities at Monash University held at BUET
- "Time Management" by Randy Pausch, <http://www.cs.virginia.edu/~robins/Randy>