



STUDENT'S VOICE



SARRAZ ATIK

PhD Student, Nagoya University

My name is Sarraz Atik from Bangladesh. I am a PhD student at the graduate school of engineering, Nagoya University. I am a member of [the concrete laboratory](#) of the department of civil engineering, under the academic guidance of Professor Hikaru Nakamura. I am very glad to have this opportunity to write for the JSCE Concrete Committee Newsletter and would like to express my sincere gratitude to the editors to give me the chance for sharing my experiences in Japan.

I am from Bangladesh (a Bengali word which means "*Land of the Bengals*"), situated to the east of India on the Bay of Bengal. Bangladesh is a South Asian country marked by lush greenery with many waterways, and is recognized as the largest delta in the world. The riverine country of Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated states in the world, and its people predominantly follow the religion of Islam.

The reasons for me to come to Japan were to witness the cutting-edge construction technology and state-of-art research in the concrete field. The Japanese government offered me a scholarship after confirming my background in Bangladesh, to pursue my graduate studies, which started in October 2018, before the COVID pandemic. I completed my Master's degree in civil engineering under this scheme from 2018 to 2020, where I witnessed the research environment under the extreme conditions of the pandemic. This is a rare experience where I could observe the transition from open environment to pandemic and pandemic to open environment, and how the research was resumed. After these experiences, I started my PhD in the same laboratory with the financial support of the

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Construction site visit

Japanese government, from October 2020 and will finish in September 2023. The journey to my PhD also become smoother thanks to my experiences studying for my Masters and the support of my academic supervisor. I conducted research in the bond behavior of deformed rebar with fiber concrete utilizing the numerical model called 3D RBSM (rigid body spring model), where the short fibers were discretized inside the mesh system of RBSM, and analysis was conducted utilizing the non-linear constitutive models for concrete and short fiber separately.

Apart from the research, the idea of coming to Japan was both exciting and frightening at the same time due to the language and cultural barriers. However, due to the hospitality of the Japanese students and teachers in my laboratory, there were no reasons to worry. My Japanese life was ornamented with some spectacular experiences around Aichi, Hyogo, and Kyoto. For example, I visited Inuyama and Hikone Castle and was amazed by the architecture. I also visited the shrines of Kyoto and witnessed the amazing natural scenery of Atera valley in Nagano Prefecture.

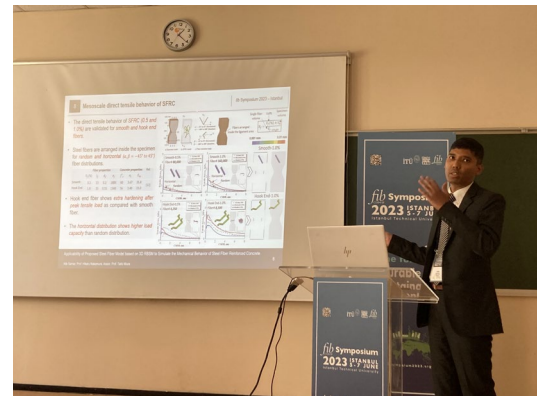
Moreover, I had the chance to participate in various activities with my lab mates. For example, we went on several construction site visits around Aichi Prefecture and on pleasure trips like “Matsutake” mushroom hunting in Gifu Prefecture. It was an opportunity to exchange cultural experiences, and I learned a lot from my lab mates.

Looking back at my 5-year-long study life (Master to PhD) in Nagoya University, I must first mention my supervisor, Professor Hikaru Nakamura. He is the person who gave me the opportunity to continue my studies in Japan. Furthermore, I am continuing my career in Japan from October 2023, which become possible thanks to his kind support. I spent my whole study time under his guidance in learning about structural concrete mechanics, nonlinear analysis based on RBSM, new materials such as fiber-reinforced concrete and its performance in structures. In a nutshell, Professor Hikaru Nakamura is kind and supportive, always listening to students' ideas and giving them the freedom to find their own ways. Also, I must thank Associate Professor Taito Miura for his excellent personality and research endeavors, which helped to guide the students. I am convinced that the laboratory of Professor Nakamura and Associate Professor Miura is the best place to grow your potential in concrete research. To sum up, Japan is a place where you can grow academically and personally.

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