The Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) admission test is more of a marathon than a sprint. An aspirant would need around two years' worth of preparation before sitting for the exam and they can take either of the two approaches – be regular from the very beginning and adapt to the process, or crunch two years' worth of effort within a few months. I prefer the first one, and so do many other BUET students.

BUET has recently started a preliminary MCQ exam before the written exam, which requires a somewhat different preparation strategy.

"For each MCQ, you get around 30 seconds," said Anindya Guha, a second-year student of Mechanical Engineering at BUET. "I used to solve lots of MCQs from the Varsity Ka question bank without a calculator to speed up calculations in my head. A month or two before the preliminary exam, I started solving MCQs from other question banks, like the CKRUET one, with a calculator."

While some students focus on learning shortcuts, a good understanding of the topics is more important for both MCQ and the written part.

"My preparation for MCQs and the written part wasn't vastly different. I think if you understand the topics in-depth, you get faster with time," said Abdullah Al Shafee Chowdhury, a second-year student of Civil Engineering at BUET. "I didn't learn a lot of shortcuts although they're popular among aspirants. My strategy was that if I could correctly solve 70 questions, I would get in, and it worked. Since memorising has always been difficult for me, it was easier for me to take the conventional way because memorising so many shortcuts and mnemonics end up wearing you out."

For both the MCQ and written part, the time crunch is a serious crisis during the admission test. Practising how to solve problems efficiently and quickly from college days ends up being a huge asset in the admission season.