



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF NORTH AMERICAN BANGLADESHI ISLAMIC COMMUNITY

... YOU PROMOTE GOOD
FORBID EVIL
& BELIEVE IN ALLAH ...
[AL-E IMRAN: 3.110]

N A B I C V O I C E

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What will light up the High-Tech Sector?

Mohammad Ataul Karim

Each year for over a decade now, I get to meet some unusually bright individuals from Bangladesh over the computer network. In some year, that number will exceed a thousand or so. My meetings are never face-to-face. I do not get to talk to them or call them. A large number of them are students, mostly undergraduates, perhaps in their early twenties who are attending either public or private universities in Bangladesh. My first encounters with each of these young men and women each year often start around in August as I get to scan their works that they would prepare and then upload in a web-site designed for this purpose. Often two or three but at times up to five of them will team up to write up their original research results and findings. These scientific articles would perhaps be written and rewritten many times during the preceding months. Each of these articles would typically be up to eight pages long full of equations, simulation results, experimentations, graphs, and analyses.

More often than not, at least one of the coauthors for each paper is a faculty member of their respective universities. I have often no idea of their identities or specifics except perhaps for their names and the names of their universities. I have no sense of their looks or personal likes or their families or upbringing. I know though that they are folks who are shooting for the stars. When I look back at my own time while growing up in then East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, I had never seen these many determined young people interested in generating super ideas. They are not like the typical poets or singers who clamor around Ramna or at various cultural festivals of Dhaka - they all seem to have much higher goal posts for themselves.

I know for certain that most of these individuals will keep on sweating often for months worrying about how their works are getting evaluated and scored by individuals who live far away from Bangladesh and who

would remain forever unknown to them. Occasionally, a few would e-mail me to see when they would be hearing from me about the final outcome. I would typically respond right away to clam them down and never venture into any discussion. I do not often have the luxury of additional time to do that..

Once their works have been uploaded through their computers, on a magic day each year I would start assigning each of these works of passion then to multiple number of experts in their respective fields. These experts who have been recruited about a year in advance are mostly academicians who work in faraway universities and a few who work either in government or corporate laboratories overseas. Each paper would be evaluated by a team of up to three experts. While the authors would usually spend restless time in Bangladesh the next many weeks, I would often be chasing these experts so that they would render their opinions on these works in writing and by a set deadline. Their written reports are often directed for me; however, when time would permit they would also prepare written comments albeit brief for the authors. During late October and early November, I would spend my evenings late into early morning often reading through these comments. Based on their respective assessments, I would then get to determine which of these works will be presented at a conference site in Bangladesh in the following December. These teams of authors would then revise their accepted papers one more round based on the reviewer comments. The final polished version will be appearing in a proceeding. The papers would be read and debated by these authors before audiences and peers at the conference location. This coming December's site is Military Institute of Science & Technology in Dhaka.

Let me elaborate on the specifics for just last year (2008) so that one can make a sense of what this whole exhaustive process

entailed. For the eleventh time in Bangladesh, the International Conference on Computers and Information Technology (ICIT) was held on December 25-27. Its website is located at <http://www.iccitbd.net/>. ICIT attracted 538 technical papers that came from scientists and engineers from both within Bangladesh and overseas. Of these 538 submissions that originated from over fifteen hundred people, only 158 papers survived the review process. These were accepted on condition that they will be revised to be readied for presentation and inclusion in the Proceedings. Selectivity for ICIT thus amounted to an acceptance rate of 29.4%. A team of 83 international reviewers - all 100% of them from outside of Bangladesh (Australia, Canada, China, Germany, India, Ireland, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, UK, and US) evaluated these 538 manuscripts. 89.03% of the assignments made to the reviewers were all completed. Of the accepted papers, 42.4% originated from authors from outside of Bangladesh.

Starting 2008, ICIT papers are being included in the IEEE Xplore Digital Library. For the first time for any conference ever held in Bangladesh, some of these ICIT papers will get to appear in up to six international archival journals. Seventy two such ICIT manuscripts have now been enhanced further to include additional results, analyses, experimentations, simulations, and elaborations.

These enhanced manuscripts are now going through a much exhaustive review process and only those that will survive this current intense level of scrutiny will get to be included in one of the following five journals, *Journal of Computers*, *Journal of Communications*, *Journal of Multimedia*, and *Journal of Networks* produced by Academy Publisher and *International Technology Management Review* in Australia.

(Continued on page 3)

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NABIC VOICE, a publication of North American Bangladeshi Islamic Community, is dedicated to enhance Islamic awareness and to create a congenial atmosphere for exchanging ideas and building cooperation and understanding in the context of Islam, Muslim Ummah, and Bangladesh. The views and opinions expressed in various materials here do not necessarily represent the views of the editor or of this organization.

While NABIC activities are mainly facilitated by its members and staff, the basis of this initiative is the active cooperation and participation of Bangladeshis in North America. All kinds of cooperation and assistance are welcome. Please use the contact address for more information about its activities in North America, and those in Bangladesh.

Editorial

DECEMBER IN BANGLADESH: A Wonderful Return of the Republic

Towards the end of our seven-day exodus out of the curfew-laden Dhaka in December 1971, the subsided winter river was flowing gently as our dingee boat pulled against the soft current. While the past few evenings in the western sky behind the 'Porabari/Tangail' bank had brought huge flocks of humming birds flown overhead across the river, our hearts baffled with fears and flairs. The views were unforeseen, experiences unforgettable. We were seven in the boat, five of my little siblings in my humble refuge along with the boatman rowing for a safe home upstream. None of the little migrants, born long after the last World War, had any idea of what a cloud of warplanes carrying paratroopers might look like and whether they were airborne from the American Pacific Seventh Fleet or a friendly Indian airfield.

The seventh day of our journey broken by the brave morning sun struggling through the last fog for a brighter day, we could not but cheered when a not-so-strange voice of General Manekshaw was heard in my one-band radio saying "General Nazee has surrendered". Stunning was it but I wished the announcement came from General Usmani. That was the December 16, when we all were born again with a new flag in our shaky right hands. We celebrated the victory, but on that day an apprehension of the inevitable misfortune was an incomprehensible future.

Through an enormously costly freedom fight we achieved Bangladesh freed from the irresponsible nonresident rulers of Pakistan. The victory was ushered by the 1970's democratic triumph of the people of then East Pakistan for a free nation. And that was the best thing to happen in the life of a nation consisting predominantly of the working people. But none of them knew then, that the baby nation, apparently perfect, was born with delusion and a confused psyche. The true freedom fighters who gave their lives would never come to know that the purpose of the fight was fragmented at the very outset. Majority claimed to fight for freedom from the colonial subjugation and indignation, some for a fair-share of the national resources and opportunities, while others cherished a goal yet unclear to many. Perhaps the fight should have been allowed to be fought by the freedom fighters for their own purification and genuinely visible accomplishment.

Unfortunately the evolved nation was thorny to some strange intellectuals whose prerogatives were bound by prejudices of progressive secularism, religious nationalism, or national socialism. Yet an undivided Bangalee identity was another subliminal dream for some others. The immediate outcomes of these rifts were instant anarchies and the consequential collusions leading to loss of the two greatest sons of the soil, the heroes of the struggle for a decently dignified homeland.

Founder of the nation, the revered Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and one of the builders of the new nation, President Ziaur Rahman, both were brutally assassinated. The real motives of the brutalities have been deeply buried and yet to be unearthed. The very untimely demise of these two heroes, caused by the meanest conspiracies, gave birth to extreme mistrust between the two surviving flag-bearers, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, of the two genuinely nationalist parties, Bangladesh Awami League and Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

With time, the mistrust flared by the foppish feet-lickers of both parties made these two surviving leaders suspicious and revengeful to each other. Their mutual vengeances had created such situations that made the top leaders vulnerable to more conspiracies. As a result, the nation was virtually polarized into two hostile camps. Cooperation and converging conversation disappeared from the political horizon; even the Parliaments turned into platforms for feud. The consequence was volcanic eruption of public corruption compromising the values of a potentially virtuous nation. These conditions predisposed the tenderly nation to the termites of the extreme leftist separatists and ignorant religious militants, which undermined the character and stability of the young republic.

At length, the 8th incumbent government became overwhelmed when another December appeared in 2006 with vehement protests and violent agitations by the intolerant opposition against holding the national election in January 2007 by an unreliable CTG & EC. Eventually the armed forces stepped in to support a replacement CTG & EC that dragged for about two years with the promise of many reforms for accomplishing a credible national election.

Through much suffering of the people but with a sigh of relief, the long-awaited election was finally staged in December 2008. The cancerous corruption, malign mindset, and political animosity may not disappear overnight from the century old civic decadence, but a ray of hope has now beamed. The two years of the reconstructed CTG was not all waste. One of the most remarkable breakthroughs has been the restoring of human rights and citizenships for the people born in the Geneva Camps in Bangladesh that have removed a piece of black tape from their foreheads.

The efforts of the CTG and EC, blessed by the Army, have awarded the nation with an ad-

mirable voter list, national ID cards, and above all, the unprecedented public awareness. Hence, deception now may not be as easy and bribes may take a lot of sweating for the bad guys, provided the Judiciary remains free of undue executive interference, the Anti Corruption Commission remains uncorrupt, and authority of the Parliament remains on top of the public policies. Hopefully then, with successive democratic processes followed, the nation will mend and mature itself; and someday soon, a perfect Republic will emerge afloat the Bay of Bengal.

Mohammad Jalaluddin

What will light Up the High-Tech sector?

(continued from page 1)

Bangladesh is eagerly waiting for a time when its high-tech sector could begin to fuel an economic miracle. While naïves often feel that Bill Gates of the world will help us turn this corner for Bangladesh, the true test is not what the outsiders can do but whether or not Bangladesh will be able to generate world-class talents who in turn can generate world-class ideas. ICCIT, now in its 12th year, is one such major effort focused at cultivating winning teams. If we want Bangladesh to be at the center of attention for high-tech investment that in turn can power up its economic development engine, it will need to think really big and be prepared to light up its universities.

Dr. Mohammad Ataul Karim is a past president and a current Board member of NABIC. He is currently the vice-president for Research at the Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia.

**NABIC's 2009 commitment is over
\$290,000 to various projects in
Bangladesh.**

Please donate generously to:

NABIC, P. O. Box 6631
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I AM PROUD TO BE A NABIC

Hasan Jameel

Needless to say, NABIC is the acronym of a unique NGO run by a humble group of philanthropists and development activists of Bangladeshi origin in America. I did not know if the name happened incidentally so or purposely constructed to be synonymous to a noble character of immense significance in Bangladesh: A cheerfully diligent paddle-navigator who operates the boat full of valuable resources or valued people from the field of cultures towards its manifestation of human wellbeing was in fact symbolized in the common name "Nabic" in its own cultural linguistics. I could not but admired the mere symbolism of this simple idea, and it was full of amusement and delight.

Initially I was fascinated by the sound and significance of the name. Curiously I began to search the publications in the NABIC website and printed newsletters. Amazingly it was my first time getting interested in knowing about a nongovernmental organization operated by expatriate Bangladeshis that was not related to a job or business as usual. I found its organizational strength and transparency, sincerity of purpose, and above all its Islamic values and commitments worth considering.

To know more about the organization, its objectives, activities and impacts, I wanted to meet some of its organizers and associates, first hand. A coincidental pleasant surprise came upon me when I came to know that my father was a member of the NABIC and would like for me to become involved. Delighted though, I was a little cautious about giving my unconditional commitment because there were clouds of skepticism, misconception, stereotype and malice against anything in the horizon that is Islamic. I have known many NGOs that are kind to the cause of Muslims in the West were sued, harassed, confiscated or abrogated

for no good reason.

Generally people were either halfhearted or afraid of being associated with Muslim organizations that raise funds to support noble institutions here and abroad. Even some good Bangladeshis who are normally willing to do something great for the cause of Bangladesh were hesitant to become involved and supportive. Aside from a negligible number of NGOs that were punished for their inefficiency, mismanagement, and not following the financial rules and stipulations, most of the philanthropic organizations were clean, transparent, and law abiding. I have found by now that many of the Bangladeshi organizations are doing very well. This positive image of the Bangladeshi, especially Islamic oriented NGOs in the USA made my mind ready; and since then I have become a member of this great organization, NABIC.

I am aware that the funds collected by NABIC in the USA and Canada are well spent for the noble cause of Bangladesh. The major focus of NABIC support has been on human development, poverty alleviation, supporting educational and healthcare efforts, in addition to disaster relief and rehabilitation. The funds support specific projects planned and executed by those reliable organizations operating in Bangladesh that are affiliated with NABIC in partnership agreements. Funds are given to support only those projects which are qualified and approved by the NGO Affairs Bureau of Bangladesh. I am convinced that I am in a vessel, safe and sound, and will keep sailing as a proud *Nabic*.

Hasan Jameel is an M.D. living in Chicago, Illinois, working in the field of healthcare research. He and his wife Nipa are active members of NABIC.

19th NABIC Annual Convention

What: 19th Annual Convention of the North American Bangladeshi Islamic Community (NABIC)

When: Saturday, June 13, 2009 (8:30 am - 10:00 pm)

Where: York College Campus, Jamaica, New York

Program: Lectures, Bazaar, Health Screening, Fundraising Banquet

Speakers: Dr. Jamal Badawi, Dr. Altaf Hussain, Dr. Mohammad Karim and Bangladeshi Community Leaders, and NABIC Officials

For more information about the NABIC Convention Contact: Kamrul Ahsan, 917.280.5248 or Abu Bakar Ahmed, 865.387.0135 or visit www.nabic.org

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SPEND, O' SON OF ADAMI AND I WILL SPEND UPON YOU!
[HADITH QUDSI: 11]