

... YOU PROMOTE GOOD
FORBID EVIL
& BELIEVE IN ALLAH ...

[AL-E IMRAN: 3.110]



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NABIC VOICE

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A Report on My Bangladesh Visit

Rashed Nizam

As a graduate fresh out of medical school pursuing a post graduate carrier in ophthalmology, I met a professor who baffled me with a question, "What is the distance between the truth and a lie." The proud professor of ophthalmology showed me, it is little more than four fingers. That was the distance from his eyes to ears. Seeing is believing. Living in the "Show me state" Missouri, I've heard that statement many times. I couldn't agree to this more until I witnessed the different NABIC projects during my recent trip to Bangladesh.

Although the trip was planned for attending the invitation of the Ophthalmological Society of Bangladesh (OSB) for its 36th annual national conference, the excitement of visiting my parents, the families of my brother and sisters, and taking care of some unsolved personal business were added to the list of things NABIC asked me to do.

I arrived in Dhaka at 1:33 AM on March 16. My lifelong tendency to remain restless until the task is accomplished made me forget the jet lag; and on the same morning, I went to visit Prof. Hosne Ara Khan, a retired Prof. of Rajshahi University, who has translated the English version of the Qur'an by Abdullah Yusuf Ali into Bangla, in three volumes. She is requesting NABIC to help her publish them.

NABIC has been working as a US non-profit organization since its inception in 1990. With the increase in the number of projects, the spectrum of work has enlarged so much that we felt the need to have our own office, country representative in Bangladesh, and NABIC to be registered with the NGO Affairs Bureau as a foreign NGO. To share this idea and to meet the prospective NABIC advisors in Bangladesh, I attended a luncheon on March 17 at the

Dhaka Gulshan club. I had a very interesting experience which I have shared with the NABIC Board of Directors.

The Bangladesh Eye Care Society (BECS), headed by my respected teacher Prof. Mustafizur Rahman, one of our affiliates, arranged a reception dinner for me on the evening of the 17th. I was deeply humbled. It was an opportunity for me to share the mission of NABIC with several of my longtime acquaintances. This meeting was important for discussing the proposed "Glaucoma Research and Eye Hospital" (GREH) in Dhaka. To run their glaucoma clinic, NABIC donated several units of expensive eye-equipment to BECS such as Humphrey Visual Field Analyzer, operating microscope, Auto Refractometer, ultrasound A-scan, Pachymeter, Keratometer, Lensometer, and slit lamp bio-

microscope. Since the clinic started in 1977, according to a BECS report, 25,051 patients have been treated and 2424 surgeries have been conducted so far. According to a recent study on glaucoma conducted by Prof. Rahman (published in the British Journal of Ophthalmology, December 2004), 97% of people have never heard about this irreversibly blinding disease and 96% of the population with the disease did not know that they actually had the

disease. Considering the tremendous need for such a research institution, NABIC now intends to donate \$250,000 to help BECS complete the first phase of the 12-story hospital that will, Insha Allah, serve close to one million glaucoma patients in Bangladesh.

On March 18 and 19, I was busy with the Ophthalmology Society of Bangladesh conference.



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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

Voluntarism for Improving the Quality of Life

People in a society thrive when communities support one another with the spirit of cooperation and fellowship. On the contrary, mass-deprivation can send down its roots when the privileged elites are allowed to grab wealth and opportunity to their advantage. As a result, the social harmony gets so distorted that the lives of the disadvantaged people become dangerously threatened. In an extreme situation, people become divided forming hostile groups facing one another that may lead to social breakdown. History has witnessed that kind of social breakdown many times. Nevertheless, mankind has prevailed because of their heeding to the divine guidance as well as emulating the noble characters that always regenerated the hope, strength and wisdom defeating the cheap temptations and unworthy desires.

Impatient self-gratification is one of the root causes of human miseries. Only a few greedy minds may have potentials enough to destroy the entire peace of a population. The deprived hearts broken and energy dwindled, but the inherent solidarity for survival can rejuvenate the spirit again and again. Eventually, human conscience searching for the truth can set the mass back to the center of gravity when the clock of civilization starts ticking again. Thus, the societal heartbeat accentuated by the repeated evolution of leaderships brings the people back into a nation building taskforce.

Societies not enriched by intellect and wisdom often reproduce communities that are not fairly served: Some are served to undue affluence while others remain quite deserted. This is when the sense of humiliation and guilty-feelings of the kinder hearts grow restless wanting to do something for the underserved. Sometimes people come up with a noble idea of forming associations with the mere intention of seeing a comforting condition around them by building up a consensus. Yet some others, great enough to take the challenges individually, can bring about lasting changes in the society.

Looking at our own Bangladesh, we have a genuine candidate for a formidable change. As the world's most populous country, it is faced with tremendous challenges of inadequacy in life-support that has already been a griming threat to the quality of life. Malnutrition, child mortality, and environmental pollutions are already menacing. Unemployment, food shortage, and lack of meaningful education are way above the threshold levels.

Population growth rate cannot be reversed in spite of all measures taken. Land will be lost to the sea and river-erosion because of global warming coupled with hostile upstream flows. Major crops will be lost to unmanageable floods, storms, droughts and pests. Under the foreseeable circumstances, the people of Bangladesh must work hand in hand to form a national coalition for survival.

Bangladesh is a nation predominantly of rural villages. Peoples Republic by name, the modern amenities of life hardly reach the people in need. Affordable healthcare and management systems are dreams yet to come true. Building a well nourished, well educated, and skillful workforce is the precondition for all life-lines of the human resources. At the end, modernization and migration may be the only two options left for the future of this people. Whatever option they pick, the competition will be intense and resources limited. For this reason, intensive cooperation among the voluntary organizations is essential for efficient resource utilization; and this must be aided by government support and cutting down corruptions.

Taking modern approaches in education and training is a must as applying rule of law unavoidable. Besides, migration to Europe and Americas as a lasting option should be seriously pursued. Especially Europe, where population growth is in decline, will need a flow of immigrants to support their manpower needs. But those nations will welcome only the skilled workers and highly trained technocrats. If we want to tap that market sooner than the other smarter competitors, we must be quick in preparing our people accordingly; and without private entrepreneurship backed by public support, achieving this goal will be almost impossible.

In conclusion, philanthropic organizations have made tremendous contributions to the lives of the underserved worldwide. In Bangladesh, many private citizens have built non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for helping the fellow citizens. Likewise, Bangladeshis living in foreign countries have formed brotherhood organizations to bring positive changes in their own lives and that of their countrymen. In this process, people are devoting their knowledge, skills, and leadership to resurrect their lost statures. Especially, Bangladeshis living in North America have formed many active NGOs that are leaving visible footprints of voluntarism on the soft soils of the land. - M. Jalaluddin

A Report on My Bangladesh Visit

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On the evening of March 19th, I met Mr. Mustak Hassan Md. Iftexhar, the new Director General of the NGO Affairs Bureau. The meeting was quite unexpected. I

found the gentleman very friendly, and it allowed me the opportunity to briefly explain NABIC projects. I hope this will help us in getting NGO Bureau approval for NABIC as a foreign NGO. On

the same evening I met the President and the Secretary General of BECS to discuss the planned foundation-laying ceremony of GREH.

On the morning of March 20 I left Dhaka with Mr. Kazi Shariful Alam, the executive director of NUSRA, to visit the hospital at Madhabpur, Sylhet. NUSRA is one of the major NABIC affiliates in Bangladesh. This general hospital, including the land, building, and its operation, are entirely financed by NABIC. Apart from usual outpatient-inpatient accommodations, it provides 24-hour emergency medical coverage, highly impressive operating rooms where surgeries will soon begin, and it is equipped with X-ray, pathology, ultrasound and pharmacy facilities. We are now planning to have a blood bank and an ambulance for the hospital. I met several of the admitted patients and those waiting at the outpatient section; they were pleased with the service provided by the hospital.

After spending seven busy days in Chittagong, visiting my parents and close relatives and examining several patients in my rural home, I returned to Dhaka on March 28.

On the same morning I visited NUSRA Rupganj Sharia-compliant microcredit office that provided sewing training for the young ladies and some

sanitary latrines in the village. The confidence I saw among the young ladies on completion of the training and the satisfaction of the villagers who received the sanitary latrines was very touching.



In the afternoon I met former Air Commodore Alauddin, ORCA President; Mr. M. Abdus Sobhan, President of the Karmirhath; Mrs. Sharmin Murshid, CEO of

the Brotee; Kazi Shariful Alam, Executive Director of NUSRA,; Dr. Lady Faiz, Vice President, and Mr. Abdul Khaleque, Project Manager, the Safe Home for Girls. These are representatives of our major affiliates.

The last event I attended was the foundation laying ceremony of the proposed "Glaucoma Research and Eye Hospital". The event opened the opportunity for NABIC to get national media coverage since it has committed to be a major partner in this building project. The event was quite emotional for me as it was my long cherished dream for establishing such an institution in Bangladesh that would help the hundreds of thousands of people to pre-



vent the unnecessary blindness.

I pray to Allah (swt) to help us and guide us to fulfill our goals..... ameen.

—Rashed Nizam, M.D is the current president of the NABIC.

NABIC @ ISNA

The 46th Annual Convention of the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) will be held at the Washington DC Convention Center from July 3-6, 2009. NABIC encourages everyone to attend the ISNA convention and to:

- Visit the NABIC Information Booth in the Bazaar (Booth # 660)
- Attend the NABIC reception: Friday, July 3 at 6:00 PM at the Renaissance Hotel (Room #5).
- Join NABIC leadership at ISNA Community Service Recognition Luncheon on Saturday, July 4 at 12:00. Please contact Dr. Rashed Nizam (doc.nizam55@gmail.com) for tickets at NABIC table.
- Attend the NABIC organized parallel session, "Confronting Delslamization of South Asia." Speakers: Dr. Mansur Ahmad, Maulana Mirza Abu Zafar Beg, Dr. Muhammad Shafiq and Dr. Mohammad Karim (please see ISNA Convention Program book for time and room number)

**For more information
about the ISNA
Convention, visit:
www.isna.net**

NABIC

19th Annual Convention



WHEN: Saturday, June 13, 2009

WHERE: York College Campus, 94-20 Guy R. Brewer Blvd.,
Jamaica, New York



WHO: Speakers include Dr. Jamal Badawi (Fiqh Council of North America), Dr. Parvez Ahmed (Past -Chairman, CAIR), Dr. Altaf Husain (ISNA Majlish-e-Shura), Imam Shamsi Ali (Jamaica Muslim Center), Dr. M. Ataul Karim (Past-President, NABIC), Dr. Farrukh Mohsen (VAB-NJ), Sanjana Ahmad (DC Green Muslims), and representatives of local Bangladeshi organizations.



WHAT: Lectures on Islam, Muslims, and Bangladesh, health screening, entertainment, and evening banquet.

For more information, contact: Kamrul Ahsan [917.280.5248 | kamrulyc@gmail.com]
or Abu Bakar Ahmed [865.387.0135 | abahmed@aol.com].

We are on the web!

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