# A small tale of a big place

**Faheem Hasan Shahed**

HE looked straight into my eyes. Feeling a bit apprehensive, I fashioned on my face an expression of everlasting query. Hasan bhai, the Human Resource chief of AIUB Mr. Hasanul A Hasan, hurled into the air a curly dancing tobacco-smoke from his mouth and said, "Faheem, you know why I want you to join AIUB as a teacher?"

I answered in the negative of course, and he continued, "Because, I needed a brand new gun...a gun that hasn't fired before. You are just fresh from abroad with your Ph.D., haven't taught full-time in this country, and here you are, with your fullest liberty, to fire bullets of your choice. Someone who has been already teaching in this country wouldn't be able to do that."

I started to sweat. My God, what this man is talking about, I wondered. I had gone there for my interview as a teacher, and already finished it along with some teaching demonstrations in front of a panel of academicians. After that, I was in Hasan bhai's room for some sort of briefings from him.

Because of his unusually amusing style of discourse, I continued with my sheepish look even after that 'fresh gun' issue. Noticing it, Hasan bhai firmly said, "See Faheem, you are in a place called AIUB. Simply keep going, keep flowing. You will do mistakes, so what? Mistakes are part of a learning process. You already know it as a researcher in language teaching..."

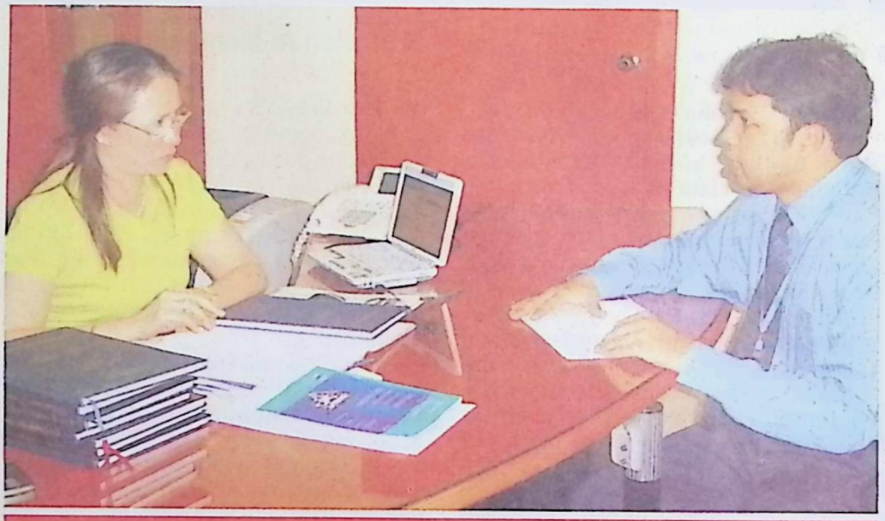
Hmm...I started to charge up. Probably that reflected somehow on my face. He said with an enthusiastic decisiveness, "Welcome to AIUB, Faheem!"

I shook hands with him and came out of the admin building with lots of excitement. It was already 4 p.m. and I was supposed to be hungry. That didn't happen and instead, all the 'best' teaching plans of the world kept whirling round my head. I decided to buy 2 kgs of *Porabari Chamcham* instantly for my family members.

That was the 19th day of May, 2001. It was how God launched my academic career in AIUB.

This is 2006. With my five-year non-stop catwalk existence in the campus, I have witnessed the rise of AIUB. In fact, I have been an inextricable part of that rise. The rise has been slow, but rock-solid. I recall those days when we had only one Pentium-3 PC in each floor for our daily work. One printer only at the ground floor with an old-fashioned photocopier. OHP machines in the classrooms were the 'state-of-the-art' devices we'd feel proud of.

Now that our lives have become silk-smooth owing to the multimedia PCs and laptops on every table and every classroom and also the advanced Virtual University Expert System (the software we use for academic and administrative management, developed solely by our students). Almighty has allowed me to see this simple truth : it is the "small" that eventually becomes "big" and that "becoming big" is the greatest learning process in life. If you have passed through this process, you attain humbleness and glory.



AIUB VC Dr. Carmen Zita Lamagna with Dr. Faheem Hasan

> "We exist for our students whose parents have sent them here with high expectations. Honor their expectations by sustaining your accountability towards yourselves and your profession. You will rise, and so will AIUB."

Under the leadership of our ever-exuberant VC Dr. Carmen Zita Lamagna, AIUB has thought big and worked big. Her message for us has always been simple: "We exist for our students whose parents have sent them here with high expectations. Honor their expectations by sustaining your accountability towards yourselves and your profession. You will rise, and so will AIUB."

As I walk in and walk out of the campus everyday, I look at the faces of students chattering and laughing all over the place. My next generation...the hope of my country. These young boys and girls around us need to be shown the way to discover their possibilities. I have always felt this. And it is to my soothing satisfaction that AIUB thanks to its teachers and management has been doing that with a sort of religious fidelity. Our students, parents and guardians wouldn't disagree with it even a wee bit. I am sure about this.

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