An evening, *la* gracious...*la* glorious!

Faheem Hasan Shahed

HE dislikes speaking just for the sake of saying something. He never hesitates articulating anything that is plausibleregardless of your liking or disliking it. Because, when he speaks he ensures that his heart is intensely involved with his deliberations.

I pointed out this fact directly to him while sipping my cup of tea. It had been my personal judgment, I told him. I felt as such since I have known his reputation as a phenomenal Professor of Law at Dhaka University (presently Dean, Faculty of Law), and as an advocate of human rights.

Professor Borhan Uddin Khan readily pointed out toward his wife Ms. Tahmina Gafur (Chair of Population Science at DU) saying: 'For your information Faheem, she bears this ability far more than I do!'

Everyone burst into laughter as Shoaib bhai (A.K.M. Shoaib, ex-national debater and president of National Debate Federation) tossed a remark, 'Till now we haven't seen *bhabi* talking much. But we obviously have seen her doing much...can anyone disapprove her interior decoration ability!'

We looked around the living room. Spectacularly designed. Touch of class in every corner. Paintings and art crafts placed in immaculate perfection. As *bhabi* smiled, Borhan sir continued, 'Hundred percent has been done by your *bhabi* herself...'

'...With hundred percent euphoric support of sir himself,' tagged Nazmuzzaman, our beloved "legal" colleague (Assistant Professor of Law in both DU and AIUB).

Well, these were some of the sweet nitty-gritty of the evening *adda* we had in Prof. Borhan's residence three weeks back. His house, quite adjacent to the International Students' Hall, is one of the best places in the DU campus when it comes to location and architecture. He has been living there in his capacity as the Provost of Muktijodhdha Ziaur Rahman Hall.

Actually we were at the Zia Hall in the afternoon to attend its debate workshop. Now, Shoaib bhai went there as a special guest while Arif Ashraf Nayan went as Star Campus reporter. But my presence was simply coincidental which, to my utter surprise, was magnanimously transformed by Nazmuzzaman (who is also the Moderator of Zia Hall Debating Club) into an 'attendance as an honorable observer'.

Result? My compulsory stay till the end, plus a winding up lecture!

As usual, in that debate session, Prof. Borhan was at his eloquent best, and I decided to have a brief session with him at his Provost chamber. We would talk on some academic and human rights issues, I was planning. But who knew that session would eventually turn out to be a delightful *adda* at his house continuing till 11.30 at night?

In an almost BBC hard-talk manner, I asked him about his opinion regarding today's "declining standards of studentship". He straightaway objected.

'I don't agree that the overall standard of studentship has fallen. Rather, an interesting phenomenon has occurred over the past three decades. More and more students from rural background are entering our universities,' he said, 'and, they ARE doing well.'

The issue of urban etiquette came. Nayan asked, 'Can we guarantee the development of urban smartness in just 3-4 years?'

'Why not? It's an automated process...as part of academic process, students grasp it. As a teacher you've seen it too Faheem, haven't you?'

Shoaib bhai explained, 'See Nayan, we have so many renowned personalities who held important positions throughout their careers, who represented Bangladesh in international forums so far... . Have you ever asked yourself where they had come from? Villages and mafassal towns. They had studied in rural schools, and they were so pretty smart!'



Prof. Borhan Uddin Khan (Left) AKM Shoaib, Shafayet Hossain & Md Zahirul Islam