

...blocks of knowledge society

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property rests on unexamined assumption that without direct incentive, inventors will cease to invent, actors and singers will fall silent, writers will put down their pens, and creativity will decline catastrophically. This assumption conflates the motivations and interests of individual creators in widely different circumstances with those of vendors. Furthermore, by ignoring moral rights, it fails to distinguish between the interests of various categories of creators in the intellectual property protection. While some creators may be motivated by the prospect of riches, the probability of these being in significant amounts is about equivalent to their chances of winning a lottery. Even conceding that some financial motiva-

tion may exist, is the present IP regime the best way to protect the creator's interests? Economist Robert Hurt in 1966 dismissed the idea that authors are uniformly motivated to write "in the expectation of monopoly profits", pointing to a wide range of other intentions, such as "the propagation of partisan ideas, notions of altruism [...], desire for recognition; and enhancement of one's reputation". Obviously there are many more possibilities.

The global IP system, and specifically copyright tends to concentrate control of humanity's common cultural heritage in the hands of a shrinking number of private owners. This tendency has a demonstrably negative effect on the well-being of the majority of the

world's poor people, most of who live in countries like Bangladesh. Boldrin and Levine's report of Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis argued that the copyright and patent systems are in fact a form of protectionism and interference with the free market.

The Enlightenment copyright discourse that dates back to the 18th century Statute of Anne in the UK and to the US Constitution implicitly proposes an idealised balance between right-holders' limited-term monopoly and the public benefit of unhindered access to scientific record and the products of cultural traditions. But to accept this idealism at face value is to ignore two key problems. First, most rights are now and have always

been held, not by the creators themselves, but by vendors in the form of publishers and later media corporations. Second, as the sale of educational and cultural content has increasingly shifted from the delivery of physical objects (books, pictures, records) to the provision of access to digital objects, two contradictory tendencies have emerged. It has become technologically possible for the vendors to restrict and monitor the uses made of the digital objects, while at the same time it has become technologically possible for the users (having access to the Internet) to reproduce it immediately, infinitely and at close to zero cost. Probably in the 1960's UK rock group The Beatles understood this, and did not, for example, own copyright in the songs they wrote, performed, and recorded.

One of the major alternatives to traditional copyright system is Creative Commons licensing (CCL). CCL defines the spectrum of possibilities between full copyright all rights reserved and the public domain no rights reserved. These licenses help an author keep copyright while inviting certain uses of work a "some rights reserved" copyright. A

CCL is based on copyright. Thus, they apply to all works that are protected by copyright law. CCL gives you the ability to dictate how others may exercise of your copyright rights such as the right of others to copy your work, make derivative works or adaptations of your work, to distribute your work and/or make money from your work. CCL offers various combinations of the four types components of the copyright system: attribution (by), non-commercial (nc), no Derivative works or NoDerivs (nd), and shareAlike (sa).

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Copyleft, a play on the word copyright, is the practice of

using copyright law to remove restrictions on distributing copies and modified versions of a work for others and requiring that the same freedoms be preserved in modified versions. A widely used and originating copyleft license is the GNU (General Public License). Similar licenses are available through Creative Commons - called Share-Alike. There are other forms of alternative intellectual property protection system, which does not force users to violate terms of use of content or software and proposes profitable alternatives to survival.

A UNCTAD Report (2003) asserted that innovation is heavily dependent on IPRs while conceding that the exclusionary aspects of strong IPRs can increase costs of follow-on innovation and imitation. UNCTAD therefore came down in favour of 'a balanced approach [...] with particular

features of the system varying according to the level of economic development." The strong propagator of the capitalist ideology The Economist in 2005 wrote in its editorial, "Copyright was originally intended to encourage publication by granting publishers a temporary monopoly on works so they could earn a return on their investment. But the Internet and new digital technologies have made publication and distribution of works much easier and cheaper. Publishers therefore need fewer, not more, property rights to protect their investment. Technology has tipped the balance in favour of the public domain." Surprisingly, the editorial continues by recommending "a drastic reduction of copyright back to its original terms 14 years, renewable once. This should provide media firms plenty of chance to earn profits, and consumers

plenty of opportunity to rip, mix (and) burn their back catalogues without breaking the laws". I hope Bangladeshi copyright warriors will take rather a rational stand-point understanding the position of Bangladesh in terms of ability to absorb equivalent or tougher than US-based system, and follow rather a path of open source and open licensing system, which will facilitate building a knowledge society at an affordable costs. And this path is fully in compliance with the doctrine of "free trade" propagated by neo-liberalists.?

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The author acknowledges the report of Copy South Dossier for preparation of this article.

দ্রুত ও নিশ্চিত রেমিটেন্স পাওয়ার আশা ? উত্তরা ব্যাংক-ই ভরসা

- মধ্যপ্রাচ্য, মালয়েশিয়া, ব্রুনাই, ইন্দোনেশিয়া, দক্ষিণ কোরিয়া, অস্ট্রেলিয়া, কানাডা, স্পেন, মালদ্বীপ, জার্মানি, জাপান, সিঙ্গাপুর, যুক্তরাষ্ট্র, যুক্তরাজ্য, গ্রীস, সাইপ্রাস, ইটালী, ফ্রান্স, উত্তর আমেরিকা ও দক্ষিণ আমেরিকা এবং আফ্রিকার সকল দেশ সহ বিশ্বের যে কোন দেশ থেকে প্রবাসী বাংলাদেশীদের প্রেরিত অর্থ (রেমিটেন্স) বাংলাদেশে উত্তরা ব্যাংক লিমিটেডের ২০৭টি শাখার মধ্যে গ্রাহকের মনোনীত যে কোন শাখায় গ্রাহকের একাউন্টে দ্রুততম সময়ের মধ্যে জমা হয়ে থাকে।
- মনি গ্রাম (Money Gram), এক্সপ্রেস মনি (Xpress Money) এবং ওয়ালস্ট্রিট ইন্সট্যান্ট ক্যাশ (Wallstreet Instant Cash) প্রভৃতি আন্তর্জাতিক মনি রেমিটিং সংস্থাগুলোর মাধ্যমে বিশ্বের যে কোন দেশ থেকে প্রেরিত অর্থ উত্তরা ব্যাংক লিমিটেডের মনোনীত শাখায় রেমিটেন্স বাতী পাওয়ার সাথে সাথেই জমা হয়ে যায় এবং ব্যাংক সমূহের কার্য দিবসে লেনদেনের নির্ধারিত সময়ে নগদ টাকা উঠানো যায়।
- নগদ টাকা পাওয়ার জন্য গ্রাহকের ছবিযুক্ত পরিচয়পত্র আবশ্যিক। পরিচয়পত্র না থাকলে অন্যান্য ব্যাংকে পরিচালিত হিসাবের চেক বই প্রদর্শন প্রকল্প নগদ টাকা উঠানো যায়। এক্ষেত্রে বিদেশ থেকে রেমিটেন্স বাতী গ্রাহকের পরিচিতির বিস্তারিত বিবরণ থাকা জরুরী, যা অর্থ পরিশোধের সময়ে ব্যাংক কর্তৃপক্ষ চেক বই এর সাথে মিলিয়ে দেখবেন।

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আবহমান বাংলার ঐতিহ্যে লালিত

...research?

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making process is also often compromised. This is not good news for a country which takes great pride in its intellectual struggle for the self-identity and its contribution towards attaining a free Bangladesh through a war of liberation.

What should be done now? While speaking at the silver jubilee celebration of BIDS, Professor Nurul Islam, the first Deputy Chairman of Bangladesh Planning Commission and the doyen of the country's economists, provided the following suggestions for financing the social science/economic research institutions including investment in building their human capital.

1. While seeking finance, the 'thinktanks' must ensure that research projects also include long-term research on broader policy and structural issues beyond short term-deadline bound donor-driven or government-priority projects.

2. Even in donor-financed research projects, the 'thinktanks' must try hard to include a few selected elements of its own research priorities along with those of donors.

3. Since there is hardly any domestic donor or foundations which could support creative research, there is no alternative to government funding support to these 'thinktanks'.

4. Government should provide grants for a wider range of policy research with 'short, medium and long-term implications to selected "thinktanks" on the basis of an overall research program and a strict evaluation of their quality.

5. There has to be a council or foundation which should be run by independent experts of known integrity and experience. They may be assisted by experts both from home and abroad, including the non-resident Bangladeshi experts, particularly in evaluating the research proposals for funding.

6. The government can even seek donor assistance to finance such grant-making foundations or councils. The main objective of this collaboration will have to be widening of the scope of the research of these 'thinktanks'.

7. These grants have to be generous enough to pay high compensation package which is comparable to market-determined consultancy fees.

8. There has to be sufficient funding support for building up

research capacity through on-the-job training of the staff of the think-tank including higher education.

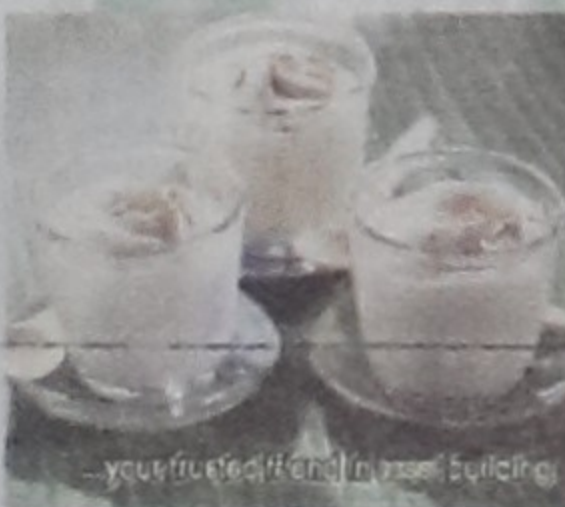
Many more interesting suggestions have also been made by Professor Islam covering diverse areas like tolerance of critical views of the researchers by the policy makers, freedom of enquiry and debate on public policies, 'declassification' of policy documents prepared by the government, transparency and easy access to information on government's policies and actions, providing necessary intellectual assistance to the parliamentarians for quality debates in the house which should be open to media and public etc.

I must thank Professor Islam for raising some of the most pertinent issues related to generation and management of policy-related knowledge at a juncture when we are indeed at a loss. We hope policy makers, particularly some of the current advisers to the caretaker government who themselves are researchers, would take a queue from Professor Islam's deliberations and initiate implementation of some of his brilliant ideas. Almost all of today's policy-makers are either his direct students or connoisseurs of his creative research. Hopefully they can read his mind and do what is needed for reclaiming the ownership of our policy discourses. Why can't we have a foundation like PKSF just for social research? We may have another for natural science as well. If we really mean business and care for an effective democratic society, the positive role of 'thinktanks' has to be appreciated. The parliamentarians can actively participate in the debates on policy issues only if they are made acquainted with these policy issues. Only indigenous knowledge generation through such 'thinktanks' can create similar opportunities for the policymakers and law makers. Let us therefore put all our minds together to create an appropriate opportunity for the desired process of indigenous knowledge creation which will finally help the 'body' to keep the 'brain' within.

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