FROM PAGE 13

They convinced the NSU Board and the Vice Chancellor that withdrawing the offer to host the momentous event would be a great discredit and stigma for NSU and a near major national disaster and disgrace. NSU Foundation and the VC were persuaded. Both pledged and offered unqualified support and assistance.

The organizers and volunteers arranged the hotel and venues and persuaded the media partners; swayed banks, financial institutions and reputable firms to offer generous financial sponsorship; and the hardest of all, arranged assistance from governmental agencies to make it pleasant, convenient and user friendly for international participants to travel and spend a memorable week in Bangladesh.

The office of the NSU Vice Chancellor was churning out request letters incessantly in an assembly line fast pace with the VC signing scores of such letters.

At times the ceaseless student plea for help, letters, phone calls and requests got to be a bit much. On at least two occasions, the persistent, assertive and pervasive members of the debate club were thrown out of the office when their pushy request resembled a demand or a dictate. But they kept coming back wave after wave, offering genuine apology, and with the ultimate goal and big picture in mind. And it all worked out in the end.

The Chief Advisor inaugurated the event at Hotel Sonargaon on May 8. Enthusiastic and expectant participants from all over Asia, decked out in vivid and bright national outfit and formal attire; diverse ethnicity and cultures, civilizations and traditions all under one roof for an eminent event. Dr. Hafiz G.A. Siddiqi, NSU Vice Chancellor, mentioned the Lincoln-Douglas debates, resulting in the victory of Abraham Lincoln as the US President that led to abolition of slavery and emancipation, to imply how debate can set the course of history.

Days of knockout and round robin competition yielded 8 quarter finalists, a team each from Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh and the other five from big behemoth talent studded India. NSU was not eligible to participate because of rules regarding possible conflict of interest.

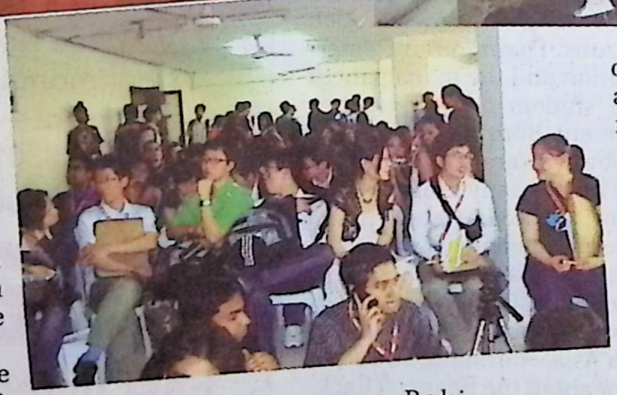
The Bangladesh prospect for greater glory rested with the IBA team of Ridwan, Sohara and Kibria. Then something unforeseen and unfortunate happened. Ridwan lost his voice prior to the semifinals. All day of drinking hot tea with lemon and honey, different voice enhancing maneuvers were only partially successful and the team lost against an Indian squad. The Semis had Pakistani LUMS and three Indian sides and the finals were an all Indian affair. Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Education and Commerce Adviser, gave away the awards as the Chief Guest at the closing ceremony on May 13, 2008 at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Center.

This was a very successful Asian Intervarsity Debate tournament. Many individuals and organizations cooperated and worked collectively to make it an inspiring achievement. The guidance of the faculty advisor, Nusrat, was pivotal. But ultimately, the infectious energy, unbridled enthusiasm, concerted efforts and indomitable spirit of NSU Debate Club Members, such as Barsha, Diba, Nayeem, Mahmud and Shatadru and many others, who stubbornly believed in "Life isn't about how to survive the storm, but how to dance in the rain" made it happen.









(The writer is the Special Assistant to the Vice chancellor of North South University)