IBA: Transcending the Uncharted Arena

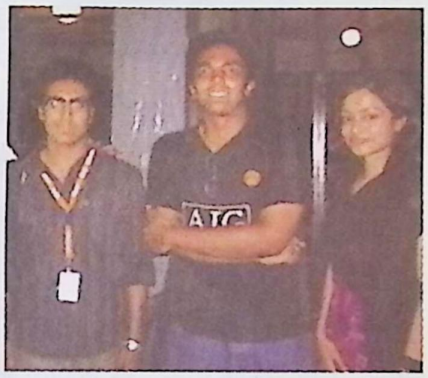
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THE roller coaster ride of All-Asians Inter Varsity Debate Competition from 7th to 13th May 2008 unfolded some of the most rewarding debating experiences of my life and ground breaking achievements for Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and Bangladesh in the international arena of debating.

With the aim of selecting debaters to represent our institution at Asians, an intra-IBA debate competition was organized prior to Asians. It seemed like an insurmountable task for me to compete against the senior debaters and get the chance to represent IBA. So when I was chosen for IBA-1, I was drowning in ecstasy! However, I soon realized it was not all rainbows and butterflies since the responsibility of upholding IBA's reputation rested on my shoulders as well.

On May 7th the tournament commenced with registration at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel followed by a grand dinner. The championship officially kicked off on 9th May. I was a bubble of decorous excitement at the prospect of debating with two of the debating titansRidwan Karim and Golam Kibria of BBA 14th batchthe national champions. The team jelled really well and our confidence flared up from the very beginning. Our spirits soared as we had two consecutive wins, debating Kyung Hee of Korea and RVCE of India.

Early morning the next day, snoopy-droopy and bleary eyed, we reached NSU where immediately we were given the tab for the 3rd round. We were to propose the motion: *This house would allow divorce for any reason.* It was a heated debate with violent polemics and stinging repartees, and it was in this debate that we had our first loss. A faint qualm of apprehension struck me,



because I knew we could afford to lose only 2 debates if we were to reach the Octofinals, a feat never achieved by any Bangladeshi team in the history of this competition.

Shortly afterwards, we were able to clinch a crucial victory in the next debate. Before we could heave a sigh of relief, we were called up for the next debatethe 5th round. Our apparently pedantic opponents inundated us with their rather quixotic and chimerical verbiage. However, the judge gave the decision in their favour and thought we were "caught up in a cyclone of arguments" and "couldn't channel their energy back to them" an explanation that leaves a lot more to be explained.

The next day was a crucial one for our team, as we had to win both debates that day if we were to make it to the Octoswhich seemed a distant dream. However, we gave it our best shot. The last two rounds were silent rounds and we didn't have access to the results. After an agonizing interlude, it was finally time to announce the breaking teams. When the booming voice on the microphone said *"The first ever Bangladeshi team to break at the Asians is IBA 1!"* my heart skipped a beat. When the rapturous applause gradually subsided, comprehension finally dawned on me...we were in the Octo Finals!

A strong wave of patriotism swept us all. This was no longer IBA versus some other university but rather Bangladesh versus another nation. With full zeal, we brainstormed to engage in verbal battle with EDIS University of South Korea on the rather interesting topic: *This House would institute annual prize for the best pornographic novel.*

If I needed a moral boost before the Octofinal, it came in the form of a pleasant surprise. Immediately before the debate started, many of my closest friends, some senior IBA ites as well as debaters from other local universities came in to support our team. The debate went really well; I could feel the positive vibe and I felt we could channel it back to the judges and the audience.

On midnight that day, the results of the octos were going to be announced at Sonargaon. And then we heard those euphonious words...IBA 1 was in the quarterfinals!! The first ever Bangladeshi team to do so! This was history...we jumped around all over the place for what seemed like an eternity. Our enthusiasm was perhaps contagious and soon the entire Bangladeshi debating contingent joined in on our celebrations.

The next morning we were to face our nemesisNLS 1 of India. The motion was *'This House believes that migration of high skilled workers leads to brain GAIN for sending countries'* and we were the proposition. The debate was a true clash of intellect but NLS stole the show with their unfaltering eloquence and emanating confidence.

Eventually NLS 1 reached the grand finale and became the champions. As for our team, Asians 2008 was over, but it was the starting of a new era of debating for IBA and for Bangladesh.