1984, he came to Washington and saw me at the World Bank. By that time, he was widely known in the country and abroad, particularly among the bilateral donors and international financial institutions like the World Bank. Unlike some other sectors, efficient and timely utilisation of development funds working within the traditionally slow governmental system was never a problem for Qamrul and the dedicated band of engineers working under his able leadership. He gave a full account of the situation in Kushtia since the time I left the district in the late nineteen-sixties, including the status of many educational, cultural and sports institutions, which I had assisted in setting up.

He also gave me an idea of the rural roads, the engineering capacity and institutions that he was developing in every district. Sitting in Washington, I became aware that haats, bazaars, villages and thana headquarters were being connected to the district towns by the LGED, which together with the Rural Electricity Board's provision of electricity to villages, was opening up the country and causing its economic transformation. Qamrul was full of excitement about the potentials of the rural areas in contributing to the prosperity of Bangladesh. I could see the gleam in his eyes and joy on his face I had indeed a highly dedicated and devoted government engineer in front of me.

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In 1996, he invited me to visit the magnificent skyscraper office of the LGED in Agargaon. He showed me around the modern facilities, including the centre for the geodesic maps of Bangladesh done with Swedish assistance. I was told of the numerous LGED field offices throughout Bangladesh with computers, communications and engineering equipment and a large number of women engineers, and other technicians. In fact, I found two women officials working in the map room. Qamrul told me that he had the rural areas already mapped and asked me to provide the details of our village. By the time I came out of the building, I had with me a map of our village showing roads and homesteads. On that occasion, I requested him to build a much-needed mile of road between a District Council paved road and the muddy road to our village *haat* and school. As expected, within a year that road was completed. In 1997, I went to see a new technology of holding stream waters for preventing flash floods and providing irrigation water in hilly areas by inflatable Rubber Dams he had brought from China and established in Cox's Bazaar. He tried to replicate this in a few areas of Bangladesh. He also provided employment to a large number of women in maintenance work and encouraged local and beneficiary participation in planning and execution of works. An innovator indeed!

Qamrul subsequently held the positions of Chairman of the Power Board and Secretary of the Works Ministry. He had finally retired some years ago when in January 2006 I expressed a desire to see Kushtia, which I had not visited since 1967. He enthusiastically accompanied me on a two-day tour by road to Rajbari, Kushtia, Meherpur, Baidanathtala, Jhenaidah and Faridpur. We met numerous people and visited colleges, municipalities, press club, Lalon Centre and other institutions from 8 in the morning to 11in the night. The wonderful roads, many built by LGED in the remote interiors, and the unending miles of roadside greenery- luxuriant agriculture, mango trees, banana plants and poultry farms were most impressive. Qamrul's running commentary based on his thorough knowledge of the rural economy, geography, culture and the people gave meaning to my fleeting glimpses of the countryside. There were many offices of LGED along the way these were highly organised, well equipped and manned by motivated engineers and other workers. I was also struck by the well-kept flowery gardens in the office yards in which were also plants like neem, *hortuki*, *tejpata* and other spices. I found him taking interest in all aspects- engineering and the rest and encouraging his former colleagues to do the same, emphasizing the need for careful and regular maintenance.

Qamrul Islam Siddique visited our house in Washington in late-2006, when I introduced him to some of my friends with pride. I had not seen or talked to him since that time. I was told that he had visited Washington at the end of August 2008. Unfortunately, I was out of town at the time. He had gone back to his son's house in New Jersey and died there suddenly on September 1. I was deeply shocked when I heard the news. In his retirement years, he had involved himself in seminars on issues concerning the water and energy sectors and climate change. But I do believe that a man of his calibre could and should have been utilised more productively by successive Bangladesh governments in the many years since his retirement from service. ■