IUB Debaters @ WUPID 2008

Radian Khan

"HUMAN progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. We are faced now with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history there is such a thing as being too late ... We may cry out desperately for time to pause in her passage, but time is deaf to every plea and rushes on. Over the bleached bones and jumbled residue of numerous civilizations are written the pathetic words: Too late." Martin Luther King Jr.

December was an auspicious month for the Debating Club of the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUBDC) as IUB was the only university invited from Bangladesh to participate in a grand international debating tournament held in Kuala Lumpur from December 14 to December 17,2008. The competition was organized by The Commerce International Merchant Bankers Group World Universities Peace Invitational Debate 2008 (CIMB WUPID 2008). CIMB is the region's largest investment bank.

The other universities invited to the tournament included Monash University, Sydney University, Harvard University, Cornel University, Western Washington University and Assumption University. A number of Asian universities also participated in the event.

The IUB debaters were Ipshitt Tarafdar, Nafis Ahmed, Radian Khan and Lazina Farhin Anandi. They were accompanied by Mr. Md Shaiful Islam, Moderator (IUBDC), Deepita Naila Muhaimen, Raihan Ul Mahmud Abrar as adjudicators and Raisa Fareen Chowdhury as observer.

We landed at the airport early on the morning of December 14. I can clearly remember how excited I was as I walked through the terminal at Kuala Lumpur airport. I could visualize the debaters of all the giant universities throwing fierce arguments to kill mine. I wondered how I would manage to speak for seven minutes if the motion was unfamiliar. With all these anxieties and fears I crossed immigration, took the train from Kuala Lumpur International Airport to the city (the KLIA Express) and checked in at the Impiana KLCC Hotel and Spa.

The location for the debate was the University of Kuala Lumpur and the tournament started on December 14 with brief introductions by Neil-Harvy Smith, current Chair of World Universities Debating Council and the Deputy Chief Adjudicator of WUPID 2008 and Omar Salahuddin, Chief Adjudicator of WUPID 2008 Round.

The motions of the tournament centered around peace settlement issues of the world, since the title of this tournament was World Universities Peace Invitational Debate. The opening motion was 'The house believes that Barack Obama should close Guantanamo Bay.' In the rounds of debating that followed the great debaters of the world displayed how reasoning and arguments are the finest intellectual weapons.

Another great aspect of this tournament was the presence of some of the best adjudicators of the world. Besides Dr. Omar Salahuddin, Neil-Harvey Smith, Fiona Prowse and James R. Haft were present as Deputy Chief Adjudicators. In their oral adjudications they subtly analyzed the debate providing their insight on the skills of debating.

Sydney University, Monash University, University of Vermont and Ateneo De Manila reached the final round. The Grand Finale, held in the Kuala Lumpur Convention Center (KLCC), was graced by the presence of His Highness, the King of Malaysia, Dr. Raja Nazrin Shah. The whole of KLCC roared with excitement and enthusiasm when the final round started. In the end it was Monash University which captured the championship.

The whole tournament was organized amazingly well. There was the opening ceremony with beautiful cultural shows and the free day debate tournament between team Malaysia and the rest of the world where people from the UN were invited. Last but not least, meeting new people and creating a whole new network of friends was all a part of the fun and perhaps the best thing that can ever happen to someone who goes out there to debate in the international field.