

| STAR PEOPLE |

In the fifties when Bangladesh was one of the poorest and most neglected parts of the world under the exploitative Pakistani rule, a family of visionaries dreamed of a prosperous and progressive economy in the country. Late Abdur Rahim, the founder of this progressive business family started to manufacture automobile battery, and the brand Rahimafrooz was founded in 1954. Niaz Rahim, his son and currently one of the group directors of the conglomerate, has transformed this enterprise into one of the biggest and most reputed business enterprises of Bangladesh. Unlike other corporate giants, Rahimafrooz has introduced the idea of welfare business in Bangladesh which has changed millions of lives while also securing profit for the industry.

Besides this, it has established the idea of utilising business zakat as a tool for social change through his organisation called Centre for Zakat Management (CZM) which has won the Islamic Economic Award in 2015 for its role in ensuring financial empowerment to some of the least privileged people of the country through proper and planned dissemination of zakat fund.

"Our aspiration and vision is to do ethical business practices and adding quality and value to all our stakeholders. Therefore I always try to introduce commodities that will not only bring profit for us but also change the lives of our countrymen", says Niaz. From this vision, when Niaz took control of Rahimafrooz group in the early eighties, he took the initiative of introducing



Niaz Rahim

NIAZ RAHIM: A STORY OF PRINCIPLE BEFORE PROFIT

CZM's livelihood development projects, healthcare and nutrition programmes for mothers and children, education programmes and skill development programmes for unemployed women and youth have freed millions of families from the vicious cycle of poverty in 37 districts of Bangladesh. For this contribution, CZM achieved the Islamic Economic Award from Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice-president and prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai, at the inaugural ceremony of the second edition of the Global Islamic Economy Summit 2015.

MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

solar power for Bangladeshi households with the motto "Banglar Ghore Ghore Alo (Lighting every house in Bengal).

"At that time Solar power was known to very few people and we faced a lot of challenges while introducing it here— such as heavy import duty, unavailability of related experts and people were very unfamiliar with this technology. However, engineers from BUET helped us a lot and all praise to Allah, all these challenges have become bygones and we are now the biggest manufacturers of solar panel in Bangladesh.

Besides solar panels, we export our batteries in 62 countries and today we are the 2nd largest battery manufacturer in South Asia", adds Niaz. While enlightening Bangladesh's homesteads, Rahimafrooz family's dream of a prosperous rural Bangladesh and healthy new generation came into being by launching the country's first retail super shop— Agora. Employing more than fifty thousand rural traders and farmers as suppliers, this super shop has changed the lives of millions by providing their fresh produce to the urban customers, at the right price.

"We ensure quality of every kind of product we sell at our outlets. We have developed a strict mechanism that enables the rural farmers to maintain the product quality by themselves. For this uncompromising effort to ensure quality besides our energy industry, our super shop Agora has also achieved ISO 22,000 certification," says Niaz.

"Agora was also the first to sign a Public Private Partnership agreement with BCSIR to ensure a scientific and reliable method of ensuring hygienic and safe raw and processed food products," adds Niaz.

However, probably the most significant social contribution of Rahimafrooz's welfare business is institutionalisation of zakat by establishing Centre for Zakat Management. Zakat is the obligatory financial



Niaz Rahim receiving Islamic Economic Award from Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, vice-president and prime minister of the UAE and ruler of Dubai

PHOTO: COURTESY

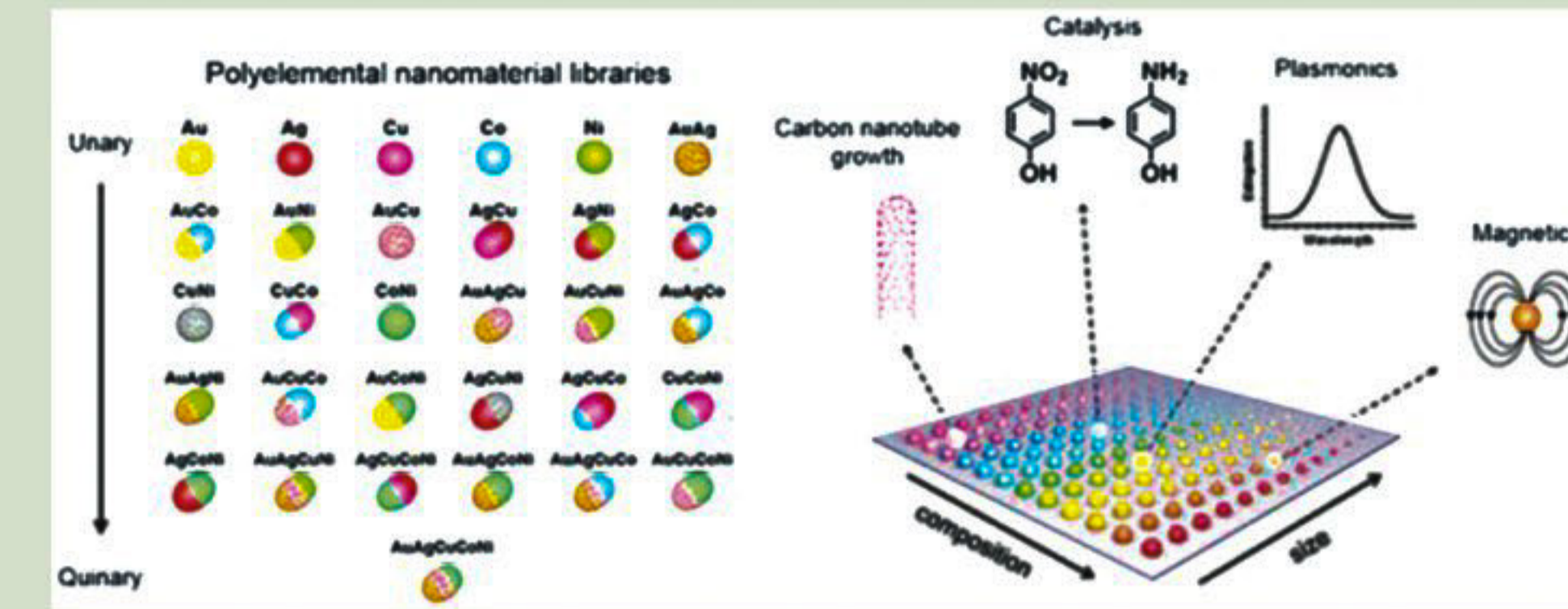
donation which every Muslim has to pay early from their surplus wealth. "In our country the concept of zakat from industrial wealth was absent. Muslims used to pay zakat personally and indiscriminately by donating cheap clothes or small amount of cash," says Niaz.

"The mission of establishing CZM is to collect zakat from different business organisations and interested individuals and disseminate the fund in a constructive manner so to ensure proper distribution, ensuring the change in the lives of the people we are trying to help", he adds.

Rahimafrooz has established an amazing example of doing business and social good together, which was unprecedented in Bangladesh. He is an inspiration and example for the young entrepreneurs who want to think out of the box. To inspire young entrepreneurs, Niaz says, "You need to have vision. If you don't know what you want to do and what you want to be, you will be misguided with time." We hope that Niaz's exemplary initiatives will contribute to the nation not only financially but also by building a generation of inspired youth. ■

QUIRKY SCIENCE

THE ULTIMATE DISCOVERY TOOL



The discovery power of the gene chip is coming to nanotechnology. A Northwestern University research team is developing a tool to rapidly test millions and perhaps even billions or more different nanoparticles at one time to zero in on the best particle for a specific use.

When materials are miniaturized, their properties – optical, structural, electrical, mechanical and chemical – change, offering new possibilities. But determining what nanoparticle size and composition are best for a given application, such as catalysts, biodiagnostic labels, pharmaceuticals and electronic devices, is a daunting task.

"As scientists, we've only just begun to investigate what materials can be made on the nanoscale," said

Northwestern's Chad A. Mirkin, a world leader in nanotechnology research and its application, who led the study. "Screening a million potentially useful nanoparticles, for example, could take several lifetimes. Once optimised, our tool will enable researchers to pick the winner much faster than conventional methods. We have the ultimate discovery tool."

Using a Northwestern technique that deposits materials on a surface, Mirkin and his team figured out how to make combinatorial libraries of nanoparticles in a very controlled way. (A combinatorial library is a collection of systematically varied structures encoded at specific sites on a surface.) Their study will be published June 24 by the journal Science.

AN OLD ERROR

For 3 billion years, one of the major carriers of information needed for life, RNA, has had a glitch that creates errors when making copies of genetic information. Researchers at The University of Texas at Austin have developed a fix that allows RNA to accurately proofread for the first time. The new discovery, published June 23 in the journal Science, will increase precision in genetic research and could dramatically improve medicine based on a person's genetic makeup.

Certain viruses called retroviruses can cause RNA to make copies of DNA, a process called reverse transcription. This process is notoriously prone to errors because an evolutionary ancestor of all viruses never had the ability to accurately copy genetic material.

The new innovation engineered at UT Austin is an enzyme that performs reverse transcription but can also "proofread," or check its work while copying genetic code. The enzyme allows, for the first time, for large amounts of RNA information to be copied with near perfect accuracy.

"We created a new group of enzymes that can read the genetic information inside living cells with unprecedented accuracy," says Jared Ellefson, a postdoctoral fellow in UT



Austin's Center for Systems and Synthetic Biology. "Overlooked by evolution, our enzyme can correct errors while copying RNA."

Reverse transcription is mainly associated with retroviruses such as HIV. In nature, these viruses' inability to copy DNA accurately may have helped create variety in species over time, contributing to the complexity of life as we know it.

Source: Sciencedaily.com

| FIVE THINGS |

5 EID GIFTS UNDER 1000 TAKAS

NAZIBA BASHER

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



Eid is a time for closeness and celebration. A festival that shows the true spirit of our beautiful religion, families and friends form a more tight-knit bond during this time of the year and they shower each other with presents and blessings. Here are 5 ideas of gifts that you can buy in bulk for your best friends and family members all costing less than a 1000 taka.

- Jewellery:** I'm not going to pretend like I came up with this brilliant idea. Jewellery is always pretty much the go-to gifts for anyone, at anytime, for any occasion. You can find good, ethnic jewellery within a 1000 taka in shops like Aarong, Piran and Ideas.
- Phone accessories:** Given that phones mean so much to people nowadays, having invested their whole life in them after the introduction of 'smartphones', people also like dressing them up with different kinds of accessories. You can buy the cell phone charms, back covers, or even G-masks from malls such as Rifles Square or Bashundhara City.
- Cufflinks and ties:** I remember once going to Almas and being very pleasantly surprised at these items. Very classy and elegant, these tie and cufflink sets are perfect for men who like dressing the part.
- Key rings/ key charms:** These little items can be very good gifts for people of all ages. You can find cute quirky key rings in shops like Archies or Hallmark, or pretty much any gift shop around. Almas and Priyo have these items available as well, all in affordable prices.
- Notebooks and Stationary:** Personally, these are my favourite presents! If you have friends who are book-nerds, love writing, or just even keep journals, these presents are gold! You can find good, affordable notebooks in stores like New Market, Aziz Supermarket, or any bookshop around. There are plenty of online stores selling customised notebooks as well, take your pick!

With such a list of presents, you can be sure to buy presents in bulk and make sure you leave no one out. Buy a precious little something for each and every important person in your life, and celebrate Eid with the utmost elation! ■