

Why we must build specialised research universities

The Rohingya crisis Bangladesh has done its part, UN must do its own

THE call of the prime minister to the world body to do more for a permanent resolution of the Rohingya crisis, of which the only country to have suffered and endured the brunt has been Bangladesh, needs to be iterated constantly. It must be said that the UN for its part has tried to see a peaceful and permanent solution of the catastrophe, entirely the making of Myanmar, and also to ameliorate the sufferings of the Rohingya refugees through its relevant agencies. But a political resolution has been repeatedly stonewalled by several countries, bringing all efforts of the UN in this regard to naught.

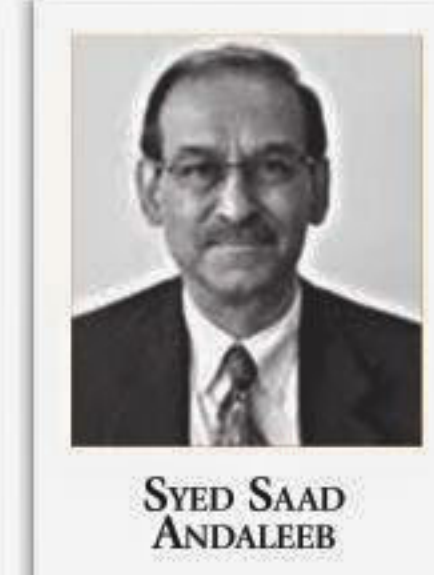
And this is where, we feel, the UN's diplomatic acumen and potency need to be exercised to its capacity to convince some of the permanent members of the Security Council, to put petty economic and commercial interests aside for the wider consideration of human rights and dignity of an ethnic minority made victim of whimsical policies and predatory actions of a military junta.

For its part Bangladesh has done all that is possible. But that has not been without the attendant costs on the environmental, human and social levels. The security concerns that stem from a situation where nearly a million people of various ages are penned in a very restricted area cannot be overlooked. It's past the time for laudatory comments on how well Bangladesh has done to accommodate the Rohingyas, instead some practical actions like engaging the Myanmar authorities more intensely and convincing them to ensure a peaceful environment for the Rohingyas to return should be taken. Time has come to work on a definitive timeframe and getting all the stakeholders to commit to stick to it.

Hospital commissioning stuck in red tape Patients deprived of health services

IT is quite astonishing to find that a newly constructed 250 bed hospital in 2017 has not been commissioned due to an inter-departmental row over pending electricity bills. The new building was constructed at a cost of Tk 26 crore under the Health Population and Nutrition Centre Development Project as an extension of the Bagerhat Sadar Hospital. We are informed that the Bagerhat Public Works Department (PWD) has issued a bill of Tk 11.3 lakh against Bagerhat civil surgeon, and this is the snag. The issue of outstanding bills has resulted in a flurry of letters exchanged between the health ministry and PWD but nothing has transpired over the last two years.

In the meantime, patients are being deprived of services despite the fact that the new building is ready. The new facility is a modern health facility that will have intensive care unit (ICU), CT scan, outdoor treatment, etc. These are critical services for the thousands of patients in a district town and that is precisely why the hospital was extended in the first place. However, we fail to see why this issue has not been prioritised over the last two years and a solution found. This delay inevitably translates into patients with serious conditions in Bagerhat having to resort to much more expensive treatment in private hospitals or going to Dhaka. These out-of-pocket expenditures are a major drain on people. The relevant authorities should sort out the bureaucratic issues as soon as possible so that patients in Bagerhat can have access to the services they need in their own district.



SYED SAAD ANDALEEB

"It is most difficult to get people on the path to research and publication. That culture, that appetite, that scholarly commitment has eroded considerably. [They] LOVE the microphone, they HATE the pen."
 — Ahrar Ahmad

HAVING spent time in a leadership role in a private university in Bangladesh, I was keenly interested in the collective culture of research in the country. Interactions at both public and private universities made it apparent that the role, value and need for research are acknowledged but not well-understood. For many, it is seen mainly as a means for promotion. There is also an actively anti-research group that downplays or degrades the value of research. For this group, time is better spent in petty politics or trivial projects which add little value to either the institution or society. This aversion is reflected in the Times Higher Education rankings: not a single university from Bangladesh showed up in the Emerging Economies University Rankings 2019! None are deemed world class.

Importance of research universities
 Research and use of knowledge have been fundamental to the ascendance of the western world in global importance and influence, providing immense gains from new discoveries. Given the enormous prospects of research, a recent news headline goes: *China Expands Research Funding, Luring U.S. Scientists and Students.*

The importance accorded to research in the advanced countries has led to the creation of a category of universities—research universities (RUs)—whose fundamental mission is problem-solving and discovering new and useful knowledge to drive change. "Nobel Prize winners routinely come from the ranks of these institutions. Professors are evaluated primarily on the papers they write and the research dollars they attract. Graduate students, who represent the number two priority at research universities, facilitate much of the research at these universities."

Vibrant and highly visible in the global knowledge infrastructure, they are immersed in challenging and rigorous work, passionately involved in discovery, pursuing new realms of knowledge as trailblazers, and engaged in a collaborative process of learning involving teacher and student.

The student-teacher model places learners in a new light—not as products or customers of the institutions, but as co-creators of knowledge. The process also incentivises the learners to be associated with new discoveries, not to mention

the elating experience that follows with recognition and new opportunities.

RUs, with access to the latest resources, equipment and technology, often create new courses and curriculum and offer advanced programmes. They provide advanced education for academics, policymakers, and public and private sector professionals, preparing them for the 21st century. RUs also play a significant role in regional and national economic development. According to one source, the biotech industry was conceived and integrated into the economy almost entirely by RUs.

RUs also add to cultural vitality by helping produce strong and inclusive communities. In many countries, RUs have significantly advanced the state of medicine and healthcare. Many have teacher certification programmes to enhance pedagogical and related skills. Evidence of dramatic change is all around us, with many of these change-making innovations being conceived at top-ranked universities.

not serve as mere bystanders offering borrowed knowledge crafted in other countries.

It often creates a stir when a RU attracts distinguished scholars with strong credentials in their fields who bring the promise of high-profile projects, funding, publications, acclaim, and a growing reputation on a global scale based on their ability to produce big discoveries and scientific breakthroughs.

The prescient Bangladeshi RU
 Flagship RUs must emerge in the academic landscape in Bangladesh. With their research missions, they must build strong graduate programmes that attract the best and the brightest who wish to build research/academic careers. The RUs must offer high quality master's, MPhil and PhD degrees to equip tertiary education and various other sectors of society with well-trained "research professionals" recognised for their specialised skills.

RUs have deep implications for Bangladesh to become a developed

research. It is thus important to consider categorising faculty into research or teaching streams. Research faculty must be given smaller teaching loads, autonomy (with accountability) and seed funding so that they can concentrate on research and seek resources to build appropriate research infrastructures.

On the larger canvas, policymaking bodies have been benign, inept, or even negligent about nurturing research potential. This must change. One is hard-pressed to find a clear vision and strategy for nurturing research in tertiary education. Part of the fault may be attributed to academia for producing low calibre research. Misappropriation of funds in the name of research is also of some concern. Conversations in academia further suggest how funding for research is dependent on who you know.

Building a meaningful and enduring research culture is an arduous process. When brought about, it could potentially launch faculty into an exciting intellectual journey, entangled in a web of evolving ideas, pushing the limits of knowledge, while addressing local challenges. In this milieu, faculty and students interact extensively, especially beyond the classroom (launching a new pedagogy). Students work with other students, critiquing, discovering, integrating, and applying their evolving knowledge structures. Partaking in international collaborative research ventures can be the icing on the cake.

For the above vision to materialise, focus ought to be on the next generation of academics (our generation has had far too many non-performers) whose mission will be to pursue exciting avenues of knowledge, primarily of relevance to the country and its aspirations. To make research central to their careers, they must be shown the many payoffs: psychological, emotional, financial, social, intellectual and reputational. As they begin to make significant contributions, the resulting self-satisfaction can be deep and enduring. Imbued with Kazi Nazrul Islam's, "Aj shrishi shukher ullashey (the rapture of creation)" they can be a truly transformative force in the nation's development and evolution.

It is time for serious discussion on what is desirable and what is possible in the realm of nurturing RUs in Bangladesh. Many Bangladeshi-born researchers, our pride, occupy prestigious positions in the global knowledge architecture. The stellar accomplishments of M Zahid Hassan, a physicist involved with the discovery of a massless particle (the Weyl fermion), provide evidence for us to say: "Yes, we can!"

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Many research-driven universities, forming research clusters in specialised knowledge arenas, are creating *knowledge parks* in collaboration with industry and private partners to motivate start-ups and obtain patent grants. RUs in many countries participate in community and government initiatives, providing academic expertise and technical assistance. They also provide training for workforce development. In many countries, they are major employers creating innovative work opportunities.

Properly designed and managed, RUs can transform Bangladesh society, something like in Malaysia's Ninth Development Plan which aspires: "to transform the country into a knowledge-based economy, where universities are expected to contribute significantly" (Salmi 2009). With research and local discoveries, RUs can become active participants and precursors of change,

country by 2041. It requires a strong edifice of knowledge workers for a country to graduate to developed-country status. The alternative is to depend on outsiders. Without appropriate interventions and facilitating structures, along with a body of regulations (e.g., plagiarism, intellectual property protection, etc.), to foster knowledge creation and innovation, development as anticipated may be unsustainable and ephemeral.

An unfortunate fact is that the role of research in our universities has been minimised or marginalised by policies, while time devoted to teaching has been maximised. Teaching full loads (roughly around 36 credits per academic year and perhaps more) in a corporatised model of revenues and costs can cut substantially into faculty time to conduct research. The dependence on adjunct faculties is a whole other story of cost-cutting at the expense of quality education, especially

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

Protection of intellectual property in sports tech can be a game-changer



FARID AHMAD

THE countdown for the Cricket World Cup 2019 has begun. Very few of us know the amount of planning required for such an event. To give an idea of the size of the operation,

Steve Elworthy, MD of the 2019 World Cup, while talking to SportsPro, pointed to the 350 training sessions planned for the competing squads at match day venues and out grounds.

The International Cricket Council is responsible for the sponsorship sales and digital strategy. Media giant Star holds its broadcasting right. For the England and Wales Cricket Board, hosting the tournament means creating national excitement and converting it into generational benefits using the revenue created. As spectators, if we close our eyes and think about what the tournament is going to be like, perhaps we won't imagine the one-billion-pound worth of TV deal that has been signed for the live coverage to more than one billion fans. A technology and data strategy is in place to learn about the sell-out English crowd, groundsmen are talking about drop-in pitch technology, and the soft drink giant Coca-Cola has agreed to refresh the crowd with their non-alcoholic beverage—among many other deals that have been signed.

In the past, people had to rush to stadiums to get tickets to watch live matches. If they didn't get those elusive tickets, they had to try to get a glimpse from the rooftop of some nearby building. But today, with advances in technology, one can just watch the World Cup on television. Technology is now used in a variety of ways in cricket matches, where so much rests on split-second, game-changing moments. Many breakthrough technologies like Spidercam, Hot Spot, Snick-o-Meter, Hawk-Eye, Light Meter, Stump Camera,

Speed Gun, etc. are assembled for tracking individual performances. The use of robot as umpires has also been proposed to dismiss controversies. All these technologies and businesses that enhance the game of cricket are subjects of intellectual property.

Wondering why I am talking about cricket? Because this year's World Intellectual Property Day campaign—Reach for Gold: IP and Sports—takes a closer look inside the world of sports. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) celebrates World Intellectual Property Day on April 26 every year across the globe to create awareness on the role of intellectual property to encourage innovation and

patents or trade secrets—are taking sports to new heights. The use of smart sports equipment is now widespread, making sports safer. Sporting events and sponsorship deals are underpinned by trademark rights. The strategic use of intellectual property rights in the world of sports has significant potential to support economic development in a variety of ways. Sports has become a multi-billion-dollar global industry. Business relationships built on intellectual property rights help to secure the economic value of sports. Sports businesses use patents and designs to foster the development of new sports technologies, materials, training and improve athletic

includes patents for novel inventions with industrial applicability, distinctive trademarks, industrial designs and geographical indications for origin, qualities or reputation. Copyright covers literary works such as novels, poems, plays, films, music, and artistic works. What are intellectual property rights? Intellectual property rights are like any other property right. They allow creators or owners of patents, trademarks or copyrighted works to benefit from their own work or investment in a creation. Why promote and protect intellectual property? An effective intellectual property system can foster economic development, spur the creation of new jobs and industries, promote foreign investment, innovation and creativity and professional marketing of a product or service, and enhance the quality of life. There is a positive correlation between economic development and intellectual property rights protection.

World Intellectual Property Day is a great opportunity to get people interested in such issues. And Bangladesh definitely needs to make certain decisions and pledges to prosper in its sporting sector. World Intellectual Property Day is observed here like everywhere else in the world. Patent and Copyright Offices of Bangladesh and others celebrate the day by organising national symposiums. The system of intellectual property, however, is not beyond criticism. For example, Pharmaceutical and Genetic Test patents prevent alternative life-saving drugs from entering the market. Thus maintaining high prices for medication and hindering public access to get a second opinion about the accuracy of the results of such patented tests. According to Lex Machina, which keeps a database on intellectual property disagreements in the US, the number of complaints lodged has been increasing immensely every year. Hopefully, WIPO will look into these issues for the sake of progress.



Technology is now used in a variety of ways in cricket matches. PHOTO: AFP

creativity that drives human progress. This year, on the eve of the Cricket World Cup, WIPO will delve into the world of sports and explore how intellectual property rights, including plant variety protection for turf on sports pitches, support the global sports ecosystem. It will celebrate the sporting heroes and innovators behind the scenes to boost sports' performance and its global appeal.

Technology has always had a role to play in the sporting arena. Innovative technologies including artificial intelligence—typically protected by

performance as well as engage with fans worldwide. Trademarks and branding maximise commercial revenue from sponsorship, merchandising and licensing agreements.

A few frequently asked questions may be answered here to create awareness on intellectual property. What is intellectual property? According to WIPO, intellectual property refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works and symbols, names and images used in commerce. Intellectual property is divided into two categories: Industrial Property

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Erosion of morals

A good character is the most important thing in life. According to John Ruskin, losing money or health is no loss at all when compared to the loss of one's character.

It is important to develop one's moral character and ingrain good ethical principles from childhood. And this must primarily be done by the family when the individual is still a child, as well as later on, at school and through the education system.

Through education, a person must be taught how to behave with others, respect their elders, and importantly, women. But unfortunately, it seems that children and young boys are not being taught to respect women in our society, which is why stalking and sexual harassment of women have become very common.

We need to recognise that this is a major problem in our society today. And we need to realise that such widespread mistreatment and harassment of girls cannot be tolerated anymore.

Each one of us, whenever we witness such incidents, must speak up so that these incidents do not go unnoticed or unpunished.

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