

# THOUGHTS AND INITIATIVES

## 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NATIONAL INNOVATOR'S AWARD (NIA) FUND IN BANGLADESH

Dear friend,

BDI has established a National Innovator's Award (NIA) Fund in Bangladesh in order to award one prize each year to the most outstanding innovator or producer for his efforts in production and innovation in Bangladesh. BDI has opened the Fund in 1993 with an initial amount of 5,000.00 US dollars that was collected from the BDI members and well-wishers in 1992. The BDI-NIA account will be managed by the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) with the supervision of the Vice Chancellor of BUET.

This year our target is to raise another 15,000 US dollars for the BDI-NIA Fund. As of July, we have collections and pledges for 9000 US dollars, which means we have to raise an additional 6000 US dollars in the remaining months. Please participate in this effort by sending your tax-deductible contribution to:

BDI

812 Hope Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15220

15160 SE 54<sup>th</sup> Place, Bellevue, WA 98006.

The proceeds earned on this account shall be awarded as prize-money each year. The original deposit in the BDI-NIA Fund shall remain intact and continue to grow in future with more contributions from people like yourself.

The Institute of Appropriate Technology (IAT) of BUET, under the direction of the Vice Chancellor, has agreed to help in selecting

the innovator deserving the award each year, and in handling the press, media and other activities.

### MOTIVATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF BDI-NIA FUND

An average Bangladeshi earns about fifty cents a day which is equivalent to about three pounds of rice in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Development Initiative (BDI) has set a goal of raising the average daily per capita income of Bangladesh to a decent level by the turn of the century. How is this to be achieved?

Currently Bangladesh predominantly produces a variety of consumer goods for domestic consumption and export. The bulk of these goods is produced in the informal sector as family businesses. The quality of these goods is almost always poor. In the garment, cosmetics and related industries, a few relatively large and organized companies exist which produce consumer goods of reasonable quality. The machineries used by these industries, e.g., garment machines, are imported from other countries. As a result, while Bangladesh employs a labor force whose educational level is hardly at fifth grade and which earns only about fifty cents per person per day as mentioned above, the investments made by the Bangladeshi industries toward the purchase of these machineries go into supporting a highly educated labor force having a daily per capita income as high as fifty US dollars or more in other countries.

The production of 'international quality' modern machineries requires a Bachelor's, Master's or a Doctorate level labor force at different phases of research, development and manufacture. This labor force in turn demands modern scientific and technological methods from the academicians for its operations and itself spawns modern technologies at the same time.

The advanced industrialized countries have succeeded socio-economically because they hold the keys to these modern

scientific and technological know-how. Bangladesh, however, has the potential to engage in the production of the means of production, i.e., the above-mentioned machineries, at least in some sectors. The family-business type production of machineries that is currently going on in the Dholai Khal area near Dhaka is a prime example of the existing capabilities of the production of machineries in Bangladesh.

BDI would like to support activities such as the one in the Dholai Khal area and in other parts of the country. The ultimate objective is to transform these small enterprises into big corporations in not so distant a future, and enable them to produce all sorts of researched and engineered durable and capital goods. At present these producers can build machines or machine parts if they have access to appropriate drawings and specifications of the parts to be built.

The continuing cycle of poverty and underdevelopment in Bangladesh can be broken only by building the production capacities of durable, intermediate and capital goods and enhancing the quality of these goods through scientific and engineering research. This is the only path to a stable and permanent change in Bangladesh and thus to our desired goal of achieving a decent average national daily per capita income by the year 2000. The BDI-NIA constitutes only a small step in the right direction. Please be a part of this noble undertaking by making a contribution to the BDI NIA Fund. Make checks payable to BDI.

(This statement is approved by the Executive Committee of BDI. BDI is a non-profit non-political federal tax-exempt corporation based in Pennsylvania, USA. Note: BDI has no overhead expenses.)