

A family and a possible dream

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Smart Bangladesh naturally means a technology-based state-building process, where every citizen will get a golden opportunity to guarantee their rights and fulfill their duties without suffering. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) 2019 data, the total population is about 18.57 million. The total number of residential houses in the country is 3 crore 59 lakh 90 thousand 951. About 57 percent of the total population, or about 94 million people, are under 29 years of age. (Sixth Census -BBS). Where it is possible to make Smart Bangladesh a reality only through the correct implementation of the words Smart Citizen, Smart Economy, Smart Government and Smart Society with a member of each family.

In view of this, the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said to prepare a plan for 2021 to 2041 and make a delta plan in 2100 to protect the Bengal delta from climate impacts, develop the country, and make the people of the country live 'beautifully, healthily and smartly'. Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman established the country's first satellite earth station on June 14, 1975 at Betunia in Rangamati district. Through which the use of information technology started in Bangladesh. The current government announced Vision 2021 as an election promise in the 2008 general elections, the main objective of which was to ensure the socio-economic development of the Bangladeshi people through the establishment of Digital Bangladesh. The government is moving forward to build a Smart Bangladesh of 2041 through de-documentation, e-learning, startups, freelancers, cashless society and paperless offices.

Recently UNDP and the Bangladesh Hi-Tech Park Authority (BHTPA) have embarked on an innovative partnership to co-launch the 'One Family, One SEED' Initiative. Its aims to pave the way for 'Smart Employment and Entrepreneurship Development (SEED)' opportunities, empowering households and families across Bangladesh. We know that 'One Family, One SEED' Initiative is a visionary project by the government, which aspires to extend 'SEED' opportunities to at least one member from every household and family in Bangladesh. This holistic approach recognises the potential of each individual and household to contribute to the nation's progress.

Actually, Empowering the nation's youth as entrepreneurs involves providing training, capital, and technological assistance. In collaboration with UNDP, the Hi-Tech Park Authority initiated the 'One Family, One Seed' initiative, envisioning to generate employment opportunities for fifty per cent of the country's six crore families by 2041, in alignment with the aspirations of building a Smart Bangladesh. The 'One Family, One SEED' Initiative comprises a spectrum of programs and activities. From fostering digital economic inclusion in distant communities to grassroots-level promotion of the startup culture and from empowering individuals to knowledge-based initiatives aimed at fortifying the national entrepreneurship, innovation, and startup ecosystem, this initiative signifies a comprehensive approach to nation-building. In addition, youngsters are now very tech savvy. Their will power is also strong. That is why educated youth of this country are encouraged to become rural technology service delivery agents. Now as young entrepreneurs are selling their agricultural services by buying combined harvesters at subsidized prices, a day will come when they will use crop robotics' technology to further revolutionize agriculture in Bangladesh.

Educated youth of tomorrow will build efficient agricultural structure by using appropriate amount of fertilizers, water, seeds and pesticides in the welfare of sensors. Emphasis is placed on the joint contribution of government, industry and academia to build Smart Bangladesh. By 2031, we can earn 20 billion dollars in foreign currency by exporting ICT products and services, if everyone is focused on implementing a comprehensive plan. For this the most policy support should be given to building our smart manpower. There is a shortage of 3 million IT skilled manpower in the US, 1.5 million in Europe, 1 million in the UK and 8.5 million in Japan. Only by exporting suitable manpower can we earn huge foreign exchange. At the same time, we can create numerous small digital entrepreneurs. That is why there is a need to find ways to train, mentor and finance young people interested in 'start-ups'. This job of 'midwife' is supposed to be done by our universities and training institutes.

Young people have great potential to be creative. Develop closer links between government, industry and academia. Hopefully, this connection will increase in the coming days. Because we have smart leadership. There are far-reaching plans. And there is a big dream of becoming a developed country. Dr. Bernard Lawn said, 'He who can see the invisible can make the impossible possible'. Because Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina were able to see the invisible, independent sovereign Bangladesh today has transformed into 'Digital Bangladesh' and is moving towards the implementation of 'Smart Bangladesh' by 2041. 'Smart Bangladesh: ICT Masterplan 2041' has been prepared by verifying the best practices of the world's leading countries in information technology, which focuses on artificial intelligence, machine learning, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, blockchain, nanotechnology in the future, energy, health, communication, agriculture, education, healthcare, trade, transportation, environment, energy and resources, infrastructure, economy, trade, governance, financial transactions, supply chain, security, through the use of modern and innovative technologies like 3D printing, entrepreneurship, community and other sectors will be managed with greater efficiency. In this ICT master plan, a total of 40 mega projects are proposed to be undertaken, one of the objectives of which is to ensure that the ICT sector contributes at least 20 percent to the national economy by 2041.

Digital Bangladesh initiatives are being integrated with Smart Bangladesh initiatives to adopt 4th Industrial Revolution and Smart Bangladesh friendly plans, policies and strategies. Ultimately, if the demographic dividend can be properly harnessed through the 4th industrial revolution to transform Bangladesh into a 'Smart Bangladesh', the goal is achievable. We can express the slogan of the 2018 Awami League election manifesto 'Youth power, Bangladesh's prosperity' in this way: 'We will use the power of youth, build a smart Bangladesh 2041'. We are hopeful that we will be able to build a cost-effective, sustainable, intelligent, knowledge-based, innovative Smart Bangladesh by 2041, depending on these four main foundations – Smart Citizen, Smart Government, Smart Economy and Smart Society.

Rabindranath wrote in the article 'Goals and Education', "What we can expect, is not drawn anywhere in the country in a very thick line." It is the right to hope that makes man strong."

Undoubtedly, journey towards hope is the greatest wealth of a nation. That is the real development journey. The source of that wealth is our great liberation war and father of the nation's dream becoming 'Sonar Bangla' through young generation.

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