

23 March, 2021

Prof. Golam Newaz  
Foundation for Charitable Activities in Bangladesh

Dear Prof. Newaz –

I trust these greetings find you and your family all in good health.

Here I summarize recent activities that bear on the purpose of my 2019 donation to the Foundation for Charitable Activities in Bangladesh (FCAB) and suggest some options for the coming years.

My basic motivation was to honor the memory of my late colleague, Muhammad Arif, by promoting scientific education, broadly construed, in Bangladesh. An opportunity to make a first visible impression was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the experimental realization of Bose-Einstein condensation (2000) and the centenary of the University of Dhaka (2021), which could be celebrated by an international physics conference in Dhaka in February 2021. Such a conference could establish relationships between U.S. and Bangladeshi physicists that might help the progress of physics in Bangladesh.

Work on this project began in November 2019, led by Prof. Sultana Nahar of Ohio State University. We recruited eminent speakers – Nobel Laureate Eric Cornell and Princeton professor Zahid Hasan – and engaged high-level attention from the University of Dhaka and the U. S. Ambassador to Bangladesh. The coronavirus pandemic intervened, and in September 2020 we decided that a conference of the usual type would not be possible. However, our conference was moved to a virtual format, conducted with the Zoom telecommunications program during February 5-7: **The International e-Conference on Physics – 2021**.

This meeting was deemed by our Bangladesh hosts to be most successful. Several of the speakers were elected Fellows of the Bangladesh Physical Society and were invited to return for another meeting in February 2022, hopefully in person. No specific planning of the 2022 meeting has begun yet, but that should start soon.

As it happens, we got a good start on the objectives of the original plan without spending any of the original FCAB bequest, since there were no travel expenses. Professor Nahar paid some incidental expenses herself. By having already conducted a successful meeting of this type jointly with the premiere physics organization in Bangladesh, Prof. Nahar and I are well positioned to get financial support for subsequent efforts from the U.S. National Science Foundation. For example, this first conference did not have sessions featuring student talks. It would be quite beneficial for Bangladeshi students to be able to present talks at international meetings, or indeed to stage their *own* international meeting as is done by student chapters of the Optical Society of America.

What I suggest to FCAB is that it review the fund balance and reserve sufficient funds to pay travel expenses of several senior U.S. physicists to Dhaka in February 2022, and Prof. Nahar and

I will seek additional financial support from US science agencies and other foundations. FCAB backing gives us the ability to make up-front commitments to speakers well in advance; if our funding proposals are successful, there may be no (or little) actual cost to FCAB, as was the case this year.

At the same time, FCAB might solicit suggestions from the Bangladesh Physical Society, about other expenditures that would have a lasting benefit for physics education in Bangladesh, with a cost of up to \$25,000.

Yours faithfully –

Charles Clark