

India Post News Service

Living the American Dream Frank Islam

Sunday, 07.13.2008, 10:48pm (GMT-7)

VIRGINIA: Frank Islam is a name synonymous with the American Dream. A native of Aligarh, India, Islam was not exactly born with a silver spoon in his mouth.

But in 1994, when he bought QSS, a support services organization in information technology and aero space engineering, for a "small amount of money", he quickly established a growth of an unbelievable 55,000 percent, which made QSS the largest individual owned company in the United States of America.

After selling his company in Jan 2008, to former Presidential candidate Ross Perot for a whopping \$300 million, Islam a proud alumnus of the Aligarh Muslim University, is busy with his new venture, FII Investments and a diagnostic imaging center he bought in Orlando with a 164-slice CT scan. To get an insight into the world of Frank Islam, India Post decided to talk to him in his lavish office in the upscale Tyson's Corner business area in Virginia.

IP: How would you describe yourself?

FI: There's an old proverb: 'I am like a wave; I exist only so long as I continue moving forward.' That sums it up - I am a man who likes to always move myself forward, whether through continuing to educate myself, by impacting the world around me through philanthropy, or as an entrepreneur, trying to push the envelope of achievement. I would describe my approach to any endeavor as one of "cautious pragmatism". It is important to me to choose things that will have an impact.

IP: What specific goals have you established for your occupation and life?

FI: In all things, my main goal is to be happy. I think that if you lose focus on what's really important - happiness - then what's the point? But understand that the pursuit of happiness is not always easy, but a choice that requires effort and, the recognition is not always in an ending, but often in the journey.

Specifically, I'd say that I always wanted to create a great company where people would be proud to work, and if it made money, even better. I also always wanted to help people who didn't have the same opportunities that I have. And I wanted to learn as much as I can about everything.

IP: What does it take to be successful in this career?

FI: I have tried to synthesize what it takes to be successful as an entrepreneur in the technology sector in a guidebook that I am preparing, called the "ICT Executives' Business Guidebook." In that, I talk about what kind of planning you need to do, how to go about marketing, and how to position yourself to customers.

At the core of all of it is just common sense - find the need in the market, develop a solution, and deliver it effectively and efficiently. Ultimately, it comes down to providing value to your customer. And of course, you make mistakes and learn from them. Generally, the same things are necessary to be successful in any career -- effort, perseverance and focus.

IP: How do you evaluate success?

FI: Everyone has a different definition of success. Success to me is achieving the goals I set for myself, enjoying what I do and learning from the experience. It's very much an individual phenomenon. I think the common denominator among successful people, though, is that they think in terms of "I can, I will, I am" as opposed to "would have, could have, should have, and won't."

IP: What's in the offing for the future?

FI: I plan on building the FI Investment Group to become a world class financial investment firm. We will be making direct investments, as well as forming debt, equity and hedge funds with like-minded investors, which will leverage my internally generated cash, as well as my experiences in business.

I plan on giving back to the world through my foundation and a charity as well as participating in many civic and community organizations. Hopefully, through all of these endeavors, I will have an opportunity to continue to learn, enjoy myself and make an impact. And most of all, I plan on having fun and enjoying life with my wife.