



An Exciting Visit to Dell Malaysia Plant

Mohammad Abdul Haque
(Returning from Penang, Malaysia)

Malaysia has an important position in the ICT sector in South East Asia. China manufactures numerous ICT products. Many of the ICT products are also produced in Malaysia. Dell is one of the top ICT brands to invest heavily in manufacturing in Malaysia. In late December, I had the opportunity to visit Dell's manufacturing plant. I, along with a group of ICT journalists from Bangladesh- Bhuiyan Muhammad Inam Lenin, Shahidul K K M Shuvro, Mehdi Hassan, Pallab Mohaimen, Muhammad Khan, Mojahedul Islam, Tariq Rahman and four employees from Dell Bangladesh- Protap Saha, Atiqur Rahman, B. M. Azam and Mahmud Bin Kayum went to Malaysia. We had a great time there. Aside from visiting the manufacturing plant we did a little bit of sight-seeing.

Our team first arrived at Kuala Lumpur by air. From there, we made a 50 minute plane journey to George Town, the capital of Penang, an important state of the country. The small Penang airport is well-planned and very beautiful. Its capital, George Town, is named after the English King, George II. Around 7,50,000 people live in this beautiful city. Beautiful natural surroundings, modern day architecture coinciding with historical places gave George Town a very unique look. Because of its rich history and beautiful

landscape, George Town was listed on UNESCO's World Heritage Site list. At night, the city looks amazing.

While browsing Internet, I stumbled upon an interesting piece of fact about Penang. During British rule, Penang was under the Presidency of Bengal. Like Dhaka and Kolkata, Penang was ruled by the British from Bengal. It was two hundred years ago. Penang was also an important spice center. Different types of spices had been imported to Bengal from Penang. Which is why, I was interested to take a tour of Penang. Thanks to Dell, my wish came true.

As I have mentioned earlier, the delegation consisted of eight ICT journalists. We enjoyed the tour very much. We went to different places together and talked with different people. Waiting for the plane in the airport or in the bus, we chatted with each other.

On our way to Penang, we crossed a big bridge. There were actually two bridges. We crossed one and the other will be inaugurated within few days. The bridge was more than 13 kilometer long and we crossed it by car. OJ Dicon, a Dell employee, was our tour guide. He informed us that the second bridge was 22 kilometer in length and it will be opened

pretty soon. In Bangladesh, we are now planning to build bridge over the Padma River. I think, our engineers can visit Malaysia and talk with the people who were involved in building these bridges in Penang and gain valuable knowledge.

The Dell Penang factory was first established in 1995 in Bayan Lepas, on Penang island before moving to the current factory in Bukit Tengah on the mainland in 2001. Since then, it only expanded its operation. For the last few years, Dell remained one of top ten best employers in the country which is another reason for my visit to Dell's Penang manufacturing plant. It was 31st December of 2013 and the New Year vacation will start from tomorrow. Hence, there were few people in the factory.

The working environment is very nice. The plant is very neat and clean which makes it a very attractive place to work. The quality of food given to the employees is very good and affordable. During lunch break, the employees took their meals and then resumed working. The plant we visited assembled computer parts. Large number of people works in the plant and employees come from different countries of Asia. We also heard that few Bangladeshi workers work here but most of them were on New Year's vacation. Still, we met with one Bangladeshi worker Alamgir and talked with him.

Dell is always exploring options to increase the skill of its employees and there are many highly skilled employees. The plant also has very good safety precautions. During our visit at the factory site, we saw that the employees were wearing special gloves with long strings to protect themselves from electrocution. Such high safety standards resulted in fewer accidents.

The factory mainly ships Desktop computers and servers. Dell produces a wide range of servers and they are produced in this factory. The plant

also produced All-in-One PCs. The main feature of All-in-One PC is that it has no separate CPU unit like that of desktop. The CPU and other parts are fitted with the monitor. Dell's world famous Blade server is very popular and sold all over the world. With the rise of cloud computing, demand for Dell Blade server is increasing. Servers and desktop computers are manufactured at the facility, and shipments are made to approximately 30 countries, including countries in South Asia and Australia and



Michael Dell and his journey with Dell Inc.

A student at the University of Texas at Austin in 1984, Michael Dell founded the company as PC's Limited with capital of \$1000. Operating from Michael Dell's off-campus dormitory room at Dobie Center, the startup aimed to sell IBM PC-compatible computers built from stock components. Michael Dell started trading in the belief that by selling personal computer systems directly to customers, PC's Limited could better understand customers' needs and provide the most effective computing solutions to meet those needs. Michael Dell dropped out of school in order to focus full-time on his fledgling business, after getting about \$300,000 in expansion-capital from his family. In 1985, the company produced the first computer of its own design — the "Turbo PC", sold for US\$795 — containing an Intel 8088-compatible processor running at a speed of 8 MHz. PC's Limited advertised the systems in national computer magazines for sale directly to consumers, and custom assembled each ordered unit according to a selection of options. This offered buyers prices lower than those of retail brands, but with greater convenience than assembling the components themselves. Although not the first company to use this model, Limited became one of the first to succeed with it. The company grossed more than \$73 million in its first year of trading. In 1987 the company announced that it would change its name to Dell Computer Corporation, because it was more professional than "PC's Limited" and avoided problems with the word "Limited" as a corporate name in Britain. The company set up its first operations in Ireland; eleven more international operations followed within the next four years. In June 1988, Dell's market capitalization grew by \$30 million to



Michael Dell

\$80 million from its June 22 initial public offering of 3.5 million shares at \$8.50 a share. In 1989, Dell Computer set up its first on-site service programs in order to compensate for the lack of local retailers prepared to act as service centers. In 1990, Dell Computer Corporation tried selling its products indirectly through warehouse clubs and computer superstores, but met with little success, and the company re-focused on its more successful direct-to-consumer sales model. In 1992, Fortune magazine included Dell Computer Corporation in its list of the world's 500 largest companies. Michael Dell became the youngest CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Dell was a publicly traded company (NASDAQ: DELL), as well as a component of the NASDAQ-100 and S&P 500, until it was taken private in a leveraged buyout which closed on October 30, 2013. Michael Dell was ranked the 41st richest person in the world on 2012 Forbes list of billionaires, with a net worth of US\$15.9 billion as of March 2012. Dell purchased his first calculator at age seven and encountered an early teletype terminal in junior high. At age 15, after playing with computers at Radio Shack, he got his first computer, an Apple II, which he promptly disassembled to see how it worked. Dell attended Memorial High School in Houston, selling subscriptions to the Houston Post in the summer. While making cold calls, he noted that the persons most likely to purchase subscriptions were those in the process of establishing permanent geographic and social presence; he then targeted this demographic group by collecting names from marriage and mortgage applications. Dell earned \$18,000 that year, exceeding the annual income of his history and economics teacher .

New Zealand.

The most important feature of the Dell manufacturing plant we visited is that it is called Green Factory. As for being a green facility, the factory adheres to Dell's global sustainability practices. It has zero emission and all recyclable materials such as paper, cartons, pallets, plastics, etc. are recycled and reused wherever possible.


Protap Saha of Dell Bangladesh gave us different information on Dell especially, on Dell's manufacturing plant in Malaysia. The plant is spread over an area of two lakh 38 thousand square feet. The entire plant is highly restricted area. On our way to enter the factory, we had to leave our camera at the entrance. The security employee told us that in his seven year of service, he himself could not carry any camera inside the factory. The employees perform wide range of functions. More than 100,000 people work in Dell's manufacturing plants all over the world. The Penang plant employs 5000 employees.

I felt very happy to see Dell's manufacturing site but also felt sad that there are no large scale hardware



Dell Blade Server

manufacturer in Bangladesh. Our's is a country of 160 million people making it a highly lucrative market for computer hardware. Such hardware factory would create jobs for thousands of people and saved money. We could have exported our hardware products to other countries as well. Still, I am hopeful about the ICT sector of Bangladesh. I have been personally involved with this industry for the last twenty years and I observed tremendous development within short span of time. ICT industry developed very late in Bangladesh but we shall manufacture our own PCs one day.

We are deeply indebted to Sonia Bashir Kabir, Country Head, Dell Bangladesh for arranging this exciting tour for us. She played a very important role for establishing Dell in the ICT market of Bangladesh. Sonia started her career at Silicon Valley in USA. Later, she returned to Bangladesh. She oversaw all the aspects of this tour making it an enjoyable and memorable experience for all of us .