

TechNews

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Mama Qadeer Baloch breaks Gandhi's civil disobedience marching record after 84 years

Shireen Gul
COPY EDITOR

We all know life's not fair. We all deal with loss and death of a loved one and it's probably the hardest thing anyone in this world can go through. But what makes the situation worse is when your loved ones are missing. You live every day in dual feeling of hope-fear, hope that they will return and fear that they might not. This is the feeling which many Baluch families are living with since 2007.

Writing history, as Abdul Qadeer Baloch (also referred to as "Mama Qadeer") aged 72, under the aegis of the Voice of Missing Baloch Persons (VMBP) set on foot to Islamabad from Quetta three months ago, hoping to raise awareness about human rights violations in Baluchistan and demand the recovery of their missing relatives. The families and supporters of the people reportedly whisked away by intelligence agencies from various parts of the restive Baluchistan province, reached Rawalpindi on Thursday, travelling more than 1,245 miles in adverse weather conditions and intimidation by government agencies.

Many people joined them for the long march. One name which is really worth mentioning is, Ali Haider Baloch, an 11-year-old boy, who stopped going to school and joined the long march with his elder sister,

Saba. Why did he do this? He did this because his father, Ramzan Baloch was abducted in front of his eyes. Farzana Majid Baloch, secretary general of VBMP and the moving spirit behind this historical long march, is not a layman.

In fact, she is a well-educated woman who is well aware of what she is doing. She did her master's in biochemistry from Baluchistan University and has been raising voice for the protection of her younger brother Zakir Majid Baloch since 2009. But when there was no light at the end of the tunnel, she chose the beacon of hope and initiated this long march with her fellow beings.

Recently, Pakistani media has been emphasizing about the thing that Mama Qadeer and Ali Haider Baloch have made history and are unaware of this fact. They reportedly "broke the 84-year-old record of Mahatma Gandhi, who travelled 390 kilometres on foot from Ahmadabad to Dandi as part of his famous salt march. When Mahatma Gandhi started his march to protest against the salt laws of British Government in the colonial India he was 61 years old in 1930, the youngest among the first 80 marchers with Gandhi was 18 years old," according to The News, Pakistan.

I urge all Pakistanis to get out of their stereotype obsession and preoccupation with making stupid world records. This man (Mama Qadeer) did not initiate a long march

to make a world record or to be flattered with such prominence. His young son Jalil Reki, a political activist, was kidnapped and was killed in the custody of secret agencies. He does not want recognition for his so-called "greater-than-Gandhi-record." He needs, and indeed deserves, justice. His sons' (he says all of Baluchistan's thousands of missing persons are his sons) murderers should be brought to justice.

I do not deny the fact that they didn't make history. It's a reality that they did make history but unfortunately our real rulers are deaf and dumb. They are wall-faced and stone-hearted.

Defense Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, who visited their camp in December 2013 in Karachi, assured Mama Qadeer Baloch that their dear ones will be produced in courts soon. The Defense Minister of Pakistan himself is defenseless. He can't defend either Baluch pedestrian marchers or human rights.

He won't plead the case of Baluch hushed voices in the torture cells. He made a false promise to them. All I can say to my people is: "don't give up because we still have something to give." Nothing is really over until the moment we stop trying and soon this dark dawn will turn into a bright day where falsehood is bound to perish and truth to triumph.

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UTSAV GANDHI

CAMPUS

IEEE@IIT project team participates in E-Week events at Rice Campus

Vijai Baskar
COPY EDITOR

The project group "Ardupilot," within IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) were present at E-Week, which occurred at Rice Campus on February 22. E-Week was a fun, free, family interactive event providing children and adults the opportunity to experience and explore many fields of science and engineering, through interactive displays and presentations. The 30th Annual Engineers Week Expo was geared towards children from kindergarten to eighth grade; however, all ages enjoyed the event.

The Ardupilot team built a small game with two Arduinos. Each Arduino was connected to a LED (light emitting diode) Seven-segment display. One Arduino was connected to a button, while a second Arduino was connected to an RFID (radio frequency

identification) scanner module.

In order for the kids to win a prize, they were supposed to hold the plastic RFID tag against the scanner, which changes the number on the LED display; then hold down the button connected to the other Arduino, changing the other LED display's number to match the numbers. Both numbers were randomly calculated, which added a level of difficulty. Another level of difficulty came with the different timings of the random numbers for the RFID side. A new number was generated every 100ms (milliseconds) whilst holding down the button generated a new number every 1000ms (1 second.) For the adults, they tried to match the numbers without having to let go of either the button or the RFID tag which tested their reaction time.

The winners were given a lollipop, but could also choose an IIT button. Some additional games were developed at the event

using a small LCD (liquid-crystal display) screen, but those were not completely successful with the number of parts available.

The current project members of Ardupilot are: Changqing "Shark" Wang, Boyang "Bobo" Dong, Eric Tendian, Ning "Allen" Xin, Weiwei Wu and Shengfeng Tang. They have accumulated experience with using embedded systems such as Arduinos, and so will be using their knowledge to build a UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.)

They currently have the frame parts that are ready to be assembled, and are investigating control systems.

They may end up working with AIAA on their UAV project, or will be joining forces with the quad-copter team to program the quad-copter (as it is using an Arduino as the base) and make it autonomous. Any further info can be found on the website <http://mypages.iit.edu/~ieee/project/ardupilot/>.



Photos by Vijai Baskar