

Feature

EDUCATION is the key for all development. The present status of Bangladesh as one of the poorest countries in the world is a clear witness that the key didn't work.

It's a proof that the system suffers from a major crisis, and the crisis lies in its very objective. Walking without a direction takes one nowhere.

The system must work with a sound objective. Only then it helps knowing the right direction of life at every crossroads — the basic need of every human.

Man is not human by birth, in this regard he differs from other beings. He has to go through a learning process to attain human qualities.

The country's existing education system is the legacy of the British education policy in India. It has proved its efficacy in producing a class of people who worked, fought and gave lives for the British in India and other parts of the world.

In Bangladesh, it caused more dependence than development. Since the birth of this independent nation-state, various bodies were entrusted to frame an appropriate education policy.

An arena of diversities Education helps harmonious development of mind. It facilitates exchange of views among individuals.

Star Special

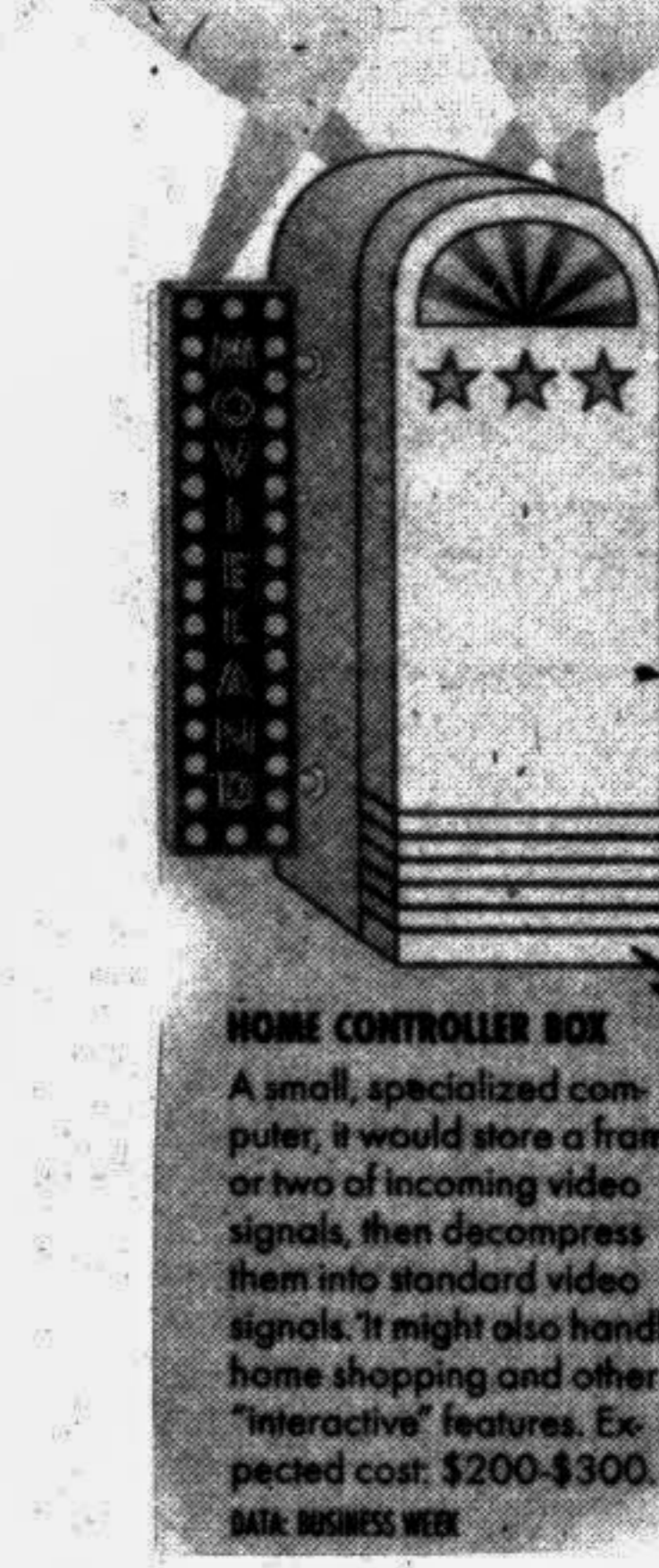
They can't Wait to Serve You

Mainframe makers hope to cash in on the digital video market

ON Jan 12, Bell Atlantic Corp gave makers of large-scale computers a shot in the arm. The Philadelphia-based Baby Bell announced that it will spend some \$ 25 million for three new supercomputers plus software to build a first leg of the Information Superhighway.

priced a \$1 million and up are shrinking by 20% annually. And massively parallel, supercomputers have been slow to catch on. So the companies are refitting mainframes, adding new software to supers — and designing all-new, specialized "video servers" to feed the coming interactive-TV market.

video-based business-information services. Puzzled factory workers, for instance, could call up video clips to brush up on difficult assembly procedures. Between the Information Superhighway and business markets, Digital Equipment Corp officials reckon that by the year 2000, some 10% of its revenues will come from giant servers.



PUTTING DIGITAL VIDEO AT YOUR FINGERTIPS VIDEO SERVER This computer would store hundreds of feature movies, digitally compressed to about 2 billion bytes each. Movies would be transmitted to thousands of homes at a rate of about 200,000 bytes a second. Expected price: \$1 million.

Portland, Ore. and software maker Oracle Systems Corp in Redwood City, Calif. — will share the spoils. But all makers of "big iron" are celebrating. With the Bell Atlantic deal, a new market is opening: giant servers to feed digitized movies, home shopping, games, and other interactive multimedia services to homes across the country.

Still, it's a gambit that could be tricky to play. By itself, say analysts, the business of equipping cable and phone networks with video servers may never be more than a \$3 billion market — just 1% of today's worldwide computer market. But selling servers for movies on demand could help develop other markets such as

Video servers could also spark huge service revenues. For instance, DEC envisions setting up media service centres around the country to help retailers create video-shopping services. DEC Media Business Segment Managing Director Robert L Griffin estimates that for every \$1 of video-server sales, there could be \$7 in related services. IBM and American Telephone & Telegraph Co also have a lot of service and networking experience, which puts them in a good position for this market.

And computer makers are eager to supply other pieces of the Information Superhighway. Hewlett, Packard, DEC, and IBM are vying for contracts in the \$500 million cable-TV converter market, either supply chips or selling complete boxes. They are trying to forge relationships with traditional cable-box suppliers Scientific Atlanta, General Instrument, and Philips. Other computer-industry players such as Silicon Graphics, Intel, Microsoft, and British chipmaker advanced RISC Machines have the same idea.

Video servers could prove tough for even DEC and IBM. In digital form, a feature film takes 2 billion characters, or bytes, of computer storage. Just a few dozen of the tapes in any video store would, if digitized, exceed the 100 billion bytes or so used by the largest airline reservation systems. And unlike, say, banking transactions, video data streams can tolerate no more than microscopic delays in transmission. "You can't afford to have the ballet look like break dancing," says Tony Ruiz, senior manager for communications systems at IBM's TJ Watson Research Lab.

SERVICE CENTRES

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Education

Education System in Bangladesh

by Firoz M Kamal

tem didn't work. It has succumbed to bloody hostilities. Chaos is the way of life in most campuses. Mostly it owes to failure in promoting a universal system of education. The present system has varied institutions, and they differ not only in curricular content but in fundamental objective. It has English medium schools for the privileged, religious madrasas for the under privileged and secular institutions for the rest.

helps them to kill invaluable time in bad ways. The poems or stories that are taught in schools have little relevance to the experience of our pupils and the country's need. Much of the study contents in schools are never real, they are far removed from our every day life.

achieved it long before, as it is taught in this country for more than two hundred years. The proper educational servicing is impossible with a singular curricular system — as educational needs are not alike for all groups. Often it makes the curriculum irrelevant to the priorities of pupils and their catchment area.

difference of 10-20 per cent of intelligent test scores than those who are both malnourished and deprived of stimulation. Undernourished children from drab homes are found to score 40 per cent less on IQ tests than well fed children from stimulating homes.



Often it is said by many that poverty is the prime reason for low attendance in rural schools. Recent studies contradict such claims. The findings say that majority of the rural parents wish to send their wards to school. Despite their wishes they are unable to send their children to schools for reasons other than poverty.

Photo: Rafiqur Rahman/Development Features

consensus opinion even on a single national issue. The country's universities and other higher institutions have proved their worth as fertile breeding grounds for warring demagogues, not so much for intellectual pursuit.

The irrelevance of curriculum

Mere reading, writing and numeracy skill is not education. To teach reading without a purpose is to make children more vulnerable to the add-mass and to make them addicted to a kind of narcotic. The practice

as a compulsory subject at all levels still deserves further scrutiny. Otherwise it will continue to waste billions of study hours at the national level. Study hours for learning priority subjects like science must not be curtailed at any cost. At present 14.4 per cent of the teaching time is spent for learning English, not spending much for learning scientific 'know how'!

but important for survival. But little is taught on these subjects.

The poor: the most deprived

Poverty is a major bar to education. It has been revealed that undernourished children score 10 percent less in intelligence tests than those from better-off homes. Deprivation of good nurture is a death sentence to child's intelligence. An encouraging environment seldom exists in poor homes. If found that poor children from a stimulating background make a

Children find it difficult to be inventive

by Alexia Lewnes

NEVINE Ahmed, an English language teacher, steers her group of 11-year-old boys and girls out of the confining classroom and into the open air. With their small faces raised to the sky, Ms Ahmed asks simply, "What do you see when you look at the shapes of the clouds?"

The question is met by silence. Of the 40 students, not one is able to see anything but clouds. It was only after repeated examples and encouragement that figures began to emerge from the white masses and the children are able to explore their individual creativity.

Ms Ahmed is not surprised, because the students have often found it difficult to be inventive in similar exercises. Yet she is quick to explain that they are not to blame. "Our children should be imaginative, yet their imagination is blocked," she says. "They are losing their own personalities and words in the schools."

As the population of Egypt continues to grow at 2.8 per cent annually, students are entering the school system each year at an astounding rate. In 1981, 83 per cent of school-age children entered primary schools. Today that figure has climbed to nearly 95 per cent, and in the past two decades enrolment in kindergarten alone has increased by more than 500 per cent.

Inside the classrooms, students encounter both a curriculum and a testing system that many educators believe are badly in need of reform. The current syllabus does not encourage creativity and does not address the new technological and economic needs of the society. Monthly examinations promote memorisation rather than observation, analysis and comprehension, further inhibiting students' development as individuals.

The system needs to be revised and aimed to help students survive in the 21st century," says Dr Waguida el-Bakary, coordinator of Education Programme at the American University in Cairo.

In a government school in el-Sahafeyeen, students of the first shift begin their exercises

than learning. Students are tested monthly, so they are forced to memorise endless numbers of facts that they have often not understood or assimilated. Frequently, students are asked to recite full chapters but not to provide any analysis of the material.

Although no current drop-out figures are available to determine how many children abandon their formal education, many students, especially in rural areas, leave before secondary school. Some children drop out because the system has killed their desire to learn, while others can't afford the school fees or must go to work to help support the family.



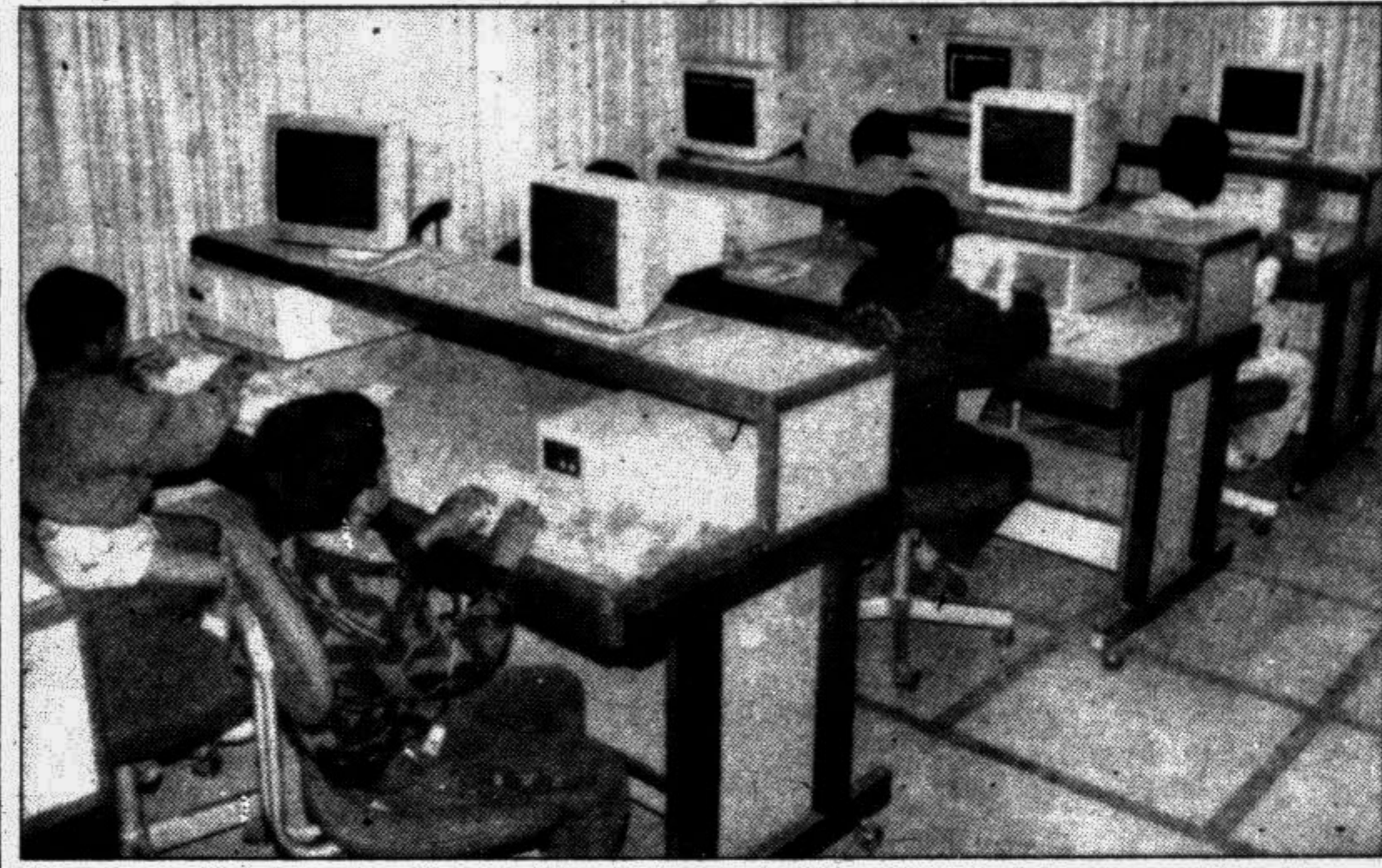
47 students sit at battered desks, and five days each week listen to their teacher methodically instruct them in Arabic, mathematics, science and religion. They have no classes in music or art and no time for recreation. They have grown accustomed to the broken window, and during the winter months sit bundled in their coats throughout the morning.

While students in some private schools may have access to better facilities and quality of instruction, they are not immune to the effects produced by the government syllabus and the examination system. As early as kindergarten, the emphasis is on accumulating information, and there is little room for developing individual creativity. Young children grow accustomed to massive amounts of homework that require them to study well into the night.

The emphasis on memorisation rather than analysis is accentuated by the nature of the examination system. Success in school is determined by exam marks, so the emphasis is on testing rather

When Ms Ahmed asks her class what they think about the main character in 'The Prisoner of Zenda' by Anthony Hope, one student repeats what Ms Ahmed herself had said the previous day. "Tell me in your own words," she says. "Remember, my words are not the Quran, my words can be changed." — Depthneys Asia

Computer



"Computer Programming Competition '93" organised by Monthly "Computer Jagat" was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Works Minister Rafique Islam Mian on January 27, 1994. Thirty students from various age groups, ranging from 6-year-olds to university levels participated in the day long programme.

CHEAPER BY THE DOZENS

That's why many players are insisting that only a massively parallel machine — such as the nCube machine selected by Bell Atlantic — will do. These systems use thousands of processors, each with its own memory. Video servers "will all be massively parallel computers," predicts Oracle Systems Chief Executive Lawrence J Ellison, who also is part-owner of nCube. Bell Atlantic Large Business & Information Services Group President Stuard C Johnson adds that massively parallel machines can be more easily expanded as demand grows.

But no one can be counted out yet. IBM has snared server contracts at Ameritech, Cox Communications, and Bell Atlantic, while DEC has captured US West, Rochester Telephone, and Canada's Stentor, a consortium of nine telephone companies. Phone companies figure that scattering dozens of video servers will be cheaper than deploying one massively parallel machine. Whichever type wins, consumer services such as movies on demand will continue to be the focus of the hoopla for now. With cable systems in 60 million homes — and with an additional 30 million that could be added — couch potatoes look like a mighty appetizing opportunity. Courtesy: Business Week

IBM Will Sell Low End PCs

A number of company names (i.e., Merisel, SCI Systems, Acer, and Wearnes Technology) are mentioned in the same breath as Ambra, the new IBM subsidiary that will sell lower-than-low-end PCs. The companies listed above will contribute as much to the manufacturing, distribution, and support of Ambra's PCs as IBM will. For example, SCI will build Ambra's motherboards, Acer is providing systems development and subsystems technologies, and Merisel is handling the order taking. With IBM playing a less dominant role than ever before, analysts say one question that users will inevitably ask is: Can Ambra maintain the quality they expect of IBM systems?

how Ambra sales might dip into those of IBM's own Value-Point, particularly in a mail-order channel that generates 10 per cent of that line's sales — a sizable portion considering the profit margins of low-end systems. It almost seems like the company is duplicating effort.

Singapore Builds An Advanced Computer Culture

SINGAPORE, Feb 1: The planning is finished and Singapore now intends to test its "information superhighway," reports AP.

Called the National Information Infrastructure, the master plan is expected to turn this small city-state into an "intelligent" island, officials of the National Computer Board said Thursday.

The board is moving from an experimental stage to installation of the first networks that will link computers in almost every home, office, factory and school.

"We are now ready to proceed and develop a number of services," said Robin Hu, the board's director of planning and application services.

The concept is much like President Clinton's National Information Infrastructure Agenda for the United States that was announced in September.

It comprises a web of communications networks and computer databases that promise to change the way people live, work and interact with each other.

Because Singapore has only 3 million people, an authoritarian/decompression schemes (codes) — such as Intel's Indeo, Media Vision's Captain Crunch, or SuperMac's CinePak — can do this.

The upcoming MPEG-2 standard will be used for broadcast and high-definition television (HDTV). It may be one of the key technologies that squeeze 500 channels onto cable TV.

Roll'em on CD-ROM

The MPEG-1 standard was developed specifically for DC-ROMs. With MPEG encoding, a video signal is compressed so it can be played from a single-speed CD-ROM disk and still have the quality of a VHS tape. MPEG works with both video and audio by throwing out redundant data within a single picture frame, looking for redundant information between adjacent frames, and ending up with a video stream that plays at 30 frames per second (fps) on a CD-ROM. None of the available software compress-

The first MPEG-1 add-in cards are beginning to hit the market. Sigma Design's ReelMPEG uses a C-Cube System's MPEG decoder and will sell for about \$400. It can play video at 30 fps at resolutions up to 1,024-by-768 in 32,000 colors and comes bundled with the CD-based game 'Return to Zork' to show off its colors. And King Technology has released the \$795 Xing! real-time video capture and playback board. Captured video files can be played back in Microsoft's Video for Windows.