

The articles, or "posts" (to use Internet parlance) published in this page come from the Bangladesh Internet news group called "soc.culture.bangladesh," or SCB. In this newsgroup, Internet users from around the world, mostly Bangladeshis, discuss issues relevant to Bangladesh. In "Live from the Internet" the Daily Star reprints these posts verbatim (complete with English language errors) — just as they would appear on your computer screen. They have only been edited for size and relevance to the subject matter.

A homeless man from Bangladesh

Naeem Mohalemen
naeem@ix.netcom.com
USA:

What are the NY Bengali community activists doing? Nothing, from the evidence of this article.

years back, Arman Rahman fell off the planet.

More precisely, he joined the estimated 100,000 New Yorkers who, one way or another, are without homes... If there's one thing that strikes

"It's the new Calcutta, or Bangladesh-on-the-Hudson. Maybe in this guy's country, it's not unusual for people to live alongside a highway."

— Guy Trebay

NOTICE OF DISPOSSESS

—by Guy Trebay

"Arman Rahman, a Bengali from Chittagong, Rahman spent his first 3 years here in the half-world of restaurant peonage and at the fringe of the construction trades. When contractors wanted laborers for risky demolition or asbestos hauling without permits, Rahman had a job. He carried sloop in Indian restaurants. He washed dishes for a while. He did all manner of menial work while living in a series of shared rooms...He never learned more than a smattering of English, and that may be why, at a point roughly 2

a visitor about Rahman's predicament, it's his stoicism. He makes tea. He boils some rice.

"There's this facile comparison journalists make of New York to a Third World country," says Mary Broenahan. "It's the new Calcutta, or Bangladesh-on-the-Hudson. Maybe in this guy's country, it's not unusual for people to live alongside a highway." The symbolic meaning of

Rahman's circumstances may not be as radical for him, as it might be for someone born into the bosom of First World wealth. "But, let's face it, what it signifies is exactly the same."

Bangladeshis being unable to unite

Musleh Farid
faridm@approach.com
USA:

I remember somebody posting a message in this newsgroup about Bangladeshis in European countries always calling the cops for the slightest reasons.

I don't know why but we Bangladeshis can never get along with each other. I know the Bangladeshi community in New Jersey has been fighting amongst themselves for at least five years or more. It's a highly educated group of people who are all successful in their respective professions. There are two groups: BSNJ and BANJ. There have been so many elections and so many times physical fights have broken out. Once cops came and asked everybody to leave the park (where they were holding the election). There have been court cases. People curse at each other. It's just an unbelievable and very shameful scenario.

What I wonder is, when such a small group of highly educated and well informed people cannot get along, what's going to happen to the country of 130 million people?

History of the Internet

The Story of a New Network

by Edwin Diamond and Stephen Bates

The war-planning needs of the military and the research interests of computer scientists began to converge. The Pentagon asked RAND to analyze how the military could communicate (by voice telephone as well as data hookups) after a nuclear war. The existing phone network seemed far too fragile for such a task. For each call, switches in the network created a circuit between the two parties; if part of the circuit was broken, whether by an ICBM or by an errant backhoe, the connection had to be reestablished from scratch.

RAND's solution, developed by Paul Baran on an air force contract, was a network that could route around damage and continue to communicate. In such a system, Baran wrote, "there would be no obvious central command and control point, but all surviving points would be able to reestablish contact in the event of an attack on any one point" through a "redundancy of connectivity." The key to creating this survivable grid was what later came to be called packet switching.

With packet switching, as Baran and others envisioned it, computers would not monopolize a circuit for the duration of their communication, as telephones do. Instead, the messages would get broken up into small packets, which would flow in an intermingled stream with other packets, each of which would carry enough information to seek out its destination. Packets from a single message might take different paths to reach the destination. If one packet did not get through, the addressee would notify the sender to retransmit it. Then, when all the packets had arrived, the addressee would reassemble the message. The approach would be slower than having a dedicated circuit between the two points, but it would be far sturdier. If one connection broke, messages would reroute themselves. The "smarts" of the system would reside in users' computers and in the packets themselves, not in centralized, vulnerable switching centres.

Baran, at RAND, did the basic research on packet switching; but many of his reports were classified. Donald Davies of the National Physical Laboratory in Britain independently outlined the same general concept and contributed the word "packet" for the message components. Other researchers also began to focus on the idea of a packet-switching architecture.

It was an idea that appealed to ARPA, particularly its Command and Control Research Office, headed by a computer scientist named JCR Licklider. ARPA in the 1960s became the patron of computer research, a Mecca to the mathematical Michelangelos. The agency funded research into countless aspects of hardware and software development, including graphics, simulations, head-mounted displays, parallel processing and networking. ARPA grants produced the most powerful

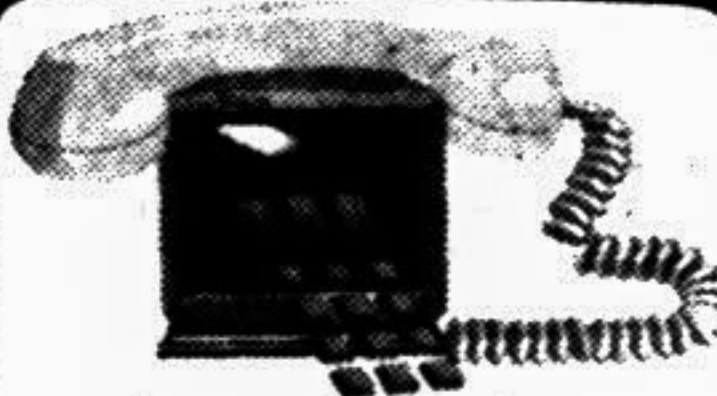
computer of the mid-1960s, the University of Illinois's ILLIAC IV, as well as nearly all artificial intelligence research in the 1960s. "Far from [our] being evil warmongers," the computer scientist Eugene Miya has somewhat defensively said, "Some neat work was done."

Miya and other hackers (the word then carried no negative connotations) were in deep denial, trying to insulate themselves from the currents of dissent about the Vietnam War sweeping across many campuses.

Although their work was funded almost entirely by the "villainous" Pentagon (one of the most prominent figures of the 1990s digital revolution told us that 95 per cent of his budget came from the military during his lab's critical early years), the computer scientists continued to insist that ARPA funding didn't make them part of the military-industrial complex. "I like to believe," the computer scientist, Alan Perlis later said, "that the purpose of the military is to support ARPA, and the purpose of ARPA is to support research."

As part of its research support, ARPA agreed to fund an experimental computer network. The network, ARPA officials hoped, would demonstrate the feasibility of remote computing from the battlefield as well as test the potential of a post-World War II military communications network. In addition, the network would enable widely dispersed researchers to share the few supercomputers of the era, so that the Defense Department would not have to buy one for every contractor. In 1968, ARPA solicited bids for an expandable network linking four sites already conducting ARPA research: the University of California campuses at Los Angeles (UCLA) and Santa Barbara (UCSB), the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in Stanford, California, and the University of Utah (Salt Lake City).

While the bids were continuing to come in, a handful of representatives of these proposed ARPAnet nodes met to discuss what lay ahead. "We had lots of questions," recalled Stephen D. Crocker, at the time a UCLA graduate student. People wondered how the computers would be linked and what they would be capable of doing. "No one had any answers but the prospects seemed exciting," he remembered. The men decided to hold more meetings. The Network Working Group, as they dubbed themselves, proved as fluid and nonhierarchical as the Internet itself would ultimately be; an early memo prefaced a list of group members by saying that "The Network Working Group seems to consist of..." "We had no official charter," said Crocker. "Most of us were graduate students, and we expected that a professional crew would show up eventually to take over..." Of course there were no seasoned veterans; the students and professors had to be their own crew.



"SCB debates too frivolous for Dhaka netters"

Shahidul Alam

shahidulalam@driftapool.net

Dhaka:

I think the debates are important, and need to be discussed, but as far as this particular conference is concerned, I would find it far more relevant to discuss burning issues that need to be addressed now rather than dwell on either the past or on who should apologise to whom.

This conference felt it important to promote a human chain when its middle class core felt threatened by political unrest. The cry for peace, and democracy are laudable, but how come we stayed so quiet during and after the Yashmeen murder? How come there has not been a single response to the military atrocities that are going on today? I for one would rather spend my energy preventing rape in my neighbourhood, than trying to convince a Pakistani of what had happened in '71.

University Education in Bangladesh

Zuraid Kazi
kazistimpy@ccs.udel.edu
University of Delaware, USA:

As an EE graduate from the premier Bangladeshi engineering institution, BUET, I have often wondered how much of my education would actually have been helpful out in the field. We don't need 130 theoretical Electrical Engineers all able to solve Schrodinger's Equation, we need more engineers who can go out and fix that darned generator or that downed powerline.

Anisul Haque
haque@sunray.ece.clarkson.edu, USA:

I think you have pointed out a key issue in higher education in third world countries. While we don't need the advanced skills from our technocrats yet (presently it might suffice to bring the downed power line back to operation), the face of technical education is changing fast on the planet. Do we attempt to make a giant (may be unrealistic) leap to cope with the rest of the world, or do we contain ourselves with the "appropriate technology"? Is there really an appropriate technology which is NOT the state of the art? Is a proper blend of the two extremes possible in a higher education system as small as in Bangladesh?

Disclaimer

The Internet is a global medium of communication and expression. It is free from all sorts of censorship and restrictions. It is truly a PEOPLE'S FORUM.

The opinions expressed in these columns are the author's own as they appear to all receivers of the Internet. We reproduce them authentically to permit our readers to know what Bangladeshis abroad are feeling and saying. The Daily Star is not responsible for the opinions expressed in these columns.

The Pakistan Apology series . . .

Supratik Gupta
j43703a@uicc.cc.nagoya-u.ac.jp
Japan:

(a reply to Shujaat Ali's post, printed in the last issue)

I have bangladeshi students friends here. They some time tell me that old people who only see their material benefits say so. This is because they don't know the ground realities.

This is basically because of two reasons:

a) Most Bangladeshi people had confidence in fighting for freedom because they were actually the principle bread earner, with 60-40 distribution in foreign

servants when the Pakistan army cracked down on where she was residing. We the citizens of Bangladesh have nothing to apologise to the Biharis.

Denis Wright
dwright@metz.une.edu.au
Australia:

I am sincerely sorry that your grandmother was murdered in this way. She was an innocent victim: one of many, unfortunately. I'm sure I would feel the same way as you do if such a thing had happened in my family in those circumstances. I can understand your grief and anger when innocent people so close suffer a violent death

There are guilty people in all traumatic circumstances such as 1971. Guilty Pakistanis killed innocent Bangladeshis. Guilty Biharis collaborated with the Pakistan army to kill innocent Bangladeshis.

— Denis Wright, Australia

earning. Spending was in reverse order. But it was a matter of luck, that its principle bread earner, the JUTE industry

feel because of discovery of new material.

b) India also did not help Bangladesh. It complicated its problem with the DAM issue.

But one thing that should be noted that: This would have been the fate of Bangladesh, even if Bangladesh would have chosen to stay with Pakistan. Because JUTE would have any way dropped in Demand.

Second point would have been true also. [Even being an Indian, I don't agree India is right on the Dam issue].

At least Bangladeshi people no more has to hear that east is a burden, every time there is a flood. Bangladesh is still a young nation. Already its literacy rate is higher than Pakistan. It has already implemented family planning better than Pakistan. Though it has political problem, surely it will develop.

Imran Zaman
75113.1746@Compuserve.Com
USA:

Please do not equate the actions of the Mukti Bahini with the massacre of the 3 million Bengalis by the Pakistan army. Regarding the Biharis, they are the ones who collaborated totally with the Pakistan army, which as a result brought about the death of Bengalis. Biharis resided in the East but they always identified themselves with the West. My grandma was slaughtered by her Bihari

like this.

But that's just the point. There are guilty people in all traumatic circumstances such as 1971. Guilty Pakistanis killed innocent Bangladeshis. Guilty Biharis collaborated with the Pakistan army to kill innocent Bangladeshis. Not all Bangladeshis were innocent either, and some helpless Biharis were killed by Bangladeshis, along with the guilty ones. There is always a fearful danger to a society when people take the law into their own hands (here I agree with Shakil, who said something similar in another context.)

The guilty on all sides need to apologise - not that that is ever going to happen. Those who don't have innocent blood on their hands don't need to. But to feel justified in killing innocent people under any circumstances, whatever their race or colour or belief, is a corruption of humanity. You cannot tar a whole ethnic group with the same brush - you cannot pin a crime collectively on an entire people.

Mariam Isphahani
mariam@skypoint.com
USA:

Denits - Very nicely put!!! Your reply took the words right out of my mouth! Yes, there are guilty people in ALL traumatic circumstances and as I said before, WAR brings out the worst in people.

Once again, you are right. We can't accuse an entire group for crimes committed and last but not least... who is going to apologise even if they should???

The Daily Star reader's Asking

—Ekram Kabir, Reader.

The Daily Star, Dhaka:

The war criminals of '71 were convicted at the people's court in '92. What do you suggest to try them at the court of law? The Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee is observed its anniversary on January 19, 1996. Do you support their cause which is ultimately to bring the war criminals to trial.

R.Begum

rb9@ukc.ac.uk

University of Kent at Canterbury, UK:

Suppose a mother had two sons. One has been killed and the other one is very ill and going to die without food, medicine and care. So what the mother should do now? Should she go to find out who has killed her son or she should take care her other son? In my opinion, she should take care her alive son first. So the point is that the burning issue is to stop strike to save our country rather than finding 1971 war criminals. I do support the cause of the Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee, but not in emergency basis.

Wasi

wasi@mit.edu

USA:

The Government should try the war criminals in the proper court of law. Though I support the cause of the Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee, which according to them

is to bring the war criminals to trial, I cannot support all their actions. I do not believe in anarchy and I believe that a group of people calling a 'people's court' in the middle of a park does invite anarchy. It is sort of similar to the anarchy following the French Revolution. I also do not believe in Hartal calls given by the "Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee". If they call themselves patriotic, then they shouldn't do anything that is detrimental to the country's economy. I also think that the Ghatik Dal Nirmul Committee is just a tool that the opposition parties use to oust the government.

—A.M.Sabirul Islam, reader.

The Daily Star, Dhaka:

How much student politics is essential for a third world country like ours?

R.Begum

rb9@ukc.ac.uk

UK:

Not at all.

Wasi

wasi@mit.edu

USA:

In a country like ours, student politics should be stopped. The reason? Have a look at the condition of our Universities. People who are professional student politicians like the BNP MP (I forgot his name, he was VP of DUCSU, I think Aman something) should be dismissed.

Our national fish AND...

Mahmood Hassan
hassan@kenroku.ipc.kanazawa-u.ac.jp, Japan:

Give back our right share of the water of PADMA and Let our fish resources be saved from extinction. Let Our people have their protein back.

Let's keep with the good news!

Denis Wright
dwright@metz.une.edu.au
Australia:

I am heartened to read in this morning's Newsweek that there are some very interesting world population statistics that have just been released. They show that the fertility rate in Bangladesh has dropped from 7 in 1975 to 4.3 in 1993, a 39% fall, and dropping it from 133rd position in the world in terms of rate of increase to 99th.

If this is true, and if the reasons are better family planning, then there is far more room for optimism about the prospects for all sorts of initiatives than there might have been if there was no sign that the rate of population growth (2.2%) was declining significantly. Stabilising population is the biggest single challenge for Bangladesh. Looks like it's on the way to happening!

Sumon Shahed
sumon@cs.tamu.edu
USA:

This fact shows there is "hope" for US... Infact it can be seen from the comparison of two Muslim countries in the subcontinent, eg. Bangladesh and Pakistan. In 1971 Bangladesh had 70+ million people whereas Pakistan had 55+ million. In 1994 Bangladesh had 110+ million and Pakistan had 110+ million people (notice my ++). Also in India, the muslim population has very high rate of growth (one reason I can think of... is... they try to compensate the religious threat with sheer number...)

Also, I would like to add - that I believe...Bangladeshi people are starting to realize the difference between what is good and what is bad for them...

A Simple Quiz

Ahmed Rahman
s022amr@alpha.wright.edu
USA:

Four men sat on four row of a hall room. Please observe the diagram

- 1.....A.....
- 2.....B.....
- 3.....C.....
- 4.....D.....

let the person on the first row is A, second row is B, third row is C and fourth row is D. Now D asked C "How many person ahead of you?" C replied "two". Now C asked B "How many person ahead of you?" B replied "two". Now the question is what is the probable explanation of the reply of B. Please mind it we are looking for "PROBABLE EXPLANATION".

Saif Ahmed
saahmed@cs.oberlin.edu
USA:

B & C are facing each other

Be-aware of SOFTWARE Job Opportunities

Musleh Farid
faridm@approach.com
USA:

To Everybody from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Don't ever believe these Indian companies and anything they say. They claim of long-term contracts and they layoff people the day after a project finishes. I know friends who had bad experiences with these companies and one of them

ended up suing Taj Technologies in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Protect yourself guys. These people are frauds.

COIN COLLECTING

Lenny
lennys.place@telepac.pt
Portugal:

I am from Portugal and I would like to exchange coins. Would anybody be interested in trading a collection of circulating coins from your country in exchange for a collection of portuguese coins?



The newsgroup, "soc.culture.bangladesh", has been provided courtesy of Agni Systems Limited.

You can also take part in this page by sending us your views / questions / comments / inquiries (anything that you want). The Daily Star will then send your responses into the Internet newsgroup free of charge where they will be read and commented on by participants from around the world. Letters should be no more than 100 words in length and titled.

Please send or fax your Internet posts to: M.Shamimuzzaman, Page incharge, "Live from the Internet", Daily Star, House 11, Road 3, Dhanmondi, R/A, Dhaka-1205. (GPO Box no:3257) Fax: 863035.

SAME DISEASE DIFFERENT DAWAI

Mohammad Zahir
jabar@nyc.pipeline.com
USA:

Didn't Gen. Ershad seize POWER by overthrowing a civilian government? Yet, before becoming an army general, he had to take an oath on the holy Quran to protect the nation, to uphold the constitution and laws, and to respect existing government (correct me if my information is wrong). Instead of protecting the nation, he conquered it which (Bangladesh) trusted and paid him for his service as general. He established an illegal dictatorial rule by force. For long nine years we (Bangladeshis) struggled against that illegal entity. We did anything short of civil war to overthrow that illegal military dictator. Like many others, Noor Hussain, Dr. Milon, and Raufon Bosunia sacrificed their lives for our democracy. Did you know that? Then how could you relate Hasina's action against a democratically elected government with the struggle against an illegal dictator and label the first post as hypocrisy? Aren't you deluding yourself?

Shimant Manzur,
New Zealand:

91's general election the new parliament didn't declare Ershad's government as illegal nor did it try to nullify the amendments to the constitution made by Jatiya party. The bottom line is Ershad's government was constitutionally as legitimate as Khaleda's government. Remember, Khaleda and BNP were in the forefront calling hartals, Oborodh, Bondh etc - although she knew it was going to cost the country 30

million dollars(US) a day in lost productivity, not to mention the sufferings of the poor. But that didn't make her think twice before calling hartals, bondhs etc - what's worse is that many of those who are against hartal today because it doesn't serve their political agendas anymore, were actively in favour of hartals when it did served their purpose. What else can it be called except "hypocrisy"??

As for sacrifice of Noor Hossain and others - I'm sure they didn't take bullets in their chest to see someone else running the country in the same way Ershad did.

—Shimant Manzur, New Zealand:

As far as I know, after

I feel that BNP probably deserves all the grief it is getting. But, does the country?

I find it incomprehensible that BD politicians think that crippling the country is the only way to bring about political change, and removing the person/party in power is the only form of political change worth pursuing. Other, more important, goals (hidden unread in party manifestos) do not get pursued and other, less destructive, tools of political warfare never get used.