

Why Bangladesh lags behind in Scientific & Technological development

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Dear SCB readers:

A question was posed in this forum as to why Bangladesh lags behind in the scientific and technological development compared to many other countries in the Asian subcontinent. I would like to give some information which may help the readers to have an idea on this issue. If the present government takes a cue from what has happened in the past, Bangladesh may be able to emerge out of this unfortunate situation and before long would compete with other Asian countries in their contribution to science and technology and at the same time helping substantially to the progress of the country in its economic emancipation.

During Ershad's time the Department of Education has three divisions one of which was the Division of Science and Technology. This division was raised to the department during the last regime under the Ministry of Science & Technology. When this division was created in late seventies, it was headed by a Joint Secretary; thereafter by an Additional Secretary sometimes promoted to the rank of Secretary during his holding of the office. However, this Ministry never got the recognition as being one of the most important one; it witnessed as many as 23 or 24 secretaries (AT AN AVERAGE ONE PER YEAR) since Bangladesh came into being with a small budget. Sometimes secretaries not in the good books of the government used to be selected for this post. The same principle held good while choosing a minister for this ministry.

During Ershad's time 80 to 90 per cent of budget of the research institutes were spent to provide salary to the employees of the research institutions and only 10 to 15 per cent to meet other expenses i.e. to run the laboratories, their expansion, purchase of scientific books and journals.

Thanks to the fruits of democracy, budget for research activities in BCSIR, AEC etc. increased a good deal during the last five years with concomitant to reasonably good quality research work in most of the institutes. This was also true for the universities where funds for research activities increased resulting in passing out of more PhDs. However, compared to what is happening in the contemporary world, the money spent in research institutes is only an insignificant amount.

In order to expand scientific and technological activities my appeal to the present

government will be the following:

1. Please make the Ministry of Science & Technology as strong as it could be headed by a seniormost Minister with department such as Department of Biotechnology as in India.

2. The staff members in that Ministry after their recruitment should be trained in different scientific disciplines in relation to R&D and without exception should be able to use "INTERNET" email to retrieve information in different fields of science and technology. Everyone working there must be able to use computers including spreadsheets, data entry besides wordprocessing.

3. The "Science Library" which was abolished during Ershad's time be revived with a division on "informatics".

4. The Status of UNESCO office may be raised to the status to a regional office. In other words, BNCU should be headed by a secretary so that full advantages of UNESCO can be reaped.

5. Steps should be taken for Bangladesh to become the member of all International Scientific Organizations which offer training, fellowships etc. International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB). In spite of Bangladesh's being selected as a member of ICGEB, it has not been ratified by the "Treaty Section" of the legal office of UNO at New York because S&T Ministry is slow to take follow-up actions.

6. Special funds should be allocated for Bangladesh's scientists to represent the country in international meetings. In this context, the activities of Bangladesh Association for Advancement of Science, Bangladesh Academy of Sciences and all monodisciplinary Associations should be supported and they should be taken into confidence in the formulation of scientific policies of the country. Steps should be taken immediately to speed up the construction of "Science Bhavan" in Agargaon on a priority basis.

Finally I would like to end up my posting by narrating a story recounted by the Nobel Laureate Professor Abdus Salam in one of his addresses to the Scientists in Dhaka.

Lamenting over the fate of scientific progress in Muslim countries Professor Salam said that some Korean politicians approached him in his Trieste office of the Institute of Theoretical Physics with the request whether Professor Salam could advise them as to how their country could produce Nobel Laureates.

No wonder South Korea is making such a tremendous progress in the field of science and technology.

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.

Pouting melissa trumps the cyberporn censors

Arlene Getz
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Melissa Wolf pouts provocatively as she promises to introduce me to busty beauties and sexy porn stars.

Melissa and her seductive body language are not under plastic wrap on the "adult" section of my local news-stand, but on my computer screen, via the Internet, the worldwide computer network.

The accompanying text tells me that if I am interested I can see others like her in more revealing poses.

All she promises, without leaving my keyboard.

I find her charms irresistible, so I click off the site. Had I wanted, however, I could have continued touring the darker side of the Internet in

dents engaging in pranks.

The global nature of the network poses another difficulty.

Pornography in one society is in offensive in another, rendering it difficult to enforce common definitions of indecency.

One of the main on-line services in the US, CompuServe, encountered these problems of decentralization last December, when German anti-pornography police forced the closure of more than 200 sexually explicit Internet discussion groups and picture databases.

Although their ruling was applicable only in Germany, CompuServe's technical inability to restrict access to a specific group of users meant it

A US court has ruled that attempts to ban sexually explicit material from the Internet contravenes constitutional free speech guarantees. But the controversy over cyberspace censorship, reports Arlene Getz in her latest Internet column for Gemini News Service, is far from over.

search of a growing range of sexually explicit photographs or electronic bulletin boards discussing a range of erotica.

Such material is not easy for casual users to find and often requires credit card payments from those wanting to see revealing pictures.

Nevertheless, the increasing availability of pornography in cyberspace is the subject of a growing battle between free speech advocates and anti-pornography activists.

As a system of computer links originally designed by the United States military to withstand a nuclear attack, there are immense practical problems facing any would-be censors.

In addition, anybody who can read messages on the Internet can also transmit, leading to a rash of cyberporn posted by users ranging from commercial companies to stu-

initially also had to cut entry to more than four million international subscribers — including victims of sexual abuse using the forums for therapeutic talks with other survivors.

The development of screening software eventually eased this problem.

CompuServe was able to provide users with programmes allowing them to filter out sites they deemed objectionable rather than imposing a total blackout from above.

Similar software is now available to parents concerned about their children's activities on the Internet.

Despite these technological advances, the debate still rages.

The latest development came in the form of a legal ruling ordering the suspension of a US law banning "indecent" materials on the Internet.

A three-judge panel ruled

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.

— Editor.

More Private Universities: white flight repeated?

Azizul Haq
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There may be another private university at Dhaka soon and I may be involved in it too.

Naeem Mohalemen
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USA

For the folks who are involved in setting yet another private university, some questions, I know that folks are saying as private universities get better, there will be pressure on DU to get better. But I wonder if instead, result will be:

--More good professors deserting DU [many profs are already teaching at both places]

--As middle class/wealthy strata have a escape route for their children, in fact pressure to fix DU will lessen, not increase?

It might be instructive for the organizers of this 2nd university to read up on history of private schools in this country in 70s. As neighborhoods became more integrated, white flight from cities created suburban public schools which today are some of the best in the nation. Meanwhile the black and latino underclass are stuck in inner city schools which today are 100 times worse than they were in 60s.

Talk to any TEACH FOR AMERICA volunteer. Or read William Julius Wilson and other sociologists. Consider if we are laying the seeds for something, similar in Dhaka. Before coming to US, I studied in DU for a year. DU was a shambles and this mattered to me and my family. Now my brother is doing summer school at NSU. My cousin downstairs is full-time at NSU.

I think none of us care any more if DU goes to pot or not. Is this a good thing?

I know that NSU has a few scholarships. But so do places like Deerfield and Spence in this country. Is the fate of the underclass here any better for those token scholarships?

WHAT'S IN A NAME

Nashid Fernin
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Sweden:
HELLO,

Does anybody here have any idea about how much a 'name' costs? It seems like companies cannot use any name for a new product and specially if that name coincides with a person's surname. The person bearing that name (product name) has to give permission and that permission can cost a juicy amount.

Now to be more specific, Kao Corporate (Japanese company) wants to launch a product in Sweden with a friend's surname. The company's agent here has sent a letter informing my friend that his permission is necessary to launch this product. It seems like Kao is a pretty big company (I checked the company's website) so I'd like to know how much do you think my friend should ask for his immaterial possession (i.e. his name)?

Would be glad to know how much a name costs?

Poverty = inhumanity

Rinku Anisuzzaman
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USA

Every country in the world has poor people, we all know this. Unless various governments admit to the poverty, and think about practical solutions to tackle this problem, no progress shall be made. The next question is, what for example can the govt of Bangladesh do to fight poverty? The poverty in Bangladesh seems so overwhelming... its a deep poverty, the poorest of the poor. Horrible conditions, horrible living conditions... we should be investing in the betterment of our poor, instead of spending money on new tanks and buildings. A simplistic attitude I admit, but we've got to start somewhere.

The newsgroup, "soc.culture.bangladesh", has been provided courtesy of Agni Systems Limited (Tel. 882379).

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", The Daily Star, House 11, Road 3, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205. (GPO Box no: 3257) Fax: 863035.

Free Astrological Reading

Jean Luc Margot
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Cornell University, USA:
Hello,

A very interesting experiment about astrology is described in a recent book by Carl Sagan. The book also discusses a number of other topics which will be of interest to this audience.

The reference is Sagan, Carl (1995) The demon-haunted world: science as a candle in the dark, Random House, New-York.

And here is the excerpt about the experiment:

"A scientist places an ad in a Paris newspaper offering a free horoscope. He receives about 150 replies, each, as requested, detailing a place and time of birth. Every respondent is then sent the identical horoscope, along with a questionnaire asking how accurate the horoscope had been. Ninety-four percent of the respondents (and 90 percent of their families and friends) reply that they were at least recognizable in the horoscope. However, the horoscope was drawn up for a French serial killer. If an astrologer can get this far without even meeting his subjects, think how well someone sensitive to human nuances and not overly scrupulous might do."

I hope my post did not ruin a similar experiment :-)

Asiamart: Bangladesh & modular homes

Michael E Willett
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USA:

I see from the AsiaMart WWW site, <http://www.anewnet.com/>, that there is a Bangladesh-oriented firm involved with modular homes exports/imports. Might anyone have additional information on the modular home import/export business, especially regarding Asia?

The Daily Star Entertainment Guide

Wednesday 17th July
(All programmes are in local time. We recommend programmes printed in bold. There may be changes in the programmes)

BTV

3:00 Opening Announcement: Al Quran Programme Summary 3:10 Recitation from the Quran 3:15 Re-recitation of Selected Programme 4:00 News in Bangla 4:15 Sports Programme 4:45 Tappor: Songs 5:00 News in Bangla 5:25 Agam 6:00pm News in Bangla 6:05 Umrah 7:00 The News 7:05 Open University 7:25 Nitro Tale 8:00 News in Bangla 8:30 Album 9:00 Mini Series: Return To Eden 10:00 News in English 10:30 Shasthatath: Health Programme Based on Child & Mother 10:35 Kathamala 11:30 News in Bangla 11:35 Thursday's programme 11:40 Close down.

BBC

6:00am BBC Newsroom in: World Business Report/Asia Today/24

Hours 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Under The Blue Flag 10:00 BBC Newsday 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Horizon 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Building Sights 4:00 BBC World News 6:00pm BBC World News 6:15 Panorama 7:00 BBC World News 7:15 World Business Report 7:30 BBC Newsday Asia & Pacific 8:30 Time Out: Auction 9:00 BBC World Headlines 9:05 Under The Blue Flag 10:00 BBC World News 10:30 Time Out: Top Gear 11:00 The World Today 1:00 BBC World Headlines 1:05 Inside Burma Land Of Fear 2:00 BBC World News 2:30 Time Out: Food and Drink 3:00 BBC World Report in: World Business Report/24 Hours 5:00 BBC World News 5:10 Newswatch

CHANNEL V

7:00am Revend VJ Sophiya 8:00 Jump Start VJ Trey 9:00 Frame By Frame 12:00am The Vibe VJ Trey 1:00 By Demand VJ Trey 2:00 Revend VJ Sophiya 3:00 Big Bang VJ Alexandra 4:30 By Demand VJ Trey 5:30 Picket Fences 2:30 El Extreme Close Up Salma Hayek 3:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 4:00 Hooperman 4:30 Home And Away 5:00 The Sullivan 5:30 Gabrielle



NYPD Blue on Star Plus, Tonight at 9:30

Bang VJ Alexandra 4:30 By Demand VJ Trey 5:30 Picket Fences 2:30 El Extreme Close Up Salma Hayek 3:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 4:00 Hooperman 4:30 Home And Away 5:00 The Sullivan 5:30 Gabrielle

STAR PLUS
6:30am Volt-on 7:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 7:30 GI Joe 8:00 Saber Rider and the Star Sherif 8:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 9:00 Aerobics On Style 9:30 Nanny and the Professor 10:00 Mr. Belvedere 10:30 Graham Kerr's Kitchen 11:00 El Extreme Close Up Salma Hayek 11:30 Gabrielle 12:30 Santa Barbara 1:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 2:00 The Oprah Winfrey Show 3:00 Remington Steele 4:00 Graham Kerr's Kitchen 4:30 El Extreme Close Up Salma Hayek 5:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles 5:30 The Adventures Of Black Beauty 6:00pm Lost in Space 7:00 Home and Away 7:30 Charles in Charge 8:00 MASH 8:30 The Golden Girls 9:00 Empty Nest 9:30 NYPD Blue 10:30 The Bold & The Beautiful 11:00 Santa Barbara

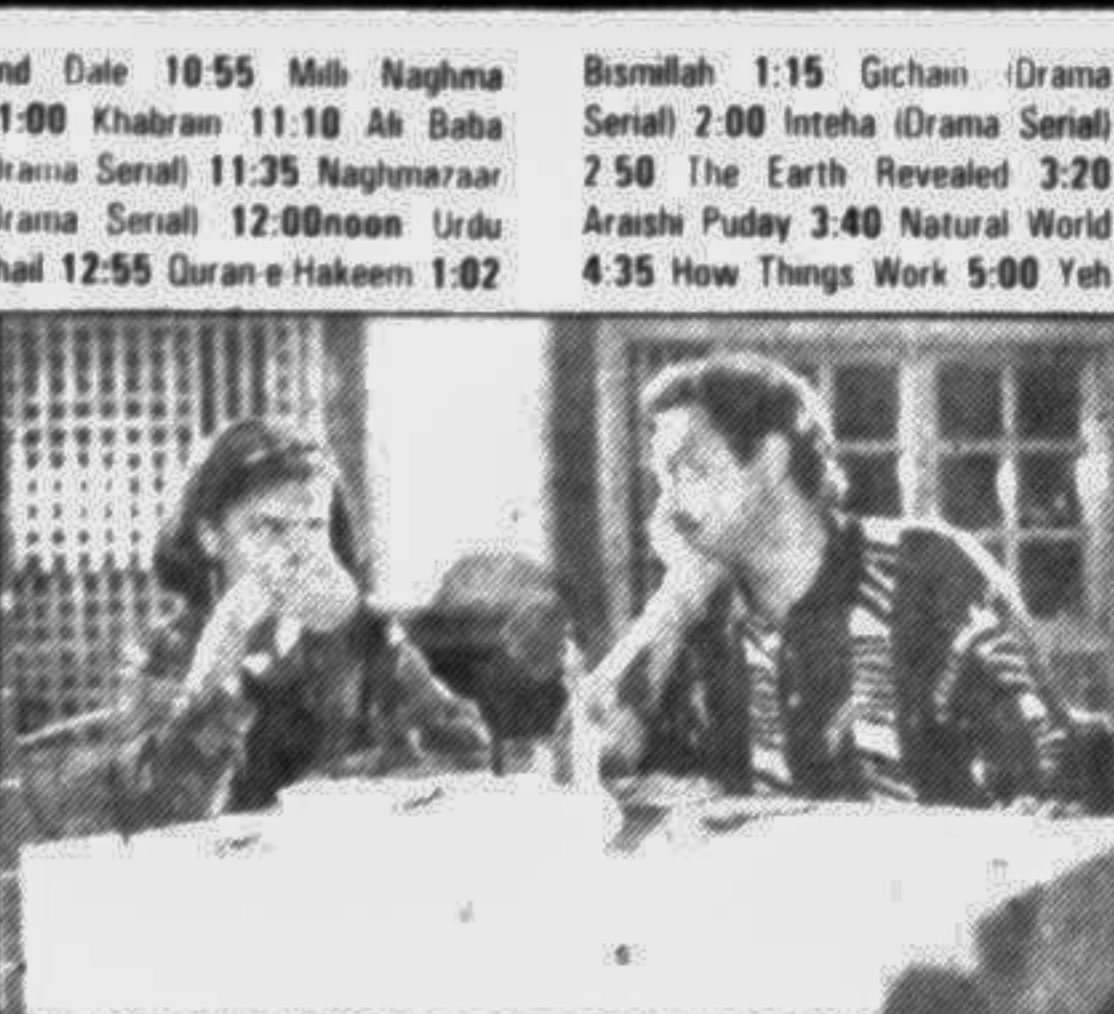
Remedies 18 (Arabic Subtitles) 9:30 Family: Snow Queen PG Arabic Subtitles 11:30 Comedy Best Of Friends 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 1:30 Western: The Tall Men 12 (Hindi Subtitles) 3:30 Classic: Its A Wonderful Life PG (Hindi Subtitles) 5:45 Family: Prince Valiant: The Kidnapping (Hindi Subtitles) 6:30 Bol Bollywood 7:15 Family: Tommy Tracker And The Stamp Traveller (Hindi Subtitles) 9:00 The Movie Show 9:30 Val Kilmer Double Bill: Tombstone 18 (Hindi Subtitles) 11:30 Private Eye Weekly: Val Kilmer Double Bill: Kil Me Again 18 (Arabic Subtitles) 1:30 Comedy: Monty Python's Life Of Brian 18 (Arabic Subtitles) 3:30 Thriller: Police Python 18 (Arabic Subtitles) 5:30 Film Club: The Unbelievable Truth 18 (Arabic Subtitles)

ZEE TV

6:00 News 6:30 Jagran 7:00 A To Z of Computer The Management Course 8:30 Through The Gear 9:00 Helpline 9:30 Gaane Anjaane 10:00 Lakme Khubsoot 10:30 Duniya 11:00 Its My Show 11:30 Hum Paanch 12:00 TBA 12:30 Sur Taal 1:00 A To Z of Computer 2:30 Tara 3:00 Film Chakkor 3:30 Celeste 4:00 Bhagyan 4:30 Positive Health Show 5:00 A To Z of Computer 5:30 Hum Zamane 6:00 Cartoon 6:30 All Out 7:00 Khana Khazana 7:30 Gaane Anjaane 8:00 Ek Minute 8:30 Mi Minto 9:00 17 Sherry Road 9:30 Bangi Apni Baat 10:00 Parampara 10:30 The News & Business Roundup 11:00 The Dream Merchants 11:30 Aap Ki Adalat 12:00 Salab 12:30 Campus 1:00 Has ratein 1:30 Film Deewane 2:00 Suno Suno Tripp Tripp 2:30 Zee Arabia: Infotainment (TMM)

PTV

8:00am Titawat Aur Tarpanal Hand/Nast 8:20 Cartoon 9:30 Khabran 9:45 Mansoorbagat Bara Khud Kafalat 9:50 Sur Savaria & Seta Ka Safar & Sada-E-Kasim 9:40 Shona Be Shona 9:50 Aaj Ki Kiraah - Aik Naam 10:05 Boor Kay Ladoo 10:30 English Film: Chip



Sallab on Zee TV, Tonight at 12:00

