### The Baily Star

Founder-Editor: Late S. M. Ali

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#### Chameleons in Politics

ERTAIN voices are being increasingly heard in Upolitics today that make a far too rasping sound to be liked by anyone with functioning auditory nerves. Their antecedents of changing colours, dumping previous patron-saints, and aligning with the power of the day would not be recalled to public memory had they exercised restraint in their utterances recognising their softbelly track-record. Instead, theirs have been the loudest of voices to pierce through the ears in a shameless defence of the volte-face they turned as if validating the euphemism "politics makes strange bed-fellows" into a mini-movement of sorts.

What makes us say all these things is the diatribe that issued from the formal split that occurred on Friday, in the Jatiya Party, spearheaded by Mizanur Rahman Chowdhury and Anwar Hossain Manju. They have castigated their mentorturned tormentor Ershad warning him not to behave like a 'military dictator or to the monster in the classics The Arabian Nights who tried to kill his saviour.' Holding any brief for the discredited autocrat is out of the question for anyone with the rudimentary sense of history. But if his previous associates and once powerful spokesmen were to grill him now for politics they themselves had been supportive of in his hey days and are now doing in the camp opposed to him, then it amounts to a double breach of trust with the public. The list of such names can be longer who had changed colours one time too many for whatever reasons they thought it worthwhile. They have fallen in and fallen out with consummate ease.

In a pluralistic democratic society every shade of political opinion has a platform. But the pertinent question is: how are they using it. Marriages of convenience and personality-based groupings and alliances of expediency have made the public distrustful of politics no less than what the other negative political developments have. Discerning voters ought to be thinking twice next time over when politicians with such reduced credibility rating seek their ballots again. Unless they change their nature of politics credibility of the democratic system will itself be at stake.

#### Rajuk's Law-point

N recent times Rajuk has come under fire from Lthe press and the public for a number of reasons - the most important being land grabbing by unscrupulous developers and greedy allottees under their nose.

But hardly have they been lent support either by the concerned ministry or by the relevant laws in force. Through the flaws in the Building Construction Act of 1952 as amended in 1990 which 'forbids digging or excavating without permission from the authorities but does not prohibit filling up of lakes and low-lying areas or construction on parks and open spaces, sly landgrabbers have had a field-day. Rajuk has explained their frustrations and weaknesses against these elements seeking appropriate amendments to the existing laws in place of Prime Minister's Orders which are but administrative direction. Unfortunately, the proposed amendments and proposals by Rajuk already submitted to the ministry concerned are 'feared to be gathering dust,' according to a detailed report published in The Daily Star yesterday. To deal with wealthy and intelligent intruders and to avoid legal tangles Rajuk has asked for a couple of changes in the legal framework which would enable them to deal with the offenders firmly and quickly. Rajuk has also proposed ceiling on the height of residential and commercial buildings for the greater good of the city. It is deplorable that none of Rajuk's proposals is 'getting any attention' from the concerned ministry. We strongly feel that Rajuk should be provided with the required legal framework and logistic support to carry on its responsibilities. At the same time we would advise them to apply restraint in using the powers when these will have vested in them. In their sincere attempts to make this city a better place to live in, we can assure Rajuk of full support and cooperation of this newspaper.

### Oh Peace, No Peace

TT has been almost a year and a half since the LCHT Peace Accord was signed, still peace in the hill tracts remains elusive as ever. The Khagrachhari episode comes at a time when PCJSS leader Shantu Larma's reported willingness to take over the Regional Council has raised hopes of the beginning, albeit belated, of the peace process. Thursday's face-off between police and anti-accord activists that left two persons killed and more than 50 injured has generated apprehensions of more trouble in the hill tracts.

A group of tribal people has opposed the accord from the very beginning, especially on issues relating to the rights of non-tribal settlers. Radical in their views, they have rallied for full autonomy, for a land occupied and run by tribesmen. They have tried to whip up an anti-Bengali sentiment in the region. Thursday's flare-up is no ventilation of popular sentiment, but rather an act against popular interest. The perpetrators should be tackled with an iron hand and local administration must ensure that they are.

Such an incident should not, in any way, disturb the pursuit of peace in the region. The hill tracts, which has been ravaged by more than two decades of bloody war, need peace more than anything, because peace is the pre-condition for development. The European Union has already made it clear that aid will come for development only when all conditions stipulated in the accord are fulfilled. It is imperative that the Regional Council starts functioning right away and let the peace process begin.

## War Crimes Mustn't Go Unpunished

NATO officials have stated that the names and the evidence would be turned over to the special

The soldier, be he friend or foe, is charged with the protection of the weak and unarmed. It is the very essence and reason for his being.

- General Douglas MacArthur, 1946

LMOST four weeks into the NATO bombing Campaign in Yugoslavia, there are no signs of backing down from either side. President Clinton may have thought that a few fires in Belgrade would bring Milosevic to the negotiating table and forge a foreign policy success for him. He explicitly ruled out ground troops. The result was to give Milosevic a semblance of cover for the brutality that has been a gleam in his eye for a decade or more — terrorising hundreds of thousands of innocent people from their homes in the name of eliminating the members of KLA.

The air strikes have not deterred Milosevic, and there are those who argue that the NATO strikes made things worse for the Kosovars. But that ignores the likelihood that things would have become worse anyway. All evidence suggests that cleansing Kosovo of ethnic Albanians has been in Milosevic goal for at least a decade, one that even NATO threats could

not deter him from pursuing. The process of trying to shift the ethnic balance in Kosovo from ninety per cent Albanian to predominantly Serbian has

S they say, 'the operation

was successful, but the

▲ patient died'. That is

exactly the condition today of

the Kosovo Muslims who are

facing a new 'holocaust' let

loose by the neo-Nazis under

the leadership of another

'Hitler' of Yugoslavia. (I have

purposely said 'Kosovo

Muslims', and not "Albanian ethnics" because they have been

living in Kosovo for centuries,

generation after generation,

and must be identified as Mus-

lims of Kosovo for which they

are now suffering). President

Clinton had expressed his deep

conviction that NATO opera-

tions in Belgrade and Kosovo

(Pristina) were showing signs of

big success and it wouldn't cease

until President Milosevic

But Clinton

kneels down and seeks mercy

'by-passes' the 'hell' that his

NATO action has created for the

Muslims there who just wanted

to be independent of the Serbian

rule for which Kosovo Lib-

eration Army (KLA) has been

waging a ceaseless war against

the Belgrade rule for the last

one decade or so, paying a high

made of a 'sterner staff.' Even in

the face of more than three

weeks of NATO air strikes and

missile attacks on military in-

stallations and defence projects

in Belgrade and Pristina, he

seems to be unnerved and un-

perturbed. Such continuous

heavy bombardments have not

so far been able to cause the

slightest dent in his resolve.

The "bloody and brutal dicta-

tor" in the language of the

British Prime Minister Tony

Blair, is walking straight in the

face of NATO action. Of course,

he had declared a temporary 'u-

nilateral' cease-fire, not out of

panic, but to allow his army

and police-men, now in action

to drive out the Muslims in

Kosovo and destroy the KLA. He

had also offered to the 'moder-

ate' political leader of Kosovo

Ibrahim Rugova a proposition

for a 'temporary agreement' to

serve as a basis for a permanent

solution of the Kosovo problem

within Serbia and Yugoslavia.

So it is ridiculous on the part of

America to reject the 'tempo-

rary' cease-fire and their 'offer',

as it is not meant for them. So

to what extent will Clinton al-

low NATO to go to 'net' that

'bloody brutal dictator'? (Bush

Milosevic has proved to be

for his 'misdeeds'.

price for it.

Yugoslav war crimes tribunal in the Netherlands, so that after the bodies have been buried, the fires put out and the war has been ended, punishment can be meted out. The killers are running amok in Kosovo, but in the end, justice must be given its day. been well under way for some time now. The Serbs are apparently intent on driving as many

of them as possible out of their

homes in a calculated and cyni-

cal process of terror and mur-

Uprooting people from homes and villages that they and their ancestors have occupied for many decades is an abrogation of both human and property rights. Milosevic attempts to justify his ethnic cleansing on the grounds that Kosovo is the land of the Serbs. citing the defeat of a Serbian army there by the Turks six

centuries ago. NATO's air bombardment has accompanied and perhaps provoked a new dimension to the horror in Kosovo; the dire possibility that Milosevic and his band of bloodthirsty goons will exterminate or expel the population of Kosovo before NATO can stop them.

One of the stated goals of the air campaign is the deterrence of Serb aggression in Kosovo. Unfortunately, so far, the bombing campaign has not only failed to halt Milosevic's gangsters, it seems to have actually energised them.

The Serb soldiers who have been scourging Kosovo with special ferocity in the last few weeks have callously and cruelly repudiated their basic duty

as protectors of the vulnerable. These moral monsters are, alas, free to do their evil work in depriving hapless people of their homes, their farms, their businesses, their cities, their homeland and even their lives. But the world cannot allow these soldiers to be free of responsibility for their demonic

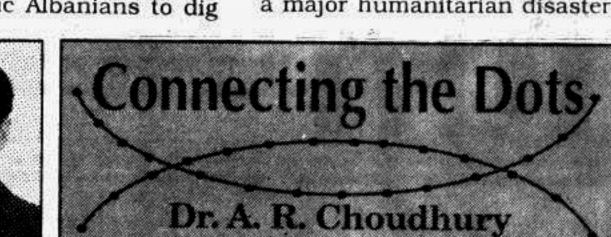
The most frightening and evocative of the latest news reports emanating from Kosovo described how Serb troops have forced ethnic Albanians to dig

behaviour.

by photographs taken by NATO satellites.

Some of the survivors said Serb soldiers compelled them to wear orange-red coats that made the Kosovars easy to identify and control.

The first need now is for these hapless victims to be treated with kindness by the governments of Macedonia, Albania and other countries where they seek refuge. Make no mistake about the extent of the crisis. Kosovo is on the brink of a major humanitarian disaster



mass graves for their own people. These bloodcurdling reports need to be promptly and completely investigated, not only to establish the truth, but to fix responsibility and blame.

The grave-digging accounts came from either survivors or witnesses: Kosovar refugees fleeing their homeland in front of the pitiless advance of troops and tanks of the Yugoslav army and police. The reports have been confirmed, at least in part,

the likes of which have not been seen in Europe since the closing

stages of World War II. In addition to sheltering the homeless, it is essential that NATO collect as much evidence as possible, from human and technical sources, about the nature and extent of Milosevic's butchery in Kosovo so that he

can be prosecuted and punished. Mass executions, forced marches and many other atrocities have been reported. Some of the people who are doing this seem to have abdicated all vestiges of human sympathy and have begun to act like jungle an-

Milosevic, the chief patron of this animality was allowed to get away with murder in Bosnia; he was not indicted by the United Nations war-crimes tribunal for his role in the ethnic cleansing there, mainly because NATO needed him to participate in a political negotia-

It's now apparent that Milosevic jerked NATO around like a monkey on a chain. He didn't negotiate; he lied. He didn't deal; he double-crossed.

In an attempt to settle scores in a speedy, effective and professional way when score-settling time comes — as it will the NATO has recently released the names of nine Serb commanders who might face prosecution for war crimes in Kosovo.

It was a way of putting these commanders on public notice. "We know who you are and we are watching you very closely, and if you put torches to homes and bullets into the brains of babies, we will find out about it

and make you pay".
There is already a mountain of evidence of crime, gathered by satellites and down-to-earth methods such as personal in-

terviews with survivors and witnesses. Various officials have related reports of mass killings, a forced march, execution victims left on streets, injured children, beatings and deportation of people stuffed in rail cars. Many of these atroci

ties recall the brutality that was perpetrated in Bosnia. NATO officials have stated that the names and the evidence would be turned over to the special Yugoslav war crimes fribunal in the Netherlands, so that after the bodies have been buried, the fires put out and the war has been ended, punishment can be meted out. The killers are running amok in Kosovo, but in the end, justice

must be given its day. With each passing day's new atrocities, the NATO alliance faces an increasingly stark operational choice: go in on the ground, or allow the Serbs to continue with the massacres and ethnic cleansing that NA-TO's attack has exacerbated. Because the apostles of air power oversold their capabilities to the NATO leadership, who are anxious to keep down allied casualty, they made the strategic blunder of beginning a campaign without assembling either the will or the tools that might be necessary to bring it to a rapid and desirable conclu-

If NATO can't muster sufficient force to prevent Milosevic from completing his work in Kosovo, it at least ought to be in a position to settle accounts with him when the fighting

### **KOSOVO HOLOCAUST** While UN Lies Paralysed Unplanned NATO Action Adds Fuel to Fire

by AMM Shahabuddin

Perhaps UN needs a thorough shake-up to free it from the curse of 'veto power' of the big five (US, UK, France, Russia and China). This 'veto', a "lunatic device", as called by H G Wells, should be abolished by amending the Charter, giving equal rights to all the 15 members of the Security Council.

called Saddam Hussain 'a little Hitler. But Clinton has not yet conferred any such honoris causa on Milosevic). Undoubtedly. Milosevic deserves such honorifics as NATO's 'successful' operation has further consolidated his position before his nation.

#### NATO Operation: A Big Mistake!

It is now being realised and commented by analysts that NATO's air operation without the support of ground forces was a 'big mistake' on the part of President Clinton and his allies who jumped with him in the

Commanding General Wesley Clark has been quoted as saying that it was "entirely predictable" that Serbian terror and violence against Kosovars would intensify following NATO bombing. It became all the more glaring when the Kosovo 'moderate' leadership was practically forced to accept a US-brokered peace agreement, giving 'autonomy', instead of independence, while the Yugoslav government and the KLA rejected it, making the door open for violence and terror. The consequent reign of terror that was let loose by the Serbian army and para-military forces against both the civilians as well as the KLA guerillas was inevitable, particularly when NATO had no ground forces to drive out the Serb 'Huns' who had an easy 'walk-over' whenever the so-called international observers were withdrawn from Kosovo. The most strange part of the whole bloody drama is that the Clinton Administration couldn't foresee the endless tragedy they were going to perpetrate in Kosovo by jumping into the unplanned or half-planned NATO air action. Perhaps, they knew it fully well and considered it a 'price' 'worth paying'

#### A Blessing in Disguise!

It may be a coincidence but a hard fact that both Milosevic and Clinton want the total extinction of the KLA guerillas. May be they have got separate reasons for this. Milosevic wants to finish off the KLA freedom-fighters because they are the spear-head of the secession movement while Clinton may be up against them as they had refused to accept the 'autonomy' plan.

The end-result is horrifying. The Serbs must be thanking their 'stars' for such a God-sent gift for them. What they couldn't achieve during the last one year or so, has been done in just over two-weeks by the NATO bombing. It must have been a blessing in disguise for the Serbs! Hitler must be turning, in his grave to see the breaking of his 'holocaust record'! It appears like 'killing two birds in one shot.' NATO, or rather America, has shown that at last it has carried out its promise to punish Milosevic i he didn't behave properly. On the other hand. America has caused havoc for the Muslims of Kosovo by almost 'killing' their dream of an independent state.

A total population of 1.8 million, of which 90 per cent are Muslims, are now facing almost a total annihilation. There is already a huge daily exodus of refugees, crossing the borders to seek shelter in safer neighbouring countries — Albania, Macedonia and even Montenegro. But the Serb hordes in Kosovo are trying to use these fleeing refugees as 'human shield's against NATO bombings, by preventing them from leaving the country. America is reported to be sending additional troops to Albania to handle the increasing number of refugees there. America has already stationed troops in Albania and Macedonia, not as combatant force, but as mere 'observers'. Mere send-

ing of American troops to the Balkans won't reverse the process of a growing human disaster caused by America itself by its wrong planning. They shouldn't try now to fish in troubled waters. They should remember what they did in Kuwait to 'take care' of the occupying Iraqi forces. At that time, the US air action simultaneous with ground forces operation. chased the fleeing Iraqi soldiers literally to their graves within Iraq in thousands. They didn't hesitate to do it under the 'rusty' UN umbrella. Why do they fight shy in sending ground troops to-Kosovo today? They must answer. Otherwise Clinton would have to face charges in 'people's court' for abetment of genocide of innocent people of Kosovo side by side with Milosevic who had ordered total "ethnic

A Pertinent Question Thus the ill-planned NATO

cleansing" of Kosovo Muslims.

action in Belgrade and Pristina has raised a pertinent question: Is America and its closest NATO ally, Great Britain, want to go the same way the then British government did in creating Israel by uprooting the Palestinian Muslims from their land, scattering them in a number of Mideast countries as refugees and then following up with some 'soothing' measures in the name of rehabilitation? The result? It has been more than five decades, since the establishment of Israel and the Palestinians have not yet been able to establish their independent state of Palestine. Only now Yasser Arafat would perhaps declare next month such an independent status of the areas he claims to be Palestinian. As for the Kosovo Muslims, a similar process of 'exile' seems to have already started. The Kosovo refugees are now being pushed not only into the neighbouring countries, but they are also being airlifted to some European countries, including Germany and Norway. Even some 10,000 of such refugees would be accepted by

#### Dislodging Refugees: A New Game?

But Albania has suspected a dirty game behind it. Albania has come out with a strong criticism of such dislodging of Kosovo refugees. Apprehending that Muslim refugees will be placed far from their homeland, the Albanian government has protested against such plans to settle them in farway Western countries. And Albania has expressed its readiness to accept more refugees, although it is already hard hit by accepting about 300,000 of them. So the 'rat' is there, and Albania has caught it by its tail! Let America order its NATO ground forces to go into action against the Serbian Army and paramilitary that are busy giving a few finishing touches to their "cleansing" operation against Muslims. Also not station them in Albania just to help refugee rehabilitation. It's like 'asking your tigers to eat grass.' They should instead be put in action where they are most needed.

#### Tragic Drama: Where is the UN?

Now a few words about that august organisation known as the United Nations. It is most striking and pitiable as well not to find that world body anywhere near when this 'tragic drama' is being enacted by America and NATO. In the past President Reagan and President Bush had heavily abused or misused the UN to serve their purpose. The entire Gulf war was operated under the UN umbrella and all US actions were 'legalised' by the UN. But Bush never bothered to involve the UN, when he created 'no-fly' zones in the northern and southern parts of Iraq and bombarded Baghdad, to punish

of the 'no-fly zones'. What a mockery in the name of the UN! Even when France, a powerful NATO ally, proposed a UN Security Council resolution to "authorise" deployment of NATO peace-keepers, now stationed in Albania and Macedonia, America flatly refused to do so declaring that America could do it "independently".

Power seems to have entered Clinton's head. So America has taken up an onerous responsibility on itself as the lone superpower and policeman of the world, showing total disregard and utter contempt to the UN Charter and all that it stands for. In fact, America has 'hijacked' the UN and put it in its backyard shed'. It is brought out only when needs to suit US strategy. Perhaps UN Secretary General, who is supposed to do lots in such a horrible situation to maintain peace and security, would be asked by America to 'take care' of the massive refugee problem that has followed the NATO air action and Serbian ground forces operation. But UN was not created by its founding fathers to serve as a mere ceremonial body to issue statements on observance of UN-designated "days" and "weeks". Nevertheless, today it lies paralysed and impotent.

#### How to Resurrect the But how to 'resurrect' this

august body to its dignified position? Perhaps it needs a thorough shake-up to free it from the curse of 'veto power' of the big five (US, UK, France, Russia and China). This 'veto', a "lunatic device", as called by H G Wells, should be abolished by amending the Charter, giving equal rights to all the 15 members of the Security Council. including the five permanent "big" powers. One application of 'veto', or 'negative vote' by a single permanent member is enough to crush an entire peace process. All council decisions should be made either by a simple majority or by a twothird majority, and it should be binding on all. No single power, however 'super' it may be, should be allowed to impose its 'home-made' decisions on others. The world have had enough of it. If the only superpower goes around as the 'trouble-shooter' in a 'wild-west style', then more disasters and catastrophies are bound to

#### The poor Os

Sir. Very recently the O-level results of the students from Bangladesh were published by the British Council. Most of the students could not do well in different subjects including the English language. Meanwhile. some of the students have applied for re-examination of their exam scripts with extra fees to the Council, Dhaka. It appears to me that the Examination Committee of London tends to develop a commercial interest out of the students belonging to the rich parents who can afford to spend extra money for them. On top of it, students not getting good grade at O-levels examination cannot reappear in the same subject/s within three months' time because of the peculiar system now prevailing in the third world countries. Since the UK treats educational institutions as Academic Industry, it exploits the rich parents and guardians for their self-inter-

We strongly feel that some sort of positive measures should be taken to end such existing order for good.

M A Osman Ali Uttara Ameer Complex Sector # 7, Dhaka

#### Kosovo: Revisiting 1971 Bangladesh

Sir, The tragedy that has befallen upon the Kasovars is a reenactment of what happened to

the people of Bangladesh in 1971. The difference is today the world power is taking a stand to fight the perpetrator of this genocide and mass exodus. Their is a consensus of bringing to justice those who are behind this crime against humanity. But those who committed the similar crimes in 1971 in Bangladesh were never tried. leave alone brought to justice. The world witnessed the genocide in Bangladesh during 1971 with disgust but the political scenario was such that the criminals were allowed to be set

Today we live in a more humane world and those who suffered the pain and agony of Pakistan forces' brutality cry out for justice. It is never too late to punish those who committed the genocide in Bangladesh, where almost three million people perished.

Akku Chowdhury Banani

#### **Biotech Institute**

Sir, The news has reached us recently that the government has decided to establish the proposed Biotech Institute in the Rajshahi Campus of BCSIR. Because the application of Biotech in various sectors is vitally important for the economic development of Bangladesh, we require a state of the art institute along with top class scientists to do the re-

search projects there. From my experience as a re-

search professor (Agriculture) I can say that without proper infrastructural facilities including uninterrupted supply of electricity, an institute of this kind cannot function. Unfortunately. Rajshahi district lacks those basic facilities, and therefore I strongly suggest that the main Biotech. Inst. be located in and around Dhaka with provision to build ancillary institute in the near future in the :major Univ./Res. Inst. areas.

I do sincerely hope that government will reconsider its decision by having the institute built in and around Dhaka.

Emeritus Research Professor Langston University, Oklahoma, U.S.A.

M A B Mallik

#### BTV blacks it out

Sir, Without any provocation Indian Border Security Force intentionally and in cold blood killed six Bangladeshi people on the 19th of April 1999. The firing continued from 11:00 hours to 19:45 hours BST. BBC broadcast the news. No doubt it was not only a big news but also news of the day as far as Bangladesh is concerned. So after having heard the news on BBC I switched on BTV to hear more about it at its 8 o'clock Bangla news.

Surprisingly not a single word was uttered regarding the incident. The news was totally blacked out by the BTV.

Whereas, a trash news (better to be thrown in the dustbin) of Sachin Tendulkar scoring a century and that too against forty year old players who retired from playing first class cricket long time ago was broadcast. This is the standard of our news. Alas! BTV news. Igbal Ahmed Dhaka - 1000

#### All hope and no result

Sir, I refer to Mr Hanif's recent press meet. I guess time is right again for candidate likewise to give all hope and no result. I wonder why a person fit to be Mayor of a mega city commits himself to promises which he cannot fulfil? Now when again time is ripe to face people for vote, he informs to everybody's surprise that "mosquito free Dhaka is not possible". Why then there should be such large number of people on the payroll of DCC as mosquito eradicators?

Another joke of the year could be his so-called formation of special committee, to eradicate "terrorism, extortion, violence etc to be headed by "OCs"! I only wish this could be true to its least. We all can see very recently, bit by bit the true colour of our law enforcers! Does Mr Mayor only make commitments which he will fail to accomplish?

A Concerned Citizen of Dhaka

# Saddam Hussain for violation Buchwald's COLUMNI

#### Vying with Mr Gates ILL Gates has just written a book entitled "Business @ the

Speed of Thought," in which he has listed the "Ten New Rules Concerning Computer Networking." Without stealing his thunder, I also have 10 rules that I will eventually put in a book. They are not as sophisticated as

Mr Gates, but then again, I don't have his money: 1. When turning on your computer, try to remember your password. Many people cannot boot up their machines because they can't recall whether they named their password after their

wives, children or the girl next door. 2. Do not hit any key you are not certain of, as it will only make you lose the file on your hard disk. You may ask, "Which key"? No one knows which button on your computer will make you lose everything you have written for the last two days.

3. Spilling coffee or Coca-Cola on your keyboard will cause more trouble than the drinks are worth. 4. Do not put a computer in a microwave oven if it does not

warm up. 5. If you have difficulty getting the font you want, do not call the computer maker to talk to someone. They will put you on

hold for a week or until you starve to death. 6. There is no such thing as a friendly computer. It will stab you in the back as soon as you turn to answer the telephone. 7. A computer is so simple even a child use it — as a matter of fact, only a child can use it. Do not try to do anything on a com-

puter unless someone under 13 is standing next to you. 8. The more bells and whistles a computer has, the less chance you have of doing anything on it. 9. The Internet is as good way as any to say "Hi" to people who

live in New Guinea. 10. There is no way of getting rid of an outdated computer other than to get in your car and drive it to a salt mine in New Mexico.

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