

## Unnecessary bad Behaviour!

I had an opportunity to conduct a 10 days long research project with a Japanese researcher from Osaka University, Japan. We were trying to find out the differences in supervising systems for teachers between NGO schools and public primary schools in Bangladesh. On 5 July 2004, we went to Savar to interview the controlling officer of some selected schools. We were somewhat happy that we successfully completed the research. We took a rickshaw ride to enjoy the beautiful twilight. Villagers welcomed us warmly everywhere. Kids were running behind the rickshaw and ladies were waving their hands at us. It was really a novel experience for the foreigner. She was overwhelmed with joy to see the simplicity and hospitality of the village people but after a few minutes, we reached the town, going back to our rest house. During the last couple of minutes of our journey the experience was horrendous. A number of local boys passed some very repulsive comments to her and uttered some slang in English. She was shocked, as was I. I requested them to be friendly and courteous, especially to a foreigner and asked them to apologise to her. They said sorry but in a very filthy manner. We were silent for the rest of the time and I was distraught by the hostility of those young people.

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A few days ago in the BUET-Cafe, I noticed some junior boys sitting with some senior female students. The boys were blowing smoke and passing comments to the senior girls, harassing them continuously. For sometime no one seemed bothered but to my utter surprise, when some of the boys left that table leaving only one of them behind, some senior male students approached that boy and slapped him on the face in front of everyone. They ordered him to



bring back all his friends in the cafe at lunchtime. Surprisingly they showed up and their leader approached the senior male students quite aggressively. Before he could say anything, he was slapped. Things were really heating up and there was a crowd growing in the café. The senior students decided to punish them rigorously for their indecent behaviour but later decided to spare them. The young ones were ordered to behave properly with girls in the future. I wonder what 'zamana' has come that the juniors do not even hesitate to harass seniors, but the good thing is that there are still people who dare to stand up to them.

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## A Weightless Swindler

CHEATING while weighing goods for the customer is a common phenomenon here in Dhaka, especially amongst the food vendors on the streets. I had recently purchased some mangoes from a street hawker from where I live but after he handed me the fruits, they seemed a little lighter. I had brought the same quantity of fruits from somewhere else a week back and they seemed to have weighed more. I asked the vendor if his weights were all right but he quickly put aside my allegations. His behaviour seemed a little peculiar and I immediately took his 1 kg weight to test it. I saw that he was cheating everyone out of 50 grams and on careful

inspection, I discovered that one of the screws to the weight hole was missing. It must have been tampered with. A crowd had gathered by now and it was almost as if they were simply waiting to get their hands on the hawker. I rescued him from an imminent beating and I even saved his basket full of mangoes but I refused to return his 'modified' weight. I contemplated that he was a tiny hoodwinker but the civil bureaucrats who take bribes day in and day out are the real mega hoodwinkers of this nation.

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