



# ...scenario



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in many government offices. It is quite interesting to note that the Bangladesh government wants to have E-governance countrywide without having arranged for proper infrastructure and uploading necessary websites to that end. We look at other websites of foreign countries and get impressed and inspired by it, but leave our local websites lacking in information. So the first and foremost thing for E-governance is to create this database with the help of skilled ICT workers. Then the other thing is to set up network architecture between the computers in the government departments so that each department knows what the other is doing.

These linkages are still not in place. As far as the providing of information and utilities services are concerned, government departments, banks, airlines, educational institutions should come forward with good and user-friendly programs which can be accessible to anyone who has the minimum facilities. These days, the use of mobile telephones has been on the increase no doubt, and many argue that one can use these mobiles to have access to internet. This sounds innovative all right, but this has its limitations too. Further, one

has to worry about the cost and has to be financially solvent to buy special mobile sets. The other thing is that unless the contents are in the local language, not very many people would be able to benefit from it. Making a call on the health line on the mobile phone, getting the latest news or even paying for utility bills are only mundane E-governance. The proper installation of the broadband connection is absolutely essential especially for educational purposes, so that people can download instructional materials apart from buying tickets and paying bills, etc. For this to happen, the electricity must, of course, be reached to villages (with a number of other achievable dividends from such electrifications). Unless that happens, community ICT centers can be set up with the right technological infrastructures for a large number of people in the rural areas, so that these people can solve their problems of communication and can have access to the information highway apart from being connected to the private and government institutions for satisfying their informational, personal and market needs.

Another thing that must be emphasized with E-governance is that the sense

of awareness of the public about the importance and use of the information systems should be developed using the print media as well as radio and TV. Community centers which can act as health-centers may also act as ICT centers for catering to the needs of the people. If we really want to put E-governance in practice, then the use of ICT trained people in the country should increase manifold, and the dependence on foreign experts should be reduced to a minimum. In order that the electronic and informational gadgets find an easy entrance in the lives of our common people, it is further necessary that some of these devices may be assembled (if not manufactured) following the norms and practices of the neighboring Asian countries. The action of the government ICT Task Force, which was formed earlier, should be increased manifold, and the ICT policy that was adopted quite sometime ago, should be implemented keeping in view the needs of not only some elite groups, but also those of "our people" - "the people of Bangladesh".

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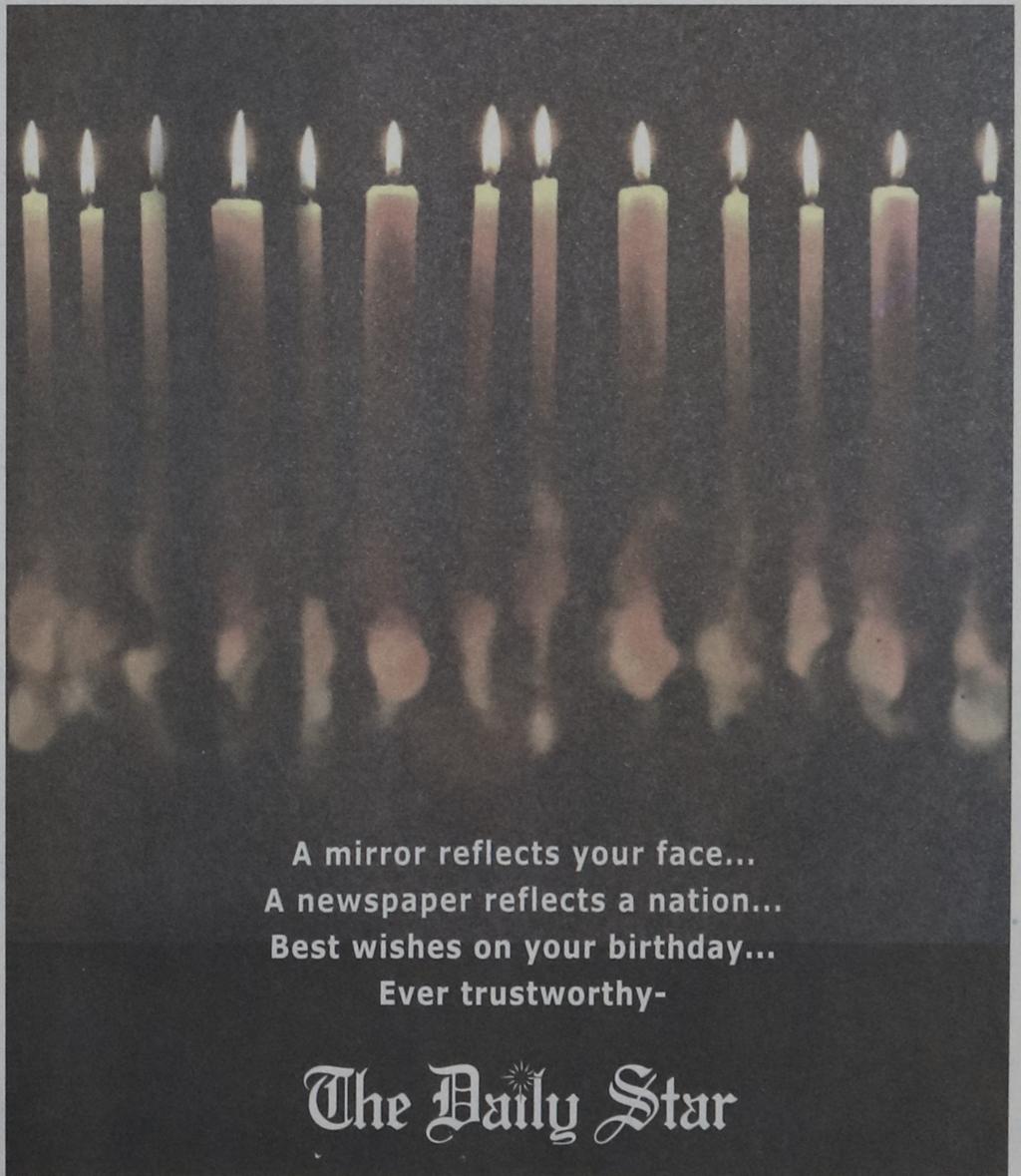
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