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Primary final exams

Primary Final Exam-2009 of class five began across the country from 21 November. A huge number of students have sat for their first public examination to prove their standard. The routine of the exams had been given earlier, so that the students could prepare themselves. This new system of primary final exam, a new initiative of the Primary Board, also an acid test for the education minister and his new education policy, will make our

tender boys and girls competitive, challenging & courageous to face more public exams in future.

It is a matter of regret that some guardians of the famous schools demanded a change in the exam routine to give their boys and girls ample time during the exams. Perhaps, they wanted to make their boys & girls commit every page of the books to memory. A question arises in this respect, "What have our students been taught all the

year by our reliable teachers?" The concerned guardians should think about it.

Again the real objective of this exam is to find out the talents.

We convey our thanks to the authorities of Primary Education Board of Bangladesh as well as the Education Ministry for initiating the scheme.

Ratan Kumar Saha
Dhaka Zilla School
Dhaka



AJAHAD / DRINKNEWS

Astalemate

Bit by bit the unplanned 400 year old capital city is becoming paralysed and coming to a stalemate due to encroachment on the riverbanks, illegally built-up buildings, vehicles and influx of a huge population into the city. Indeed it's no longer to be considered as the city of mosques as it has turned into a sea of vehicles and population. There is no guarantee that you can reach your destination within your desired time, but there is a guarantee that you will have to stay stuck in a gridlock of vehicles.

Now coming to some important points, at present the biggest challenge for the government is grappling with traffic congestion, after the problem of electricity shortage. The truth is that many of our conscious citizens are talking about the ways to get out of this grave traffic gridlock, hampering our every day life with enormous wastage of precious time, keeping the very important issue of increasingly growing population size aside which is to be brought to the limelight.

Therefore, checking the population growth is a must. I would earnestly request our government to lay more emphasis upon the population control programmes, alongside resolving traffic congestion and power shortage.

Hasnat, AIUB

Presidential clemency

The President of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh has reportedly shown clemency and released a 'convict', a son of an influential ruling party leader. This was reportedly within his clemency power. I don't know what service the state will get from this gesture, but it will definitely give a bad message to the people that "a convict, if he or she is a relative of political leader may enjoy the privilege of Presidential Clemency."

It is a bad signal for the nation.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

National pay scale

The government has announced the seventh national pay scale fixing the highest salary at Tk 40,000 and the lowest at Tk 4,100. The new pay scale has come up with a 52 percent increase, on an average, in the basic salary of the public servants and the finance minister, while announcing this good news, assured the countrymen that the new pay regime would not negatively impact the kitchen market. This enhanced pay scale will require the government an additional amount of Tk 62.22 billion annually.

As is widely believed, this new pay scale is for addressing a long-standing feeling that

the government employees are not well paid and hence they resort to corruption and do not perform as expected. But how this enhanced salary and associated benefits will motivate them to come out of the age-old system of poor performance and corrupt practices remains a question. After completion of my engineering graduation in 1973, I served for about seven years in a government office. I very clearly remember that on my joining, I was not given any job-orientation and no one told me what were my duties & responsibilities and what was expected of me. I do not really know how the system has been changed during the last 35 years. But if the overall performance of the government is any indication, then probably nothing positive has taken place.

It is really good news that from now on the government employees will enjoy more than double financial benefits. But they should know who is paying them and for what. They are public servants and even a rickshaw puller pays for them in the form of VAT and other tax structures. Along with the pay scale the government must draw an action plan to motivate the government employees to be obedient public servants and bring some relief to the life of the people with higher responsibility, greater accountability, enhanced efficiency, firm commitment and, above all, integrity. The surgeon of a government hospital should know that he/she must look for another job if something is left inside the stomach of a patient!

Engr. Md. Aminul Hoque
Khalishpur R/A, Khulna

Digital or analogue?

Outside Dhaka two time standards are maintained.

Is it not a violation of the law as they are not obeying the government decision?

MD. Washiqul Alam

Azimpur, Dhaka

Translation of Tagore's Gora

The recent translation of Gora of Rabindranath Tagore by Radha Chakraborty (wife of the present Indian High Commissioner in Bangladesh), published from New Delhi was reviewed by Mohsena Reza in your paper (15 Nov). This translation was also widely acclaimed in the Bangladesh media when the book was published and launched last year.

I would like to mention here that Gora was translated by Rabindranath Tagore himself, with no other name accredited or acknowledged for such translation, and was published by Macmillan and Co. of London in 1924. I have a copy of the book which has 408

pages and is a complete English version of the full novel in Bengali. Of course the UK statutory libraries have copies of it and no doubt the library in Shantiniketan will have copies also. I am surprised that no reviewer or commentator has thought it worthwhile to mention this authoritative translation by the Master himself, and eulogising only the present prose translation of the novel has belittled the Master's own work.

Translation of poetry or songs is quite different from that of a prose novel. The former can have many new moods and nuances to convey to the readers. I myself have translated many of Tagore's poems and songs and have published them in the UK which have received wide acclaim in Bangladesh, India, the US and many other countries.

See www.oaktownpublications.com and www.museindia.com (March 09 issue). However, translation of a bulky prose novel is another matter and renderings in other languages should not be widespread as it is unlikely to provide new literary insight by such process, especially if it is already done in full, (and not in an abbreviated manner), by the author himself. Any new literary light on such translated novels can best be supplied in critical literary analysis or commentary, rather than another full version of translation.

Engineer Shafi Ahmed
London, UK

Tin bigha issue

As part of our training in a tour 'Know Bangladesh' we reached Lalmonirhat, and thereafter Dahagram Angorpota, a small chitmoahol (enclave) of Bangladesh in Indian territory. On the way to Dahagram-Angorpota, our guide again and again reminded us not to take snap on the narrow passage known as tin bigha corridor. It is called tin bigha corridor because the total passage measures tin bigha. On zero line we got down from the bus and walked on to the corridor, a narrow passage marked by white colour on both sides of the passage. The guide warns us not to overstep the white marking. 'Why?' I asked. 'That's India' he replied. I found BSF personnel standing firmly, guns in hand, eyes fixed on the corridor to notice any walker crossing the white marking. I found a BSF personnel, big camera in hand cautiously taking video of us, another one beside him was manually counting the poor, silent, timid walker passing over there. Again two or more personnel having moustache and wearing half pant and tea-shirt casually sitting on chairs putting one leg on another, chewing gum or anything else and casting

merciful look on the passers-by before them. Beside us the BSF personnel raising gun were patrolling their border on high speed open jeep.

On the other side of the corridor we expected almost none, but beyond our imagination we found not less than two hundred people mostly women and children eagerly waiting for us for a long time. Don't think they were waiting for food relief, they were waiting for relief to breath freely in Bangladesh.

In my masters syllabus I read a one act play with the title "The Riders to the Sea" by JM Synge. In the story of the play the inhabitants of the island often lost their lives and properties in the sea in their efforts to reach the main land. The people of Dahagram also lose their lives in their effort to reach their main land. But the only difference is that the islanders would die of natural cause, here in Dahagram, the ill fated people succumb to the same fate for an artificial cause, otherwise known as unnatural or deliberated cause.

Around the border India erected strongly built sharp ended iron fence overhead and in regular intervals flood lights are there focusing towards the territory of Bangladesh. The people gathered there echoed in a voice that those floodlights multiplied their sufferings. After the day's hard toil they can't sleep at night because the heavy beams of light keeps them awake. They describe it as physical and mental torture. We inquired about the development programmes there and got a bleak picture about health, education, family planning and other civic facilities. The entire enclave has no electricity. The Deputy Commissioner of Lalmonirhat told that the authorities of India do not permit electric pole over their territory. The authorities of Bangladesh proposed fly-over to connect the people of two sides. The reply of India was 'no'. Why? You may ask. Yes, the answer is ready: it's 'safety'.

When will they put the issue of Dahagram-Angorpota on the table while talking to their Indian counterparts?

Muhammad Iqbal
Dhaka

Corruption, then and now

Your paper did a splendid job in highlighting corruption when the BNP misruled this country. However, you have gone totally blind to the corruption ravaging the country under the present government.

Please send your journalists under cover for government job interviews and find out what is really happening. Nepotism, bribery and so on...

Jehangir Samad
One-mail

Banani bridge & traffic management

The new Banani bridge connecting Banani and Gulshan has been a great relief for people of these two areas as well as people who come to visit this part of the city. The bridge was well managed at the beginning, but recently things have been let loose. First of all, there is no constant traffic policeman at this important bridge. Rickshaws, motorbikes even sometimes cars try to take advantage of this by coming from the opposite direction in this one-way bridge creating possibilities of accidents. Also, this bridge was rickshaw free at the beginning. Now, rickshaws have been allowed creating traffic jam. For the greater interest of Banani residents and for easing traffic jam, I will request the authorities concerned to provide traffic police in this bridge at least during commuting times for office and schools. Also, this bridge has significantly increased traffic flow at Road #11 at Banani. This road should immediately be made off-limits to rickshaws and this can also be turned into a one-way road as Kemal Ataturk Avenue runs parallel and that can be made one-way the other way around. Let's face it, it will be years before subways can be built in Dhaka. Till then, we must be smarter about traffic jam to make our city liveable, no one else will do it for us, we have to solve our problems by ourselves. This is a good time to start addressing the big problems through small steps and one step at a time. Kolkata can be a good example of how they have smartly managed their traffic by turning some key roads into one-way during peak times and reverse one-way after 1:00pm as well as turning all major roads off-limits to rickshaws and making auto-rickshaws run on selected routes only. We can start by implementing it at a few selective roads and take it on from there.

Parvez Murshed
Banani, Dhaka

Fingerprint experts!

It is heartening to read in your 16 November issue, a technology report on the success of a local IT company, TigerITBD.com, in the global market of Automatic Fingerprint Identification System, and that the US Federal Bureau of Investigation intends to work with the company for the ID solution.

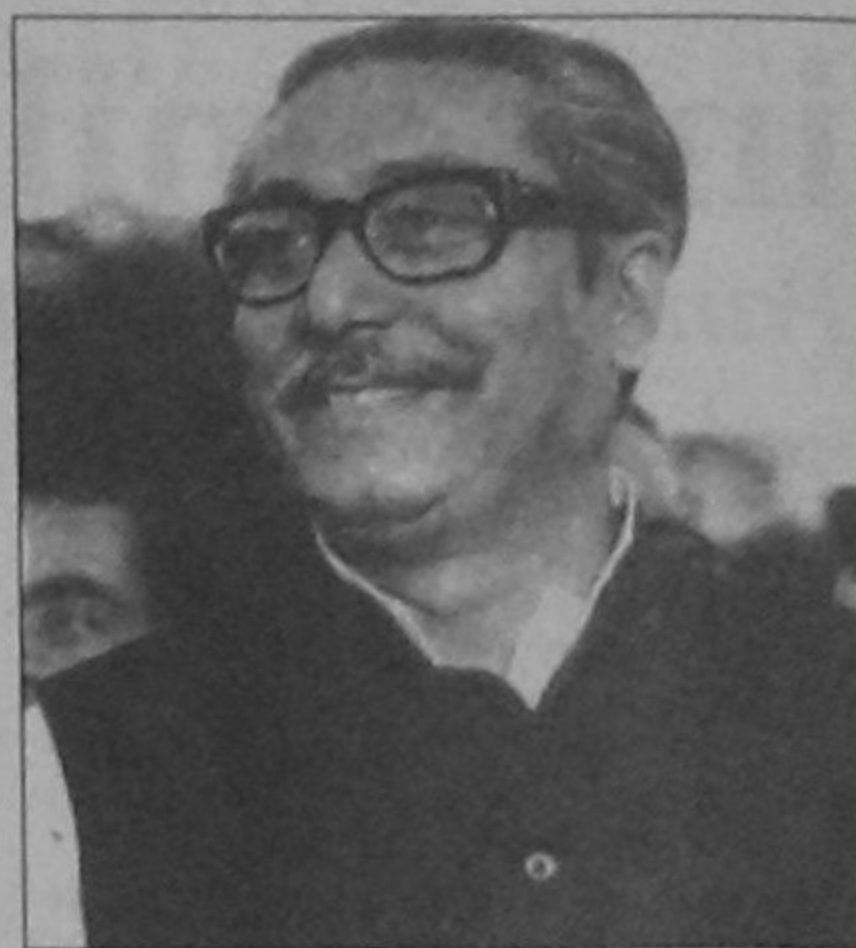
I would like to recall on this occasion two Bengalee pioneers of international system of fingerprint identification. More than one hundred years ago -- in 1897 -- two Bengalee fingerprint experts, Azizul Haque and Hem Chandra Bose, then working at Kolkata's Anthropometric Bureau developed the first modern system of classification of fingerprints. The Haque-Bose system was soon adopted officially by the Scotland Yard in Britain in 1901. It replaced the previous inaccurate systems and became the most widely used international system of classification of fingerprints. The FBI in the USA adopted the system in 1924 when the

Justice delayed, not denied

It was so heartening to learn about the long awaited judgment on the Bangabandhu murder case. The Supreme Court of Bangladesh unanimously upheld an earlier judgment that found all those 12 rogue officers of the armed forces guilty of the worst crime in the history of Bangladesh. Unless some miracle happens, these criminals will be hanged for the murder of Sheikh Mujib and his family members on August 15, 1975.

However, not all the guilty criminals are in jail now. Only five murderers are imprisoned in Dhaka jail. The government of Bangladesh must now try to bring the fugitives home through extradition treaties signed with those countries where they are hiding and implement the verdict.

It took more than 34 years to eventually find justice on this case of monumental importance to tens of millions of Bangladeshis. It was delayed justice, but not denied; it was by all accounts a welcome verdict. The verdict showed that a killer can run and even hide under the skirts of the beneficiaries of a gruesome killing but justice may still prevail. The Supreme Court verdict also proved that even when we least expect



justice in a country that has become hopeless for the victims, not everything is lost; the victims can still smile and see light at the end of what once appeared to be a never-ending judicial circus.

So, who knows we may even live long enough to see the war criminals of 1971 hanged for their horrendous crimes! Thirty-eight years probably is not too long a waiting time. Let's keep our hopes alive and have a sweet dream for now!

Dr. Habib Siddiqui
Pennsylvania, USA

Congress passed an act to the effect. It had been often called the "Henry system" after the name of the then superior of Azizul Haque and Hem Chandra Bose at the Anthropometric Bureau (Mr. Edward R. Henry) who wrote a book describing the Haque-Bose system with the title "The Classification and Use of Fingerprints".

It is quite befitting that an IT-company from Bangladesh should make an international mark in fingerprint identification in the international scene again by developing, after more than a century, the most effective fingerprint matching solution that topped the list of a formidable group of competitors from high-tech countries like the US and Japan. TigerIT BD.com deserves our congratulations for this achievement and for keeping up the tradition!

Farhad Faisal
One-mail

China, Tibet and we

I refer to the timely comments made by former Ambassador M. Serajul Islam in his article "Civil Society and Bangladesh's foreign policy objectives," published in The Daily Star on November 14, 2009 on 'Strategic Issues' page.

While I fully endorse the points of view expressed in the well thought out commentary, I should like to emphasize upon the main point brought out therein. The civil society should be aware and conscious of the national objectives, and certainly the foreign policy ones. Unfortunately, this is occasionally not the case in our country.

China is a trusted and close friend of Bangladesh, and the two countries have no current or possible clash of interests at all. It is in the interest of both the countries that all sections of society and the government try to strengthen the bonds of our close friendship and deep understanding, and to the fullest extent. In the context, the efforts of a hitherto unknown group, called

"Students for a free Tibet (SFT)," along with a local gallery to stage a photo show titled 'Into exile-Tibet 1949-2009' seem to have been motivated by extra-national political interests. A visit to the website of SFT reveals that besides India, Bangladesh is the only developing country among the eight countries which have SFT national network. The foreign ministry and the home ministry will have to keep SFT under careful watch. Bangladesh cannot afford to see its relationship with China damaged by unpatriotic elements.

We thank the Chinese Embassy for taking the initiative of pointing that out and the authorities for their subsequent prohibitive steps. We in Bangladesh believe in One China. We believe that Tibet is and always has been an inseparable part of China. There cannot be any deviation from this unalterable principled stand.

Enam A. Chaudhury
Member of the Advisory Committee to the Chairperson, BNP

Football coach

Bangladesh Football Federation officials are now famous for sacking foreign coaches, right and left. Recently, the axe fell on Brazilian coach Dido. His fault was he did not select experienced players. He did select players whom he thought would do well in South Asian Championship. So it would have been wiser for BFF to decide Dido's fate after the SAF championship. Now we will never know, whether Dido's player selection was a good one or not. Dido did not pick some experienced players, as he had conflicts with those which were never resolved. Dido should have been more lenient toward those players given the fact that the players did apologize. Perhaps Dido was trying to build a team consisting of young players for long-term good results. We should also remember that when a great player falls out of favour

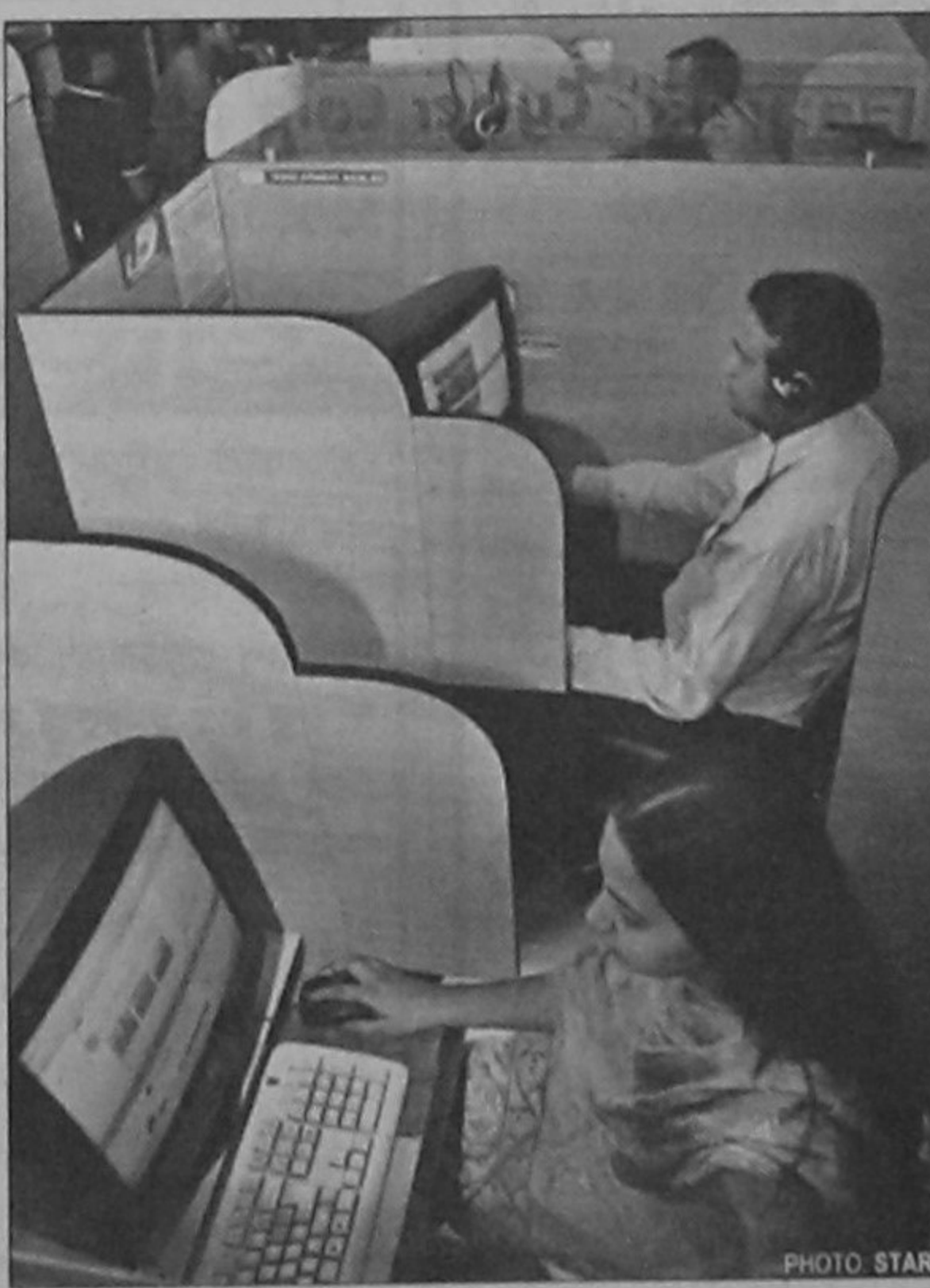
because of conflict with a professional coach, that player usually does not get regular playing time and in most cases he has to move to another team. While playing for Villarreal, elegant playmaker Juan Roman Riquelme lost his starting line up playmaking duty, as then Villarreal coach Chilean Manuel Pellegrini (now Real Madrid coach) did not like Riquelme's attitude. So finally Riquelme had to go back to Boca Juniors. But it was Riquelme's brilliant playmaking ability that took Villarreal to Champions League semi-final, a feat they failed to repeat after his departure. That did not matter to coach Pellegrini. World class Dutch striker Ruud Van Nistelrooy fell out with Sir Alex Ferguson that prompted Van Nistelrooy's departure for Real Madrid. A professional European and South American coach's thought process is just like what I describe about Chilean Pellegrini and Scottish Sir Alex.

BFF should remember that a professional foreign coach is unlikely to think the same way as a Bangladeshi professional coach. I heard the BFF president comparing it with Luis Scolari's sacking by Chelsea with BFF's sacking of Dido. But Scolari was sacked because under him Chelsea was not getting the anticipated results. BFF sacked Dido even before he was proven right or wrong with his player selection. So, this comparison is not logical. Of course, his comparison is logical in the sense that the authorities can sack a coach anytime.

I would ask BFF to think very carefully before appointing a professional foreign coach, as a foreign coach won't try to please big BFF officials. If BFF wants to take Bangladesh football forward, they must give freedom to the coach and, more importantly, give the coach enough time to prove himself. In my opinion, sacking Dido was a premature decision.

Bazul Wahab Shaheen
Boston, Massachusetts

Cyber addiction!



Information technology has made our life easier than the past. But we know everything has shortcomings. Nowadays cyber cafes have sprung up very rapidly and at the same time cyber addiction is also increasing. I am a sporadic user of net. As I do not have any PC, I have to depend on cyber cafe. However, in my experience about cyber cafe I notice an alarming thing.

Whenever I go for browsing, most of the time I discover it crowded with customers. The alarming thing is that most of them are schoolboys who browse at their school time missing the classes. One day I waited for two hours, even then I couldn't manage to get a sit to surf as there were some school students surfing relentlessly!! Finally, I left that cyber cafe wasting my two valuable hours.

Therefore, I would urge the guardians to know what their children are doing.

Mohammad Zia-Ul-Haque
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International Islamic University Ctg.