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# Electronic gadgets behind child obesity!



PHOTO: STAR

Experts are constantly warning us that the digital revolution is making our children ill. According to them, the constant overload of information could be triggering mental health problems. Paul Veugelers, a Canadian public health professor said, "If you want your kids to sleep better and live a healthier life, get the technology out of the bedroom." He led a study of nearly 3,400 Grade 5 students in the province of Alberta which showed that as little as one hour of additional sleep decreased the odds of being overweight or obese by around 30 per cent. The recent study also confirmed a link between getting less sleep and having electronic gadgets in the bedroom. Half of the students had a TV, DVD player or video game console in their bedroom; 21 per cent had computer; and 17 per cent had cell phone. Five per

cent of students had all three types of devices. 57 per cent of students use electronics when they should be sleeping.

The researchers found that students with access to one electronic device were 1.47 times likely to be overweight compared to kids with no devices in the bedroom. Kids with three devices are 2.57 times more likely to be overweight. Researchers found that more sleep led to significantly more physical activity and better diet choices. The problem is that most parents do not comprehend the damage electronic gadgets can do. Nevertheless, it is time parents understood the consequences.

**Mohammad Jashim Uddin**  
Rupnagar  
Dhaka

## Open pit mining of Phulbari coal

Most English dailies on November 10th reported on government's final go-ahead to Asia Energy Corporation, for open pit mining of coal, and having a mine mouth power plant at the location. After years of arguments, discussions and deliberations, we finally see a concrete decision being taken. I hope it is acted upon, and not left to gather dust in some bureaucratic labyrinth! It is vital that there is biparty agreement and understanding on this important national issue, so that the project can progress without any hindrance, in our overall national interest. Already, a lot of time and effort have been spent on this matter. Admittedly, many farms and rural

households and people living in the area will be uprooted and need resettlement. This has to be done with compassion, sincerity, patience and understanding of the plight of the affected people. This is as important as the main project and needs to be taken up with due importance! Our political parties should also restrain from a contentious issue out of it. The fact remains that we may have to pay a social and human price for this endeavour; but this has to be minimised. All interested NGOs should be mobilized and supported by the authorities concerned in carrying out this humanitarian ask, of resettling the affected people. Let us all hope that we will succeed in this important venture.

**A conscious citizen**

## Suu Kyi's comment on Rohingyas surprising

We have learnt from newspaper reports that Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi on November 13 described the violence in west Myanmar between Buddhists and Muslims as a "huge international tragedy" and said illegal immigration from Bangladesh had to be stopped.

Dhaka has expressed surprise at these comments in a press statement saying historic evidence shows that people of Rohingya ethnicity have been living in the Rakhine state of Myanmar for centuries, whereas Bangladesh came into existence only in 1971.

The hard fact is, there have been occasional influxes of Myanmar nationals of Rohingya ethnicity into Bangladesh due to internal situations in their homeland for long. We remember, during the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to Myanmar in December 2011, the government of Myanmar had assured Bangladesh of taking back the remaining Myanmar refugees after verification of their origin.

We know both Bangladesh and Myanmar are working closely to resolve this longstanding issue. But the recent comments of Suu Kyi would jeopardise all these efforts. We hope she would make well-thought comments in this regard.

**Mobarak Ali**  
Gopibagh  
Dhaka



PHOTO: UNHCR

## Challenges for Obama

What are the challenges for Obama in the next four years?

1. 7.9% people are still unemployed in America. So new jobs must be created.
2. The unavoidable issue of budget deficit and the fiscal and monetary policy will be among the biggest challenges for Obama.
3. Pressing issues including Iran's nuclear programme, China's monetary policy, long-drawn civil war in Syria, continuous unrest in the Middle East, etc., should be dealt with judiciously.
4. In his first term the president ended the US military intervention in Iraq and pledged to bring back all the US combat troops from Afghanistan by 2014. Obama must keep his promise.
5. US' drone attacks in Waziristan have made him unpopular in Pakistan. He needs to regain the confidence of Pakistan to fight the Taliban.
6. The Palestine crisis needs to be resolved. Obama should play an important role here.
7. US foreign policy in South Asia is another important issue.

We hope president Obama will meet the challenges within the next four years.

**Md. Golam Rabbani**  
Jahangirnagar University  
Dhaka

## HSC, SSC results should be the basis of varsity admission

It has been a practice in Bangladesh to hold tests for admitting students into the universities. After the completion of HSC exam, students get no break as they have to take admission to different coaching centres for taking preparations for university admission tests. This is unfair. Holding admission tests mean that our public examinations carry no value in the eyes of the government. So this practice should be stopped forthwith in the interest of both students

and guardians. The guardians have to pay through the nose for their children's coaching. The real beneficiaries of this system are the coaching centres which are making brisk business.

Will the ministry of education rise to the occasion and do something without further loss of time? Admission on the basis of SSC and HSC results may not be entirely foolproof but then admission tests are also not infallible.

Considering all the pros and cons, admission on the basis of SSC and HSC results is more pragmatic and a better option.

**Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury**  
DOHS Mohakhali, Dhaka

## Kidnappers on the prowl

Kidnapping for ransom has become a regular event now-a-days; mostly schoolgoing children are the target of the criminals. People have become frightened not knowing how to cope with this situation. On November 11, 2012, six-year-old Parag Mondol was kidnapped by criminals riding motorbikes, who shot his mother and sister before abducting him. He was found alive when the kidnappers left him after receiving Tk 50 lakh. But Anik Hossain, aged 11, was not so lucky. He was abducted on November 12, 2012. The kidnappers killed him and his body was found in a water body because his parents did not pay the ransom money and informed the police. After tracking their mobile phones police arrested three people and with their confessional statement, the police were able to locate the body. How agonising monstrosities!

Those who could do such crimes are fiends in human disguise; they must get capital punishment so that in future no one dares to commit such a heinous crime.

We feel deeply sorry for the families who had to go through this unimaginable pain, and pray and hope that no one will have to suffer like this anymore.

May Almighty Allah save us from such heart-wrenching fates.

## Create open space for political programmes

Traffic jam is a big problem in Dhaka city. It is a regular matter that we are to wait in the rickshaw or bus or other transports for hours due to traffic jam. It becomes worse when gatherings and processions are held in the middle of the road. By closing the road, political programmes are being held regularly in front of national press club. Those who have to use this road know how much they suffer. Besides, if any big party calls a meeting or procession in Dhaka, the whole city comes to a standstill. To stop this immediately, the government should allot a big open space for political gathering. I would request the prime minister, the pol-



icy makers, and the authorities concerned to look into the matter seriously.

**Arifur Rahman Munir**  
Ibrahimpur, Kafrul  
Dhaka



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### Hail Hasan

Abul Hasan becomes only the second No 10 batsman in the history of Test cricket to hit a hundred on debut (November 22, 2012)

### Khan Sharif Raihan

Congrats to Hasan! He gives us hope and shows us the future of Bangladesh cricket. While hailing Hasan, we should not forget the awesome support Riad gave him. It would have been impossible for Hasan to make the world record without the extraordinary support from him.

### Syed Imtiaz Ali

We must know how to nurture such talents for greater glories, and extend all our support - moral and material. Hats off to him for keeping his nerves calm, unlike Tamim. Congrats to Mahmudullah as well for

giving vital support to Abul. Go ahead boys, keep yourselves cool.

### Shabbir A Bashar

Bravo!

### Jami

Congrats to Abul Hasan. He deserves all the praise.

### Sukhendra Debnath

Heartiest congratulations to Hasan. Wish Bangladesh team good luck. We are proud of the record. Now we are praying for a win.

### Cdre. Mujibur Rahman

As former president of BCCB and chief selector of Bangla-

desh team, I would like to congratulate Abul Hasan, and also Akram Khan, the chairman of the selection committee, for selecting Hasan who excelled beyond all expectation. Well done.

### Selim

Well done Bangladesh.

### Kamal Naim

Congratulations to Abul Hasan for the good performance. Once again our top batsmen failed to get sufficient runs. Our top batsmen lack the basic batting skills to encounter any sort of bowling.

### Habib Khondker

Bangladesh Cricket Team has come of age. Hasan's performance adds one more feather to the crown.

### Harun Rashid

Congratulations to Hasan and also Riad for their consistent and responsible playing. Really, it was a remarkable day in our cricket history. I do believe now that young Tigers will be able to

make our dream come true since we have cricketers like Hassan, Nassir, Riad, etc. At last, I would like to congratulate the selectors.

### QTS

We do not expect him to score centuries regularly, but we do desire that he plays sensibly like yesterday, without taking unwarranted risk. A word of caution: the previous debutant centurion for Bangladesh was Ashraful. We hope Hasan does not follow the same steps.

### World Without War

Beautiful news and the way it has been covered is better than international standard.

### Rajeib Khan

Excellent! Go ahead. Best wishes for you.

### Reaz Hassan

Abul Hasan played very well and has salvaged the home team wonderfully. I only wish he performs consistently unlike most of his team mates. He has a long way to go, and we wish to