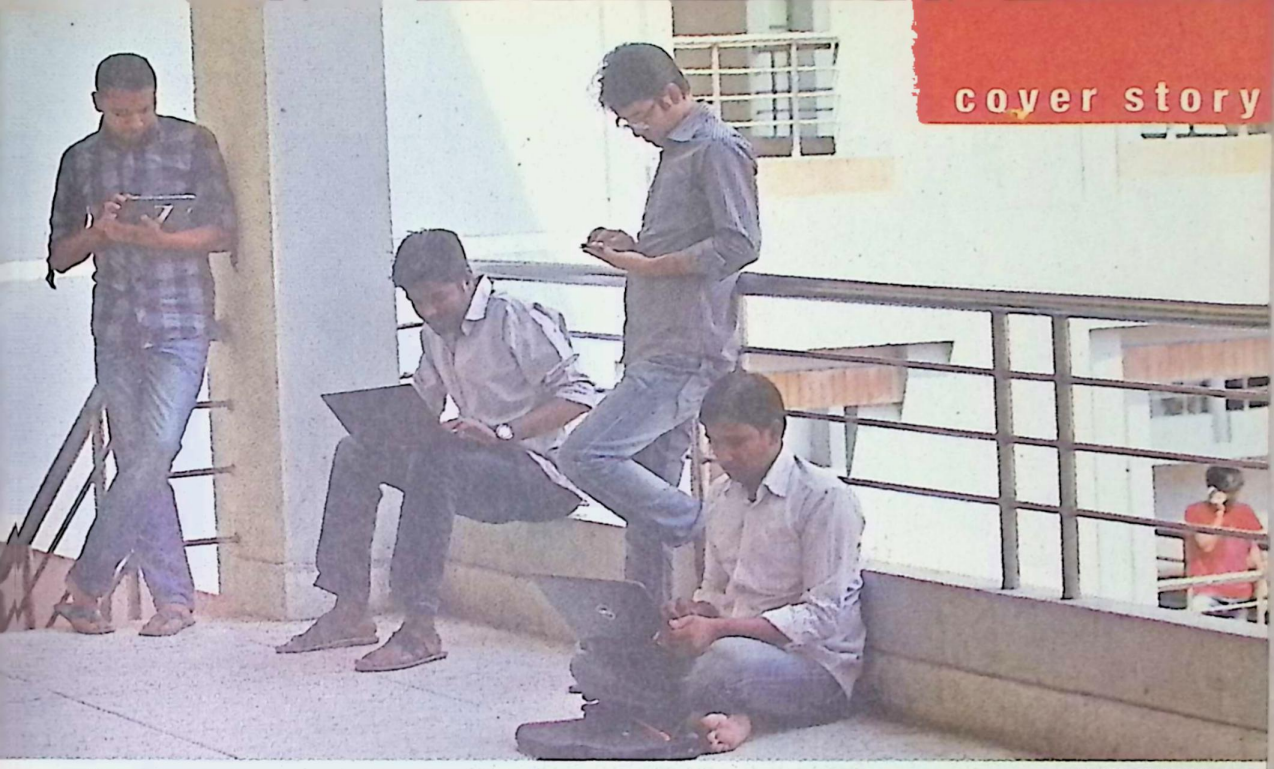


University students are using free high speed internet connection. PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

internet connection in all our districts and Upazilas by 2014. And for the first time we have started e-filing in our ministry which was inaugurated by Sajeeb Wazed Joy, the Prime Minister's ICT Affairs Adviser. Soon it will be expanded to other offices as well. By this project called Bangla Govnet, an inter connection of all the government offices up to Upazila level will be established. So we actually have no obstacles to establish e-governance.

One of the most discussed initiatives of your ministry is the amendment of the ICT Act in 2013. We received a range of reactions from different sectors. What is your opinion on the recent amendment?

We actually updated the act, which was first promulgated in 2006. You will agree that law is for humans and every law is changeable. Recently we saw how the ICT can be misused by some anti-social elements, as exemplified by the Ramu incident which resulted from the misuse of social networking sites. We amended the act to prevent these sorts of incidents, and to protect people from cyber crimes. You must have observed that no individual has yet complained that he has been prevented from thinking or freely expressing his views. The act has been amended to prevent cyber crimes, not to stop free speech.

The market of outsourcing is emerging in Bangladesh. Are you considering steps to help more young people?

We have been running many projects to encourage our youths to take up outsourcing jobs. We have been training young people through the Learning and Earning Development programmes to develop their skills to get outsourcing jobs. Through an individual program called *Bari Boshe Borolok*, we are trying to involve women in the outsourcing job market. Last year the country earned $20 million from the jobs of the trainees, and we are sure that with our increasing efforts it will be one of our biggest income sources.

Finally, I would like to ask about the infra-structural development in this sector. Do you think Bangladesh has the necessary infrastructure to be a "digital country"?

Before 2009 Bangladesh was being shattered by corruption, terrorism and militancy. So we had to start from zero resources. But we have begun work on establishing two hi-tech parks in Gazipur and Jessore. Software and hardware industries working on ICT will be employed for these massive establishments. The parks will be connected by both road and railway to facilitate investors. We have provided high-speed internet connectivity in public universities at no cost. One of my visions is to establish a zone in each district and Upazila where people can avail free high-speed internet. My motto is "It is the youth who will build our dream of digital Bangladesh."