

Make America great again. Seriously?

ACC should investigate

Ministry's probe may not be adequate

FACED with a barrage of reports, the Industries Ministry has formed a probe committee to investigate into the long-running cases of graft involving fertiliser shipment, transportation and management. While the move is to be welcomed, we would hope that the probe will be conducted objectively. Our experience with ministry-run investigations is not always pleasant, as many such probes, have lacked transparency or petered out before seeing the light of the day.

The reports clearly show a certain extent of collusion between some officials of the BCIC and private distributors. What is crystal clear is the alleged role of some of the officials of government-run BCIC, who, for years, have apparently turned a blind eye to the corrupt practises or, at worst, have been complicit in the crime.

We find it beyond belief that the higher authorities of the BCIC and the ministry have never had a wind of the systematic mismanagement and siphoning of public money that has cost the state about Tk 100 crore. Not to mention that this practice has been going on for about a decade. And this aspect should also be investigated, at least for the purpose of plugging any loopholes in the future.

In this light and given the magnitude of the offence, we urge the Anti-corruption Commission to take cognizance of the case and launch an inquiry into the alleged crimes. Defalcation of public money should not go unpunished, and it is crucial that accountability and transparency is ensured in such matters.

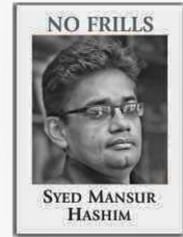
Mobile phones and driving

Enforce traffic rules stringently

THE six back page pictures in Sunday's issue of this paper speaks volumes about the blatant disregard of traffic rules by vehicle users and more importantly, the obvious lax enforcement of them by the police. The images show users of cars, motorcycles and bicycles recklessly using mobile phones in the middle of traffic apparently oblivious to the danger they pose to their own lives and those of others. Taking one's eyes off the road while driving even for a split second can cost someone injury or even death. But we cannot help but wonder, while drivers are known for breaking rules, where were the traffic police to enforce them?

Enforcement requires well trained policemen who will apply the rules without discrimination, fear or favour. But the reverse is true. Traffic rules are constantly flouted, often under the very noses of the law enforcers. Vehicles of every kind go in all directions, VIPs and others ply on the wrong side of the road, unfit, dilapidated buses are allowed to run races in major thoroughfares – all with apparent impunity. Why would traffic police allow such defiant disregard for traffic rules? Is it because they are poorly trained or because they just choose to be strict about enforcement only when it suits them?

As for the practice of using mobile phones – this must be stopped immediately through public awareness and exemplary enforcement of the law with no exceptions extended to anyone. People must realise that such risky behaviour can lead to fatal road crashes and hence shall not be tolerated.



NO FRILLS
 SYED MANSUR HASHIM

US President Trump has gone after the tech industry through another of his executive orders. The Muslim ban that has adversely affected some of the biggest names in the US tech industry and now some CEOs are speaking out. One of the most interesting things being pointed out is that Steve Jobs, the icon and founder of Apple was the son of a Syrian migrant and Mr. Trump is being cautioned about choosing wisely as to who should be kept out. The irony is hardly lost upon anyone. Had there been a similar ban 50 years ago, there would have been no Steve Jobs and we would not have had seen the birth of perhaps the most innovating tech company the world has ever seen. The ban that has been put into effect has unsettled captains of industry in the tech world who have till now kept mostly quiet on Mr. Trump's onslaught.

That scenario has changed. The administration's decision to ban entry of immigrants from seven Muslim-majority nations has begun to ferment dissent in Silicon Valley, and why not? Thousands of Green-card holders, many of whom are employed in companies like Uber, Google and Facebook have been left stranded abroad. Google CEO Sunar Pichai recently wrote a memo which had been obtained by Bloomberg News stated "It's painful to see the personal cost of this executive order on our colleagues". Then we have Apple CEO Tim Cook who has written a similar memo to his employees that the company they work for "would not exist without immigration, let alone thrive and innovate the way we do." Indeed, Silicon Valley is a hub for immigration and it is so because this is where the world's brightest are converging to take innovation forward.

Thus Mr. Trump who has been bulldozing his way around Capitol Hill with his executive decisions has run up against a "wall" of opposition from the software and hardware industry. But again, this is not exactly news as pointed out by Fortune magazine recently: "No

Fortune 100 CEO endorsed Trump in the race, while others, including some who self-identify as Republicans, backed Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton. Trump's victory initiated a truce. A market rally unleashed by expectations of new infrastructure spending and regulatory rollbacks helped hold it together – as did fear in C-suites of being singled out by the new president, who's wielded his Twitter account to name and

software industry (and a budding player in the hardware one) along with Uber, Apple and Google have all expressed dismay about the new ban on immigration. All this isn't coming out of some moral standing but for pragmatic reasons that will affect operations and profitability. That the CEOs of Microsoft, Apple, Netflix, Uber, Airbnb and Tesla Motors have gone on the record to denounce this policy is due to the fact

Well Mr. Trump is merely delivering on one of his electoral promises. Make America Great again by allowing true Americans to return to high-paid jobs. Never mind whether they qualify for these or not, with the stroke of the executive wand, a lot of global talent will no longer be able to work in the US for a lot of US companies because it is the new American way to deny entry or delay entry of people from some countries



PHOTO: AFP

shames American companies he believes are under investing at home." If this is the way the president-elect hopes to govern the United States, we wish him luck. Unfortunately for him, these companies are not going to take it lying down. Push has come to shove and many are pushing back because if the bloodline of new talent is cut off, these companies will not be doing much innovating.

Indeed, Microsoft, the Big Mac of the

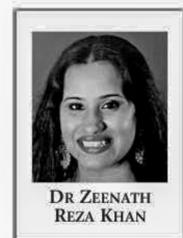
that it will affect people employed by these companies, their ability to work in the United States legally and more importantly affect the way these companies recruit talent globally. Netflix CEO and founder Reed Hastings has stated that "Trump's actions are hurting Netflix employees around the world, and are so un-American it pains us all....It is time to link arms together to protect American values of freedom and opportunity."

who incidentally, happen to be predominantly Muslim-majority countries. We hope that this ban will "Make America great again"- by depriving American companies the ability to source talented people globally who contribute greatly to make some of the most innovative products and services that are known to not just Americans, but the rest of the world.

The writer is Assistant Editor, The Daily Star.

E-CRIMES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Identity theft on social media



DR ZEENATH REZA KHAN

THE 21st century began 17 years ago with the heady fear of the Y2K virus. If you are a digital native reading this article, there is a good chance you have no idea what I am talking about. It was the pathetic panic that swept across the globe, everyone worrying that all existing electronic and information systems would crash as the internal clocks would switch from 1999 to 2000 as in '000'. Whether pathetic or otherwise, the century began on the waves of the information age, transforming into a tidal tsunami that swept across the world at lightning speed, roaring forward with no end in sight.

Now 17 years on, we are still reeling from the waves of the information age. Progress isn't to be reined in this time. Technology is taking us forward, whether we want it to or not. Add to this mix, the strength, power, and reach of the social media. The mind simply boggles at the possibilities of the good, the bad and the ugly.

We are all mostly aware of the good side of the technology all around us. Some of us may also be privy to the bad side of the technology use. However, very



IMAGE: THE BALANCE.COM

few of us are aware of the ugly side of the use of technology. Seventeen years on, it is past the time that we got on that particular wave and became aware of some of those ugly truths and ugly faces of the uses of technology that often leave behind trails of mental, physical, emotional diseases, financial losses and even death.

The realm of online communication via computer networking, also known as the cyber space, is marred with opportunities that users can take to harm others. One such opportunity is that of identity theft on social media. When someone gets access to your personal information without your permission and uses it for their benefit, it is identity theft. This information could pertain to your finances, your professional life or even your personal life. How is that possible, you might ask? Often enough, users do not need to be proficient in

technology to get their hands on these types of information. Did you know that the most frequently used passwords for email accounts, social media sites, even bank accounts are either the sequence '1-2-3-4' or birthdays? You might wonder why this is significant. Think about your birthdate. How many people know your birthdate? If you have thought up a number less than 10, you are most probably wrong. Particularly, if you have a social media account. All social media accounts ask for your birthdate when signing up. Even if you do not make that information public, your friends in their intimate desire to make you feel special, wish you online, allowing others to gauge your birthdate. Birthdates are important pieces of personal information that we often do not see any obvious harm in sharing. But birthdates are vital to opening bank accounts, accessing personal accounts, being

identifiers and so on. So making birthdates public opens up users to possible identity theft attacks.

At particular risk are children and young adults due to their prolific nature of sharing personal information freely and in abundance, making it easy for predators to find the information readily.

More than half the users of social media sites who are children and young adults regularly fall prey to identity theft. Thieves not only steal information, but use the information to set up false bank accounts raking up huge bills that are then charged to the original user without their consent or knowledge; access and acquire personal accounts that lead to further crimes such as cyber bullying, even stalking or black mailing.

Users lose millions every year due to identity theft. Victims also face psychological impacts such as a feeling of victimisation, frustration, mistrust, anger, depression, anxiety - all of which may lead to permanent wounds that can become irreversible.

Identity theft on social media isn't something new. It has been there for a few years and is on the rise exponentially along with the increase in number of users on social media. In order to safeguard against such crimes as identity theft, knowledge is key. Users, particularly children, young adults and their guardians need to become aware of the importance of securing personal information, how to secure the information, how predators might get their hands on the information. Mishandling information, being careless about receipts, throwing away paper containing vital personal information, misjudging the seriousness of the crime or the likelihood of the crime occurring all lead to users becoming vulnerable and potential victims to identity theft.

It has been 17 years since we began this journey into the twenty-first century and joined millions around the world to get on the information wave. It is now time we became responsible users and protect ourselves and our loved ones from serious cyber criminals that are lurking in the dark, waiting like patient predators to strike when we are at our lowest or weakest or most vulnerable.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Public libraries in every village

The shortage of reading facilities in our rural areas is depriving students of the works of Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, and many other luminaries.

How will our students be good citizens without availing such opportunities? I believe that every village needs a public library in order to enrich our future generations' minds. Given that the government is distributing textbooks for free, setting up libraries in all primary schools shouldn't involve significantly extra expenses. The teachers at primary schools can be appointed to help operate the libraries.

I would like to draw the attention of the Cultural Affairs Minister and the Education Minister to this matter.
 Md Golam Azam
 Gurudaspur, Natore

Animal Husbandry education needs attention

Animal Husbandry education is an applied branch of biological science relating to livestock production science and technology. It mainly takes part in milk, meat, and egg production. It is an important field as it applies to the provision of ideal nutrients to the public. Most developed countries, as well as our neighbouring countries of India, Pakistan, and Nepal, have developed livestock sectors.

Bangladesh has great potential to develop this industry through Animal Husbandry education. Therefore, I request the Fisheries and Livestock Ministry to focus on developing this area of studies in our country.

Ratan Karmakar
 Bangladesh Agricultural University

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