

# The cyberbully's playground – open 24/7

The cycle of cyberbullying is about more than just bullies and victims. To put a stop to it, everyone else – including the bystanders – needs to get involved too.



MAI OLDGARD

**P**ICTURE a schoolyard, students standing in a circle around a girl or boy, being mocked for his or her clothes and possibly being shoved by some of the other students. A classic example of bullying, you might think. Now imagine this same behaviour – but happening in the devices in your children's hands, in their bedrooms and around the clock. This is bullying of the 21st century, more invasive, maybe harder to notice, unless you know where to look, and increasingly common across hyper-connected Asia – cyberbullying.

Internet gateways are swinging open across Asia, sending our children out into an exciting, interactive world of new knowledge and experiences. Today, digital skills have become crucial in not only shaping children's social life but potentially their future professional lives also. While children today need to know how to make the best of the opportunities in the online world, they should also understand and learn to deal with risks, such as online bullying.

Our children are the keenest explorers of the online world, and it is up to all of us to help them develop the skills needed to be smart online, to use their heads (and hearts) when interacting in the digital space and to know when they need to involve a parent or an authority. With June 16 marking Stop Cyberbullying Day, I encourage everyone to get educated on the new reality our children are facing, and help them deal with the risks of being online.

### Social media - the new virtual schoolyard

As more children in Asia are expected to be online in the years to come, some estimates say 500 million by 2020, the occurrence of cyberbullying is likely to increase.

Cyberbullying happens through text messages, e-mails, instant messaging services like Messenger, WhatsApp and Snapchat, in addition to social media networks like Facebook and Instagram.

These networks have seen an immense growth in users in Asia over the last years; both Instagram and Snapchat users in the Asia-Pacific countries have doubled only from

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2014 to 2016. However, the phenomenon of cyberbullying in social media is far from new; in 2013 a report stated that 87 percent of teenagers had witnessed cyberbullying on Facebook, and some 20 percent on Twitter. Many children experience cyberbullying in some form; as victim or bully, or often as a bystander. Indeed, one can say that the schoolyard now encompasses social media.

### Your kids and cyberbullying – consequences and tips

Cyberbullying differs from “traditional” bullying in several ways; cyberbullies hide behind screens, and are more likely to say harsher things when not facing the victim in person. This perceived anonymity, combined with the permanence of potentially offensive items like photos or videos

virtual realities of your child's world; go online. Think about what values you want to foster in your children and about your own activity on social media; (ii) Assure them that they can confide in you and trust and listen to them when they do. Bullying can be hard to talk about; (iii) Include them in the solution; this will give them the confidence to handle future situations

educate parents and students on cyberbullying and provide them tools to act safely and empathetically online. One example is Grameenphone in association with BRAC. The world's largest NGO initiated an awareness programme that so far reached 80,000 students around Bangladesh. They have been informed about the risks in cyberspace and ways to use



online, intensifies the psychological and emotional effects which victims of cyberbullying may suffer. Being bullied online is also sometimes very public and can be shared with a large audience in only a matter of seconds. And lastly, it's always there. You can leave the physical schoolyard, but it's much more difficult to turn off the digital world. With that, here are some of the ways parents can help prevent or mitigate such experiences: (i) Learn about the

of cyberbullying; (iv) Specify actions to handle the bullying, such as shutting out the online bully. In fact, seven out of ten teens say that this is the most effective method of prevention.

### We've got work to do

In recent years, many initiatives on cyberbullying have been formed by partnerships between governments, NGOs and private companies in Asia. The goals of such programmes are to

Internet safely. Empathy is a word that we should all impart on our children, our students and our stakeholders because everyone – whether bully, victim or bystander, whether digital service provider, NGO or government – has a role to play in making sure the online world is a safe place for all. And empathy and awareness are our two strongest tools. The writer is SVP and Head of Sustainability of Telenor Group.

## June Mayhem



NAVEED MAHBUB

**HUMOROUSLY YOURS**  
As the Lion goes in for the kill of the Kangaroo, the Tiger gets ready for the semi-finals. This is one day when every Bangladeshi is an Englishman. Even those who can't

swallow the notion of supporting a foreign team, simply look at England as Bangladesh in Fair and Lovely. Mir Zafar turns in his grave, grumbling: “And you all just blame me, huh?” And so, the semi-finals see an Eid reunion of East India Company with England, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh among the final four. But while it took 190 years in 1947 to get England out of the Jewel in the Crown, it took only 37 overs in 2017 for team England to Brexit the tournament. Theresa May is surely dismayed after the mayhem elections post the Brexit Mayday call.

But for Bangladesh, there is a damper, literally, as it once again reminds us that it is the largest free gym. In summer it is a sauna and even before monsoon officially kicks in, it is a swimming pool. A day's rain and we come to a halt in the new port city, Karwan Bazar.

Cars are stuck, motorbikes whisk through the water like Pattaya-style jetskies, pedestrians are swimmers, jay-



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

walkers are fined for jay-swimming, mobile courts are floating courts, iftar parties become *sehri* parties, CNG cruise ships ply the waters, the Hatirjheel water taxis extend their service all the way to Green Road, many hope for the Airport area Bonsai to become invisible under 1 foot water, Roads and Highways Department and BIWTA (Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority) contemplate a merger... Even Donald Trump muses over the notion of a naval

base in Farmgate and in honour of the bumper to bumper traffic there, naming it Snarl Harbour.

Look at the brighter side. Bangladesh is a country of rivers and the flood water is the VAT.

But all this is in response to Henry Kissinger calling Bangladesh a 'bottomless basket'. We have come a long way into not only fixing the bottom, but also in converting the perforated sides into a solid surface. As a

result, the bottomless basket is now a flat bottomed, water-tight bucket.

Therefore, a bit of rain and we are filled with water to the brim (and overflowing).

So, go ahead. Bring in more sand and fill up all the low lands and make X City, Y City, Z City while Shantinagar becomes Shantinagar Marine City. And let's add to the party – dump all the plastic and polybags to clog up the storm drains. While we're at it, let's chop

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up the trees and chop up the top of the hills and just let the land slide...

But 150 dead, first responders among them? Let's see what our conscience does this time. I'm not holding my breath...

The writer is an engineer at Ford & Qualcomm USA and CEO of IBM & Nokia Siemens Networks Bangladesh turned comedian (by choice), the host of ATN Bangla's *The Naveed Mahbub Show* and ABC Radio's *Good Morning Bangladesh*, the founder of *Naveed's Comedy Club*. E-mail: Naveed@NaveedMahbub.com

### A WORD A DAY

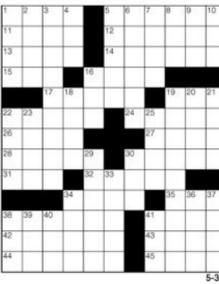


**JEJUNE**  
adjective

*Naive, simplistic, and superficial; dry and uninteresting.*

### CROSSWORD BY THOMAS JOSEPH

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|-----------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|
| <b>ACROSS</b>         | 35 Dresses in           | 8 Binary base        |
| 1 Miami team          | 35 Lumber unit          | 9 Com serving        |
| 5 Like some interests | 38 Relaxing music genre | 10 Color             |
| 11 Trade show         | 41 Take the bus         | 16 Huck's pal        |
| 12 Sort of            | 42 Film set on Pandora  | 18 Desert sight      |
| 13 Ready for picking  | 43 Privy to             | 19 Attractive        |
| 14 In excess          | 44 Report card signer   | 20 Egyptian goddess  |
| 15 Had supper         | 45 Storybook monster    | 21 Tenant's fee      |
| 16 Big book           |                         | 22 Transport         |
| 17 Love, in Lombardy  |                         | 23 Wheel bar         |
| 19 Vacuum lack        |                         | 25 Pale              |
| 22 Women's quarters   | <b>DOWN</b>             | 29 Ad catchphrase    |
| 24 Small error        | 1 Zeus' wife            | 30 "60 Minutes" aier |
| 26 Line of symmetry   | 2 Way out               | 33 Unmoving          |
| 27 Whirl              | 3 Showing one's face    | 34 Postmark part     |
| 28 Arm bones          | 4 Water tester          | 36 Sneaker problem   |
| 30 Ribage setting     | 5 Energy                | 37 Heredity unit     |
| 31 Fibula setting     | 6 Tooth layer           | 38 Catch some Z's    |
| 32 Egypt neighbor     | 7 Store come-on         | 39 Longoria of TV    |
| 34 Dresses in         |                         | 40 Fighting          |
|                       |                         | 41 Carnival city     |



YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

S P I T A S B R A V O  
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A S T R O L O G E R S  
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M O L A R N O N E T  
E N E M Y W A D S

### BEETLE BAILEY BY MORT WALKER



### BABY BLUES BY KIRKMAN & SCOTT

