Computers in Schools

This is excellent news. The government is introducing a course on computer in 300 secondary level schools of the country. The project which envisages yearly churning out of 20000 computer trained students holds good for both government and nongovernmental schools.

Welcome as we do this timely decision we nonetheless go one step further to counsel the authorities to include the course in the syllabus for the SSC examination. One rough and ready argument against the idea may be that not all the schools in Bangladesh can be brought under the computer project quickly. So what? Waiting for all the schools to be covered by the project will be impractical and sheer wastage of time. Better get started properly with whatever we have in hand. Let the computer course be on the syllabus as one of the options. Only schools that offer computer education will make it mandatory upon their students to take computer as part of their SSC combinations. Students of the schools without computer could follow suit in due time.

Key to the success of this computer education programme will be authorities' sincerity and eagerness to monitor the standards. If teachers are inadequate or insincere which is more than a possibility given the reality in our academic sector then all this investment will go down the drain. The powers that be also have to be alive to the necessity of adjustments and hidden technical problems. Unless reprogrammed, computers around the world are going to be useless at the stroke of the year 2000. Going full steam ahead for computer training without keeping these facts in mind will not only incur huge financial losses that a poor country like ours can ill afford but also create a generation of computer literate who despite investing time, labour and money will be considered worthless for all practical purposes and for no fault of their own.