

Government should Intervene

Nobody has the right to deprive our citizens of essential drugs. Unfortunately both the manufacturers of drugs and the chemists and druggists are doing it at the moment. We find it alarming that due to a dispute between drug producers and sellers, which is essentially an intra-industry problem, the general public is being made to suffer. What started off as an attempt to procure the distribution right of the products of a foreign multinational company by a trader in Sylhet district, has now turned into a country wide power play, to establish whose wishes will hold sway. Once the foreign drugs manufacturer refused to hire the local trader as the distributor — the company distributes its products directly, and does not, as a normal practice, hire any distributor — the local trader concerned organised a boycott of the company's products, first in Sylhet area and subsequently in other parts of the country, through the help of the association of the chemists and druggists. In response to this virtual arm-twisting, the association of the owners of pharmaceutical companies decided not to supply their products to the same areas.

What we cannot understand is the role of the government in general, and that of the health ministry in particular, when such lawlessness is prevailing in the drug scene of the country. What is the law concerning the distribution right of a drug manufacturer in our country? Can the chemists and druggists' association force a company to appoint their recommended person? Then again, do the drug manufacturers have the right to stop supplying their life saving and essential drugs, just because of a dispute with seller?

Hidden in this dispute are several issues of rights, obligations, ethics and law. Is it the ethical role of the chemists and druggists' association? What about the rights of the manufacturer? Above everything else, what about the right of the sick and those requiring treatment? As we have said earlier, nobody has the right to deprive them of the life saving drugs.

It is reported that a discussion between the contending parties is likely to be held today. We strongly urge the concerned ministry to let it be known that the law of the land is the ultimate. This collective arm-twisting or starving the people of necessary drugs will not be permitted. We are alarmed at the casual way the people are made to suffer, first by doctors and nurses, and now by the chemists and druggists and drug manufacturers. These sort of lawlessness — it is nothing but — must be brought to an end. Government must act in time, and decisively, to prevent such situations from occurring.

Please Support Theatre

How much does it cost to build a theatre of the quality and proportion that can keep the nation's prestige? The answer depends on so many things. Governments have a way of doing things not purely because of national need or interest. This government is no exception. Only when the ruling party or any constituent powerful group of it is interested in something — something that may even come handy for the nation — the project would be taken up.

It is universally agreed that Bangladesh has done spectacularly well on the dramatic arts front in the two decades of its independence. How many from among the vast array of ruling political leaders have frequented the Natak Sarani to have a taste of this remarkable achievement? Not many to be sure. Dhaka's plays and its staging arena at Bailey Road or Natak Sarani have been the sordest point for both Ershad and Jamaat. For whatever part of the legacy that has seemed to linger, neither the plays nor their presentations have so far taken kindly to the present government. Rather than searching their heart for a clue to this hardly covert expression of criticism or protest, the government has tried to pay the Natak Sarani back in what they think the same coin.

There should have been people in the government to understand that the arts and true literature do not grow out of conformism. It is grand social vision and great sacrificing strides that leave an imprint on the arts. The war of Liberation for example. The society's relentless fight to come into its own moving past communalism and other divisive narrowness, and its undying dream arriving at a dawn of people's power — are what form the stuff of today's plays. And the government owes it to the society to support these.

Please support the theatre. Speakers at the Bangla Academy Ekushey discussion meeting on the occasion of the publication of two anthologies of plays on Tuesday called upon the government to build a national theatre. Heeding the call with heart and imagination will do the government a great deal of good.

An Arrival Hesitant but Sure

The cuckoo is hardly reliable as a harbinger of spring. It starts cooing on the proverbial fifth note well before the distinctive shivers of Magh have even set well.

There is a bowery backyard to The Daily Star's Dhanmond office. Every afternoon, for two weeks now, a cuckoo has been — the same fellow or may be a batch of them taking turns — relentlessly trying to convince all within the earshot that spring was very much here. But no one could be cajoled to doff the woollens. No fault of the poor cuckoo. Winter with its unprecedented cold waves this year is trying a bit too long, and spring perhaps is dithering to arrive.

At a point through Magh you sink under a heavy blanket at night taking cover from aggressive cold. And throw out the thing disgusted by the sweating body which is hard to believe as yours. The process is repeated till the muezzin calls out to say prayer is better than slumber and you prefer to embrace the bad rather than the good and finally cover yourself with anything handy. This cool-and-warm duality is the surest sign of spring arriving in a fortnight time. And it arrives without notice and on an unlikely day.

This time this was unmistakably yesterday — with corners of an azure sky knowing it exactly as Tagore had it all scenarioed in *Neel akasher koney koney bujhi aaj shitor lagay*. The nip in the air was gone suddenly and the lonesome Ramadan Friday morning was waxing into a warm midday and the trees in Suhrawardy Udyan were all a-murmur telling each of the arrival. And the step-children of nature got the news snoring but sure.

Share Market Crash Whacks Mexico and Quakes Asia

SOME people say that "financial markets are more prone to faints, swoons and vapours than women in 19th century England". The saying seems to be more applicable to the recent jerk in the Mexican financial market than ever and elsewhere. It may be noted here that for a number of reasons, Mexico turned out to be a fertile ground for foreign and domestic investors who had been pouring funds at an increasing rate in recent years. One of the most important plausible reasons for such huge inflows could be Mexico's entry into NAFTA — with two of the world's richest countries — that signalled the dawn of a booming Mexico. Mexico also made tremendous strides in fine tuning its macro-fundamentals and succeeded to a larger extent in achieving some of them. Suddenly, however, the modicum of the calm seems to wither and a storm apparently replace the breeze in the Mexican economy.

**Mexican Troubles**  
It is reported that investors from all over the world who flocked into Mexico suddenly withdrew their faith in the Mexican market and started pulling out of the Mexican stock markets. The confidence of the investors in the Mexican market was so much shaken that "demand for bonds fell from \$941 million around mid-January to only \$392 million in late January with investors demanding record interest rates of 21.4 per cent to 26.7 per cent" (*The Econo-*

*mist*, 23rd January-3rd February 1994). And like a friend in need who is a friend indeed, America swiftly responded to provide Mexico with \$40 billion loan guarantees — to its partner in NAFTA — so that the fear is not spread to crack other share markets of the region that seemingly tend to "export" a large number of "illegal" immigrants to America. By and large, it appears that the relationship between the investors and the Mexican market "bear all the marks of a love affair gone sour".

**The Quake in Asia**  
May be that Asian share markets are not so much dashed to the ground as the Mexican one, but nevertheless, a string of instability has already been knocking at these markets for quite some time. Very recently, as could be learnt from newspaper reports, equity and bond markets in some of the East and South East Asian markets (e.g. Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, India) experienced sudden slide, and the governments had to rush to rescue them. On January 23rd 1994, the stock markets in some cities in Asia are reported to "lurch fiercely" downwards, following the earthquake in Japan where the Nikkei stock market average is alleged to fall by about 6 per cent just in a single day. The Bombay stock market is also reported to have depicted similar down turn while Congress (I) faced a debacle in the

state elections few months back.

**Possible Reasons**  
A number of reasons could be adduced to this instability in the share markets, be it in Mexico or in other places of the world. It is said that the fund managers in America "unnerved by their Mexican losses, may simply have decided to sell other emerging market holdings too — particularly those bought with borrowed dollars" (*The Econo-*

*mist*). The fundamental question is: could Asian markets, including that of Bangladesh with relatively meager amount of investments, face such a financial quake in the future?

Analysts tend to argue that there may be some pull-out of portfolio investment funds from Asia in general (and Bangladesh in particular) or Latin America due to the fact that interest rates are reported to be rising in the western world. Since interest rate is the price of capital, needless to mention, capital would naturally travel to those places where such prices are relatively higher. But this school of thought also tends to

argue that the kind of storm that hit Mexico might not sweep other Asian markets mainly for four possible reasons.

First, the Mexican current account deficit is reported to be 8 per cent of Mexican GDP while the same rate happens to be lower in most of the Asian countries. Only Thailand and the Philippines seem to experience a current account deficit ranging between 6 — 6.5 per cent.

Second, not only in terms of the magnitude of deficits but also in terms of the nature of deficits, that Mexico seems to differ from most of the Asian countries. For example, Mexico is said to import relatively more of consumer goods as against the "heavy imports" of capital goods by average Asian countries.

Third, the types of foreign capital inflow are also being argued to matter to a greater degree. Does the larger chunk of the inflow comprise long-enduring direct investments or volatile portfolio flows? The latter variety is alleged to be vulnerable to daily swings in the market and also prone to quick exit in response to the

interest rate differentials across countries.

And fourth, the inflationary rate and the overvaluation of currencies appear to have contributed to a panic among foreign investors in Mexico which does not appear to be so unfriendly in Asian markets, at least in the short run. Mexico has macro economic fundamentals much better and relatively more stable than it had 5 or 10 years back. But beneath the surface, a rate of inflation of 20-30 per cent and overvaluation of Peso (Mexican currency, but fixed exchange rate) remained subdued so long, thus, giving a false signal to potential and actual investors. When the currency was floated in December last, the weakness of the foreign exchange regime surfaced out, especially, with substantial devaluation of the Peso. As devaluation tends to breed inflation, an inflationary trend began to sweep the Mexican economy and foreign investors got scared. As a result, foreigners began to withdraw their shares and the rush to this end, inevitably, caused heavy blows to the Mexican economy.

**Lessons to be Learnt**  
The recent financial turmoil in Mexico should provide important lessons for emerging markets, including that of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan which are progressing with stabilization and economic reforms. First, such turbulence in the share market should not be taken with dismay as if such

incidents are not unseen or unheard of. Even in America and in India one could note the crash although, the degree of the dip was much less and the impact felt much less painful. Recession in the western world brought the funds in Asia and a rise in interest rates back home could make the investors rediscover their own sweet homes. Second, inflation and overvaluation of currencies should regularly be monitored and be put under control as diabetic patients have to do to their disease. Even with macro economic fundamental right, apparently, these two evils might rise gradually and attack one day without notice. Third, the environment of the economy should be made such as to invite long-enduring investments to stay in the country. In other words, when the stock market grows healthy, immediate steps should be afoot to gear up direct investment-friendly policies. And fourth, the trend in the rise in share prices should be read with caution. For example, between 1992 and late 1994, the share market indices in Bangladesh is reported to shot up from 340 to 890 — an incredible rate. Again, after Mexican crash, the indices is reported to fall by 5 per cent within two weeks only. Wild fluctuations tend to give the sign of weakness in the market and corrective measures should be taken up before any serious crack.

The recent financial turmoil in Mexico should provide important lessons for emerging markets, including that of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan which are progressing with stabilization and economic reforms.

Incidents are not unseen or unheard of. Even in America and in India one could note the crash although, the degree of the dip was much less and the impact felt much less painful. Recession in the western world brought the funds in Asia and a rise in interest rates back home could make the investors rediscover their own sweet homes. Second, inflation and overvaluation of currencies should regularly be monitored and be put under control as diabetic patients have to do to their disease. Even with macro economic fundamental right, apparently, these two evils might rise gradually and attack one day without notice. Third, the environment of the economy should be made such as to invite long-enduring investments to stay in the country. In other words, when the stock market grows healthy, immediate steps should be afoot to gear up direct investment-friendly policies. And fourth, the trend in the rise in share prices should be read with caution. For example, between 1992 and late 1994, the share market indices in Bangladesh is reported to shot up from 340 to 890 — an incredible rate. Again, after Mexican crash, the indices is reported to fall by 5 per cent within two weeks only. Wild fluctuations tend to give the sign of weakness in the market and corrective measures should be taken up before any serious crack.

Beneath the Surface

by Abdul Bayes

The writer is a Professor of Economics and Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Jahangirnagar University.

The Islamic Revolution in Iran

Why it Was Successful

For change and self-dignity, created within the Western mind, a paranoia and fear whose repercussions the West itself was the first casualty.

Happily for the revolution and its main architect, the Imam, its simplistic but sure divine approach managed to fool the enemy into false hopes of the revolution's failure. Its indomitable leader's advanced years of life sealed the enemy's false hopes. The enemy's first undoing, the march on to Tehran was unstoppable.

Success for the revolution came from all directions. The campaign for the movement from inception never wavered. Its goals and objectives were crystal clear. The Imam, the Leader was single minded. He was divinely inspired. He was completely dedicated to the cause of Islam. He was, unmoved and absolutely unimpressed by the enemy's power of influence and military arsenal. He dared challenge man, but was not afraid of him! He was intent on taking on the enemy with unmitigated resolve and determination. He understood the enemy. He knew his strengths and weaknesses. He exploited all these to his full advantage.

Success also lay in the fact that the leadership of the revolution, none less than Khomeini himself, was not interested in or after central power. Nor was the leadership seeking to enrich itself as is common with most revolutions.

Khomeini, was already a very rich man — spiritually. Personal aggrandizement was never part of the agenda.

The leadership identified itself with the down-trodden and never sought special privileges for itself. This in return paid off the dividends of mass support for the revolution.

This unique leadership triggered off within the masses the urge to sacrifice themselves for the cause of Islam.

Success for the revolution also lay in the fact that the POWER of the woman was ac-

knowledgeed and given its rightful role to play. Khomeini, like few men his contemporaries or otherwise, saw the woman as a full mitigated member of society. Her role was never in any ambiguity. Her role especially in the revolution, was seen in terms of human potential, mentally as well as physically. Said he once: "Women are obviously not equal to men. But men are not equal to woman either!" So the revolution left no one behind.

The revolution called for a complete new way of life dedicated to the service of Allah and his people. It preached the return to moral values that hitherto had been gnawed at by strong negative Western values and influences that had become a way of life in Iran.

So Islam had to take centre stage.

Call it fundamentalism or what you will, but a movement had been started and nothing short of absolute victory would satisfy it.

It was organised skillfully and masterfully executed. Never before in the history of revolutions, had a movement been propelled solely by soul force. This is what the enemies (there were many of them) failed to grasp. It was do or die. Khomeini and his spiritually inspired message like nothing before, had penetrated the inner souls of most Iranians. He had spoken their language. He had suffered their humiliation at the hands of the Shah and his sponsors. He knew prison. He knew torture. He knew the dreaded Savak. He knew exile. He knew hunger. He knew arrogance from the West and East. He knew their manipulations and machinations. He knew their diabolical intentions in the Persian Gulf and beyond. Armed with that, he was ready for battle!

Gallantly he led his people without arms or ammunition on a battlefield laden with mine-traps and facing an enemy armed to the teeth.

Backed by the most powerful nations on earth the Shah couldn't have felt safer!

The whole world had been led to believe that Iran was a paradise on earth under the Shah. Few who had not been to Iran would have believed otherwise.

Western propaganda media, especially, made sure that only the best news came out of Tehran during the Pahlavi regime. Secretly, the West had hatched up plans to make Iran their permanent watchdog in the Middle-East. The CIA had done its job meticulously. But it had not budgeted for "soul power".

Soul power is then what in the end guaranteed victory of the Islamic revolution that took place in Iran, albeit at a high cost!

The masses had submitted themselves to the will of Allah. They had surrendered their worries, concerns en masse to him. If heavens forbid they got killed 'in action', they became martyrs. Thus emulating Imam Hussain. If they got injured or maimed, it was for the good cause of Islam and the scars on their bodies would be the ever reminders that they were soldiers of Allah for justice. That when the call came to fight for the noble cause of

Islam, they answered it. Like Hussain at Karbala!

Never before, have so many given so much in human life for a cause as did the martyrs of Iran. Men and women, young and old, the intellectuals and the ordinary, the clergy, the teachers, the doctors, the clerks, the factory workers, the students, the military and the ordinary masses... all gave of their precious blood for the cause of Islam and justice. That is why the Islamic revolution in Iran succeeded.

**What Khomeini Wanted**  
What else did Khomeini want ultimately? Khomeini wanted to transform the economy of Iran. The Shah had mortgaged Iran to the West and East. In spite of the fabulous wealth of the country, Iran was nothing but a permanent developing country. Khomeini wanted Iran to be part of the scientific and technological age. "One day the oil wells will run dry then what shall we do?" He once warned his people.

He wanted Iranians to seek technology of inventing and manufacturing consumer products to be sold on world markets as the only way they would not only strengthen their economy, but also gain world respect. Like Japan.

He was totally unimpressed by the neo-colonial consumer mentality of Western products that has afflicted most of the so called developing countries.

He also argued that strengthening the economy through technology was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

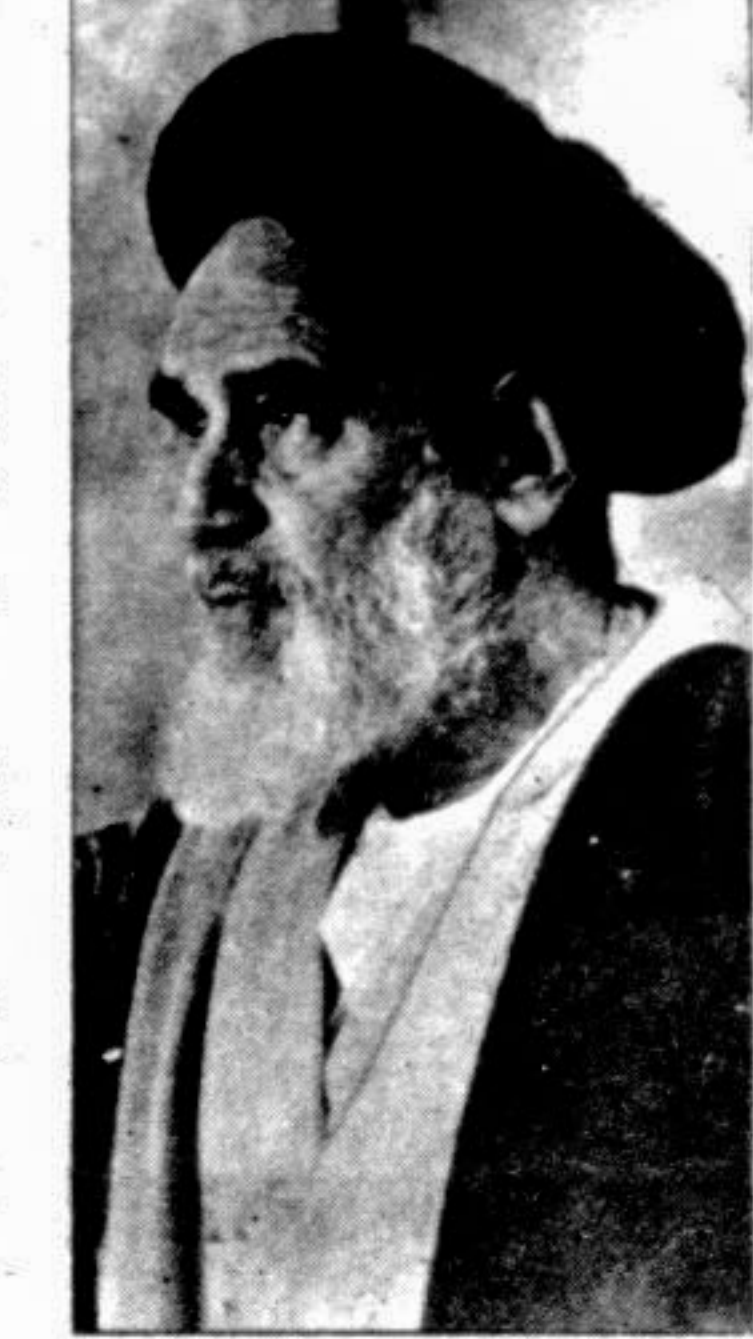
So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

So the revolution was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.



Backed by the most powerful nations on earth the Shah couldn't have felt safer!

The whole world had been led to believe that Iran was a paradise on earth under the Shah. Few who had not been to Iran would have believed otherwise.

Western propaganda media, especially, made sure that only the best news came out of Tehran during the Pahlavi regime. Secretly, the West had hatched up plans to make Iran their permanent watchdog in the Middle-East. The CIA had done its job meticulously. But it had not budgeted for "soul power".

Soul power is then what in the end guaranteed victory of the Islamic revolution that took place in Iran, albeit at a high cost!

The masses had submitted themselves to the will of Allah. They had surrendered their worries, concerns en masse to him. If heavens forbid they got killed 'in action', they became martyrs. Thus emulating Imam Hussain. If they got injured or maimed, it was for the good cause of Islam and the scars on their bodies would be the ever reminders that they were soldiers of Allah for justice. That when the call came to fight for the noble cause of

Islam, they answered it. Like Hussain at Karbala!

Never before, have so many given so much in human life for a cause as did the martyrs of Iran. Men and women, young and old, the intellectuals and the ordinary, the clergy, the teachers, the doctors, the clerks, the factory workers, the students, the military and the ordinary masses... all gave of their precious blood for the cause of Islam and justice. That is why the Islamic revolution in Iran succeeded.

**What Khomeini Wanted**  
What else did Khomeini want ultimately? Khomeini wanted to transform the economy of Iran. The Shah had mortgaged Iran to the West and East. In spite of the fabulous wealth of the country, Iran was nothing but a permanent developing country. Khomeini wanted Iran to be part of the scientific and technological age. "One day the oil wells will run dry then what shall we do?" He once warned his people.

He wanted Iranians to seek technology of inventing and manufacturing consumer products to be sold on world markets as the only way they would not only strengthen their economy, but also gain world respect. Like Japan.

He was totally unimpressed by the neo-colonial consumer mentality of Western products that has afflicted most of the so called developing countries.

He also argued that strengthening the economy through technology was the only way Iran would retain not only her hard won freedom but also her rich cultural values.

To the Editor...

Letters for publication in these columns should be addressed to the Editor and legibly written or typed with double space. For reasons of space, short letters are preferred, and all are subject to editing and cuts. Pseudonyms are accepted. However, all communications must bear the writer's real name, signature and address.

**Bus service needed**  
Sir, Hundreds of thousands of students and office employees, traders and the unemployed gather at Khilgaon Traffic Point-cum-Railway crossing every morning, and wait for rickshaws, tempos, and baby taxis. Since the number of transports are scanty they face much inconveniences in getting one and reaching destinations. Long waiting by them is one of the reasons of traffic jam at the said place which can be reduced sufficiently by introducing a bus service between Khilgaon and Bangabandhu Avenue (Gullistan). Specially the middle class people and the low income group will be largely benefited.  
Alternatively, the bus service of route No. 6 may be extended from Kamalapur-Shah-jahanpur point to Khilgaon. The buses of the said route start from Banani and touch the finishing line at Motijheel Mazar. It is quite easy on the part of the bus owners to extend the service, at least in the morning and the evening. I believe that the owners of the buses invest a huge amount and naturally they work to get sufficient return. If the extended route seems viable, only in that case they will allow their buses to ply up to Khilgaon railway crossing; otherwise they will not. Then, the Government (BRTC) may please be requested to take the initiative in this regard.  
While earning, the bus owners may also implement the spirit of helping others by helping the middle class employees, the students and the low income group to reach their destinations without

much troubles. In fact the lowly income group cannot afford the expenses to go by the rickshaws, not to speak of baby taxis. As such, the introduction of the bus service will definitely give a good relief to them.  
A T M Nurun Nabi  
Khilgaon, Dhaka.

**Public nuisance at Uttara**  
Sir, Sector 5 of Uttara Model Town is most densely populated and congested because each allottee was allotted only 3 1/2 kathas land. And only in this sector between ZIA runways and roads number 9C and 9D, there are villages still.

Unauthorized residences, restaurants along southern side immediately adjacent to roads 9C and 9D are built by villagers. Frequent use of mikes, playing music at high pitch create indescribable public nuisance. In absence of a separate road connecting Tongi-Dhaka road, the villagers use only Uttara roads. Such free and heavy movements, often without civic sense, simply change the character of

this residential area. To ensure security to runways and Uttara dwellers, planners earmarked these villages for occupation by RAJUK. Suddenly, villages were not acquired.

For creation of a children's park, high and primary schools, community centre, graveyard etc. it is urged upon the govt particularly RAJUK and Ministry of Works that more areas need to be acquired immediately.  
Abu Zafar Imam  
Uttara, Dhaka

**DCC and DTP**  
Sir, What are the powers and functions, duties and responsibilities and monthly pay and allowances of Dhaka City Corporation and Dhaka Traffic Police personnel?

Why are the public roads in Dhaka turning into bazars and why DCC and DTP are playing ducks and drakes at the cost of untold sufferings of the people?

It is alleged that some unscrupulous elements are collecting illegal tolls for allowing to unauthorised shops and markets on the public thro-

ughlars.  
We wonder whether we have reached a point of no return and time has come for the abolition of DCC and DTP and to hand over their duties and responsibilities to the private sector in the interest of public service.  
O H Kabir  
Dhaka 1203

**Sylhet University**  
Sir, Shahjalal University of science and technology has been functioning for the last four years. The first batch has recently passed out without any session jam. This goes to the credit of this new University.

But unfortunately Masters. Pass course has not yet been opened in the University. As a result students of greater Sylhet and the neighbouring districts, after qualifying degree, pass course can't get admitted there and have to look towards Dhaka and other universities for doing their Masters courses. And these Universities are well reputed for session jam, terrorism etc. Hence I request the

Ministry of Education and other relevant authorities to take appropriate steps for opening of Masters. Pass course in Shahjalal University at an early date. This will relieve pressure on other Universities also.  
Saleh Ahmed Chowdhury  
Dhaka Cantonment

**Mistakes in school books**  
Sir, It is a matter of great regret to find mistakes in school books. Recently my daughter got admitted to a KG school and all of her books were bought as per school authority's recommendation. It really astonished and shocked me to find mistakes in her ABC book! It is not only a shameful matter but highly frustrating to the parents. If we fail to give right books and teaching to our children of today, how can we expect them to be worthy citizens of tomorrow?

We would request the concerned authority to pay sincere attention to this matter  
Morris Samad Chowdhury  
Phulitola Tea Estate, Sylhet