

On to a World of Better Partnership

All the world's eyes are now set on the proceedings of the Fourth World Conference on Women that got off to a colourful start in Beijing yesterday.

There are those that have only disdain for what UN and the women are up to. And they have a presence there in Beijing too if only to prevent the big congregation from enshrining something foolish, that could foul up the set ways of man.

The big rally is all about challenging and denting the status quo that has structured inequality and injustice, deprivation and discrimination into the phenomenon of human organisation, from society and government to family.

As lack of liberty has been the undoing of lofty socialistic endeavours, democracy too stands to be as hopelessly undone by the idea and practice of gender-based inequality.

The conference cannot remove even a minuscule part of that. But it can hopefully pronounce declarations which would function as a fountainhead of national actions in narrowing the gender gap through empowering women legally and socially.

Why Flout Norms?

The 32-hour hartal, called by the opposition political parties and observed generally on a nationwide scale, has left in its trail some extremely thought-provoking impressions.

The right to authentic information assumes critical importance in anxiety-ridden conditions. It is in a period of abnormal happenings that people look for reliable information to comprehend a situation properly.

It defies our understanding as to why our people should not be in a position to keep faith with the news bulletins of their own electronic media.

The picketers' excesses were outrageous, to say the least. They set ablaze or damaged clearly identifiable vehicles of major newspapers, misbehaved with the identity card-carrying journalists and the vehicle drivers on duty.

So, we say to the leaders, rein them in or earn outright public displeasure.

Matter of Few Lakhs Only

A Bangla daily in a front-page report yesterday stated to the effect that the Ministry of Forests and Environment has given the effluent-spawning industries one last chance to mend their ways.

These industries having circumvented legal action for nearly a decade since being identified as violators of environmental standards have been asked to behave on pain of punishment.

Poor inspection capabilities of the authorities concerned and lack of public consciousness about industrial pollution near their dwelling-places have contributed no less to the insensitivity of the owners of the industries to carry on as they pleased.

THE nationally televised apology by Japanese Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama has elevated the Government and people of Japan to new heights.

To mark the Fiftieth Anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Prime Minister Murayama issued a public statement concerning Japan's role and said, 'in the hope that no such mistake be made in the future, I express here once again my feelings of deep remorse and state my heartfelt apology.'

A week before the date of her surrender to the Allied Forces, Japan commemorated the Fiftieth Anniversary of the first ever atomic strike on her cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Japan's official apology has more to do with her militaristic past with Asian nations although she was the first Asian nation to defeat an European nation - Russia - in 1904.

Some of us blame it on our wives even though Bua may be churning out the delicacies. Your Bhabhi is spoiling me, dosti. Such a good cook! Takes after my mother.

Many of us like to feel good by ascribing our job status for the mid-body crisis. I have to sit on a chair all day, you know. Some of us go to the extent of attributing genetics as the cause.

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.

City problems

Sir, Dhaka could be a very beautiful city if there was no traffic jam. The problem is not beyond solution. Some people very candidly comment that if rickshaws could be eliminated from the city then all its traffic problems would be solved.

The problem has not yet reached the unsolvable stage. If our engineers, architects and other experts on the matter can get enough support, they can give us a solution. Now the problem is of financial support.

We should also start thinking about expanding the Dhaka City and decentralization of its commercial areas. Dhaka is expanding but mostly the expansion is taking place in and for the residential areas.

An overbridge is being constructed in front of the Mouchak Market but I think that this kind of short-term solution may not work. Moreover, all the overbridges are mostly used by the vendors and beggars keeping little space for passengers to pass through.

Slow-moving, obsolete and defective vehicles should be replaced by newer and comparatively better one. Some buses and minibuses plying through the streets of the

Apology: Salute to Japan

Arshad-uz Zaman writes from Istanbul

While watching Prime Minister Murayama offering public apology people of Bangladesh recall the events of 1971 when Pakistan army committed unspeakable atrocities on the defenceless civilian population.

Since her defeat half a century ago, Japan has devoted her talent and energies in building an economy that is acknowledged by all as the number one Economic Superpower. She has become an important aid giving nation of the world.

Japan has tendered her apology without any apparent systematic pressure mounted from different quarters. Since the end of the Second World War Jews have carried on a systematic campaign around the world of hunting down Nazis.

On the morning of 30 May 1981 the Annual Foreign Ministers Conference of the Organisation of Islamic Conference was about to be-

Chatti read it and passed on to me. I read that President Ziaur Rahman of Bangladesh had been assassinated.

Chatti asked for my views. I told him that we should immediately contact President Ahmed Sekou Toure of Guinea, who was the Chairman of the Islamic Peace Committee, composed of eight Islamic Heads of States including President Zia.

Chatti spoke immediately on the telephone with Toure and he broke down in tears. He asked Chatti to convene immediately in Dhaka, a memorial meeting in honour of President Zia.

While watching Prime Minister Murayama offering public apology people of Bangladesh recall the events of 1971 when Pakistan army committed unspeakable atrocities on the defenceless civilian population.

Japan is a powerful nation. She has made peace her vocation. And now she has set a splendid example by going before the world and offer a public apology.

Can You See Your Toes?

and hold on. This has built-in risks involved as sudden, unnatural narrowing of the waist many make the trousers abide the law of gravity.

Some of us blame it on our wives even though Bua may be churning out the delicacies. Your Bhabhi is spoiling me, dosti. Such a good cook! Takes after my mother.

Many of us like to feel good by ascribing our job status for the mid-body crisis. I have to sit on a chair all day, you know. Some of us go to the extent of attributing genetics as the cause.

Pinch of Salt

by Chintito

exercise; or the commonest of them all: kurrander. Ja hoibar hotbo, khalya loi.

Under these circumstances, we would fervently call upon the government to take some pragmatic steps for solving the academic problems of the Agri colleges.

M Zahidul Haque Assistant Professor BAI, Dhaka.

Madhovkunda waterfall

Sir, Although I live nearly fifteen miles away from Madhovkunda, the largest natural waterfall of the country, I visited the place recently after a gap of four years.

After going through the article, I lost no time in having a look at the English text book for the students of SSC classes and I was appalled to see that the book, from beginning to end has been written in a style and language that more often than not lacks grace, clarity and coherence.

Holiday resorts could be constructed in the neighbouring areas of Tea Estates to attract both local and foreign visitors. With proper investment BPC can develop Madhovkunda as one of the best tourist spots in the country.

Motius Samad Chowdhury Phulatala Teg Estate, Sylhet.

Reform in result!

Sir, This refers to your editorial, 'Educational Management' (Aug 26). You have rightly pointed to the hasty and unilateral decisions of the authorities in reforming syllabus/systems without taking note of maladjustments and maladies caused by such decisions.

Agriculture Colleges

Sir, Once again for the troubles in Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU), Mymensingh the on-going annual examinations in the country's three Agriculture Colleges had been put off suddenly.

little arguments. Once we discover that blaming others is not helping us, we take to other measures such as dieting (often confused with starving) and

plus-40, one should sweat a little every day. Swimming, playing some sort of racket game (squash maybe a bit strenuous), free-hand exercises with or without music

or a simple walk should meet the doctor's orders. But never ever sit before a TV to watch one of those exercise programmes. Even if you manage to ignore the engrossing music, you are too busy looking at the girls.

Physicians advise that at

long walk and forget the distance you have to cover. Target small patches of your planned route. Cover patch by patch. Look around and you will discover pleasant sur-

prises you thought never existed, although you drove by that same route almost every day of the year. You'll locate an old building that will rekindle your childhood memories.

Every decision must be discussed, analysed and okayed by parliament before execution, that is what is called democratic culture.

S Siddique Hossain Dhanmondi, Dhaka.

State of English

Sir, I read with interest Mr Asadullah Khan's illuminating article 'Decline in the teaching and learning of English language: How can this be arrested' published in your esteemed daily on 26.8.95.

After going through the article, I lost no time in having a look at the English text book for the students of SSC classes and I was appalled to see that the book, from beginning to end has been written in a style and language that more often than not lacks grace, clarity and coherence.

Let me mention here in passing that my two children are studying in Class IX and Class X in a school in Dhaka and so long I remained satisfied that their needs and aspirations in regard to text books at least were being looked after carefully and judiciously by the Textbook Board authorities headed by veteran educationists of the country.

Let us hope that the Textbook Board authorities would wake up from their deep slumber and look at the state of education which is going from bad to worse.

Mustafa Khalid 54, Purana Pallan, Dhaka.

tor before you embark on one), it will make you feel healthier. Then you also have to cut down on smoking and boozing, if you are still indulging in such outdated fads.

Art Buchwald's COLUMN

Where have All the Children Gone?

THIS summer many parents were bewildered about why their children preferred to spend their vacations with strangers instead of their own flesh and blood.

Carolyn List Ehler said while we were standing in the supermarket line the other day, 'I don't understand it. We raised them from babies, sat up nights worrying about them, sacrificed our pensions to put them through college, and they don't want to spend a weekend with us.'

A young girl standing behind us heard the conversation and said, 'What you don't understand is that the reason kids prefer to go to their friends vacation places is they know they will be treated so much better there than they will be at home. They don't get bawled out.'

Carolyn became upset. 'I don't give my children flak when they come home. I bake brownies for them and let them sleep until 11 o'clock.'

'The young lady said, "And you don't tell them what they should be doing with their lives?"

'Every parent tells children what they should be doing with their life.

'And you don't ever bring up the subject of grades, and how nice it would be if they made their beds and didn't leave all the dirty dishes in the sink?'

'Maybe, but what's the big deal about that?'

'Nothing, except I'm staying with my friend Sophie and her mother doesn't say a word to me when I come down to breakfast after getting home at 3 in the morning. She may be peevish at Sophie, but as far as I'm concerned, she treats me like Shirley Temple.'

Carolyn said, 'I can see why you like it better at Sophie's, but after all the pain and agony parents should have some visiting rights to a daughter before she goes back to school.'

The girl said, 'Parents don't have rights - they have privileges. It is your privilege to pack her up for school, make sure she has enough new clothes, check her bank account and, if you are lucky, get her to stay home on her last night instead of spending it with the gang at Gloria Wheaton's.'

I didn't want to get into it, but I suggested to Carolyn, 'Why don't you invite some strangers to stay with you and get from your guests all the nourishment you were hoping to get from your daughter?'

'That's a good idea. I will teach Cynthia a lesson.' She turned to the young girl in line and said, 'How would you like to be our guest for Labor Day?'

'I'd love to, but I already promised to stay with the Branham's while their daughter is visiting her best friend Sarah Newman in Jackson Hole.'

By arrangement with Los Angeles Times Syndicate and UNB

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and am a witness to many horrible events. Several of my friends were picked up by the army never to return. Would it not be in the fitness of things that Pakistan takes courage in both hands and comes forward and offers an unconditional apology?

The apology of Prime Minister Murayama has opened a new and hopeful page in human history. It is surprising that there are voices saying that the apology does not go far enough.

Japan is a powerful nation. She has made peace her vocation. And now she has set a splendid example by going before the world and offer a public apology.

you stop and wander. You'll also sweat.

Of course, your tummy will not vanish overnight. Thank heavens for that. If it did, your darwan might stop you at the door with the 'kaarey challen, Sir' routine.



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