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# Is student politics needed?

# Drug addiction



We owe a great debt to our students for their leading role in 1952 and 1971, but what about their present role? Whenever something goes wrong people tend to believe that students are responsible. Terrorism in the educational institutions increased with their easy access to money and to the arms supplied by the politicians. Parents, teachers and students should try to avoid the traps set by the politicians.

**Fatamatuz Zuhura**  
Shine Pukur, Dhaka

We know that students are the future of any country. But we see nowadays that the students are used by the political leaders for their selfish gains. They are often equipped with arms. They engage themselves in serious clashes. Moreover, the political activities of the students badly destroy their academic career. Student politics is nowadays a dangerous and very harmful thing like a septic boil and an obstacle to improvement of socio-economic life. It is a serious problem for a third world country like Bangladesh. Student politics causes economic backwardness and throws the peaceful society into turmoil.

**Rubia Khatun**  
Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT)



Drug addiction has become a serious problem in our social life. In our country many young people take to this dreadful course. We know heroine, afim, morphine, cocaine and phensidyl are used by the addicts. These drugs are smuggled into the country and many young people take these for pleasure. They do not understand that these drugs are leading them to death.

So it is time to take steps to control drug addiction. I hope that people will come forward to organise a social movement against drug



## New SSC education system

The education ministry recently introduced a uni-track education system for SSC examinations. I think it is a good decision, as all the students will have the same subjects as well as all will have to go through basic subjects of all disciplines.

This will curb memorisation and note-dependent education. Moreover, this will encourage the students to learn different topics and go deep into them.

However, I am not quite optimistic about another new idea-- School Based Assessment (SBA). Though the education ministry has good intention, the ground reality tells us that it will be very difficult to implement. There is widespread apprehension that teachers will misuse this to give high numbers to the students who take private tuition.

The education ministry should look into the SBA system carefully before its implementation and take appropriate measures to ensure that the SBA system is used properly.

**Mohibul**  
Dhaka

## Fuel price hike

I do appreciate your editorial titled "Fuel price hike-Couldn't it have been handled better?" However, you have failed to mention any alternative method that the government could have taken to minimise its effect on the economy. I think the price increase decision is in compliance with the free market economy but the government could have done better if the increases were done in multiple phases over a period of time.

Higher fuel price is never good for any economy. Higher rate of inflation is looming at the horizon across the industries. In short run, the significant rise in inflation will

## Flat rate for income tax

In the United Kingdom a debate is brewing over adopting "flat rate" for income tax. The Conservative Party is planning to include this in their next general election manifesto. The whole idea originated from Estonia, a newly independent country that broke away from Russia. In 1994 the young prime minister of Estonia, Mr. Mart Laar, then aged only 32, pioneered and introduced the "flat rate" income tax, even defying the wishes of IMF.

**Prodip Saha**  
Dallas, Texas

## Too much homework

I would like to echo with Mr. Alfa Ahmed that now the students of primary level face too much pressure of studying which is at times unbearable for them. It seems so ridiculous as well as painful to me that most of the parents are trying their best to make their children extra ordinary by forcing them to read a lot of text books. Now most of the schools give the young children so much home tasks that they get no time for playing.

Sometimes I have noticed that some mothers are taking their children to private coaching after their school time while they are quite reluctant or too tired to read. But what is the result of this kind of pressure? From very childhood,

they are losing their interests in studies and schools have become a panic for them. But this should not be continued.

Mr. Ahmed also mentioned about the code of teaching primary level students. Hope a proper code will be implemented to lessen the overload of studies from the students' shoulders.

**Iffat Tarannum**  
Dhaka City College

## River bank protection

Bangladesh territorial boundaries with India are facing threats of erosion by seven transboundary rivers due to stoppage of riverbank protection work for over a year now, thanks to objections from India. In Bangladesh territory, the government made numerous efforts for 'revetment work' at 15 points on seven cross-border rivers over the last year. But it failed to do so as the Indian authorities opposed that 'revetment work' involving at least Tk 70 crore and it remained unfinished. Concrete blocks meant for protection of river erosion were pilfered frequently by local thieves, as we could not accomplish the tasks at any of the 15 points on the banks of seven rivers.

According to a source in the water resources ministry and JRC, due to Indian objections and occasional exchanges of fire between the BDR and BSF at various points, Bangladesh is now at risk of losing its bordering lands on the banks of seven out of 54 common rivers with India.

It has been said that due to lack of clarity of the critical cross-border river management issues at local levels and due to differences of opinion over exact 'Zero lines' at the porous Indo-Bangladesh border, tension prompts the border guards to go for unnecessary exchange of fire.

**S M Oahiduzzaman**  
Mirpur, Dhaka

## Adulterated food

I do highly appreciate measures undertaken by the government against adulterated food and other consumer items. It is again proved that within the framework of the existing rules and regulation, it is possible to take corrective measures and what is necessary is a durable initiative. We are consuming adulterated and date expired foods and giving them to children.

I would propose formation of a separate body under the commerce ministry in collaboration with law enforcing agencies which can work full time to prevent adulteration of foods. Moreover, the existing law needs to be enforced strictly and necessary amendment should be made to punish the corrupt businessmen and their allies.

**Jagannath Dutta**  
Azimpur, Dhaka

## August 17

The bomb blasts of 17 August are not only a threat to the nation but also a direct challenge to the government and the administration. If the government fails to find out the source of power behind this crime the future of the country will be endangered.

The bombing started from Udichi meeting in 1999. Still now it is continuing because no proper investigation has been done on the incidents. The previous government (Awami League) could not do anything. Now the ruling party also appears to be unconcerned about the matter and is not active to catch the criminals. Such behaviour of governments is really mysterious.

Here some questions arise. Are they really not capable of arresting the criminals or is there any foreign hand in the matter?

The news of serial bomb blasts was covered by the international press. The pattern of the coverage suggests that Islamic fundamentalism has already reached a critical stage in Bangladesh. So the government and all concerned should remain alert as terrorism is not only a threat to our security but it also tarnishes our image abroad.

**Feroja Goni**  
Mirpur 1, Dhaka

## A city of mosquitoes

The population of Dhaka has increased a lot and along with it has increased the mosquito populace in the city. It is now a common joke that Dhaka is not only a city of mosques but also of mosquitoes. It is impossible to sit at the reading table or talk to friends in the drawing room owing to the painful stings of mosquitoes. The situation has become so bad that even during daytime, one cannot avoid the painful stings.

The efforts so far made by the authorities to wipe out the tiny beings are only half-hearted and they have all gone in vain. They cannot keep the drains clear and remove the garbage regularly. As a result, heaps of rubbish have accumulated drains are full of dirty water in different parts of the city. The breeding of mosquitoes goes on unhindered in the damp environment. So, the mosquitoes have multiplied making the life of the citizens unbearable.

We should, therefore, request the DCC bosses to take effective steps immediately so that the citizens may get some relief.

**Md Rashed Minhaz**  
Dhaka

## Food processing

Food processing is not done scientifically in our country. We prepare foods in our house and those are safe for our health but we think that foods bought from the markets are also good and safe. That is wrong. Because food producers are not using good raw materials. They use toxic chemicals in foods.

If they need fruits they will use rotten or half-rotten fruits. Fruit sellers also use chemicals in fruits. Restaurants and bakeries prepare their foods in unhygienic places. For example, some icecream manufacturers use dirty water to make icecream. Bottled mineral water is also not safe.

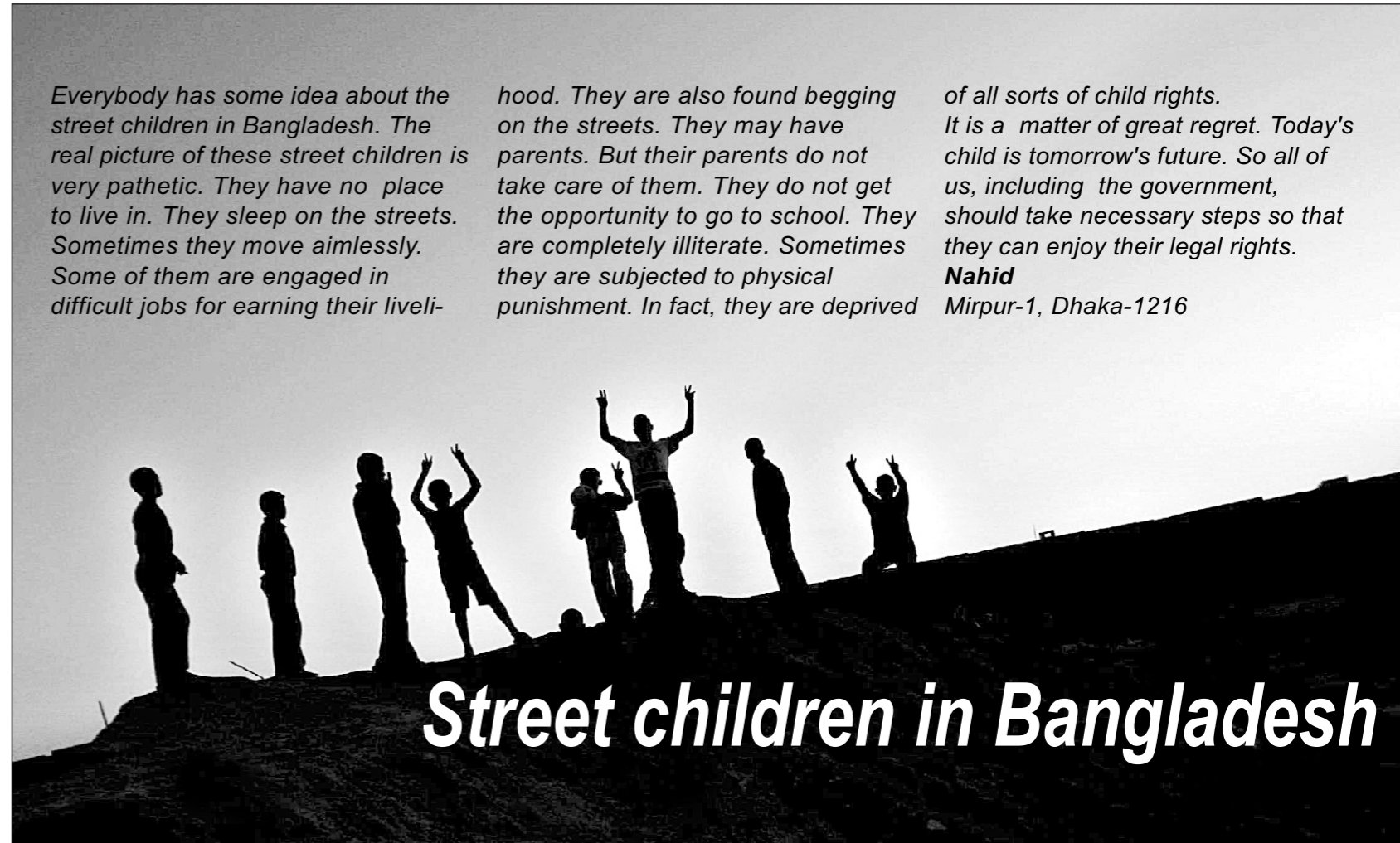
The authorities concerned should look into the matter.

**Sharmin Sultana**  
Mirpur-2, Dhaka-1216

## Traffic jam

Traffic jam is a problem in all towns and cities in Bangladesh. Actually it occurs where a mass of vehicles remain huddled together and movement becomes impossible for some time. Nowadays traffic jam is common in Dhaka city. Day by day it is becoming more and more acute. When we are caught in a traffic jam, we cannot move backward either.

We can only wait. We arrive late for an appointment. The bad effects of traffic jam are beyond description. We lose our most valuable time for it. It is a curse for



Everybody has some idea about the street children in Bangladesh. The real picture of these street children is very pathetic. They have no place to live in. They sleep on the streets. Sometimes they move aimlessly. Some of them are engaged in difficult jobs for earning their liveli-

hood. They are also found begging on the streets. They may have parents. But their parents do not take care of them. They do not get the opportunity to go to school. They are completely illiterate. Sometimes they are subjected to physical punishment. In fact, they are deprived

of all sorts of child rights. It is a matter of great regret. Today's child is tomorrow's future. So all of us, including the government, should take necessary steps so that they can enjoy their legal rights.

**Nahid**  
Mirpur-1, Dhaka-1216

# Street children in Bangladesh



## CAMEL JOCKEYS

Thousands of Bangladeshi young boys worked as camel jockeys in the UAE, and they have been brought back to the country in recent times. It's nice that our unfortunate children are brought back from the horrifying job that they're cruelly assigned to. One wonders, how come this sort of barbaric amusement exists in the twenty first century. The dreadful story that the boys related is simply barbaric. The other day while discussing the matter I came to learn a more horrifying fact about it that the cry of the tender aged boys (minor-4-6 aged) makes the camels run faster.

There are many culprits in society who conduct the heinous act of human trafficking. We welcome our boys back home and strongly urge the concerned authorities to rehabilitate them in a befitting way so that they can start their lives anew with the privileges of education and other rights that they are entitled to as human beings. The government should look into the matter and ensure that this sort of trafficking is stopped once and for all. It also has to bring the criminals to justice.

**Rafiqul Islam Rime, Agrabad, Chittagong**

PHOTO: AFP