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Agriculture and students

Agriculture is now the main key sector of living all over the world. On the other hand, students are the future of every nation. Most students are dependent on their parents. But all the parents do not have the capability to maintain educational expenses smoothly for their children. So, students often face financial problems.

After obtaining a degree students usually try to get a job. But that is quite problematic in a poor country like Bangladesh. So, it seems a better option for the educated youth is to try to have a career in agriculture. The sector can still employ a large number of young men and women.

Abbas Uddin
College Avenue
Barisal

An appeal

Recently, a local leader set up a make shift kitchen market at Popular Housing-1 under Barabagh, Mirpur-2. People from the adjacent areas use Popular Housing-1 approach road to go to Monipur School to drop their children. The connecting road through Popular Housing-1 is a very busy one. The market starts at 7:00am and continues up to 1:00pm. Different types of traders gather here and set their shops occupying almost 70-80% of the road to do their trading. During this time it becomes extremely difficult for us to go to school.

We are, therefore, appealing to the authorities concerned to close this market for ensuring a better residential environment for the residents of the Popular Housing-1 area as well as for ensuring a better and safe road communication for school children and guardians.

A.M.Zakaria
East Monipur
Mirpur-2, Dhaka

Environmental degeneration

Today man stands on the brink of annihilation as a result of environmental pollution. It is confronting the modern civilized world. It is fouling the habitat. Air pollution, water pollution, land pollution, noise pollution are some of the many types of pollution. The problem is assuming monstrous proportions. The root cause of the problem is the man himself.

The level of pollution in the city is more than double the permissible level of World Health Organization (WHO). Pollution is on the increase in the city and on its outskirts day by day due to the black smoke emitted by the vehicles, especially the old ones, brick kilns and unplanned factories. The problem needs to be addressed soon. We cannot live without clean air and a sustainable environment. We cannot breathe the fresh air. We have no greenery. Clean Air Act exists in many countries, but still we don't have such a law to protect our environment as well as the people. We should try to reduce or control emissions from the sources and adopt a sustainable urban transport system.

Haphazard growth of modern cities, industrial centres, migration of rural population to the cities in search of work have created an unhealthy environment. It has given rise to overcrowding, slums, juvenile delinquency, inadequate civic amenities, addiction to drugs and crimes.

It is a must to increase awareness in society which would contribute to reducing air and environment pollution.

There should be a regular check on use of loudspeakers and indiscriminate use of horns by the motorists.

Iqbal Khan
Teacher of English
Birshrestha Munshi Abdur Rouf Rifles College
Dhaka

Computerised system?

Recently, I went to a bank in Dhaka to withdraw a small amount of money giving a cheque to the counter and the counter said "You have to wait for a while as the Rajshahi branch is offline" I have an account with the bank in Rajshahi. I had to wait for about an hour and the banking hour was over.

The next day, I wanted to come back to Rajshahi by train, the Silk City Express, and it starts from the airport station at 3:12pm. I could manage to reach the station at around 3:00pm. The counter giving tickets was using computer and it took more time than usual. I was disappointed to see a long queue and I thought I would not get the ticket. I became hopeful to see some TTs standing near the counter. I asked one of the TTs to give a ticket for Rajshahi. The TT wanted some extra amount.

So, what is the use of having computers when you do not know how to use them quickly? Finally, we need more trains on Dhaka-Rajshahi route.

Mawduda Hasnin
Raninagar
Kajla
Rajshahi

Disappointing

Given his young age, his portfolio, and the gravity of the situation, the State Minister for Home should have extended his helping hand to Home Minister Sahara Khatun after the BDR carnage. It has been reported that he was on a personal tour abroad, but he should have flown back to Dhaka immediately.

His silence has surprised me, even though I am a Bangladeshi American.

Bazlul Wahab Shaheen
Boston, Massachusetts
USA

Pakistan-Bangladesh cricket series

The above series has come in the court of a politician after facing trouble in the court of cricket bureaucracy. I was so shocked to listen to the minister for sports at prime time news cast on Channel-i. If I am not wrong, the minister was more keen to plan for the protection of the Pakistani players, of course we will do at an appropriate time, than putting due weight to the security of thousands of young men and women who might be allured to attend the proposed cricket match. The proposed date of arrival and possible date of curtailed matches seem to be an wild idea of a few cricket organisers and policy makers.

I hope the sports minister has heard the prime minister while she was addressing an audience at the Engineering Institute. According to the prime minister, the national security and public safety are still under threat from unknown enemy quarters. How come her sports minister can think to bring the Pakistani team on March 25, a black day in our history, and arrange the matches pushing the security of cricket lovers at stake in this critical and uncertain security atmosphere? Moreover, the country is mourning the deaths of the innocent on-duty patriotic soldiers. The nation is awaiting the trail of the killers, and not any international cricket match. We need not be over enthusiastic to show normalcy by arranging international cricket matches at this stage. Do not be worried, things will be normal in the normal process shortly, God willing.

I only hope that our cricket board and the sports minister would kindly stop thinking about the Pak-Bangladesh cricket match and spend their time and efforts for organising local level internal sports game in Dhaka and outside to gradually cope with the national grief and security of the people and game participants. I think it is time for the cabinet to take a look at it and give a final decision to stop the bureaucratic game in cricket. Pakistan definitely needs our support to survive in the international cricket arena, but we need not go further and take any irrational decision without keeping in mind our own national security and safety issues.

I only hope the cricket lovers would not misunderstand my stand. I also love cricket. I would advice the organizers to kindly coordinate their thinking with the PMO and the home ministry to fix any new dates for the series. Be transparent and tell the full story why it is so urgent to organise the series now in March, why not at an appropriate time later?

A reader
One-mail

Stinky Wasa water

For the last couple of days, we the inhabitants of Rahmatgonj, Haji Ballu Road, Water Works Road, Chawkbazar in the old part of Dhaka city are being made to use stinky, foul smelling, black water supplied by Wasa. So stinky is the supplied water that one cannot use it for any purpose whatsoever. I can't describe what we are going through.

Wasa seems to be working with cotton buds in their ears. Verbal and written complaints seem to go down the drains. People are becoming increasingly agitated from within.

I would request you to kindly send a reporter to get a firsthand impression of the ever deteriorating situation.

DrMM Mortayez Amin
Debi das Ghat Lane, Dhaka

Admin horns

It is with great alarm that we the ordinary public note the efforts of the Admin cadres to get back some judicial powers. It is only natural that these relics of our colonial past will try every means to regain their undue perks and privileges bestowed on them by the British Raj and later on by the Pakistani occupiers. The colonial rulers needed a compliant and subservient group whose loyalty was to their masters rather than the public. We need people-friendly administrators who consider themselves public servants, rather than masters of the public.

Let us hope that the government will move with the times and not yield to arm twisting by the entrenched vested group.

Let us also hope that if the worst comes to worst, the highest court of the land will not allow the principle of separation of the judiciary to be diluted by the covetous grasp of the executive.

ABM Nurul Islam
Gulshan, Dhaka

Women's Day

The International Women's Day is the focal point of what I am writing today.

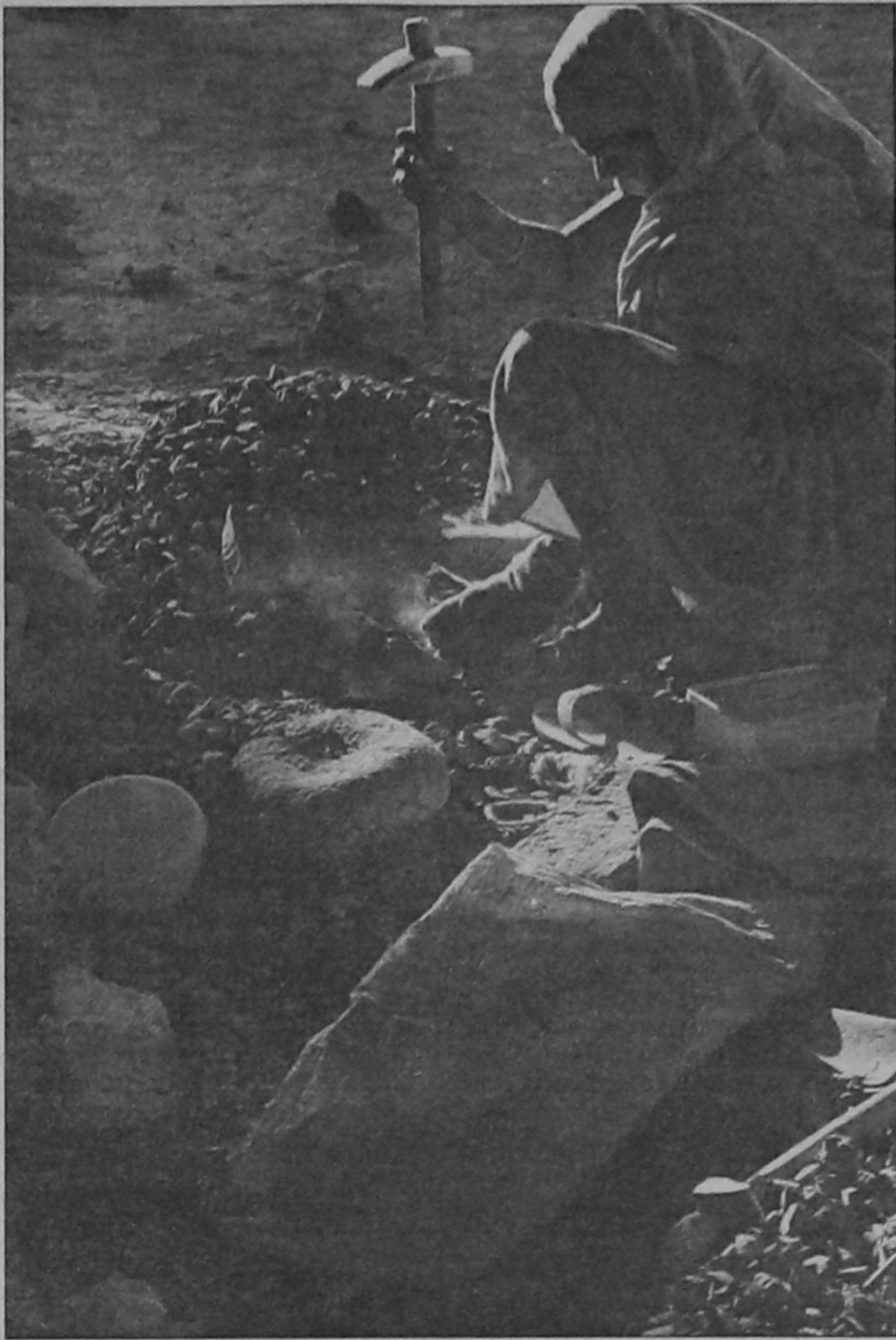
From my point of view at first I would like to pinpoint the example of my mother whom I love and admire most in the world. Nowadays, her behaviour has become harsher than before and most of the time she remains in solitude in the gloomy and dark corner of the house. Sometimes I figure out the reason of her agony and monotony and try my best to lessen it. I think my wretched poor mother is the embodiment of whole rotten society.

Well, it is a common phenomenon that we have a number of so-called philanthropists who express their views, deliver speeches and plans in favour of establishing women's rights, though inwardly their better halves and housemaids (i.e. parasites) are frequently tortured by them. What an irony!

However, sometime we notice that the family members enforce an educated woman to do some specific job like teaching and some other particular jobs. But it is a big question whether a person can become prosperous through a profession which is determined by others or which he/she does not like? Here women are the worst sufferers of this ill norm. Obviously, it is an attack on their freedom.

Furthermore, as it is the age of capitalism, society is becoming materialistic day by day. By the influence of capitalism women have been transformed into a commodity. Those who believe that these types of expeditions can play an active role in favour of women's rights are simply building castles in the air.

I admit that some people might twist my concept or they will just



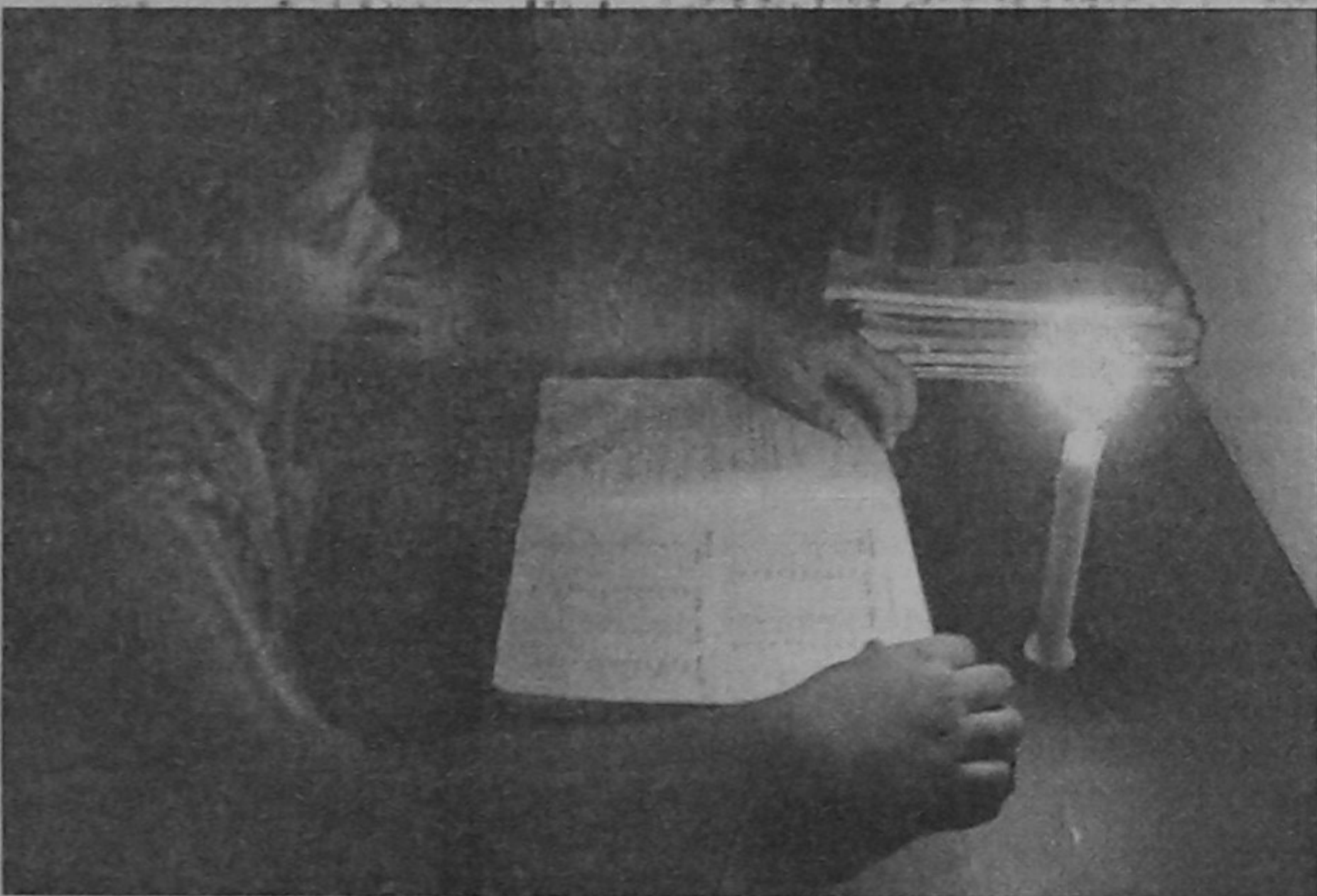
misunderstand me. Any how, "To be great is to be misunderstood".

Again, another vital issue is still unresolved-- "Equality" Vs "Equity". I prefer "Equity". That means both men and women will be treated in accordance with their capabilities. If we prefer "Equality"

between men and women, a confrontation may be created in society, which we notice in the western world.

Aiman Bin Shaofigul Hamid
Dept of English
International Islamic University
Chittagong

Load shedding in Chittagong



Summer has not yet set in, but we, the people of Chittagong city, are already experiencing an acute power shortage. There are, in a day, several hours of supply cut time for the city dwellers during the day and more terribly at night. As a result, children and the old people are the worst victims. However, one wonders why the SSC examinees

have to undergo this kind of ordeal every year.

Students sitting for their first public exam are bearing the brunt of this power failure. We strongly urge the authorities concerned to come up quick with the necessary measures to salvage the people of Chittagong.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Why these doubts?

Pilkhana carnage is the biggest shock to the nation. But it is too early to comment on the way the crisis was handled. Only time will speak about what has been done and what could have been done when the tragedy had struck. The nation is eagerly awaiting the results of the ongoing investigation. The government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina looks very serious to identify the perpetrators, their patrons, financiers, conspirators and the motive behind the carnage.

As part of her sincere efforts she has immediately re-constituted her government's inquiry team, now headed by a retired secretary. Apart from her government's team, the army, intelligence department, police, Rab and her own party inquiry teams are working day and night to dig out the truth. To get the world's best known investigators' assistance, she has requested the FBI and the Scotland Yard to extend assistance to the investigators.

But we are really disheartened to note the statements of opposition leaders. They are expressing doubts about the sincerity of the government and criticising every step

being taken by it. I doubt the sincerity of the opposition leaders. Instead of helping the government at this critical juncture, they are trying to divide the people by spreading unfounded rumours. They are speaking against the government moves without giving reasons behind their claims. Such claims without reasoning are in fact confusing people. I suggest the opposition leaders tell the people why the steps being taken are wrong and what should have been the right steps by the government.

If the opposition leaders are sure that the government is trying to divert the attention of the public from the main issue because some of the government's own people were involved, why do not they come up with their own suggestions?

By doing these the opposition leaders are in fact distancing themselves from the people.

So, for the sake of national unity of the nation and sustenance of democracy, they should cooperate with the government on this sensitive issue. This government is not doing everything negative, is it? Will people believe that? The opposition leaders' duty

is not merely finding faults, they have a duty to help the nation and the people.

Shafiqul Islam, NY

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ABM Nurul Islam
Gulshan, Dhaka

Crisis and opposition leader

The nation has seen perhaps the worst attack in its history by a few unruly BDR personnel. The whole nation along with the Bangladeshi communities living abroad are deeply shocked by the loss of lives of military officers as well as other innocent people. It is one of the views now that early intervention could have reduced the number of casualties. However, most of the local and foreign media and representatives of civil society, foreign governments, as well as high officials of the army have agreed that the situation could have deteriorated further if they had intervened earlier. Many more civilians could have been killed instantly, and on the other hand, an intense long-term rivalry would be established between the two forces-- the Army and the BDR. None of these would contribute to bringing back peace to the nation. Therefore, the government deserves thanks for the intelligent and bold steps it took to avoid those unwelcome events.

The government is taking every possible action to capture the killers and bring them to justice and also trying to

find out the force that had acted from behind the scene. For ensuring fair investigation, every member of committees should act in a transparent and credible manner (not what we have seen with the 10-truck of firearms case). The opposition leader and a few other politicians should be careful in articulating what they say. With a view to cooperating with the smooth overcoming of such crisis and tragedy, they should stop involving themselves in the blame game.

Abdul Moyeen, Ph.D
Australia

Opposition leader's role

Since the most brutal killing of our brave sons at Pilkhana, Begum Zia is making unfounded, aggressive and provocative statements every day which can only divide people, and not unite, at this critical and challenging time. Merrily, our press is giving extensive coverage to her questionable campaign against the just installed democratically elected government.

Is it not too early for Begum Zia to aspire and return to power or do the groundwork for her future election campaign?

Memories of her misrule and destruction of the country through her corrupt gang are still fresh in the minds of people. Since the departure of George W. Bush when he took the helicopter trip from Capitol Hill - we Americans have not seen him on TV, despite his being targeted every now and then for all the ills of American economy today.

Syed Ameer Ali
New York City, USA

TIN and NBR circular

The recent efforts by the NBR authorities to widen the tax net and enhance collection of income tax is quite timely and we do support the initiative. But people are still apprehensive about the effort as certain issues are still not smooth and client-friendly. For example, collecting TIN certificate for purchasing land, apartment, seeking permission for establishing industries or taking large loan from the bank is quite all right. But why should it be necessary for renewal of fitness certificates of personal cars every year? Did not the concerned person had his TIN certificate and submitted it while purchasing the car and get it registered earlier?

I think, in such cases, only producing the acknowledgement receipt of filing of preceding year's tax return should suffice. This will reduce unnecessary hassle embedded in the income tax offices to a great extent as it is not easy to get the TIN certificate every year afresh or more than one TIN certificate for more than one purpose in a year. As far as experience goes, it often takes days to get this certificate! I would request the tax authorities to consider the above option and put their effort to ease the lives of taxpayers. There might be some more smaller areas where this option may also be replicated.

ME
Dhanmondi, Dhaka

BDR bloodbath

Provocation from outside is possible; no, likely. But why do we succumb? There will always be people ready to commit the most heinous crimes for a tiny gain. Lamenting it does not take us very far. We have to develop our own defence. Talking about germs floating in the air around us is no cure. We have to develop our own immunity.

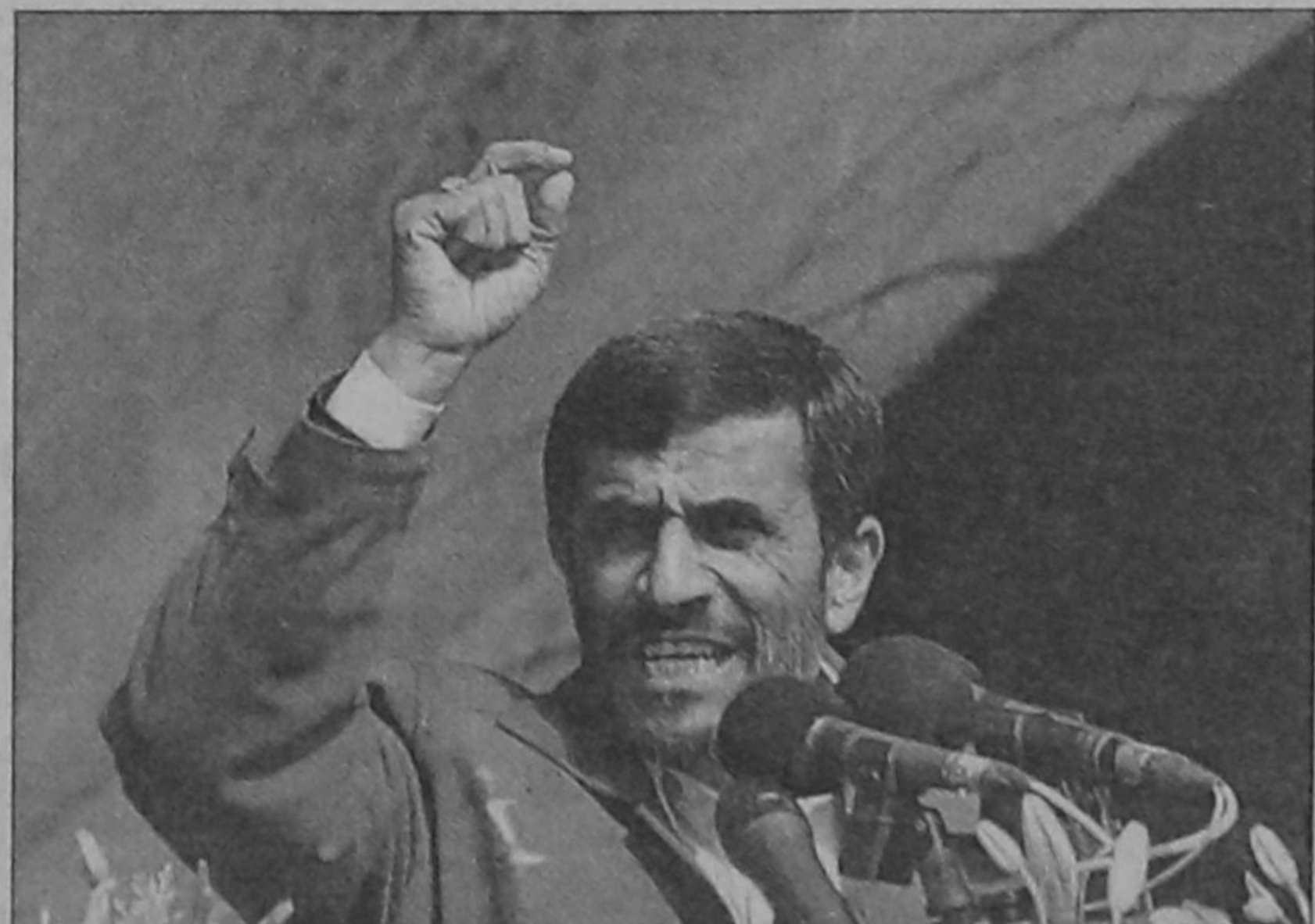
Mushfiq Ahmad
Department of Physics
Rajshahi University

Nuclear case against Iran

A report from Washington, published in a local English daily on March 3, shed light on the issue. This is very much in line with the falsehood that was said against Iraq having WMD (Weapons of Mass Destruction) for attacking it illegally, against all norms of international law. Later it was proved that it was an outright lie!

This whole false allegation was orchestrated by the USA to attack and grab the oil of Iraq, and nothing else! Now the USA is licking its lips to go after the oil in Iran!

They are setting a similar scene, the bogey this time being Iran's capability to make atomic weapons. All sort of wise (?) estimates, statements and opinions are out to create a false image. However, the world should remember that the USA is a proven liar, which is not the case with Iran. So should we not trust Iran's statements against the lies being propagated by the USA? The atomic weapon mania has become the familiar war cry for the USA's sabre rattling all the time. If the USA, China, Russia, India, Pakistan and Israel can have atomic weapons, why cannot Iran have it?



There is no logic behind this senseless US propaganda! The world should be aware and ensure that the USA does not repeat the same game and destroy Iran like they have destroyed Iraq. They should also be stopped from setting their police dog Israel to go after Iran on their behalf! Between the USA and their police dog Israel innumerable lives of people in the Middle East have been lost, and

their properties have been laid in ruins. This has happened because there is no more balance of power which was the key role of the USSR in the past.

In my opinion, if sensible courtiers in the world do not stop this US ambition for oil, then the Middle East will be their next target for dropping an atom bomb!

S.A.Mansoor
Dhaka