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Education policy

The government is contemplating formulation of a new education policy in line with the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission report of 1974 and also taking into consideration the education policies formulated by past governments. We welcome the decision of the government; the policy should ensure equal opportunity for all, irrespective of girls and boys, affluent and poor, rural and urban and match with current demands.

We expect that the new education policy would be more pragmatic, people oriented, coherent with the national and global needs as well as more technical in nature, rather than theoretical.

The education policy may have four levels keeping in mind the local, national and global requirements ensuring learning of modern technology, agriculture and environmental and natural sciences and basic health education to meet the challenge of the modern competitive world.

Primary education for eight years, may go up to class eight with basic

alphabetical learning, social and political behaviours, basic learning in English, Bengali, simple mathematics and healthcare.

Secondary Education: class nine to class 12: English, Bengali, social and political science, economics, mathematics, agriculture and applied and natural sciences, human physiology and healthcare.

Graduation: 4 or 5 years-- general, medical and engineering.

Three years' diploma in various fields may be also obtained after the HSC.

Higher education should only be available to reasonably meritorious students and those who are interested to work in research, analytical and developmental fields including teaching and academic professions and services to diplomatic and foreign institutions.

The government may also consider free education for both boys and girls up to the HSC level.

Nasarullah
One-mail

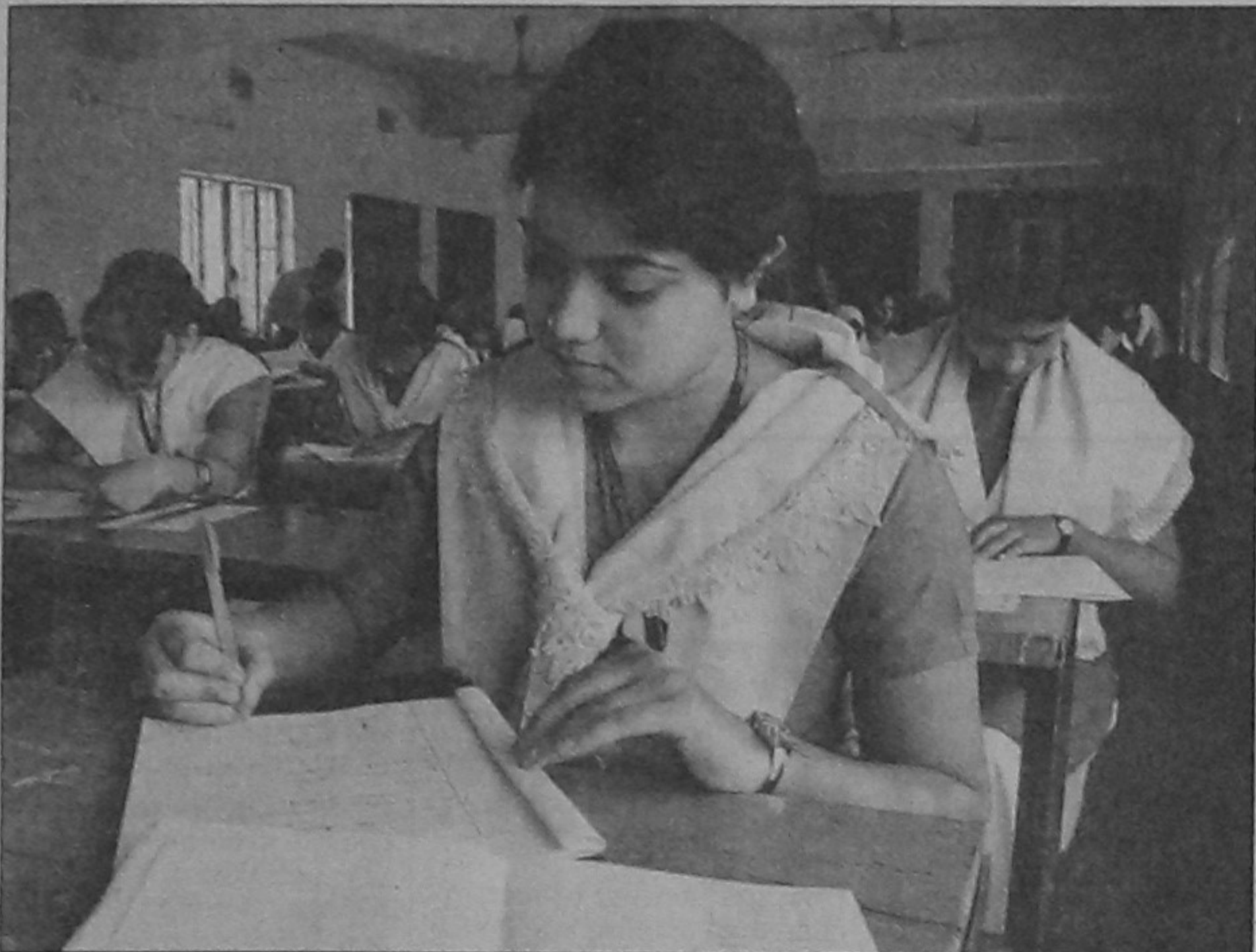


PHOTO: GAZI / DRINKNEWS

Workers in trouble

It is matter of great regret that our workers abroad are facing a hard time. Every day we hear the news of labour retrenchment by foreign companies or their employers. A large number of workers are coming back home because of faulty recruitment, dishonesty of the employers who don't pay wages and other benefits regularly and finally prevailing global financial crisis. Labour unrest, nowadays, is a common phenomenon around the world. Bangladeshi workers who go abroad (mostly the Middle East and some South East Asian countries) sell their only possession like a small piece of land or mortgaging their own house to the village mahajons or lenders in order to meet the expenses with the hope that they will be able to earn some money. But when they are betrayed and those minimum requirements are not fulfilled as promised earlier, they don't have any way out but life long disappointment. In most of the cases, it is due to some dishonest middlemen and recruiting agencies who form a syndicate along with their foreign counterparts. There is an allegation that our missions in those countries have failed to tackle the situation in many cases. They have not taken any effective measures in this regard. We should keep in mind that those poor and unfortunate workers, who are the lifeblood of our economy, send a huge amount of remittance to our country every year.

So, the country should do its bit for their survival.

Md. Anisuzzaman Sarker
MBA, Finance
University of Chittagong

treatment seekers? Where is our humanity? This question is obviously relevant.

Md. Shobuj Chowdhury
Sher-e-Bangla Agricultural University

Student politics

Referring to the article, "Students these days", by Mohammad Lutfor Rahman, PhD Student, Genetic Epidemiology, and University College London (UCL), 2009/03/20.

I think everyone will agree that student politics in Bangladesh is purely based on nothing but creating cadres of the respective political parties. And hence it can be easily said that a fair and unbiased activity in the future administration of our country's various sectors can never be imagined, as these students will be the custodians of our future democracy. Under these circumstances, we are desperately seeking the present government's action to abolish student politics in our country, a step for which, I am sure, Sheikh Hasina will always be remembered. And this could be achieved avoiding any possible internal chaos by simply keeping the gun on the shoulders of students' legal guardians, by calling for an opinion poll or a referendum.

M.A. Munim
One-mail

Health policies in schools

Health policies in schools, as well as skill-based health schooling and the conditions of different health services, can help attain health, sanitation and nourishment of kids. But superior school health policies should go afar this to certify a secure and safe corporal setting and a helpful psychosocial atmosphere. Such policies should address issues of abuse of students, sexual harassment, health-related practices of teachers and students, school violence etc to help promote inclusion and equity in the school environment. Policies regarding the health-related practices of teachers and students can reinforce health education: teachers can act as positive role models for their students, for example, by not smoking in school. The process of developing and agreeing upon policies draws attention to these issues. The policies are best developed by involving several levels, including the national level, regional and district level, and the school level with the partic-

ipation of the teachers, children, parents and the wider society.

To be effective, school policies need resources for their implementation, adequate resources must be made available at the national, regional, district and local levels. Such resources include government financing, but may also include contributions from other donors such as NGOs, to ensure long term sustainability of efficient performance.

Mohammad Rajja
Gono Bishwabidyalay Savar, Dhaka

Buddhist Welfare Trust

The Buddhist Religious Welfare Trust is a government institution under the Ministry of Religion. But actually it doesn't reflect its real appearance through the activities accomplished by the trust. The Buddhist community of the country is not happy with its performance. At present the post of the secretary is vacant.

My request to the authorities is that the institution should never be made ineffectual by appointing any old, inactive and retired person to the crucially important position of secretary.

Khokon Bikash Chakma
Chief Councillor
Australia Education Preparation Centre
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Price of rice

Any way, the price of rice is continuing to fall. The government step to sell rice at Tk 18 per kg to garment workers will definitely further lower the price. But this artificial price fall will adversely affect the paddy growers. This year farmers had to purchase urea at Tk 600 per bag, just double the price they paid last year. The long drought increased the irrigation cost considerably. Labour cost these days has also increased a lot. So it is apprehended that next month when boro paddy will be harvested, the price of paddy may go down further. The marginal farmers who will be compelled to sell their products immediately after harvesting will suffer most.

So, we request the government to keep the procurement price at last year's level and start purchasing immediately after the harvest. Bureaucratic delay will cause serious loss to the growers.

M. Sanaul Haq
Utara Model Town
Dhaka

A suggestion

There is no need to introduce Dr. Muhammed Zafar Iqbal. Everybody knows him. He is not only a scientist and university teacher, but is also a famous writer. He is the son of a martyr of 1971. He has always been with progressive social and secular movements.

The government has decided to form an Education Commission with a view to streamlining the country's education system. I think the commission should be headed by Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, an educationist with new ideas.

Shams Biswas
Upshahor, Rajshahi

Transit issue

The transit issue is not only an economic one, it's a political issue which needs careful handling. Recently, India has started building Tipaimukh barrage which will hurt our agriculture and environment as it would dry up the flow of Surma and Kushiara rivers. Tension also built up last December when Indian naval ships entered Bangladesh's waters to explore gas and oil. There are also so many unresolved issues between India and Bangladesh like water sharing, enclave transfer, Farakka problem, obstacles faced by Bangladeshi exporters while they try to export goods to India etc.

Besides, a number of Bangladeshi citizens are losing their lives in BSF shooting in the border areas. Without completely resolving these issues we should not provide transit facilities to India.

We should think about our interest first and instead of transit we may consider regional connectivity. Road links may be established from Nepal to Myanmar through India and Bangladesh and it could be further extended up to Kunming, China, which will be a bridge between South and Southeast Asia.

Through the road we will be able to explore huge business potential in all these countries and also enhance our economic relations with China.

Muktadir Hussain Chowdhury
Utara, Dhaka

In choosing the Deputy Leader of the House also, our PM does not seem to have shown great judgement.

The nation needs to be represented by highly capable people.

Ziaul Shams
Tajmahal Road
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

Every year we can see that slight rainfall leads to water logging in Dhaka city. The water cannot pass through drains, or pass very slowly. Moreover, water overflows from the drains. Very bad smell spreads out from this water. In many places, there are no covers on drains and manholes. People are throwing whatever they can in the drains every day. They are also throwing polybags, various plastic products, coconut shell etc into the drains.

A massive awareness programme to stop people from clogging drains must be launched. The media should arrange talk shows on the issue.

Rubaiyyat Eshna
Student of O' Level
Mirpur, Dhaka

In recent times too many cockroaches have filled the homes of many people. These cockroaches are increasing in number day by day. No one seems to take drastic action against these mighty cockroaches. And it is also not possible to 'minimize' these cockroaches with chemical spray only. These cockroaches have become used to living under any circumstances.

We are very much tired of the invasion of cockroaches.

Minhaj Ahmed
Utara, Dhaka

Invasion of cockroaches!

Water logging

Water logging



PHOTO: SHANTU / DRINKNEWS

Generally speaking, there is a great demand for guidebooks meant for the students of schools and colleges. Recent reports published in the dailies highlight the fact that the bookstores are literally flooded with guidebooks. And the number seems to be on the rise.

As there is a law prohibiting the publication, distribution and sale of those notebooks and guidebooks-- meant for the students of schools-- from class one to class eight, all concerned should abide by it. But the law should be implemented equally-- a drive here and an arrest there will not suffice.

One point: the textbooks fail to fulfil the needs of the learners which is why there is a perennial demand for guidebooks. Again, some students who cannot afford to attend private coaching rely on those books.

The fact remains that our formal education, as it exists now, encourages the learners to practise cramming. A good result is the end product of this culture and this goes on to explain this picture of guidebooks galore.

Zabed Wali
Pahartali, Chittagong

Hermaphrodites' wretched life

There are about 15 thousand hermaphrodites in our country. They live in abject poverty. Most of the hermaphrodites are discriminated against by their families, society and state. A team of hermaphrodites comes to an urban area from village for livelihood. They are controlled by the leader (Sorderni) in society.

Although the hermaphrodite community has got chance to cast their votes in the last general election but they are not accepted as an independent male or female in our community.

According to our religion, they can celebrate religious festivals. Even after 37 years of independence of Bangladesh, no government took any initiative for development and rehabilitation of the community.

Though the manifesto of the AL mentioned about the persons with disabilities but there was no mention of hermaphrodites.

The issue deserves a closer look.

Azmal Hosen Mamun
Development Worker
Bangladesh Protibandhi Kallyan Samity (BPKS)
Utara, Dhaka

PM's decisions

Women need to be represented in the ministries as part of the AL's policy of bringing about changes. But remember they were/are not bred or groomed like Ms. Rice or Hillary Clinton of the USA. They could be made junior ministers to gather experience and be adept in the know-how of running the administration.

In choosing the Deputy Leader of the House also, our PM does not seem to have shown great judgement.

The nation needs to be represented by highly capable people.

Ziaul Shams
Tajmahal Road
Mohammadpur, Dhaka

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PM on agriculture



PHOTO: SHAFIQ ISLAM / DRINKNEWS

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said that her government would modernize the country's agriculture system using latest technology to ensure food security. The PM made this assertion when Food & Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Bangladesh Representative Ad Spijkers met her at her office recently. Spijkers appreciated the government's food policy and assured of FAO's support in ensuring food security.

Meanwhile, in my opinion, with a view to translating PM's assertion into reality, the following steps should be taken:

(i) Formulation and implementation

of a pragmatic up-to-date 'National Agriculture Policy'.

(ii) Building up a sound communication infrastructure so that the farmers can easily market their produce at fair price.

(iii) Propagation of a true culture among the government machineries to serve the farming people with total honesty and dedication.

May Bangladesh turn into a really 'Golden Bangladesh'!

Professor M Zahidul Haque
Chairman
Dept. of AEIS
SAU, Dhaka

Drowning economies

Some days ago there was a documentary on CNN, portraying Bangladesh as a "drowning country", but to me America seems to be the real drowning country. As the economies around the world are so closely linked to America, it is going to pull them all deep down when it drowns.

The disaster of the economic crisis reminds us of the fact that we live in the world which is uncertain, unpredictable. Critics always come up with negative impact of all things, but genuine economists were also not able to predict this disaster, in a manner it all started. We are all pulled into this situation just because of the interest based banking system. Obama came up with the slogan "Change we believe in". I think if he really believes in change, he should start changing the system of interest based banking to business based banking system, that is Islamic banking.

Due to the uncertainty about the future, insurance companies came up with the idea of a secured future for peoples. For many years in booming times the insurer and the insured enjoyed the benefits of this ill system, but today as the economic hurricane has just began, the fact is coming inside out, that the people are being cheated in

Mayor and mosquitoes

An editorial of 22nd March, on the subject, published in a local daily, gave a synopsis of the "Pass the buck on" syndrome of our Mayor, whose subjects (the mosquitoes) are creating a lot of problems by indiscriminately attacking peaceful law abiding citizen of the metropolis!

Poor mayor, they have gone beyond his control. So, to justify himself, he is utilising all the verbosity at his command!

Also, why should he care for the "night guards" and "slum dwellers"? The mosquitoes keep the night guards awake and active, in chasing the mosquitoes off their bodies! The slum dwellers do not pay taxes to the city corporation; so they are not his responsibility in any case! Why should you bother about it at all?

Even then our mayor has done his best, unfortunately the mutinous zonal corporation offices are revolting and disobeying him; so he is busy setting up a proper inquiry commission to look into the matter and take necessary action in due course; so please be patient! The interim government seriously delayed the procurement of insecticides. It has just now been taken in hand; so why blame the mayor? The interim government has banned the insecticides that were so long being used, now he has to arrange the purchase of new mosquito removing chemicals; so bear with him, till the deal is finalised.

Meanwhile, they have come up with a new proposal to the government to ban the mosquitoes from the city. The police will arrest any that are found and put them in jail! It will save the city a lot of money, as no insecticide will be needed! However, the Anti-Corruption

Kanchan's campaign

Ilias Kanchan is one of the leading film stars of this country. But in my view, as a social worker he is more important. I have never met him. Probably, I will never get the chance to meet him, but he is really rendering valuable social service.

In Bangladesh, no politician till now put any emphasis on saving the nation from the curse of road accidents. No thinker or writer took any initiative in this respect. But Ilias Kanchan is different.

Ilias Kanchan has already done a lot. I think his activities would get a new momentum if he could directly take the help of media. For example, in television we find several programmes on AIDS or dowry. In the same way, a package programme can be telecast to raise awareness against road accident. This initiative can only be taken by Ilias Kanchan.

Another step should also be considered. Students are the major victims of road accidents. Often violence breaks out between driver-helper and students. Burning buses and attacking the drivers can never be a solution. Drivers are also human beings and thus our brothers. There are several positive ways to rectify the wrong being committed by our brothers. So to change the situation, I think meetings must be arranged between transport operators and the people in general.

I strongly believe that Ilias Kanchan will be successful in his battle against road accidents.

Akash Pradip
Lecturer in English
Bangladesh Health Professions Institute
CRP, Savar, Dhaka

Religion and modern life

In this modern age, most of the people are far, far away from religious knowledge and practices. Religion has been replaced by hypocrisy. People do not care much how they are living. But in times of distress ultimately they turn to religion because spiritual happiness lies in religious practices.

So, we should not be overwhelmed by our quest for material gains only.

Tamanna Ferdous Munni
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