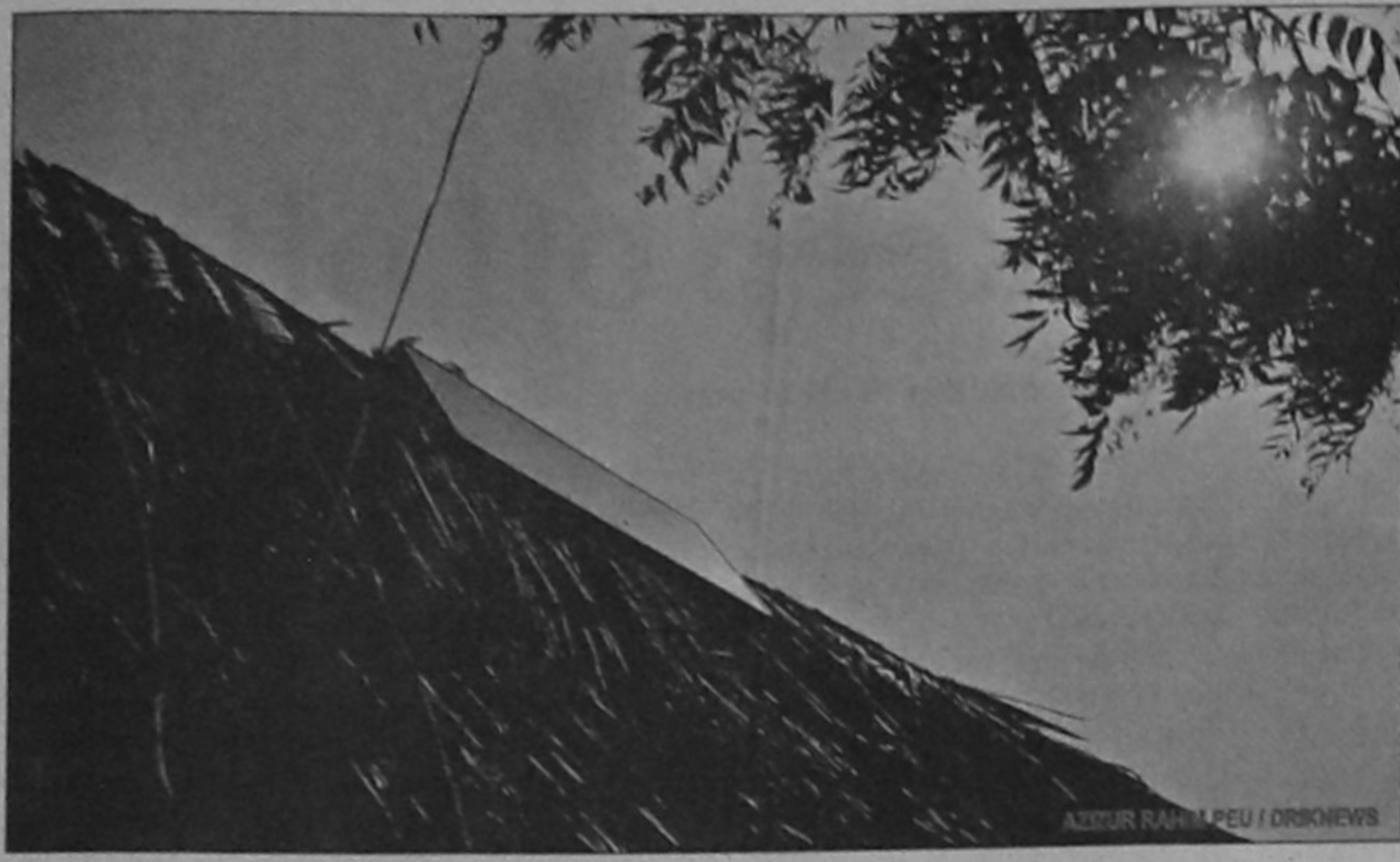


Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.



Daylight saving

In the backdrop of scarcity of electricity one may think of daylight saving by advancing clock timing which is in practice in Europe and other countries. Bangladesh is a tropical country where difference of day and night time is not too wide. Sun shines 10 to 12 hours in daytime around the year. As such advancing the clock by an hour will not be useful for us. The concept of day light saving is very much correct and we should utilise it in a customised way but not by advancing clock time. This is not also practised in our neighbouring countries India and Pakistan. We can do it by designing and constructing houses and offices very much accessible to daylight. In contrary to that we see that houses and offices have no access to light, even in secretariat building windows and doors are covered by heavy cur-

tains to make artificial dark and then light it with many unnecessary decorative lights consuming a huge amount of electricity. We should immediately stop this culture to get the benefit of daylight.

As day light is immensely available in our country throughout the year we can use solar heater for heating water and solar panels for lighting in the houses and offices during the evening peak.

Furthermore, we can change office timing, school timing, shopping mall timing and sliding office timing and derive the benefit of distributed use of electricity. I believe, thus we can have the best use of daylight.

Md. Delwar Hossain
East Rampura
Dhaka

Of guidebooks

We've talked a lot about the guidebooks menace so far; we've talked and written a lot on the mushrooming coaching centres and their activities in the name of inculcating "knowledge" to the students at large. Yet, very unfortunately, we haven't been able to stop the "guidebook business" in the open perimeter of the institutions and beyond --- they are being printed and sold out to the students. It is unfortunate because most of the guidebooks, as it has been reported frequently, are full of mistakes, haphazard organisation of ideas, and most tragically, misleading. Despite the government's ban on the guidebooks they are on the open platter in the markets for the education pursuers.

Yet again, the danger is that there are groups of syndicates interlinked into the business printing press, coaching centres and other hawk-eyed money mongers are in league together in their endeavour.

Now that coaching centres have become "a must" to a great extent, the government should devise a compact plan to bring them into its monitoring regarding the study ingredients and other aspects. Most importantly, however, the government has to put a stern check on the tax evasion of those "thick-wallet" sub-institutions --- they have to pay tax in accordance with their accumulated income. Through such a transparent interaction we only can guarantee a more-or-less good and workable platform for our students--- coaching centres will come under the continual vigil of the ministry of education and the other institutions like Income Tax and others concerned.

Last but not the least, have we ever taken notice of some other money making institutions that work under a shadow line of rendering foreign education counselling, and some other activities like teaching ELT, GRE, and more dangerously, some other incorrigible or obscure titles that they claim to be equivalent to degrees like HSC, BSC and some other public examinations and thus beguile and betray the aspirant students to their last farthing that also come from their family-wallets? And that they also evade a huge amount of income tax, least to mention that they do all this mischief with all false promises and hope under yet more false "NAMES" for their mini-institutions? And that they use the high-sounding names or the names like "...school and college" without any permission from the ministry of education? Ah, a huge task is left to be done --- the quicker the better.

Rafiqul Islam Rime
Agrabad, Chittagong

Stop the goons

All dailies in a front-page news report on 1st April covered the DMCH incident triggered by BCL's violence on the campus. It is a poor reflection on the AL's management capabilities. If they cannot manage their party's activities; how can they manage the various problems of Bangladesh?

It is really a very bad beginning for the party in power!

Such inter-party clashes and violence are a serious blow to all educational institutions. It must be immediately stopped in the overall interest of the country. The country comes first, not the party. I am sure that the AL is aware of the doings of its unruly violent members who are their worst liabilities!

If the AL fails to take prompt and harsh effective action, and nip it in the bud, it will become a fatal incurable cancer for their effective governance. Politics and administration must be divorced at all levels. Lawlessness anywhere cannot be allowed to fester. Action, and strong action, must begin now.

The Hon. PM must act, as these misdeeds are sabotaging her government.
Law-abiding citizen
Dhaka

Student politics

The glorious past of student politics is now waning because of present so-called student politics. Student politics is now a horrendous proposition. Today student politics means extortion, tender hijacking, admission business, occupying dormitories, taking free-meals, seat politics, controlling campus, chanting slogans in favour of their god fathers or so called leaders etc. Not an iota of activities in favour of general students is visible. So, why is student politics prevailing on campus? Obviously, not for students, but for the ruling party and the opposition.

The vicious circle of student politics is highly damaging. Just think how much money is being spent by the government to control the campus by deploying so many members of law enforcing agencies.

Just think what is going on in the name of student politics. Recently, violence erupted in the public universities and colleges like DMC, DU, RU, JU and so on.

So, what is the benefit of student politics for the nation? It is high time we mull to stop it.

Ashraf Mahmud
Khilgaon, Dhaka

A tragic death

The boy with a bright future is gone. He has left all of us and has gone to such a place from where he will never ever come to us. Sayem, a brilliant Dhaka University student of Psychology, was like my younger brother. He passed away on April 8, 2009 after suffering from cancer for almost a year. We met a couple of times and I have always found this boy sober and calm. He was ambitious and was always optimistic. He always looked at the positive sides of life. Even, the last time when I met him at the hospital a couple of weeks ago, he was hopeful and positive that he would recover soon and start attending his classes again. I was shocked when I heard about his death. It was unbearable for me to witness the death of such a young optimistic boy. Now, I can only tell myself, Sayem, my brother, today you are no more with us, but your memories will always be in our hearts and we pray to the Almighty for your eternal peace.

Minhaj Ahmed
Uttara, Dhaka

Smoking in public places

This is in reference reply to my letter by A. Bashar, published on April 10, 2009. The writer accused me of charging smokers in a wholesale manner in my letter, disregarding the tobacco act. My point is that when a doctor examines a patient suffering from tobacco related diseases he never asks whether the patient had smoked cigarettes maintaining tobacco code or not or whether he had smoked in the public places or private places designated by the government. It seems the writer is a supporter of smoking and I had hurt his sentiment by comparing the smokers with terrorists and by appealing to the present government which initiated the anti-smoking law to enforce the same very strictly. Smoking is harmful and injurious to health which may cause death as is evident from the statutory warning on every cigarette packet.

He wrote so many things for the smokers to smoke in designated places as per the tobacco act, but did not write a single word on the harmful effects of smoking. Rather, he gave a suggestion that one should learn about the tobacco act before commenting against smoking. My question is, are those who smoke in public places aware of the tobacco act?

If he supports smoking, an act which is universally rejected and against which public awareness is growing everywhere around the world, he should still avoid pleading on behalf of smokers. This will only create frustration for the anti smoking campaigners who are striving hard to eliminate it.

Md. Lutfar Rahman
Uttara, Dhaka

A profitable business

When a new party assumes power, their student wing is found to be in a hurry to regain control over all the educational institutions, defeating other student wings. After that they start to fight among the groups of their own parties. They always try to reign supreme on the campus. Why do they adopt such a policy? Actually, it is a profitable business. The student wing of the ruling party tries to control all activities and take a big share of money spent on different projects.

Md. Nazmul Hasan
Jagannath University

Clemency by TAC

Recently, the government disclosed the names of officials seeking clemency from the Truth and Accountability Commission (TAC). But the officials opted for voluntary disclosure with confidentiality guaranteed by the then government. Disclosure of their identity was indeed not fair to them.

This move will discourage people to refrain from making such disclosures in future.
Anonymous
On e-mail

Construction Act

The Construction Act gazetted on 27th May 2008 and published on 29th May 2008, is no doubt appreciable in many a respect, but the new floor area ratio (FAR) seems to be unrealistic, in the context of our availability of land mass. The FAR table deserves revision for the benefit of the small landowners. As per the FAR, small landowners possessing up to 10 katha or less have to keep almost 50% of the plot vacant all around to conform to the new regulations. It is simply not feasible to construct a liveable house by the land owners/developers on the plots measuring up to 5 katha or less. We have come to know through media that large number of applications filed by such landowners is pending, awaiting approval of the offices of Rajuk in view of above provisions.

Our population versus land ratio in this mega city is beyond all proportions. As it is, Dhaka city is one of the most populated cities of the world. Land is so scarce and costly! Hence our basic policy should be optimum utilisation of land to meet the ever-growing demands for housing while taking care of the environmental requirements etc. Our planners have to be pragmatic considering our demographic requirements. While formulating the FAR table no consideration was made for the places where height restrictions apply. Probably it was not even thought of.

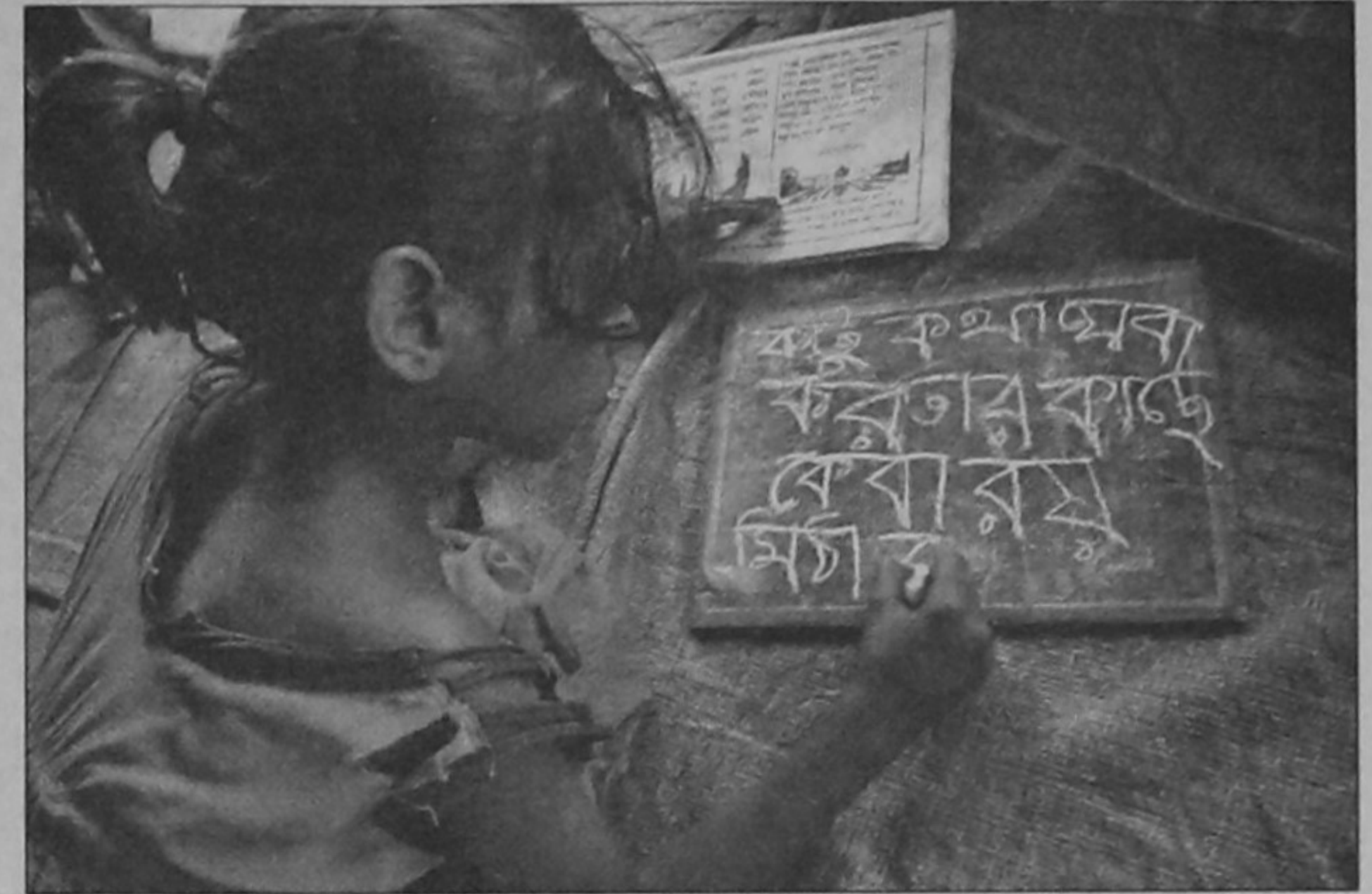
The age-old ratio of 20:80 was most suitable to our typical requirements. But the last BNP government towards the end period of their tenure, with an ulterior motive, temporarily changed it to 40:60 twice, only to exploit the common people and extort vast sum of illegal money.

Primary education

I am really disappointed to know that our government is planning to raise primary education to Class VIII. As an ex-student of Bangladesh Primary School, I would like to share the following with the readers, policy makers and concerned institutions. The Simon Fraser University, Canada conducted a study in 2006, the author was Sandra Nikolic, titled "Educating the future: Raising the quality of primary schooling in Bangladesh". This study investigates the low quality of primary school education in Bangladesh. Elite interviews suggest that GoB (Government of Bangladesh) primary schools fail to provide students with quality education, demonstrate poor teacher performance, have overcrowded classrooms, and weak management and administration. Quantitative analysis of parents with primary-aged children reveals that

of the four principal primary schooling options available, public primary schools are more likely than other primary schooling options to exhibit components of poor quality. The findings indicate that parents are equally concerned about male and female education; that administration functions are a matter of concern, and that poverty is an overarching barrier to attendance and retention rates. The important policy message is the need for establishing a system of accountability of school performance to parents and communities. All stakeholders, in turn, should be involved in partnerships affecting primary school conditions.

Avik Sengupta
Department of Biochemistry
McGill University
Montreal, Canada



AMDADUL HUQ / DRINKNEWS

Indescribable suffering of the approval seekers as well as right and left corruption inside Rajuk were reported through the then electronic media. In all probability coming to power they would have reverted to the old rules.

The building development sectors do employ vast number of workers and generate economic activities. Through the media we also saw some silver lining in the cloud that the present elected government under the Housing Ministry have already taken the anomaly to notice and assured revision of the above provision in the gazette. Majority of the landowners are of smaller areas measuring from 2 to 10 katha. If the rule is revised in favour of the age old provision of FAR 20:80 for plots measuring up to 10 katha or less, the majority people will be benefited. Most of us earned a piece of land with our life time income with a dream that one day we shall have our own multi-storeyed building, where we also may be able to induct many tenants.

I, being a NRB having a plot of land of less than 10 katha located in the vicinity of the old Tejgaon Airport, where height restrictions do apply, have been waiting with patience and hope that one day an elected popular government voted to power, will reconsider and review this impractical FAR. Since the media report, I have been browsing the dailies with a hope of looking for the good news. May I as well as others like me hope that this appeal of mine will not go in vain and today or tomorrow we shall hear the good news that we all have been craving for and soon we may be able to start the construction works on our respective lands.

M.A. Ellihan Zakaria
Stanwell, Staines
United Kingdom

Price of rice

Referring to the report in your daily on 6th April on a comment by the agriculture minister, "Prices of rice had been between Tk 9 and Tk 9.50 a kg during the tenure of the last AL government between 1996 and 2001, which increased to Tk 22 to Tk 23 during the BNP regime." Such a comment to prove the weakness of an opponent is not judicious.

Here, as an erstwhile supporter of her (during student life), should I recommend the system of governance during Shaista Khan's rule of Bengal to our present govt, as during Khan's rule 325 Kg rice was available for Tk. 1 only!

Suhel
Doha, Qatar

Harassed twice!

Income tax & Value Added Tax (VAT) of a business is assessed on the basis of sale or turnover. This is unbelievable but believe it that in Bangladesh the sale or turnover of a business is always assessed twice by two different govt. departments & the sale or turnover figure assessed by the two departments for the same business is always different. This funny thing is happening because Income tax & VAT is assessed by income tax & customs departments respectively and there is no coordination between the two departments. As a result, a businessman is harassed twice for the same business, which is completely unnecessary.

The customs department should handle the duty & tax of goods being exported or imported, to or from other countries only, not inland tax (VAT or sales tax). As far as I know, Bangladesh is the only country in the world where inland tax (VAT or Sales Tax) is collected by the customs department. Around the world, inland tax (VAT or sales tax) is collected by income tax department along with their regular income tax collection, and in this way a businessman is not harassed twice.

Arif Ahmed
Businessman
Dhaka

BRTA's blank cheque?

Some time back, prices of oil were up for a while for which a transport company raised their bus fare from Dhaka to Chittagong and vice versa from Tk. 465 to Tk. 565 for non executive seats. Has the BRTA any consideration of such factors on which a reasonable bus fare is to be decided?

All these AC buses are a Death Cage. The buses have only one outlet in front of the vehicles which is electrically manoeuvred. In case of any accident, the passengers will be led to a stampede resulting in casualties, more so if there is fire! Previously there was an emergency exit at the rear of the buses and it is surprising how the authorities concerned have allowed these buses to ply without such safety gadgets?

Last, but not the least, these companies treat the passengers, who pay more than the first class passengers of trains, as third class passengers! For instance, when a family reports as per the instruction on the ticket (say from Dhk/Ctg) at their reporting counter, the working employees ask the passengers to take the luggage to the relevant bus (even ladies), nearly 100 yards or so away! Previously, it was the practice that after the passengers reported to coun-

ters, the company officials would tag the luggage, give the luggage tag to the passengers and it was their responsibility to put the luggage in the boot of the bus. The company does not provide their own porters, nor porters are available on payment! The BRTA officials should wake up and frame some rules in this respect.

Rumi Ahmed
Playpen School, Bashundhara
Dhaka

A good novel

An exceptional book 'After the Road Accident' was available in the last book fair by Akota Prokash. It's an outstanding novel that focuses on the tragic occurrence of a road accident and its inevitable consequences on a person's life against the background of our socio-economic and cultural reality. This novel is written by Akash Pradip. The language of this novel is extremely simple. Any ordinary person can read this novel.

The writer of this novel made an attempt to depict the life of a man and his torment who was a victim of an accident. Regarding this book AWDP-Bangladesh in its website rightly said, "After the Road Accident" is a novel with a difference. This publication is unique in a sense that where lots of tragic and painful consequences of road accidents aren't focused in the literary works of our renowned writers and poets, Akash Pradip has broken that tradition." Akash Pradip really deserves our special appreciation.

Road accident is no longer any minor issue. It would be great if Akash Pradip translates his novel into Bangla and joins his hands with Ilias Kanchan to begin a vigorous fight against road accidents. I also hope that Akash Pradip would continue his writing.

Md. Mostafa Zaman
Asstt. Professor
BHPI, CRP
Savar, Dhaka

Exit of ACC chairman

He was a General and still a General and acted like a great General. He demonstrated his courage, a rarity in our country's context. He did not compromise with what appeared bad. He did the right thing to quit his position, being helpless as a lone soldier to fight. Only a few people are happy and many are not. His sincerity and honesty of purpose and integrity are beyond any question. He is a decent man also. Hats off to him.

Let the time speak for it, the truth he carries with him. Let us bring back the glory to the nation. Until then, we should continue our fight against corruption in the spirit he instilled in us. He has showed us the path to follow.

A citizen
On e-mail

Hospital for all



Khwaja Yunus Ali Medical College and Hospital is a world-class hospital situated in a rural char area in Enayetpur, Sirajganj. The vision and mission of the hospital is to give gold standard service to the poor at a minimum cost. At this moment, the cancer institute adjacent to the hospital is

the pioneering cancer treatment centre in Bangladesh and the service is unique in nature in South and South East Asia. The patients do not need to go to Singapore or India because a minimum cost helps the cancer patient to survive. The hospital has varieties of specialty and also has specialty in

heart surgery. All types of cardiac surgery are performed here at one-third cost, compared to private hospitals in Dhaka.

Dr. Md. Quamrul Hasan Zia
Senior Lecturer
Forensic Medicine Department
KYAMC
Enayetpur, Sirajganj