

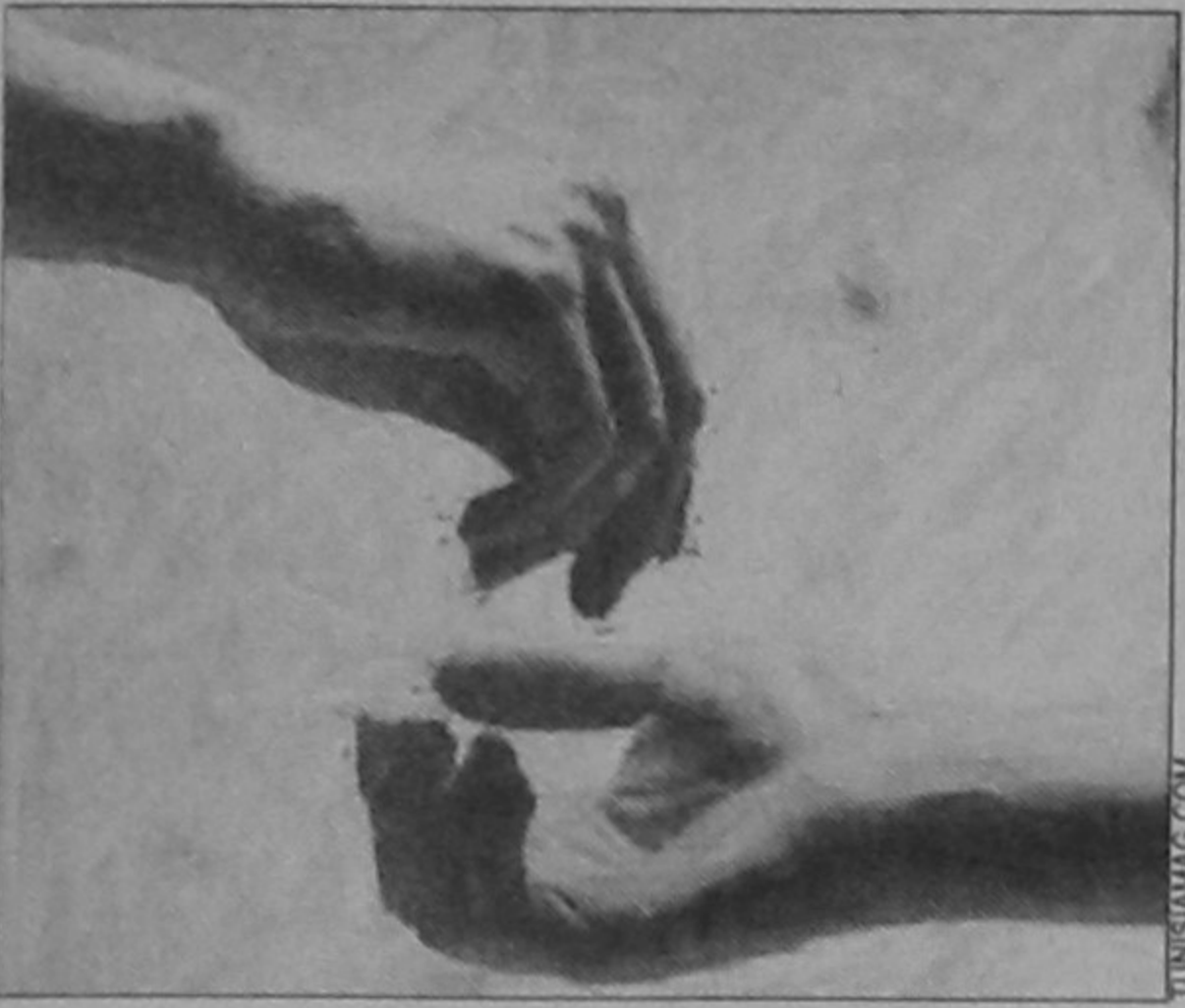
Letters will only be considered if they carry the writer's full name, address and telephone number (if any). The identity of the writers will be protected. Letters must be limited to 300 words. All letters will be subject to editing.

Zakat

All, who took shelter under the ensign of Islam, are to carry out several specified religious duties assigned to them by the religion. Zakat, which denotes one of those religious duties, is a matter of great importance. It is the third pillar of Islam. In accordance with the teachings of Islam, the word Zakat stands for the regular and mandatory charity, which is given in Allah's name to the poor and the needy by an organized Muslim community.

According to Islam, the holy month of Ramadan is better than any other time of the year to practice Zakat as well as to stand by the under-privileged members of society.

Faisal Saleh
Amirabad, Lohagara, Chittagong



Reducing medical costs

A very interesting report on the matter, was published on 29th. August, in a local English daily about the matter of high medical costs in USA. It stated, and I quote: "Get doctors to quit ordering unnecessary procedures and tests!" This was based on an article from the US Business

News website which wrote and I quote: "That evidence suggests that some doctors dole out more treatment, and yet their patients don't fare better." It also quoted a US interventional cardiologist Dr. Eric Topol, who stated that: "Doctors have an incentive to use 'stents' more often than necessary!" Possibly this relates to the medical insurance system being practiced there. It was also stated in the article that drugs can benefit patients with partial blocks rather than 'stents'; though drugs take some time to work while the 'stent' is an 'instant fix'!

However, doctors in general believe that in the interest of quality diagnosis and treatment; it is better to do a number of tests. Even if findings are negative, it ensures elimination of certain causes to ensure proper and correct diagnosis.

Going back say around 25 years or so, there were not so many tests and it needed the doctor's diagnostic skill to interpret the patient's complaints and a detailed physical examination by stethoscope backed by pathological examination of blood, stool and urine, plus X-ray. Nowadays in addition we have more detailed chemical examination of blood, stool and urine and angiography along with X-

ray, and may be stress test also! Given that in the USA insurance pays most of the doctors' fees, surgical charges and medicines, doctors there prefer a surgical rather than a pathological treatment, which could be less expensive, but financially not so rewarding for the doctor!

S.A. Mansoor
Dhaka

Public money

A beautiful and thought provoking letter written by Mr. Sikandar Ahmed has humorously delineated the reality on the ground for the useless expenditures of our police forces (DMP's High Tech Toy: September 2, 2009). Lot of public money is mindlessly misused while we could have provided that huge money for some other important purposes. While the police force is decrying the shortage of their transports, their officers are enjoying the most luxurious and expensive Jeeps. Have a look at the SPs of the district level who are merely a Senior Assistant Secretary level civil servant. They all are riding latest and most expensive Pajero Jeeps. The DIGs are Deputy Secretary level officers. They are enjoying the 4200 CC Nissan or Jeeps of other makes, which are very much dissimilar to other field level officers.

I am not envious of their facilities but at the same time I would like to get its equivalent services from them, which is miserably absent indeed.

In the name of modernising the police force, we cannot spend the poor people's money indiscriminately and worthlessly.

Monzur Rahman
Dhaka

MA in English

University of Dhaka is the best educational institution here.

So, many bright students want to study at the University of Dhaka since their school days. Due to a limited number of seats, many talented students do not get the chance to study at this university. So, introduction of evening Master's Programmes was a move in the right direction.

MA in English is not a technical degree like engineering, medical etc that a student not having the same background cannot study. So, I think a person having a 4-year bachelor's degree in other disciplines such as business, engineering etc should be permitted to get admission in MA in English. However, English language proficiency test may be taken before admitting the students of other disciplines into MA in English.

The programme should be started immediately.

Sukumar Sarker Shaan
Nestle Bangladesh Ltd.

Asian Highway

Recently Bangladesh has decided to join with the Asian Highway system. The network of Asian Highway, known as the Great Asian Highway is a set-up of 141,000 km of standardized road ways crossing 32 Asian countries. The Ministry of Communications of Bangladesh has finalized three proposed routes crossing Bangladesh. These are AH1, AH2 & AH41. The 495 km AH1 from India would go through Benapole Jessore Dhaka Sylhet Tamabil. The 805 km AH2 from India would join Hati Kurnul Dhaka Kachpur Sylhet Tamabil. The 752 km AH41, also from India, will link Mongla Jessore Hati Kurnul Dhaka Kachpur Chittagong Cox's Bazar Teknaf with Myanmar. The international sea ports, Chittagong & Mongla, will be connected to AH1 & AH2 by AH4, so that the ports can serve the regional needs if required. It is expected that the sophisticated highway system would ensure greater trade & social exchange between Asian countries. The AH will open up huge economic opportunities through providing shorter routes for movement of goods & passengers leading to huge savings in transport costs. However, it would be native to think that the AH would bring huge turnover for our country, rather it can be ominous, if we fail to make right decisions & choose right routes in the highway system. It is like allowing transit and corridor in the name of Asian Highway.

Therefore Bangladesh should re-consider its decision.

Md. Nazmus Sakib
Student
Dept. of Geography &
Environment Studies
University of Chittagong

Boycotting parliament

MPs are elected for discharging certain duties in parliament. Endless boycotts affect such duties. Hence, there should be a limit to boycotting parliament. While boycotting parliament MPs should refrain from getting benefits from it.

Shafiq Rahman
One-mail

Police action

Words fail to condemn the brutal, unprovoked police action against the peaceful demonstrators protesting the government's decision to award three offshore blocks to international oil companies allowing them to export up to 80 per cent of gas which will surely harm our interest. From the very inception of this government, such incidents are happening one after another. After the BDR incident, the government blindly sought India's expertise to reconstitute BDR, and then came the decision of withdrawing army from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Won't the government come to sense?

Tinku
One-mail

Dhaka city life

Nowadays people are attracted by the charms of Dhaka city life. Because in this city there are many sources of earning.

Still, we have to go a long way to create the best conditions for citizens.

Zafar Akbar
Student of MBA
Bangladesh Islamic University

Electricity in Ramadan

Load-shedding has always been part of our life. The situation does not change much even during the month of Ramadan. The government should look into the matter seriously and take remedial steps as quickly as possible.

Mohammad Zia-ul-Haque
Eng. Department
International Islamic University Cig.

Substandard clinics

Every day we hear the news of death due to faulty delivery operations that are being conducted in the substandard clinics by the inexperienced doctors or nurses who don't have any skills in this field. Moreover, they don't have the equipment and expertise to perform such a major operation. Our mothers and sisters are in great distress because of the situation in which they find themselves and we submit our nearest and dearest ones to those so called doctors and try to relieve our anxiety.

The matter should be probed.

Md. Anisuzzaman Sarker
MBA, Finance
Chittagong University

Mosques

It seems many of us do not know how to maintain the sanctity of a mosque through behaving in a dignified way.

I would like to request the Imams of mosques to deliver some hadith to streamline the discipline and to be more dedicated during holy Ramadan prayers. Every mosque should do the hedayet (good words) to be more cautious and not to disturb others during prayers.

Md. Emdadul Haque
Director (C&P)
BIWTA
Dhaka

Baseless assertion

The leading news media in the world BBC made the joke by this news headline "One giant slip in Bangladesh news". It is because two popular newspapers of Bangladesh slipped their sense of journalism by publishing news claiming the first successful human mission on Moon was a drama. A website named www.theonion.com, which is a fake news website indeed, published the news that the Moon mission was fake. If anyone searches the Internet with the word 'onion', the result comes at the top of the page from the famous Wikipedia as "The Onion is an American fake news organization." But the dailies didn't check the truth behind the news and just copied it without further justification. Later they apologized for this. We say our newspapers and journalism are independent and responsible, but this sort of activities not only harms the reputation of the media but also the image of the whole country. Newspapers and journalists should be aware of these issues and must publish news with proper justification.

Arup Ratan Paul
Department of Business Administration
Shahjalal University of Science & Technology, Sylhet

Tender hijacking

Some days ago it was reported that some Chhatra League and Jubo League activists prevented contractors from submitting tenders at the food department. They even beat up genuine contractors to drive them away!

Now, this is 2009 and this is a democracy or so we get told by our politicians every time they get hold of a microphone. Indeed, in this country we love democracy so much that when the country was governed by the interim government (during which time these tender-hijackers were nowhere to be seen), we all went berserk to have our democracy back. Well, brothers and sisters, now you have your democracy and with your democracy you also have a democratically elected prime minister. As expected, your prime minister was very quick to come out and warn these goons (on more than one occasion, I might add) of consequences if they didn't stop their crimes. Sadly, but unsurprisingly, her "warnings" are not having the desired effect.

If genuine contractors got these projects it would have certainly created some jobs for our people. But thanks to tender-hijacking, those jobs will never materialise. Secondly, those goons who are hijacking tenders have no intention of ever completing any of these projects. And those projects that do get completed will most certainly be of substandard and unsafe. In other words, the poor people of this country are paying for products which they will never get. Also, as a result of these poor and unsafe works many of us will pay with our lives.

I fail to understand how we can pay someone a salary to run our country and to protect us when that same individual has all these fronts which hold us hostage, extort money from us, occupy our university halls, grab our lands and even beat us to death! How can a democracy, in this day and age, allow its political parties to have their privately armed fronts? It is the most contradictory, the most absurd concept in modern politics.

It is all very nice for our PM to remind these cadres of consequences and punishments. But there would have been no need for all these warnings if the PM's party didn't have any of these fronts in the first place. It is like deliberately infecting someone with a deadly virus and

Illogical demand

The recent demand of BGMEA seems very illogical and unethical to me. I am not a businessman, nor an expert on the economy. But the way the demands have been put forward to the govt. is ill motivated. We've noticed how the finance minister talked to this largest business community time and again to mitigate their sufferings due to economic recession all over the world. We've also come to know from the media and other different sources that the garment industry is not doing so bad as it was feared by many. Once we were alarmed at the news that lots of girls would be unemployed. Thank God, that has not happened yet. The present govt. is undoubtedly considerate to the demands of the garment owners. The govt. has initiated a programme of allotting rice to the garment workers. There is also a plan to form a special force for law and order in this sector. A special fund has been kept in the budget to support this sector. All these prove the good intention of this

govt. But this sudden demand to allot Tk 3,000 crore to pay Eid bonus and salary to garment workers is illogical. I'll live comfortably in a luxurious house having a luxury car and I'll not pay monthly dues to the workers! This can not be the ethics of this largest foreign currency earning business sector. We've heard that a German buyer has stopped buying garments from Bangladesh due to a report about atrocities on female workers. This is not at all acceptable. There are many painful stories related to harassment in the factories. Your newspaper has carried out a lot of stories about what is happening in this sector. I remember once you printed picture of bare footed girls going to have food during break.

It symbolises how much deprived they are in their workplaces. I am not generalising it. My point is that these factories are not state owned. Why are they demanding money from the govt. to pay Eid bonus to their workers?

Kamaluddin Ahmed
University of Chittagong



TANVIR AHMED / DRINKNEWS

then offering them an antidote to show how much you care for them!

I have said it many times before and I will say it again: there is absolutely no need whatsoever for our political parties to have all these different fronts. These should be outlawed. Any party that wants to contest in the general election must dismantle all its wings/fronts (including women fronts) and bring everything under one body.

Azad Miah
Oldham
UK

Liberation war

It was interesting to watch on TV channel the parliament debate on the war of liberation. I must thank Mohiuddin Khan Badal MP for his role in setting right the record of history and proceedings of the day. In this regard I have nothing to add except to repeat the famous saying of the former Secretary of State of the USA Mr Casper Weinberger. He said, "War is too serious a thing that can be left to the general". I think the message is clear and unambiguous. The minister for "Mukti Juddha" ministry might have felt embarrassed for his unclear presentation which had generated the debate. Thanks to him for realizing how the war of liberation of 1971 is defined by history. The role of the army has never been underestimated and will never be undermined, but give them due credit not above the political force, the principal source for mobilization, sustenance and ultimate win in record time. The army is inclusive and not a separate entity of a nation.

Just a small question, can you tell us how many army officers or soldiers died in 1971, and how many ordinary people of Bangladesh died and suffered during and after the war?

Faqrul Quadir
California, USA

Views of a diplomat's wife

Kudos are deserved by the diplomat's wife for her caustic but true comments (DS 09-09-09) on the letter from Mr. Shabbir Bashir.

Good Heavens, what could have prompted Mr Bashir to make such a statement that most of the stretched out, 4-5 lakh gas-guzzling monstrosities that have flooded and blocked Dhaka's narrow potholed roads, streets and lanes belong to the diplomatic community and that the Bangladeshi tax-payers pay

for their fuel!! Is it not common knowledge that the easy influx of grey and black money/cars and the bloated egos of the recipients, who are mostly those elected to 'serve the people', the 'contractors', the wheelers, dealers and the FAT CATS, are the main causes of the gridlock that has brought Dhaka down to its knees?

It is a refreshing sight to see every day on my way to work (by rickshaw), foreign females mostly Caucasians, in rickshaws, walking or cycling to work in the many NGOs and other organizations in Gulshan, Banani, Baridhara areas. I have never seen a Bengali girl do that. They rely on the GGMs of their fathers to get them to work or university. Hence the world record breaking quadruple parking often seen in the Banani Private University areas. Once in a blue moon a traffic sergeant does appear (fearfully?) and slaps a Tk 200 fine (after making sure that the said cars do not belong to a 'SIR') but what good does that do for the Tk 50 lakh GGMs. The spoiled brats spend many times more at the nearby Pizza Shop.

Another amusing sight is of 16 foot cars trying to negotiate an entry into 12 foot lanes and tangling up the traffic. Besides most of these narrow lanes in Gulshan, Banani and other 'posh' areas are used for free parking by the GGMs. Can the Commissioners see all this on their new toy, the C3S surveillance cameras?

Sikander Ahmed
Niketon, Gulshan-1, Dhaka

PM's Geneva tour

The news item in Bangladesh media regarding Prime Minister Hasina's visit to Geneva has drawn my attention. She was in Switzerland with a 44-member Bangladesh delegation to attend a conference on climate. Very nice, but why she needs to have such a huge delegation for such a conference is a question Bangladesh people need to ask. And who were the members of this delegation? What are their credentials as climate experts?

Needless to mention that this visit of the prime minister is nothing but a pleasure trip with her cronies at the cost of the poor Bangladeshi taxpayers. Most unfortunate, I strongly feel, is the fact that Bangladesh media does not find any fault with this reckless wastage of public funds and never write strongly condemning such activities by the politicians or top public servants at large. What differ-

ences it would have made for Bangladesh if the prime minister did not even bother to be in Geneva to attend this conference? Bangladesh Ambassador and Permanent Representative in the UN Office would have done the job brilliantly.

Let me point out another scenario of this conference. As the news report said, the following persons were present at the airport to see off the prime minister:

"Deputy Leader in Parliament Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury, Finance Minister AMA Muhith, Agriculture Minister Begum Matia Chowdhury, Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister GM Qader, State Minister for Home Shamsul Huq Tuku, Chiefs of Navy and Air Force and Quarter Master General of the Army, diplomats and high civil and military officials were present at the Zia International Airport."

Spending public funds for this pleasure trip was not enough, top ranking civil servants, ministers and the military officers were also given "off time" for a joy ride to the airport on this august occasion. How long must it continue? The prime minister may not be blamed for it but should not Bangladesh's leadership do something about such matters?

The prime minister's work schedule needs to be scrutinised. Attending a reception given by the Bangladesh community in Switzerland was one of the events. Who are these Bangladeshi people? Our media needs to scrutinise that.

Tayeb Husain
Sweden

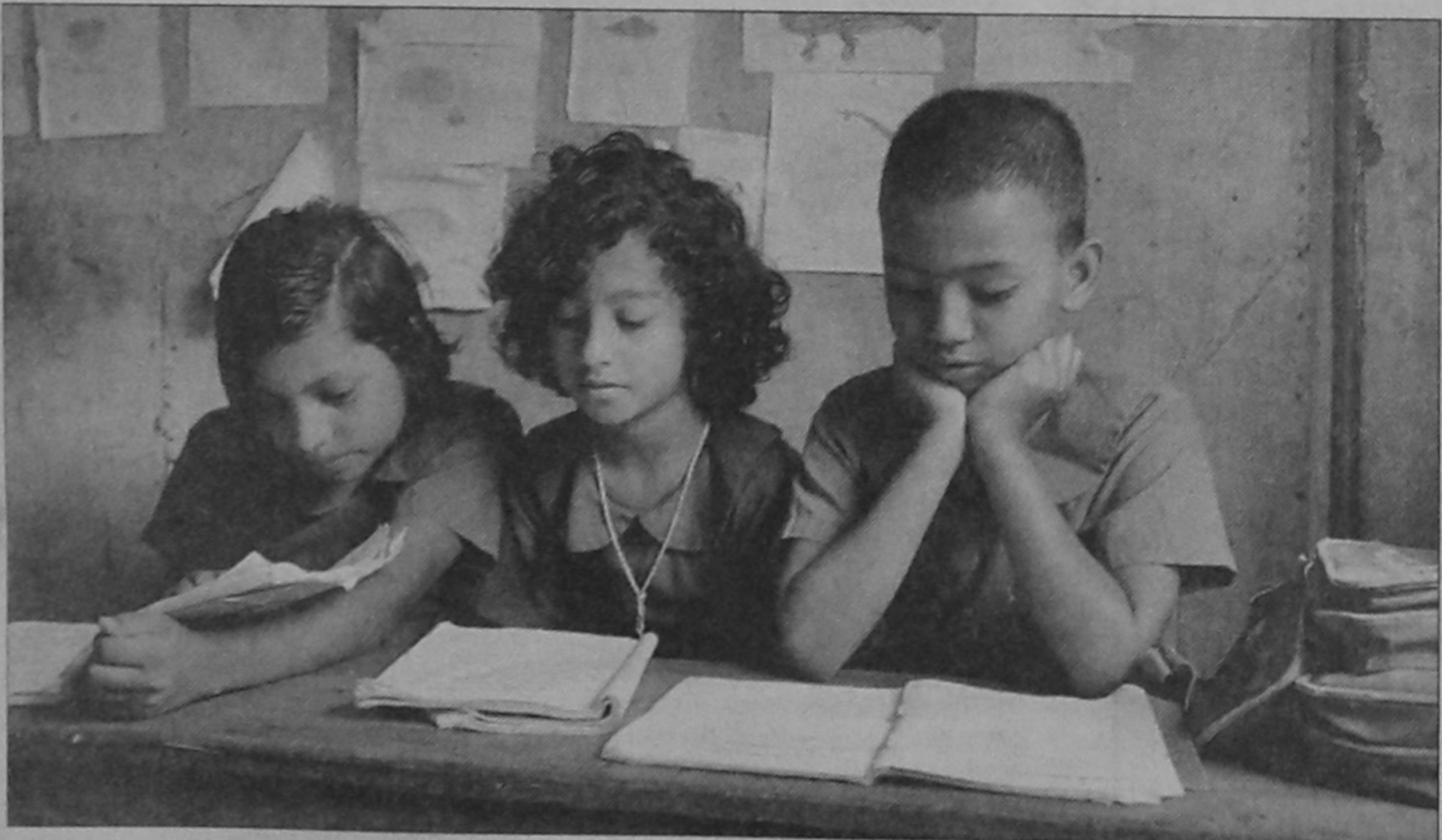
Restrooms for mothers

Many big shopping malls have sprung up in Dhaka with modern facilities like lifts, escalators, food court etc that are places of necessities and attraction particularly for women shoppers. But there are no good facilities like restrooms for lactating mothers. With increasing health consciousness and there is no substitute nutrient to mother's milk for infants, these days most of the babies from new born up to about 2 years are fed on mother's milk. In western countries big shopping malls have places for feeding mothers.

So, I draw mall owners' attention to the matter.

Rubab Abdullah
Dhaka Cantonment
Dhaka

Report on education policy



A.M. AHAD / DRINKNEWS

The National Education Policy Formulation Committee has submitted the final report on the education policy. The committee Chairman National Professor Kabir Chowdhury and Co-Chairman Dr Quazi Kholiquzzaman Ahmad submitted the report to the education minister at around 12:00 noon at the secretariat on 2 September.

The committee has suggested extension of free primary education up to class VIII and secondary education up to class XII. The committee submitted the policy within four months from its first meeting. The deadline to submit this report was 3 September.

The Awami League-led alliance government formed a 16-member committee on April 6 to review the

report of Shamsul Haque Education Committee of 1997 to formulate a modern national education policy in line with the report of Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission of 1974. We hope the government would implement the policy within the shortest possible time.

Mahfuzur Rahman Manik
IER, Dhaka University