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### On English

This refers to an article captioned "Campus: S.S.C. H.S.C. in English medium," which appeared in your esteemed newspaper on 23-9-88.

Those who want their children to study in "O" level may do so, as this is a matter of individual choice.

During 1971-73, it was optional to follow English medium for SSC and HSC in schools like St Joseph, Shaheen, Holy Cross, Vikarunnesa, etc. Students from these institutions had better knowledge of English than from those in other institutions.

While as a national policy we must use Bengali, our mother tongue, in all spheres, we should not neglect English, which being the international language, is the window to the outside world. There are recent instances where some of our graduates or post-graduates in general subjects sent to English speaking countries for training miserably failed or had to be sent back home, as they could hardly speak or write correct sentences in English. This dismal situation is owing to the fact that we have wantonly neglected English.

If as stated in the article, it was possible to switch over from English to Bengali medium overnight, it would be equally possible to introduce

English medium of instruction in stages. This process will be very much welcomed by middle-class and lower middle-class groups who cannot afford to send their children abroad for English medium education at S.S.C. and H.S.C. levels.

Bengali will always remain the general medium of instruction as before.

The article mentions the difficulty with regard to books and teachers for instruction in English medium.

If books in English are available for "O" and "A" level students, we see no problem in getting the same for students in S.S.C and H.S.C. in English medium. Books in English on different subjects can also be written by our scholars in the country. The School Text Book Board can handle this job well.

Competent teachers will have to be picked, trained and then entrusted with the task of teaching English in schools. Upto 1974 we had a sizable number of competent English teachers in Dhaka alone. Why can't we get such teachers now? Education Boards with the blessing of the Education Ministry should be able to tackle this problem.

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