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### **School Children In Receptions**

We feel intrigued by a government handout published in a section of the press on April 15, 1990, wanting all students and teachers of 92 schools in Dhaka city to be present on their respective school premises at 10 a.m. on April 30, 1990. The notification says nothing about the reason why they should do so, though it contains a long list of the Boys and Girls Schools, each mentioned by name.

Parents' and guardians' guess is that this is being organised for the reception of some VIP as has been the practice more than once in the past. We offer our warm welcome to all visitors from abroad including heads of state and other dignitaries. And we are at one with the administration that the country should do its best to give a befitting welcome to such state guests.

But, from the past experience of young boys and girls lining the streets and being kept standing for hours under a tropical sun the general public feeling about it is very resentful. School authorities being made by decree to allow the children to be used for this purpose is also open to question chiefly on account of the physical hardship this means for them. Children's presence on such occasions to receive foreign guests could be made voluntary at best rather than mandatory.

We also echo the public feeling of protest against feats of overdoing certain features of the reception which grate on sober taste and do no honour to a host country. Some of these excesses are avoidable and ought to be avoided.

Certainly our stock does not rise with a foreigner by those things which we permit ourselves on such occasions by wrongly assuming that they please the visitor. The impression these create is rather the other way around. Besides, anything that seems to conflict with our age-old traditions is best avoided and national self-respect preserved.