

Dhaka Day by Day

Darker side of the shine

by Sabah Chowdhury

"I am happier than most of my customers" said Binod chandra Das, the man with a shoe shine shop on the pavement outside Cafe Jheel, in the busy Mitjheel Commercial Area.

I had noticed this man, often on my way to office, busy at work. He usually has a number of customers in front of him and was hardly visible from afar.

Therefore, he was the first person who came to my mind, when I was assigned to do a story of our column "Dhaka Day by Day." So I just crossed over, and three I was taking to him.

Binod has been polishing shoes since he was a boy of 12. That was far back, just after the country became independent. And he was still at it, working merrily. Clad in a lungi and shirt with a chaddor wrapped around him, to protect him from the winter chill. Binod had a smile of contentment for his customers.

"How many customers do you approximately have each day?" I asked.

"Well I really do not count, but it will be in the range of about 20/25. That is of course speaking about a normal day, starting at 7 am/5 pm" except on holidays. Things are different on a rainy day. The number of customers are much lesser."

"How much do you charge your customers?" "Anything between take 3-5."

"Then your income is not too bad?" I commented.

"It is alright considering the market price of these days. That is precisely the reason why I am quite satisfied with what I earn."

Binod a young boy of 12, had come to the capital, from his village Bazilpur, in Mymensingh. He had come to the city of big buildings and offices, chasing an even bigger dream of becoming a man of moderate income one day so that the task of maintaining those dependent on him would be an easy task.

He had high hopes those days. Often while roaming around for a small job which would provide him meal, or sitting idly somewhere. As he was unemployed, Binod would imagine that one day he would be able to go back to his mother in the village, and tell her that her hard days were over. That he earned enough for her to be proud of. But that was not to be. It did not take him very long to realise, that such things rarely happen. Although he had studied

till Class VIII, in his village. It was absolutely useless in a city where he was a complete stranger, with no one to provide him with an ordinary job of an errand boy. Slowly his dreams dissipated, as he prepared for the tough days ahead. While an apprentice to a shoeshine man and sleeping on the footpath. Binod borrowed money and gradually bought a wooden box for himself to start his own trade of shining shoes. "Those days I could not even afford one proper meal a day," he recollected.

Eventually his own hopelessness and despair evaporated, as he saw over the years the increasing number of unemployment all around him, as the city kept on expanding. "I have studied only up to Class VIII. Ironically many of my customers are graduates from the university, but are wandering in search of job. This makes me thankful to my creator and gives me a feeling of contentment which I did not have before," said Binod.

A bachelor, Binod stays in a mess at Gopibagh in the old part of the city. He pays Taka 300/- as seat rent, for a single bed and the use of a common toilet. He has to manage his own food. His total expenditure on himself comes to about Taka 1500/-.

The rest of the money, he sends to the members of his family.

Not very keen to take about them, Binod informed that besides his mother, he has about 5/6 brothers and sisters who live on his earnings.

The total savings after meeting all expenditure comes to about Taka 500/- per month or even less sometimes.

"I visit my village on all important religious and social occasions. I forego my income for those few days, as I need a break from this never-ending toil of each day."

I felt good at the attitude Binod had taken towards life. The smile on his face reminded me of aman whom life and its struggles has not been able to break. Though his dreams have turned to ashes today, he continues to fight back the pangs of defeat with a smile which speaks of firm determination. He has the right spirit for a city like Dhaka—a city where only those survive who have that special quality.

"Carry on crusader," I silently said. "It is people like you who turn failures into successes and do not let any obstacle daunt their spirits."



Polishing Dreams

Workshop on water begins

A workshop on "water resources management and development" began in Dhaka on Wednesday at the seminar room of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET), reports BSS.

The workshop, jointly organised by the institute of flood control and drainage research of BUET and the Royal Institute of Technology of Sweden, was inaugurated by Prof. Abu Md. Aziz-ul-Haq, the acting Vice-Chancellor of BUET.

Weather

Cold wave to continue for two more days

By Staff Correspondent

The moderate cold wave, which is sweeping over Bangladesh for the last four days is likely to continue for another couple of days, the Meteorological Department says.

The Met Office on Thursday forecast dry weather all over

the country till Saturday morning. The night temperature will fall further by one to three Celsius by this (Friday) morning.

Outlook for subsequent two days: little change. Extended outlook for another five days: no appreciable change.

On Thursday, the temperature fell by one to three degree Celsius and most of the country was two to three degree Celsius colder than normal. Chittagong and Cox's Bazar were exceptions as there were two degree warmer than the normal for the time. In Dhaka, Hatia, Rangpur, Bogra and Bhola, the temperature was nearly normal, according to Met Office.

The lowest minimum temperature recorded in Bangladesh -- 5.8 degree Celsius -- was at Mymensingh. A westerly low lay over Uttar Pradesh, Bihar plain, Sub-Himalayan West Bengal and neighbouring areas on Thursday. The seasonal low lay over the south Bay extending its trough to the Arakan Sea.

Temperature and humidity recorded in major cities Thursday were as follows:

City/Thane	Temperature in Celsius	Humidity in per cent
Dhaka	22.4	10.9
Chittagong	24.1	18.6
Comilla	24.4	18.7
Sylhet	24.4	18.7
Rangpur	25.1	12.7
Bogra	23.8	10.4
Rajshahi	24.4	10.6
Jessore	24.4	10.6
Khulna	23.4	10.4

Minimum temperature recorded in major cities of the region were:

Location	Temperature in Celsius
Tarachi	12
New Delhi	18
Colombo	24
Bangkok	26
Singapore	26
Hong Kong	26
Beijing	26

Japanese envoy calls on Musa

Mr Takeo Iguchi, Japanese Ambassador in Bangladesh, called on Mr A K M Musa, Adviser for Industries, Jute and Textiles at the Shilpa Bhaban in Dhaka Wednesday morning, reports BSS.

More 142 prisoners released

More 142 prisoners at Dhaka Central Jail were released Wednesday under a government amnesty, reports UNB.

A batch of 152 prisoners were released from the Central Jail on Tuesday.

Among the prisoners released Wednesday, 103 were convicts, 32 under trial prisoners and 7 detenus, jail sources said.

Meanwhile, 44 prisoners were released from Khulna district jail Wednesday after 58 were released Tuesday.

The freed persons of the Dhaka Central Jail were from the part of 750 prisoners the government has decided to release under amnesty which followed a 2 week-long prison revolt.

Ziku's plea to recover arms

By Staff Correspondent

Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD) President Nur Alam Ziku has urged all quarters to show restraint for holding a free and fair election.

He was speaking on Tuesday at a reception accorded to him in Kumarkhali, Khustia where he is contesting the coming Parliament election.

PROGRAMME

Pizza promotion

Dhaka Sheraton will start 10-day pizza promotion at its Bithika Restaurant from tomorrow. The pizza promotion is aimed at popularizing this Italian speciality in Bangladesh, according to a press release.

Oldham battery dealers

The first annual conference of "Oldham" battery dealers organized by messrs Laik Ali Limited will be held on January 20 at 6-30 p.m. at a local hotel, a press release said.

A special prayer was held for the peace of the departed soul.

Rose festival on Feb 15

A Rose Festival will be held in the capital on February 15, reports UNB.

Preparations for holding Rose Festival '91 will be discussed at the annual general meeting of Bangladesh National Rose Society, organizer of the festival, says a press release.

The AGM will be held at 3 pm on January 24 at Khadya Bhavan, 16 Abdul Gani Road.

Willes Little Flower School

Willes Little Flower School in the city will hold a press conference in the room of the Headmaster at 3pm today, a press release of the school said.

Decorator's shop gutted

One decorator's shop was gutted and a fireman was seriously injured when some unruly mob set ablaze the shop at Bhairob Bazar on Wednesday afternoon, Fire Service sources said, reports BSS.

The unruly people did not allow the firemen to extinguish the fire to the shop named 'Shebasangha Decorator's' as a result fireman Anwar Hossain was seriously injured.

Some political issue was stated to be the cause of setting the shop on fire, the source added.

Major parties present manifesto

Major political parties, outlining their economic manifestoes at a discussion in Dhaka Wednesday, rated an honest and accountable administration as most vital for giving the present fragile economy a strong base, reports UNB.

Agriculture, poverty alleviation, rural development and mass education are the common features in their top priority list.

On the concluding day of three-day discussion, all the major parties spoke in favour of mixed economy and committed themselves to remove all anti-people legacies from the socio-economic infrastructure.

Economic Study Center, a forum of Dhaka University students of economics, arranged the discussion on "Future

economic programmes of political parties in the light of their respective manifestoes" at TSC auditorium.

Speakers representing Awami League, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB), 5-Party Alliance and BKSAL briefly outlined their economic policies and programmes.

Awami League

Awami League leader Shaiful Aziz Mukul announced that the main objective of his party's economic policy would be to salvage the rural economy and bring major reforms in agriculture, land ownership and resource distribution system.

"Multipurpose village cooperative system will be introduced in villages and

production operated on cooperative basis by protecting individual ownership."

Agricultural inputs would be provided at reasonable prices to the farmers and their production given adequate price support, he said.

"Access to agri-loans of poor and marginal farmers would also be ensured."

If voted to power, Awami League will exempt all outstanding farm loans upto Tk. 5,000 and also waive interests on agri-loans upto a maximum Tk 10,000, Mukul said.

On foreign trade, the Awami League leader said import of luxury items would be discouraged and protection given to import substitute local products even by imposing ban on imports.

BNP

BNP leader Prof. Badruddin

doza Chowdhury said that revival of Gram Sarkar (village government) system would be one of the main objectives of BNP to implement the party's economic programmes.

He said BNP will give top priority to agriculture and mass education and ensure optimum utilization of land and resources.

Building up honest and enterprising leadership will be another major task of BNP, Prof. Chowdhury said, as the party rated "crisis of honest leadership" as the main hurdle facing the country.

CPB

Ajoy Roy of CPB said his party strongly favours an economic administration accountable to public representatives.

Pointing out his party's support for a mixed economy, Roy said CPB wants the losing public sector enterprises to become profitable.

The party is strongly in favour of adequate subsidy to agriculture sector, he added.

On foreign aid, the CPB leader said his party would emphasize on greater national interest while taking foreign assistance.

BAKSAL

BAKSAL leader Prof. Adu Sayeed said the village cooperative system is a focal point of his party's economic manifesto.

The concluding session was presided over by S. A. L. Reza, former Chairman of Economics Department of Dhaka University. Noted economists Prof. Abu Abdullah and Prof. Wahiduddin Mahmood also participated in the discussion.



Mr. Mohamed Saleh Zaimi, Ambassador of Morocco in Bangladesh on Thursday called on Awami League President and eight-party alliance leader Sheikh Hasina at Bagabandhu Bhaban

Khaleda opens Zia clinic today

Begum Khaleda Zia will inaugurate the Shaheed Ziaur Rahman Free Friday Clinic today (Friday) at 10 a.m. at Nawab Yousuf Market, reports UNB.

She will also address a public meeting at 3 p.m. today at Mohammadpur Bus Stand.

BNP leaders including Prof. Badruddoza Chowdhury, Mir Shaukat Ali, Prof. Jahannara Begum and Amanullah Aman will address the meeting.



Wazed elected Atomic Scientists Assoc President

Dr M A Wazed Miah, Director Atomic Energy Centre, Dhaka was elected President of Bangladesh Atomic Energy Scientists Association (BAESA) on Wednesday, says a press release.

Dr F R Al-Siddique, Dr Habibul Ahsan and Mr Minhazul Islam were elected as Vice President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively of the Association.

Dr Habibuddin conducted the election.

Bangladesh Army contingent safe

Bangladesh Army contingent in the Saudi Arabia are safe, according to latest information received in Dhaka.

Presidential Adviser on Foreign Affairs Fakhruddin Ahmed told BSS that Bangladesh contingent had been sent for purely defensive purposes and latest reports spoke of their safe position in Saudi Arabia.

They are not meant for any offensive actions and neither our Army had the firepower for that purpose, he said.

The Adviser said the Government was also keeping constant touch with Bangladesh missions in the Gulf countries about the safety of its nationals in the Gulf region.

Biman flights to Jeddah, Abu Dhabi suspended

Biman Bangladesh Airlines has suspended all its flights to Doha, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Jeddah and Muscat from January 15 until further notice in view of the warlike situation in the Gulf, a Biman Press release said in Dhaka on Wednesday, reports BSS.

Petrol stock sufficient

The country has sufficient stock of all kinds of petroleum products and there should not be any cause of "concern and anxiety" in view of the outbreak of war in the Gulf, Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary Azimuddin Ahmed said on Wednesday.

"We are well covered as far as the stock position of petrol, diesel and kerosene is concerned. And there is no reason for being panicky," Mr. Ahmed told BSS.

He said the Government was constantly monitoring the supply and consumption of the petroleum products. "We have also been keeping watch on the impact of the develop-

ments in the Gulf on the international oil prices," Mr. Ahmed said.

The Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary said the stock position was comfortable due to the steps taken by the Government since fresh import would cost the exchequer extra money due to rise in the prices of oil in the international market.

Asked if the outbreak of the war would disrupt the supply of crude oil to Bangladesh if it was required at all from its usual sources, Mr. Ahmed said Bangladesh had already widened its sources for procuring crude oil.

Seminar on Asian theatre begins

Speakers at a seminar on drama on Thursday stressed, the need for increased inter-country coordination of the theatre communities for promoting harmony among the nations, reports UNB.

The three-day international seminar on "Theatre Journal in Asia: Co-operation through communication", began at the Shilpakala Academy on Thursday.

Organised by Bangladesh Centre for International Theatre Institute, the seminar was inaugurated by Presidential Adviser on Cultural Affairs Prof. Eazuddin Ahmed. Education Adviser Prof. Zillur Rahman Siddique spoke as the chief guest while Pamela Pym delivered speech on behalf of the foreign delegates.

Nine foreign delegates from India, Germany, Thailand, Iran and Australia are taking part in the seminar.

Chaired by noted literature Prof. Kabir Chowdhury, the seminar was addressed by several dramatists and theatre activists.

The speakers observed that better communication among the theatre groups in different countries would forge greater understanding among the peoples.

They said theatre was a dependable medium for evolving changes towards betterment in the society.

The programme rounded off with a cultural function.

All student bodies asked to show restraint

By Staff Correspondent

All Party Student Unity (APSU) leader Nazmul Huq Prodhan on Thursday urged all student organisations to show restraint and practice democratic norms to ensure transition to democracy.

He was speaking at a Press conference at National Press Club on Thursday, organised by Bangladesh Student Welfare Organisation in connection with inauguration of a poster by the organisation.

The Student Welfare Organisation in the poster called for building up social resistance against injustice. It also urged tolerance to other's views. The poster urged all concerned to refrain from mudslinging and launching vile attack to the opponents.

Mukib Khan, President of the organisation and Rafel Kabir, General Secretary of Engineering University Students Union (EUCSU) also spoke on the occasion.

Death condoled

A meeting of the Bangladesh Bankers Welfare Council was held in the DIT mosque premises in Dhaka Wednesday condoled the death of its founder-President Alhaj Lutfar Rahman, reports BSS.

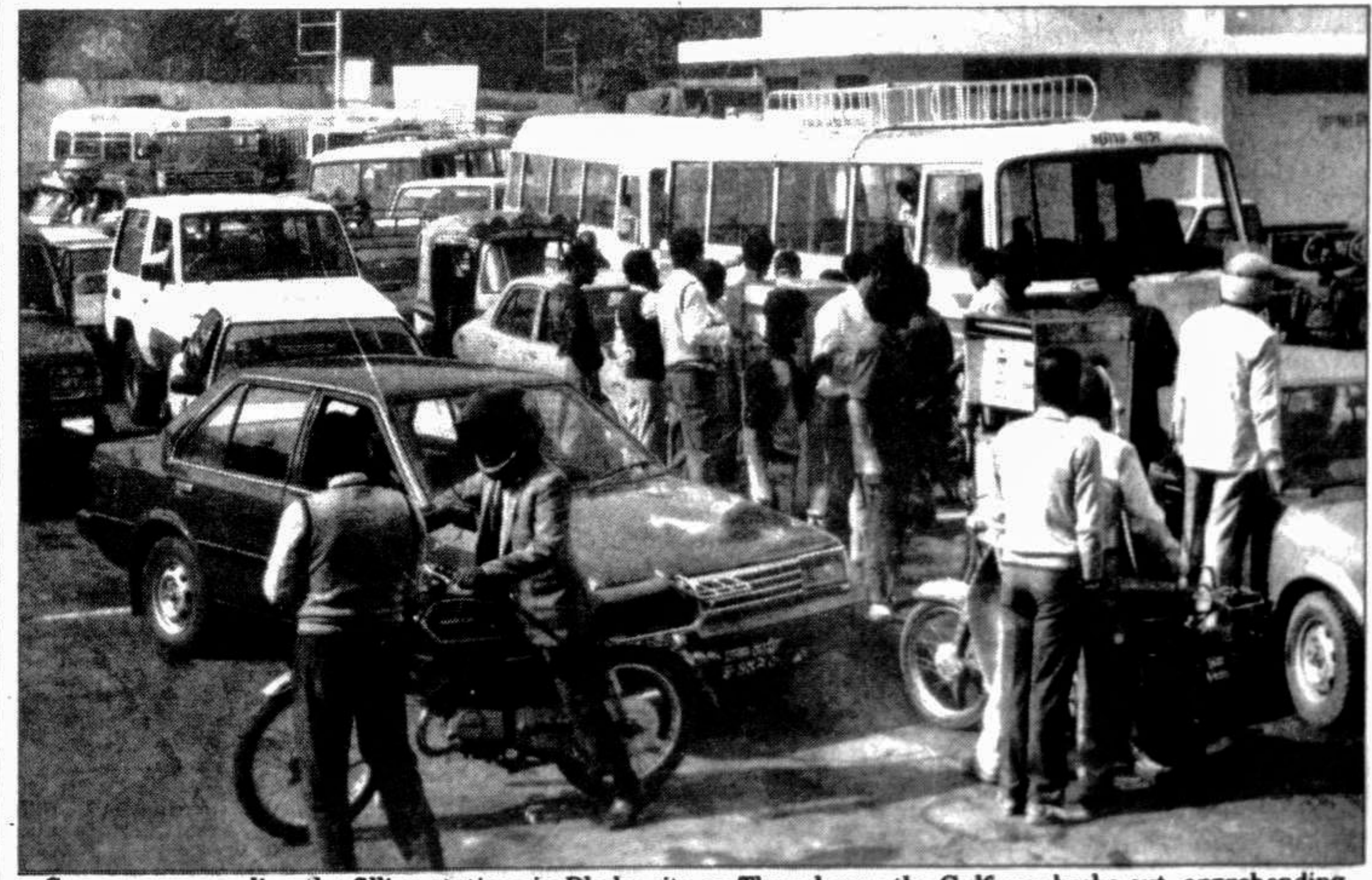
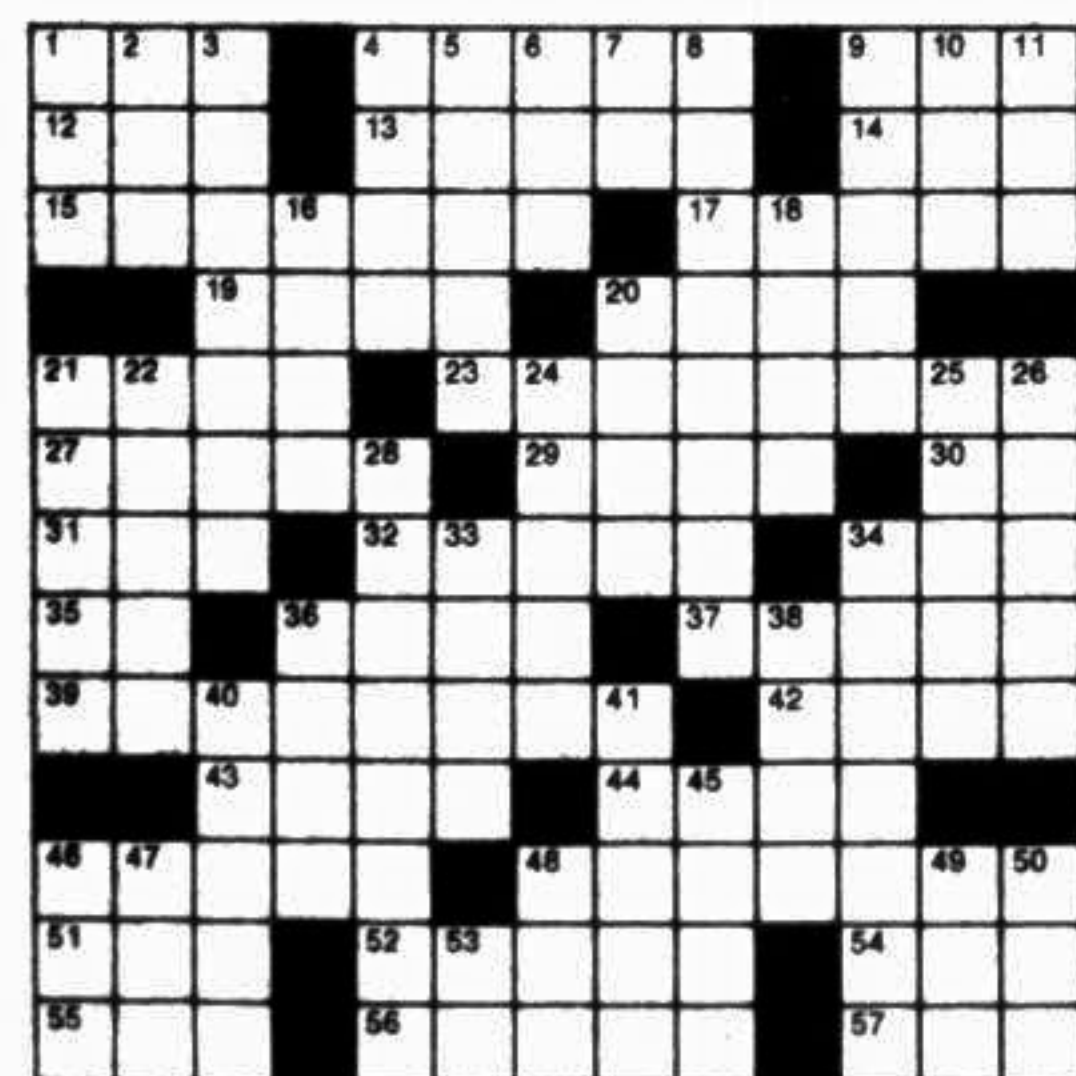
CROSSWORD PUZZLER

- ACROSS
- 1 Stout stick; club
 - 4 Pamphlet
 - 9 Suitable
 - 12 Greek letter
 - 13 Downy duck
 - 14 Diocese
 - 15 Requires
 - 17 Aromatic herb
 - 19 Assistant
 - 20 Among
 - 21 Secluded valley
 - 23 Easiest
 - 27 Take
 - 29 Burrowing animal
 - 30 Cooled lava
 - 31 Goddess of dawn
 - 32 Wipe out
 - 34 "Nightmare" Street
 - 35 Lord; abbr.
 - 36 Waste metal

Answer to Previous Puzzle

SCAN TOE MAST
HOLE APE INTO
ONE SHELF TRY
ET UPON AA IS
ISSUE MIXUP
SNEER FAR SPA
TUNS BAT RUED
YES FUN MEADS
EEDEN STILL
AS EEA STAYLAM
LOO STEAM ERA
SUBSTANTIATES
OLIO ATE TIAK

- DOWN
- 5 Is borne
 - 6 Paid notices
 - 7 Cerium symbol
 - 8 Treads underfoot
 - 9 Stage whisper
 - 10 Footlike
 - 11 Golf mound
 - 16 Is ill
 - 18 African river
 - 20 Book of Old Testament
 - 21 Resided
 - 22 Wear away
 - 24 Likeness
 - 25 Owner course
 - 26 Pounds down
 - 28 Wire message
 - 33 Unusual
 - 34 Built
 - 36 Agile
 - 38 Allowance for waste
 - 40 Speechless persons
 - 41 Matrons
 - 45 Boundary
 - 46 Capuchin monkey
 - 47 Beard of grain
 - 48 Goddess of testing
 - 49 Men's name
 - 50 Obstruct
 - 53 Behold!



Car owners crowding the filling stations in Dhaka city on Thursday as the Gulf war broke out, apprehending that the petrol prices may rise to a record low and there will shortly be shortage of oil in the country. The Bangladesh government has, however, allayed such fears

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