

Dhaka Day by Day

Waiting for Doc

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

Waiting has become one of the national pastimes of this country. Whether it is outside the lawyer's chamber, the bank executives office or the government officials office, there will be hordes of people waiting for hours for someone to attend to them. But nothing can beat the crowd outside the doctor's chamber, where the wait can be painfully endless or endlessly painful or both.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the people waiting outside the doctor's chamber is the expression on their faces. Most of them look like they have reached the nadir of depression. After going through a dusty pile of 'Bichitras' and Time Magazines from prehistoric times and watching the lucky few who somehow manage to jump the queue because they are the doctor's son-in-law's father's friend of a friend, this is not surprising.

Then there is the receptionist who takes pains to add to the misery of the already miserable. Having taken a special 'how to be the most uncivil' course, this person will never look at you when you speak. When you try to ask him if your name is on the list he may reluctantly write it down and tell you to take a seat with the most bored expression you have seen. Even if you have an appointment the story is the same, he will sourly inform you 'you have to wait till he's finished with the patient.' In other words 'that's your problem.' Then brows knit in a ferocious frown, and lips sternly compressed he will feverishly write something in the tattered registered book — all this to communicate 'do not talk to me.' His speech, which is rare, will come out as an angry snarl and his look, a formidable glare. Finally, he may condescend to growl: 'Come back tomorrow' after you have waited almost two hours to get a glimpse of the elusive one — the doc!

There is however, a certain code of behaviour that all visitors to the clinic follow almost unconsciously. The room is roughly divided into the men's corner and the women's corner. If it is a woman sitting on a chair, a male patient or patient's companion will sit after leaving one chair between him and the lady. The dilemma is cre-

ated when all chairs are filled except that particular chair that is as strong and unyielding as the Berlin Wall was, once upon a time. The problem is solved if the lady has a male companion who can then be a buffer between her and the male stranger. Otherwise, the chair remains empty.

Most of the time, nobody speaks not even those who know each other. Whether it is the close proximity of people or the solemnity of the occasion, this silence is seldom broken except by the muffled moans and groans of the ill. The occupants of this small room spend a good part of their waiting time, inspecting each other from head to toe desperately curious to know what each others ailments are yet too shy to ask. Older women

will stare at younger women, younger men and older men will stare at younger women while the younger women will stare rather uncomfortably, at their nails or their toes. Children will either make faces to ease the boredom or continue with their refrain 'I wanna go home' to their harassed mothers. A series of yawns from low to high notes will be heard throughout this waiting time, during which the patients and their companions will have the privilege of viewing each others gums, teeth's and fillings.

Once in a while, however, the ice is broken, surprisingly by a female speaking to another female 'what's wrong with you?' will be the beginning of a stimulating conversation that the rest of the waiting group hungrily absorbs. The remaining part of this exciting question-answer session may go something like: 'Are you a Misses?' 'What does your Shaheb do?' 'How many kids?' 'How long have you been waiting?' And so on.

Then finally, miracle of all miracles, somebody announces 'Misses Olulla' or Mees Chobi' or 'Mishaar Kofluddin Mia.' By an amazing stroke of luck, the wait is over and the patient hurries to the doctor's room for the coveted bottles of antibiotics, pain killers and antacids tablets, he will no doubt prescribe. The less fortunate ones meanwhile, sigh in disappointment and resign themselves to another long wait. For many it is like waiting for Godot.



Biswas asks newsmen to reflect truth

President Abdur Rahman Biswas yesterday called upon the journalists to help expedite the process of development by creating awareness among the people, reports UNB.

He said the journalists should have the courage and dedication to reflect the truth and contribute their mite for socio-economic advancement of commonman.

President Biswas was exchanging views with a 10-member delegation of Baufal Press Club in Patuakhali when they called on him at Bangabhaban. President of the club Amrul Islam led the delegation.

There are various ways of serving the country, but the journalists can help the society more than any other profes-

sionals through their sincere service, Biswas said. He urged the journalists to work for the causes of the people and socio-economic development of the country.

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Grading of restaurants on basis of sales

Restaurants will be categorized into different grades according to their monthly sales to determine the rate of VAT per month to be paid by them, reports UNB.

This was decided at a meeting of a delegation of the Bangladesh Restaurant Owners' Association with Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

The association's President Abul Kalam led the delegation when it called on the Minister here yesterday.

The restaurant owners are expected to sit with the National Board of Revenue officials to chalkout the process of classifying their establishment in con-

formity with the existing law. After classification, particular amount of VAT will be fixed against a particular restaurant as per its category.

The system is expected to save the restaurant owners from undue harassment. The finance minister said a reconciliatory board on VAT is also going to be set up very soon to hear grievances of the VAT payers.

The minister urged the restaurant owners to help the government in categorising the restaurants. The system will help proper and smooth collection and streamline the entire VAT collection procedures.

Essay competition on Siratunnabi

Saa'di Foundation has organised an essay competition on the occasion of holy Siratunnabi (SM), reports BSS.

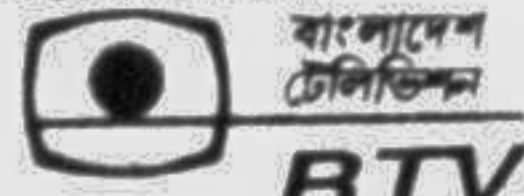
The competition will be held in four groups. Group-A: Child Life of Hazrat Muhammad (SM), 500 words for students upto class eight and equivalent. Group-B: Hazrat Muhammad (SM) emancipator of mankind, atleast 1000 words for students from class nine to class 12 and equivalent. Group-C: Prophet Muhammad (SM): The lone ideal to be followed atleast 1500 words for university students and equivalent. Group-D: Prophet Muhammad (SM) and his social service open to all.

The essays should be sent to Saa'di Foundation, House No-49, Road No -41, Qulshan, Dhaka-1212 by September 15. Three prizes will be awarded in each group.

IUB completes first semester

Noted scientist Prof M Innaas Ali yesterday said the country's education system should promote theoretical as well as applied knowledge so that the graduates could be employed to benefit themselves and the society, reports UNB.

The state-run higher education system failed to provide such education. As a result, most of our graduates lack appropriate skills and competence to succeed in life," he told a function marking completion of the first semester of the Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB).



Friday Morning Session

- 8:00 Opening announcement
- Al-Quran Programme summary
- 8:10 News in Bangla
- 8:15 Akor Dohari
- 8:40 Natun Kurat
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:25 Moner Mukure: Duhawapra Ekhon
- 11:20 Film: Tarzan
- 11:35 Shikkhya Dhikkhya
- 11:55 Film: Border Town
- 12:30 Closing

Afternoon Session

- 3:00 Opening announcement
- Al-Quran Programme summary
- 3:10 Recitation from the Tripitak
- 3:15 Cartoon: Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 3:40 Full length Bangla film: Ramer Sumati
- 5:10 News in Bangla
- 6:45 Open University Malanchya
- 7:20 News in Bangla
- 8:00 Comedy series: Perfect Strangers
- 9:00 Magazine: Upshar
- 10:00 News in English
- 10:30 Drama serial: L.A. Law
- 11:30 Khabar/The News
- 11:45 Closing

NOTICE TO PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS

IIMI invites qualified Bangladesh private sector, national institutes, universities or non-government organizations to submit a Letter of Interest in the project to IIMI at the address below. All firms submitting a letter expressing interest at IIMI's Office will be provided a Proposal Packet providing details of the project and further information about the requirements for the technical proposal. The Proposal Packet is available immediately. To be considered, the Technical Proposal must be submitted at IIMI's Office by 12:00 noon on Sunday, September 19, 1993.

The two year Study on Privatization of Minor Irrigation is being implemented by the International Irrigation Management Institute (IIMI) in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture under an Asian Development Bank Technical Assistance grant. As part of this project, a local research team will be recruited to take responsibility for conducting the field studies involving the various technical, socioeconomic and institutional aspects of the performance of minor irrigation at selected field sites as well as survey the performance of the markets for equipment imports, sales, distribution and maintenance, credit, irrigation support services and other factors relating to the privatization of the minor irrigation sector.

Upon receipt and evaluation of the Technical Proposals, the top selected firm will be invited for proposal negotiation by end-September, 1993. It is expected that the contract will be negotiated and signed by October 7, 1993 and that the contractor will have recruited the research team and start conducting field work no later than November 15, 1993.

Submission of the Letter of Interest should be in person and Proposal Packets can be collected at that time. Please do not telephone the IIMI Office, as telephone queries concerning this contract will not be entertained.

International Irrigation Management Institute
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