

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Banking Blues

by Aasha Mehreen Amin

Whether through media propaganda or real grievances the public has developed a growing distrust of private banks. This no doubt means increased deposits in government banks. One would think, or at least hope, that this rise in business would be an incentive for these banks to pull up their socks and give customers a better service. Unfortunately this is not the case and like many other state-run institutions, government banks or rather their officials display a la-cadaverous and apathetic attitude that never fails to dispirit and punish the public. Of course for no fault of the latter.

A visit to a Dhaka branch of one of the government banks is enough to make someone convinced of this. Let's say the customer needs to get a new check-book and draw some cash from a small branch in a residential area. Apparently a simple process but see how it can be made complicated. For unavoidable reasons the customer arrives at the bank at around 1:30 pm.

At this time the front door may be closed for security purposes which can be translated for our own convenience. So the customer has to meander through a weedy garden or negotiate a half-lit corridor before reaching the back door. At this time the peon will inform the customer, that 'saar' or 'afa' is eating lunch. This is not a lie, since through the corner of his eye the customer can clearly see the saar or afa in question sitting with colleagues, happily eating 'bhat' and 'murghanto' out of many storied tiffin carriers.

While the poor and by this time-hungry customer waits, he may look around the office to kill time. This is definitely not a sight for sore eyes. The floors, grimy where they are not dusty, seem to have forgotten the feel of a broom let alone a mop. The desks with their crooked, rickety legs look a hundred years old overburdened by giant, dilapidated ledgers that the officials go through for hours to get the figures right. The chairs decorated by stale, yellowing towels are as dismal as the ceiling that is clouded by cobwebs and has started to peel its plaster.

The apathy of the clearing staff is only matched by that of the officials. A bank clerk walks in chewing his paan and grumbling about the broken flush in the bathroom. The customer is a little baffled to see that the clerk has no shoes on and is gliding on the dusty floor in his socks!

Airy confusion is dispelled as a shoe shine boy comes in with a pair of shiny black shoes which the clerk painstakingly puts on, taking absolutely no notice of the customer sitting at his absent colleague's desk restlessly tapping his fingers and pointedly looking at his wrist watch. In fact it is as if he isn't there at all. The clerks and officials are engaged in animated gossip about how the 'boro shahab' (his boss) snubbed one of their colleagues (not present of course) or why Abahani lost or how easy it is to go to Saudi Arabia and

make pots of money. The other clerks who have been left out of this intriguing conversation spend their time looking dull bored and utterly non-communicative or being involved in other more productive activities such as taking catnaps, picking their teeth or 'de-waxing' their ears with their pens. The exasperated customer may ask for the eleventh time, will their absent colleague be long in returning to the desk. The answer after the tenth round of 'no response' may be 'when afa finishes lunch' or 'why don't you come tomorrow morning?' as the customer groans in frustration.

But then wonder of wonders, the sound of music — 'glug glug' of the water from a plastic jug and a loud yet satisfied burp ensue from the verandah. At last, lunch is over. The peon takes away the tiffin boxes to wash off the 'murghanto' debris in the bathroom and the patient customer heaves a sigh of relief. The official comes to her desk and then spends the

next 10 minutes shouting at the peon or clerk to get the checkbooks out. During this time, there is of course the usual exchanges between colleagues. Did you get your son admitted to St Feud's Kindergarten? How much was the admission fee? English medium? Finally the checkbook arrives from the depths of confusion and dust, the bank official takes her time stamping seals and writing words and then informs that it is ready. The customer can hardly believe his ordeal is over. Beaming he asks 'Can I draw cash now?' Equally victorious, the official replies 'Yes, over there at the cash counter... but cash is closed now.' The wrist watch on the customer's hand treacherously shows one minute past three. Banking hours are over.

This kind of plight is not uncommon to many of us. It makes one nostalgic for the good old reliable days when private banks were in vogue and quick service and cordial behaviour went hand in hand.

It was a time when the attitude was 'How can we help you?' instead of 'we are doing you a big favour.' It was a time when one entered a bank and the only sound that could be heard was the gentle buzz of people talking softly.

Nowadays, even some of the local private banks show signs of the lack of professionalism of government banks although the symptoms are not as severe. Bank tellers will not think twice before asking such personal questions to the customer as 'Are you married?' 'Where do you work?' 'What are your working hours?' So on. And heaven forbid if you ask for your balance. The bank official screams it out at the top of his lungs for everyone to hear!

If it is an example that should be followed, banks in this country should emulate the foreign banks where professionalism and a basic code of ethics still do exist. For starters, banks, privates or public can begin with being at least civil to their customers.



1 crore people suffer from 'B' virus

Deputy leader of the House Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury, yesterday called for creating mass awareness against liver diseases in the country and utilise the electronic media such as radio and television for the purpose, reports BSS.

Prof Chowdhury was inaugurating a symposium on liver disease, organised by the Department of Hepatology, Institute of Post Graduate Medicine and Research (IPGMR) at Sheraton Hotel in the city.

He said that random blood transfusion and indiscriminate use of syringe were the main two reasons for spreading the liver diseases. He suggested the doctors to examine the donor's blood before transfusion and use disposable syringe for blood testing purpose.

The symposium was told that about eight to 10 per cent people in the country i.e. about

the one crore population were attacked by 'B' virus. 'We have to take all precautionary measures to contain the disease,' he said.

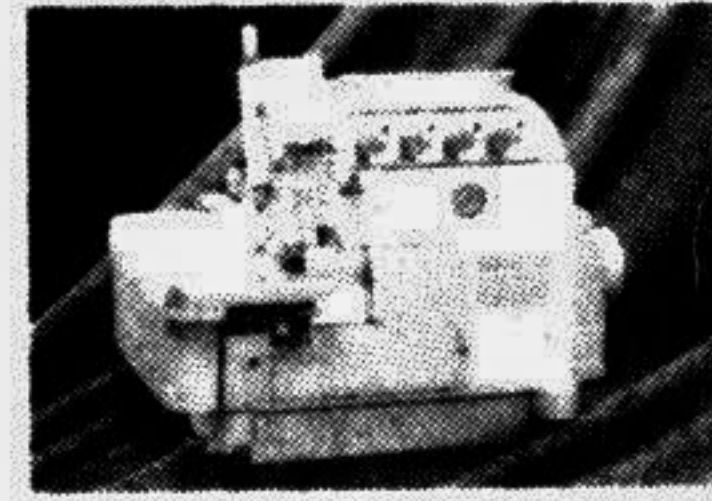
Prof Chowdhury called for involving the rural doctors with such scientific seminars so that they could enrich their knowledge with the modern advancement and technology to contain the disease.

The symposium is being participated by renowned doctors from Japan, India and Bangladesh.

Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury later inaugurated an exhibition organised on the occasion.

Presided over by Prof T A Chowdhury, Director of IPGMR, the function was also addressed by Prof Mohammad Nurun Nabi, Director General, Health Services, Prof Mobin Khan, Head of the Department of Hepatology, IPGMR and Dr A K M Khorshed Alam, Associate Professor of the department.

GOOD NEWS FOR KNIT GARMENT MANUFACTURERS & EXPORTERS!



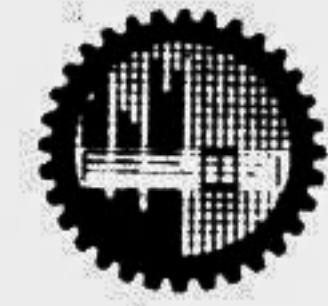
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WE ARE PLEASED TO INFORM YOU THAT MR. OKUMURA & MR. K. HIDAKA OF PEGASUS. JAPAN WILL BE IN DHAKA FROM 1st TO 6th FEB. '94.

YOU ARE WELCOME FOR OPEN DISCUSSION WITH THEM FROM 9.30 A. M. TO 6. P. M.



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Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Dhaka

WANTED

Applications are invited from the bonafide citizens of Bangladesh with requisite qualifications and fitness for appointment to the permanent post of the Registrar of this University in the pay scale of Tk. 7800-200-9000/-.

Requisite qualification: The candidate must have a 1st Class Master Degree or 2nd Class Master Degree with 2nd Class Honours Degree or B.Sc. Engineering Degree with at least 10 (Ten) years experience in a responsible position (Senior Administrative/Academic posts) out of which at least 5 (Five) years must be as Deputy Registrar or its equivalent. Experience in Establishment, Management, Academic affairs and Computer application will be considered as additional qualification. Candidate must not be less than 35 years of age.

NB: The candidate must have mentioned their post held time to time with scale of pay in the Bio-data clearly.

Candidates having foreign degree/degrees will have to submit equivalence certificate to be obtained from Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology along with their applications.

Eight complete sets of application (addressing the Vice-Chancellor of this University) with all certificates (educational, training (if any) and experience certificates) and testimonials are to be submitted to the Office of the Vice-Chancellor of this University along with a crossed Postal Order/Bank Draft/Pay Order of Tk. 25/- (Twenty-five) in favour of the Comptroller of this University.

Candidates who have already applied for this post, need not apply again.

Candidates already in service must apply through proper channel.

Last date for submission of application : 24 February, 1994 12 Falgoun, 1400

Registrar (Incharge)



Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali, speaking at the publication ceremony of a book 'Chanparar Zulekha' written by Fazlul Bari at the Jatiya Press Club auditorium yesterday.



Mirza Abbas (in pullover) presenting to DCC Mayor-elect Md. Hanif (in dark suit) a set of pens Abbas used to write with during his mayorship.

Standard Chartered WANTED

Standard Chartered - a London based International Bank is looking to fill the following position in its Dhaka Office:

- JUNIOR OFFICER - (ACCOUNTS):**
 - Holding Master Degree (Commerce/Finance preferable), 2-3 years experience as an accountant, Ability to produce Final Accounts, Preferably from a Banking environment, Computer literate (Lotus 1,2,3 and WordPerfect is essential), Good communication ability in English is essential, Good degree of inter personal Skills, Ability to work under pressure.
- SECRETARY (FEMALE):**
 - The position requires a high degree of secretarial aptitude in office management, versatility, well developed English language communication skills and the ability to work under pressure. The incumbent should enjoy working with local as well as expatriate management and have the ability to set priorities and meet deadlines.
- RECEPTIONIST-CUM-TYPIST:**
 - PC literate (Lotus 123 and WordPerfect essential), Knowledge of MS-DOS and other software packages, especially database, would be an added advantage. Basic banking knowledge and/or working experience in a banking environment preferred. Typing speed minimum 60 wpm. Fluent in written and spoken English and Bangla. Knowledge of systematic filing essential and should be mathematically inclined.
 - Able and willing to work beyond office hours as and when the need arises. Pleasant personality. Good verbal and written communication. Tidy and able to locate documents at a moment's notice. Discreet and able to maintain full confidentiality.

SALARY: - Attractive salary will be offered to the right candidate for the above positions.

The prospective candidate for the above position may apply with detail C.V. and two recent photographs, to the Head of Human Resources, Standard Chartered Bank, Aliso Building - 1/floor, 18-20, Motijheel Commercial Area, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Any attempt to influence the selection process will render the candidate disqualified.

Turkish Air Force Commander visits BAF base

CHITTAGONG, Feb 2: Commander of the Turkish Air Force, General Halis Burhan visited the BAF Base Zahurul Haque here today (Wednesday), reports UNB.

On arrival at the Base, General Burhan was received by the Base Commander, Group Captain Muhammad Khusrul Alam. Senior officers of the Base were also present to greet the distinguished visitor.

Commemorative stamps

Bangladesh Postal Department will release a 2 Taka commemorative stamp on Saturday in observance of 25th years of oral rehydration saline (ORS), reports UNB.

Thursday BTV

4:30 Opening announcement, Al-Guran Programme summary

4:35 News in Bangla

4:45 Esho Gan Shikhi

5:30 National TV school level debate competition

6:20 Mass education programme: Esho Para Shikhi

6:40 Jiboner Alo

7:20 Nazrul songs

8:00 News in Bangla

8:40 Drama of the week: Shoner Balay

10:00 News in English

10:30 Film show: Women of Substance

11:30 Khabar/The News

11:40 Tomorrow's programme summary

11:45 Closing.

Khaleda greets Algerian PM

Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia yesterday felicitated Redha Malek on his re-appointment as the Prime Minister of Algeria, reports BSS.

In a message, the Prime Minister said, please accept my very warm felicitations on your re-appointment as the Prime Minister of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria. I wish, your excellency, every success, good health and long life and the people of Algeria continued peace, progress and prosperity.

'Govt trying to solve college teachers problems'

Government is trying to solve the problems of government college teachers in consultation with the teachers, reports UNB.

This was revealed by Education Minister Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar while addressing the leaders of BCS General Education Association at the conference room of the ministry here yesterday.

The minister said the government is determined to bring about a qualitative change in the system of education.

Joint Secretary of the Ministry Mohammad Glasuddin was also present.

Seminar on South Asian cooperation opens Sunday

A 3-day international seminar on "South Asia at the Crossroads: Conflict and Cooperation" begins in the city Sunday, reports UNB.

Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman will inaugurate the seminar at Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies (BISS) at 9 am.

The seminar is intended to deliberate on problems of inter-state relations in South Asia with particular stress on the dichotomy of conflict and cooperation in the region.

There will be several sessions covering political, economic, environmental and security issues.

Matters related to conflict resolution and confidence building in the region will be discussed while the prospects and challenges of strengthening cooperation in the context of sweeping international changes will also be examined.

The Bhutanese Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, Maldives Tourism Minister and former SAARC secretary general will be present.

Some 35 distinguished scholars, experts and professionals from all South Asian countries as well as China, Japan, UK, and USA are expected to join over 125 local participants.

Weather

Light rain likely

By Staff Correspondent

Light rain or thundershowers may occur at few places over Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal divisions and the regions of Comilla, Sylhet with cloudy sky during the next 12 hours commencing 6 am today (Thursday).

The Met Office forecasts, weather will mainly remain dry elsewhere over Bangladesh with partly cloudy sky during this time.

Night temperature is likely to fall by one to two degrees Celsius over the country.

Moderate cold wave is likely to sweep over Bangladesh during the next three days.

The country's highest temperature of 28.6 degrees Celsius was recorded in Cox's Bazar yesterday and the lowest 14.4 degrees in Iswardi and Dinajpur.

The sun sets today (Thursday) at 5:46 pm and rises tomorrow (Friday) at 6:38 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and relative humidity recorded in some of the major cities and towns of the country yesterday are:

Cities/Towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9am	6pm
Dhaka	17.8	17.2	89	89
Chittagong	27.0	16.5	78	74
Khulna	18.5	16.0		
Rajshahi	20.8	15.3	96	79
Barisal	19.4	16.8	80	100
Cox's Bazar	28.6	17.0		71
Sylhet	21.2	16.2	93	93
Dinajpur	19.6	14.4	97	82

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