Dhaka Day by Day

The Little Luxuries of Life

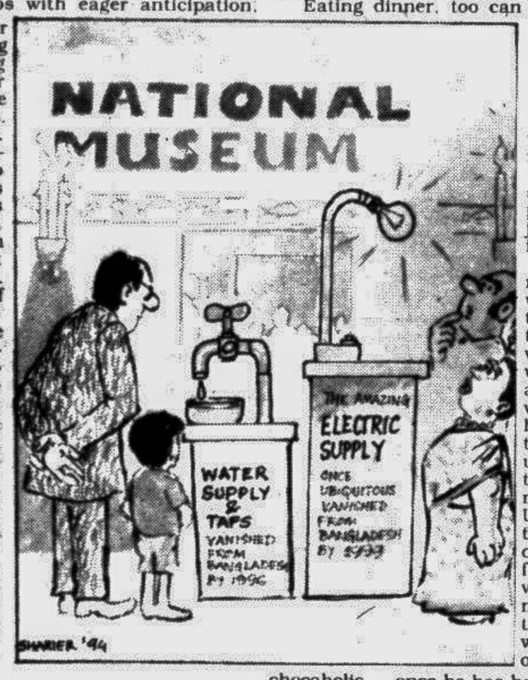
by Aasha Mehreen Amin

If the city dweller appeared to be an ungrateful sort in the past, this is no longer the case. He is not as blase as he used to be to his privilege of taking a shower every morning or enjoying the cool breeze of a fan above his head on a blistering hot day. Every time he witnesses water gushing out of the tap, every time that he manages to see through the 'A Team' without being thrown into utter darkness, the Dhakaite thanks his stars for the luxuries of modern life.

This gratitude, however, has not come easy. In fact, the Dhakaite has had to pay a high price for it.

It all started when words like 'load shedding', 'transformer bursts', and 'low water pressure' became a common use. This has caused the city dweller unending grief and frustration, making his life as unpredictable as the country's weather.

Take, for example, when he wakes up in the morning and jumps with eager anticipation into the shower for a cool, refreshing bath. After working up a thick lather from head to foot he turns on the faucets. Nothing happens. Squinting and spluttering in the soap bubbles he opens one eye and turns the knob vigorously, bangs on it and then gives a violent twist until it comes off. But no amount of cursing or struggling will persuade the tap to give a single drop of that precious water. This is because the other tenants of the building were one up on this hapless victim, taking their showers at five in the morning and so using all the water in the tanks. Moreover, the low pressure has ensured that the water from the ground does not reach the third floor, where our victim lives.



The frequent water shortage has caused residents of this city to conserve as much water as possible in various containers. This has, no doubt, brought good business for the bucket-walas and the bowl-walas for their goods can be seen in almost every household filled to the brim with water. For the residents, however, it means trudging up and down the stairs to bring water in the buckets from the ground floor and having fewer baths than they would like to in the sweltering heat. Those with enough means have installed water pumps and reservoir tanks but even this has not solved the problem.

To fill the cup of misery, there is another treat for the city dweller — power failures. This happens so frequently and at such odd times that one wonders if in the grand scheme of things, there is a mad child with divine powers at work, turning off and on the main power switch according to his whim. The electricity will go off, for example, just when you are getting ready for a party, just when you have started to iron your clothes or just when you have put eye shadow on one eye. Thus you may be confronted with curious looks as you enter a party with red eye shadow on one eye, green on the other, lipstick on the nose and a sari worn upside down.

The bathroom too, becomes an interesting place when the lights go off. For those excruciating minutes one learns the value of one's senses other than sight. Falteringly one feels the cold damp walls, the taps, basin and the door knob. The sound of drops of water become magnified and one can even hear the scary rustle of some creepy crawly running around one's feet.

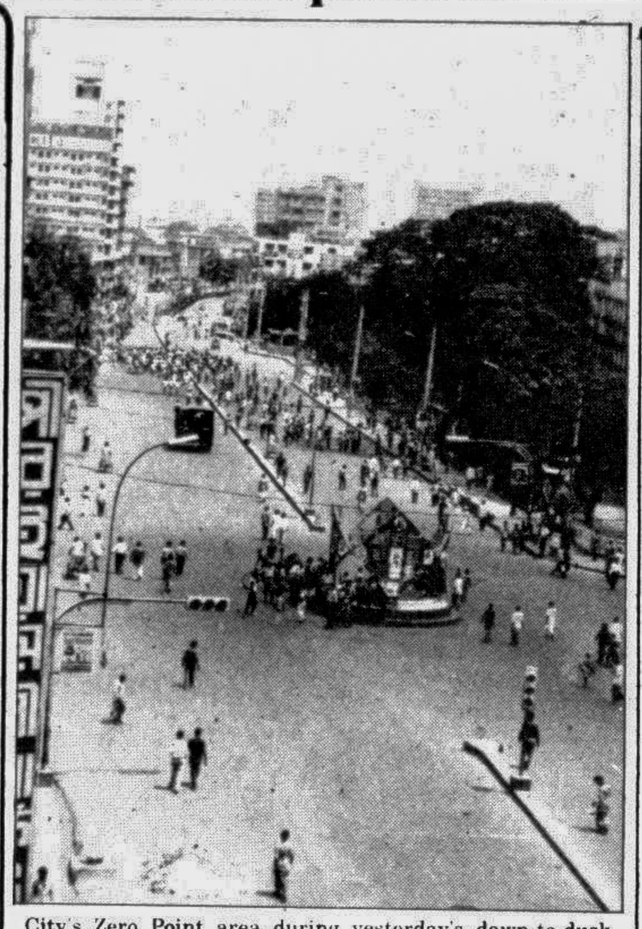
Power failures also have a perverse tendency to go off at some crucial point of a TV movie. Just when somebody is about to shoot J R Ewing or when Murdock and his gang are about to blow up a military camp, the TV turns off only to come on again just in time for one to read the names of the producers.

Eating dinner, too can be quite an ordeal since you don't know what it is you are putting into your mouth. Even candle light dinners cease to be romantic if what you crunch on is not a crispy fried 'potol' but a crisp six-legged arthropod that had jumped into the frying pan!

Of course, one may ask oneself, well what about the times when electricity was not invented and there were no such things as taps? Why can't we pretend that we have gone back to those pure times unadulterated by these unreliable modern amenities? Unfortunately, the technology-seduced city dweller is far from being convinced by this argument. For him electricity and running water are like chocolate to a potential chocaholic — once he has had the taste of it, he can't do without it.

The chronic power failures and water shortages of Dhaka, therefore, has made the middle class city dweller discard his old complacency and made him more appreciative of the utility services he receives, no matter how sporadically. There are of course many fellow citizens who have never had the fortune or misfortune to know such luxuries. For them the kerosene lamp and a dip in the nearby polluted lake are the closest they have come to such technology.

For most city dwellers the combination of scalding heat, continuous load-shedding and lack of running water has made life come very close to hell. The culprits behind this misery are reduced ground water supply, overloaded transformers, over population and lack of maintenance of power plants. All this, apart from making the city dweller a trifle antagonistic towards WASA and the Power Development Board, has made him see water and electricity in a different light. To him they are the rarest gems of his life. Never again will he take them for granted.



City's Zero Point area during yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal. - **Story on Page One** — Star photo

Prokrichi, Samannaya body concerned over teachers' strike

By Staff Correspondent

Prokrichi O BCS Samannaya Committee at a meeting yesterday expressed grave concern over the situation caused by the strike of the non-government college and high school teachers.

The meeting observed that the efforts made by the government to break the deadlock was inadequate and disappointing.

Presided over by its President Dr MA Majed, the meeting was addressed, among others, by Dr Ayubur Rahman, ANH Akhtar Hussain, Md. Abu Hena, Ibrahim Mia, Jabed Iqbal, Dr Gazi Abdul Huq, Md Ruhul Matin, Sharifur Rahman, Md Abu Yusuf, Ahsanul Huq and Dr Mushtaq Hossain.

The meeting alleged that the Education Secretary, instead of solving the problem, has aggravated the situation by putting the government college teachers under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioners of the districts.

This order of the Education Secretary has violated the government rules by putting the senior college teachers under the jurisdiction of junior civil servants, the meeting said.

The Samannaya Committee, however, demanded withdrawal of the decision saying that it would otherwise embarrass the government by fueling the movement further. In fact this has become the 'habit of the bureaucracy' to embarrass the government by provoking agitation, instead of removing the causes, the committee observed.

The meeting also requested the government to fulfil the legitimate demands of the teachers and demanded stern action against those civil servants who are involved in deteriorating the situation.

US Embassy to remain closed today

The US embassy, the American Cultural Center Library and other US government offices in Bangladesh will remain closed today to observe the national day of mourning in honour of former president Richard Nixon, says a press release.

However, the American Cultural Centre's Worldnet satellite discussion on "AIDS Prevention and Awareness" will be held at 5:30 pm as previously scheduled.

Condolence book for Nixon

The UN Embassy has opened a condolence book for those wishing to offer their sympathies on the death of President Nixon. The book will be available for signing at the Embassy today from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm.

Reception accorded

CHITTAGONG, Apr 26: Chittagong north district Jatiyotabadi Samajik Sangskritik Sangstha (JASAS) yesterday accorded a reception to Fisheries and Livestock Minister Abdullah Al-Noman and Chittagong north district BNP General Secretary Gulam Akbar Khandakar on their being elevated to the posts of joint general secretary and finance secretary respectively of BNP central committee, reports BSS.

SAARC seminar on book promotion from May 3

A three-day SAARC seminar on book promotion will be held here from May 3 to 5 next, reports BSS.

The seminar will discuss ways to increase cooperation among the South Asian countries about publication of quality books and their marketing.

Participants from Pakistan, India, Nepal, Shri Lanka and host Bangladesh are expected to attend the seminar.

Death anniversary

The 23rd death anniversary of Shaheed Capt. M Aftab-al-Qader (Iqbal), Biruttam will be observed today, says a press release.

A Milad mahfil and special prayers will be held at Bailey Square Colony Jam-e-mosque after Asr prayers.

He embraced martyrdom at Mahalchhari in Khagrachhari district in a direct confrontation during the War of Liberation

বাংলাদেশ টেলিভিশন

BTV

Wednesday

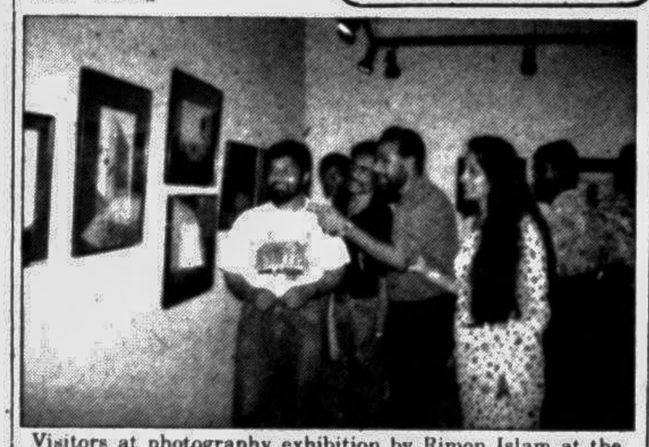
4.30	Opening announcement Al-Quran Programme summary
4.45	Sports programme: Gillet World Sports Special
5.10	News in Bangla
5.25	Agami
6.00	Nibedan
7.00	Open University
7.25	Tagore songs
8.00	News in Bangla
8.30	Biswa Parikrama
9.05	Film show: The A-Team
10.00	News in English
10.30	Musical programme: Geeti Bichitra
11.30	Khabar/The News
11.40	Tomorrow's programme summary
11.45	Closing

Obituary

Andaleeb Ali (Anni), wife of Syed Anwar Ali, former Managing Director, Social Marketing Project (SMP), died from burn injuries yesterday, April 26, 1994 at the CMH, Dhaka.

Her namaz-e-janaza will be held at the Ghausul Azam Mosque, Mohakhali after Zohr prayers today (Wednesday), April 27, 1994.

She will be buried at the Banani graveyard.



Visitors at photography exhibition by Rimon Islam at the Gallery Tone in the city. The three-day long photo show titled "Image: America" was inaugurated yesterday.

Weather

No change in temperature

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or thunder showers accompanied by the temporary *kalbaishakhi* gusty to squally wind is likely at few places over Chittagong, Barisal and Dhaka divisions, and at one or two places over Khulna and Rajshahi divisions, during the next 12 hours commencing from 6 pm today (Wednesday).

No appreciable change in day temperature is expected during this period, the Met Office forecasts.

Country's highest temperature of 38.40 degrees Celsius was recorded in Rajshahi and the lowest temperature of 20.00 degrees Celsius recorded in Sri Mangal.

Maximum temperature recorded in the capital was 33.80 degrees Celsius and the lowest temperature recorded was 23.00 degrees Celsius.

Relative humidity recorded in the morning was 74 per cent while it was 65 per cent in the evening.

The sun sets today (Wednesday) at 6:25 pm and rises tomorrow (Thursday) at 5:27 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperatures and relative humidity of the divisional towns yesterday were:

Divisional towns	Temperatures in degrees Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9am	6pm
Dhaka	38.8	23	74	65
Chittagong	32	25.5	75	76
Rajshahi	38.4	23.6	80	67
Khulna	35	22.5	86	78
Barisal	34.6	25.0	82	74

JOB OPPORTUNITY

Vacancies exist in a financial institution for the following positions :

1. **Law Officer-1 (One)**
   The candidate is required to be LLM or LLB with Masters Degree in any discipline having a minimum of 5 years' experience in specialised financial institution, investment bank, commercial bank or in a public international organisation with analytical thinking and accurate conceptual expression ability. Practical experience in the field of preparation and negotiation of financing agreements including contracts and leases, documentation of various investments, company legal matters and knowledge of letter of credit operation will be preferred.
2. **Accounts Officer-1 (One)**
   The candidate must be an M. Com/MBA having a minimum five years experience preferably in a specialised financial institution, investment bank or any other commercial banks. In case of a Chartered Accountant, experience may be relaxed to three years.

Application with detailed C. V. mentioning two referees with full particulars along with certificate of qualifications, experience and two recent passport size photographs should be sent to **GPO Box No. 4175, Ramna, Dhaka latest by 10 May 1994** inscribing post name on the envelope and contact telephone number. D-291

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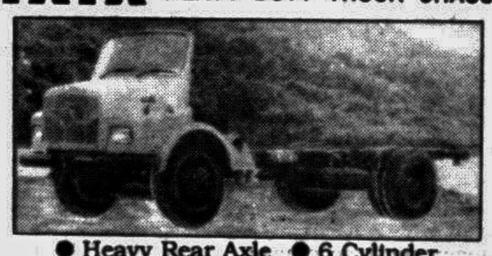

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এর পূর্বে আর কোন ৪ ষ্ট্রোক মটর সাইকেল এত গুণাগুণ নিয়ে আসেনি
● প্রতি লিটার জ্বালানীতে চলে ৮০ কিলোমিটার
● মজবুত বডি ও চওড়া হুইলবেসের জন্যে যে কোন রাস্তায় দৃঢ়তা এবং আস্থার সাথে চলে
● আরতকার শক্তিশালী হেডলাইট
● আরও পাচ্ছেন শাড়ী গার্ড, লেগগার্ড ইত্যাদি
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এসেম্বলারঃ মনোকা মটরস লিমিটেড, ঢাকা