

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Ballet by Bangalee Girls

by Lamis Hossain

Identical twins Sakiba and Sabira know how to make an entrance. With matching outfits, swan-like grace and disarming smiles, the pair manage to turn a few heads as they walk into a room.

But their media-friendly appearance isn't the only thing which made front page news recently. The eighteen year olds staged the first ever ballet performance by Bangladesh nationals at the Shilpakala Academy on September 4 last.

The twins organised every facet of their amateur production. Sakiba explains the division of labour: "She (Sabira) does everything, I manage it." Sakiba is the poised practical sister who hopes to run a dance or fashion-related business one day. Sabira is the creative one, pouring out her ideas with infectious excitement and twinkling eyes. "Sabira designed the costumes, composed the dances, and selected the music," Sakiba elaborates.

The sisters are amazingly confident in spite of their limited formal training. Born in Britain, the girls took lessons for only two years from the age of seven. "I wanted my daughters to learn dancing so I encouraged them to take ballet

and tap lessons at the church school in Leytonstone," their mother Hafiza Begum reveals. "We used to think ballerinas were so glamorous when we were smaller," Sakiba says. "We've not been disappointed at all." Her sister Sabira explains the attraction of dance: "My emotions come out and I feel relaxed. I'm a different person." This sentiment runs in the family — grandmother and mother were both keen dancers, although they never performed on stage.

The girls have the physique and expression required for ballet, but a serious dancer is also supposed to spend 90 minutes on the basic footing alone, a discipline not yet followed by the twins. To acquire the formal title of 'ballerina' they will have to be successful in three plays: Sleeping Beauty, Swan Lake and Giselle. The pair thus have a long way to go before they can match their Western counterparts.

But the sisters are not inexperienced performers. Since their arrival in Dhaka eight years ago, Sakiba and Sabira have taken modern (Adhunik) dance classes. "We just passed our BFA certificate (Bul Bul Academy of Fine Arts)," Sakiba informs. "We've also been teaching ourselves ballet at home these last two years. Before choreographing our show, we borrowed some videos from the British Council and watched them for two, three days."

Why did they renew their interest in ballet? "We wanted to introduce it here. We hoped to take ballet and classical dancing and make it a new art. We also wanted ours to be the first attempt," Sabira answers.

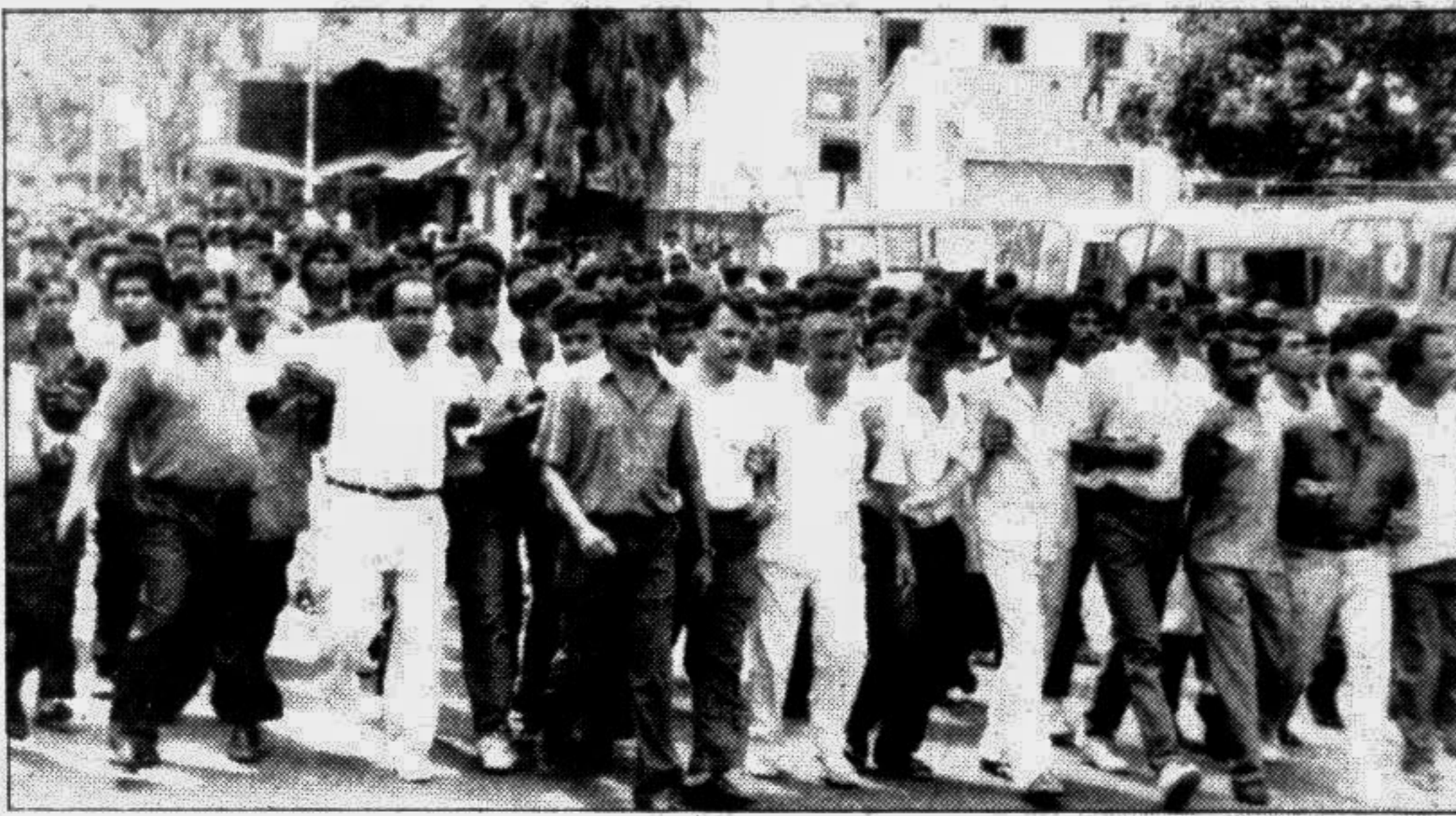
Were they successful? "We didn't have enough time to combine Indian and European forms, but we did include things from classical dancing. But instead of a dance-drama, we ended up with six ballets with different themes," Sabira admits. "The themes (such as young love) were very emotional. I had to be in the shoes of a man so I started laughing every time we practised our scenes," Sabira confides with a giggle. Another difficulty was not having proper ballet shoes: "My brother mailed them from England, but it never reached us."

The young women encountered plenty of hassles while putting together the show. The sisters were forced to prepare earlier than planned because the hall wasn't available on the requested date. "The management was very poor. There is a lot of politics and problem of bribes involved when you're trying to organise something," Sakiba says unhesitatingly.

They were also let down by other people. Sakiba cites an example: "Before one dance, I was in position waiting for the music but no one put the tape on. I felt like shouting at them, but I had to pretend to be fine, even though it's painful to stay in a position with one leg off the floor." To prove her point, Sakiba got up, lifted her leg to touch her elbow and stood there holding the pose for a few seconds. She thought the lighting could have been better as well. "The normal spotlights can't follow you around stage. You need the back spotlight system for that. The hall never uses it, unless it's a government function". How did they find the floor? "The Shilpakala stage was too uneven for ballet. The surface should be smooth and waxed, like the Osmania hall one. It wasn't large enough either," the girls explained.

What about the audience reaction? "I think they enjoyed it," says Sabira. "They just like a pretty face and figure, but they don't really understand much of it," Sakiba feels. The sisters don't aim to foist ballet upon the masses — any future show would be restricted to those who can afford the tickets and appreciate it.

The various glitches have not discouraged the duo from performing again. "We've learnt our lesson. Next time we'll take care of everything ourselves," says a determined Sabira. But that won't be till 1996 when the girls finish their A-levels in England.



A procession of the City Awami League during yesterday's hartal hours. — Star photo

## Steps taken to augment farm output in N-districts, JS told

Agriculture, Irrigation, Water Resources and Flood Control Minister Major General (ret'd) Majid-ul-Huq yesterday told the Jatiya Sangsad that the government had taken all possible measures to augment farm output in the northern districts which have affected this year by scanty rainfall and unilateral withdrawal of Ganges water at Farakka during the dry season, reports BSS.

The minister said, about seven per cent arable land in the area could not be brought under aman cultivation this year which might lead to a reduction in rice production this year by nine per cent. To make up the loss, steps had been taken to cultivate advance pulses, wheat, potatoes, oil

seeds and maize in lands which could not be cultivated earlier.

The minister was winding up a short discussion on a notice of matter of urgent public importance by treasury bench member Begum Lutfunnessa Hossain on drought situation in the northern districts.

Majid-ul-Huq said with the advent of late rains in the northern regions, the peasants had started cultivating lands which were left-out due to water shortage. He said, we hope 80,000 hectares of land would come under cultivation, in addition to existing 13.79 lakh hectares, following the late rains."

The agriculture minister said the situation in the north-

ern regions had been closely monitored at his ministry, day to day. The situation was reviewed at a meeting last month with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia in the chair and necessary policy direction was given to face the drought.

Listing the measures taken to face the condition, he said the Power Development Board had been directed to provide electricity to all power pumps there. Arrangement had also made to distribute 42 tons of aman seeds of late aman variety and aman seedlings from government lands, free of cost. A Taka four crore agriculture rehabilitation programme had been prepared which was awaiting government consideration, he added.

Majid-ul-Huq said that the government had brought a further ten per cent of the country's arable land under irrigation on top of the existing 25 per cent in.

Earlier, eight treasury bench members participated in the discussion urging the government to take immediate steps to save the peasants in the northern districts from what they described as "grim drought conditions caused by scanty rainfalls and adverse effect of Farakka".

Those who participated in the discussion were Al Haj Shamsuddin Ahmed, Whip Advocate Abdul Karim, Azizur Rahman, Whip Mohammad Shahjahan Miah, Abdul Haliz and Begum Kurshid Jahan Hoq and Begum Lutfunnessa Hossain.

## CAA, Customs at ZIA work in mutual coordination

State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Abdul Mannan yesterday informed the Jatiya Sangsad that the members of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Customs at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) work in mutual coordination for smooth discharge of their duties, reports BSS.

He said there is a coordination committee at the ZIA which makes monthly reviews of the activities of all concerned agencies at the airport.

The state minister was making a statement on a call attention notice moved by M Niamat Ullah (BNP-Dhaka) on matters of important public interest regarding alleged harassment of foreign investors at the ZIA by the members of different agencies working there.

Mannan said nobody was above law and sought cooperation of the parliament members so that law could move in its own way.

Mannan refuted the allegation that foreign investors were being discouraged at the ZIA by the on duty members of different agencies and said the investors are provided various facilities, including protocol passes and use of the CIP room.

## It venture shoe manufacturing project in CEPZ

A Bangladesh-German joint venture shoe manufacturing project titled, "Paragon Leather and Footwear Industries Ltd", has been launched in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone, reports BSS.

This is the first of its kind to be set up in the Chittagong Export Processing Zone and will be a 100 per cent export-oriented project.

The German partner, Messrs Internationale Schuh-Maschinen Trade and Service Co. of Pirmasens, Germany has indicated that they are interested to set up further joint venture shoe, sole and tannery projects in Bangladesh with the buy-back arrangement of 100 per cent production for a period of 5 years initially.

## GF's call to start dialogue

By Staff Correspondent

The standing committee of the Gano Forum (GF) at a meeting in the city Tuesday called upon the political parties to start a dialogue immediately to end the present political crisis.

The meeting, presided over by its Acting President, Matjur Rahman, expressed grave concern at the current political situation in the country and said the government and the opposition parties were aggravating the situation by sticking to their respective positions.

## WP condemns govt decision

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Workers' Party (BWP) in a statement yesterday strongly condemned the government decision of sending Bangladeshi soldiers to Haiti and demanded cancellation of the decision.

The statement issued by its president Amal Sen and general secretary Rashed Khan Menon said the government has no right to use our soldiers to satisfy the interest of the imperial forces.



Mini-buses in front of the Secretariat yesterday during the hartal. — Star photo



**Wednesday**  
 4:30 Opening session  
 4:40 Geeta recitation  
 4:45 Sports programme  
 5:10 News in Bangla  
 5:25 Programme on population problem: Agami  
 Programme by New Artists: Unmesh  
 7:00 Open University  
 7:25 Tagore songs  
 8:00 News in Bangla  
 8:30 Current affairs: Sangbad Parikrama  
 9:00 Film show: Equalizer  
 10:00 News in English  
 10:30 Cultural programme: Kathamala  
 11:30 Khabar/The News  
 11:40 Closing

## Weather

### Day temperature may rise

Light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely at a few places over Chittagong and Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna and Rajshahi divisions during the next 24 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met office says day temperature may rise by one to three degree Celsius during the period across the country. The sun sets today at 6:04 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:45 am.

Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday are given below:

City/Towns	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.8	26.2	85	86
Chittagong	31.8	25.8	78	86
Rajshahi	31.8	25.7	88	88
Khulna	33.4	27.0	86	86
Barisal	31.5	25.6	92	85
Sylhet	32.5	25.2	98	82
Car's Bazar	32.0	25.4	81	85

## BFUJ, DUJ condemn attack on journalist

Gias Kamal Chowdhury and Amanullah Kabir, President and Secretary General respectively of Bangladesh Federal Union of Journalists (BFUJ) and Zahirul Haq and Ruhul Amin Gazi, President and General Secretary respectively of Dhaka Union of Journalists (DUJ) yesterday condemned the bomb attack on Kibria Chowdhury, staff reporter of Dainik Lalsabuj, reports BSS.

In a joint statement the leaders said picketers during yesterday's dawn-to-dusk hartal first set the autorickshaw carrying Kibria on fire and then hurled bomb at him near Hardeo Glass Factory in the city.

He was admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) with severe injury. The leaders demanded immediate arrest of the culprits and urged all concerned to ensure safety of journalists during political programmes, like hartal, siege and gherao.

## Postal employees call off strike

The Extra-Departmental Postal Employee's Association called off their strike yesterday following a fruitful discussion with Post and Telecommunications Minister Tariqul Islam, regarding their demands, reports UNB.

The decision was taken after an eleven-member delegation of the association led by its general secretary A Hakim met the minister at his office in the city yesterday.

**ORCHID SHOW**  
 FOR  
 ORCHID ENTHUSIASTS  
 & ORCHID LOVER

An Orchid Show will be held at the premises of NW (K)-8 Road No 50, Gulshan, Dhaka-1212. Friday From 9:00 A.M to 5:00 P.M on 16th Sep. '94 under the sponsorship of Orchid Society of Bangladesh.

All Orchid enthusiasts & Orchid Lovers are cordially invited to attend the show.

ORCHID SOCIETY OF BANGLADESH

## Notice Inviting Tenders

No 3 EM/1994-95

1. Sealed tenders in Bangladesh Form No. 2911 are hereby invited for the undermentioned work from Special Class-I (one)/Class-I (one) EM Contractor/Firm of PWD/Class-II EM Contractor/Firm of Khulna PWD Zone and will be received by the undersigned as well as by the Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Jessore/Narail/Jhenidah/Kushtia/Meherpur/Chaudanga/Faridpur/Rajbari in their respective offices up to 12-00 Noon of 27/9/94 and will be opened on the same day at 12-15 PM in presence of the intending tenderers who may like to remain present. Each tender shall be in a sealed cover with the name of work superscribed on it. No tender form will be sold after 26/9/94.
2. Name of work : Construction of 44 Nos. newly-created district headquarters one at Magura (Sub-head: E. I. work including service connection to Medical Investigation, Gymnasium, Recreation, Canteen, Kitchen, Tailor, Washerman, Barber and Coblar room of R. P. Line)
3. Estimated cost : Tk. 3,01,692/18 only.
4. Earnest money : Tk. 6,338/00 only.
5. Contract documents consisting of BD Form No. 2911, schedule of items, addl. terms and conditions etc. can be seen and obtained from the office of the undersigned and all the Executive Engineers under PWD Circle, Jessore during office hours.

**Md. Serajul Islam**  
 Executive Engineer  
 PWD Division, Magura  
 Telephone No. 505

DFP-3966/7/9  
 G-1414

**Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha**  
 Dhaka-1000

**Public Notice**

**Allotment of Commercial cum Residential Plots to Bonafide Affected Persons of Bipanan Area**

Applications in prescribed form are invited from bonafide affected persons in "Outer Circular Road, Bipanan Area (Triangular land adjacent to Zohura Market, Bangla Motor) under L A Case No. 5/85-86 & 3/85-86 for allotment of Commercial cum Residential plots. Previously those who have applied in plain paper, they will have to apply in prescribed form for allotment. Application form and prospectus may be obtained from Sonali Bank, RAJUK Bhaban Branch, on payment of Tk 100/- (non-refundable).

As per terms mentioned in the prospectus the applicant will have to deposit Tk 20,000/- (Taka twenty thousand) only as Earnest Money either in Bank Draft/Pay Order in favour of the Chairman, RAJUK or in cash. The application form to be submitted must be accompanied with original Bank Receipts in support of payment of Earnest Money and purchase of application form. Application will be received in the above mentioned Bank Branch up to 15-10-1994 during banking hours.

The price of land per bigha has been fixed at Tk 52,40,000/- (Taka fifty two lakh forty thousand) only.

Application containing erroneous/incomplete information will not be considered. If, at any stage, it is detected that an applicant has furnished false information or willfully suppressed any relevant fact, RAJUK shall have the authority to cancel his/her allotment and forfeit Earnest Money/cost of land, so deposited.

All applicants must fulfil all the terms & conditions mentioned in the prospectus.

Applicants will have to accept plots of any size, shape or location offered by RAJUK and no objection or prayer whatsoever in this regard, will be accepted.

If any affected person of the aforesaid LA Cases fails to apply for allotment of plot as per this notice, his any prayer in this behalf shall not be considered, in future.

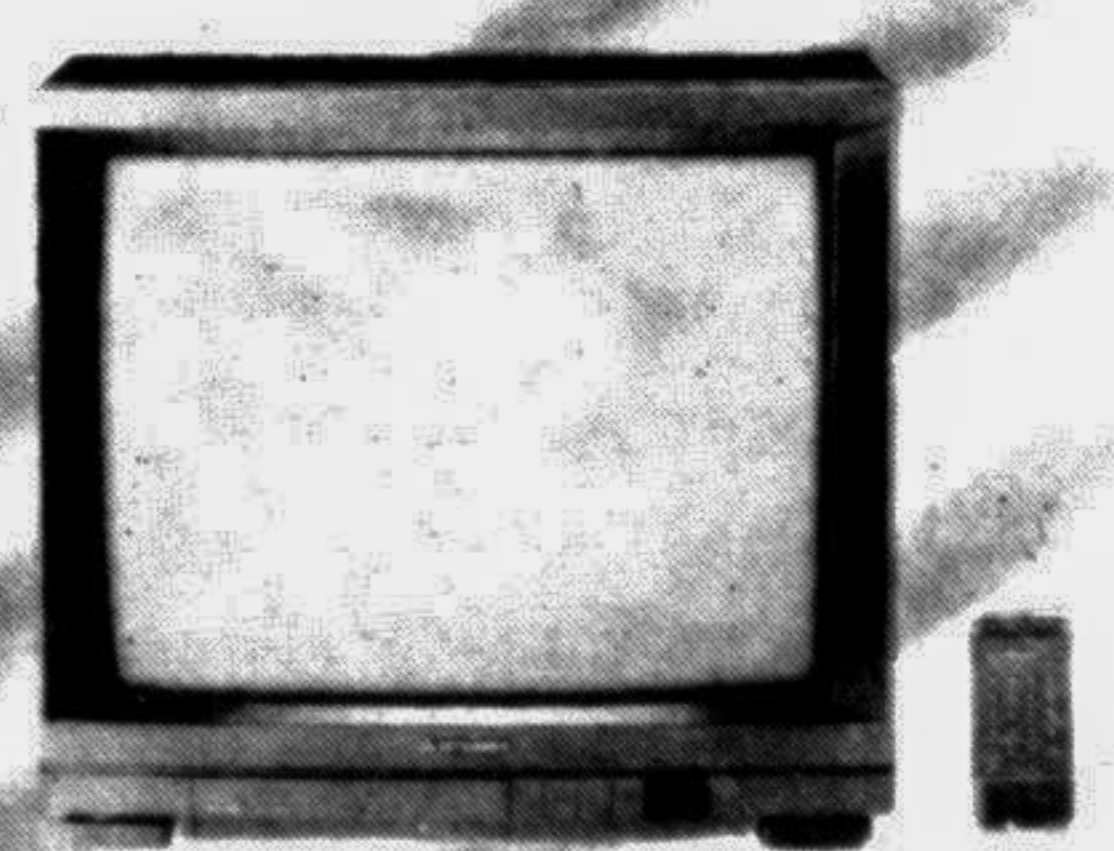
RAJUK authority reserves the right to consider or reject any application without assigning any reason thereof.

**Chairman**  
 Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakkha  
 Dhaka.

DFP-4154-10/9  
 G-1420

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