

Dhaka Day by Day

A City that Savours Sleep

by Ziaul Karim

No one perhaps has discovered the myriad faces of sleep as the inhabitants of Dhaka have done. Sleep has never been so beautiful and yet so thoroughly utilitarian. This multifarious character of sleep is this city's own speciality just like the French have 360 types of cheese.

We are now in the age of the instant. Everything is gradually coming under the trade mark of 'instant' — coffee, tea, fast food, millionaire (lottery), education (coaching centres) and who knows what next. God help them when happiness, democracy, government,

love, values, et al would be instant! However, the city dwellers have developed their own brand of instant sleep to be at par with the trend. Travelling from one part of the city to another by bus, mini-bus or auto rickshaw demands special physical fitness and stamina. Overcrowded to the point of suffocation and full of nauseating smoke, these vehicles however cannot deter the veteran passengers from taking a quick sleep for 10 to 20 minutes. Such on-journey sleep is no luxury. A commuter can match his escape-from-pains sleep while standing. One can think the passenger is imitating horse, known for such sleep. But our passenger is lucky because he runs no risk of falling. Fellow passengers are all around him. Or, is it a case where selection can do miracle?

There is a word in French *savoir-faire* meaning knowledge of how to behave in any situation. Here the dwellers have an excellent *savoir-faire* to cope with longish traffic jams. Whenever there is a jam, they manage to get a sleep amid honking, shouting and sounds from infinite number of sources.

After all these on-the-way varieties of sleep from home to one's work place, there begins on completion of elementary ritual of attendance, a new phase of sleep — especially at government offices. Siesta at work is one of the oldest forms of sleep and possibly dates back

to the day when Bangladesh started going to office during British rule.

When people in other countries retire to bed after the day's work, here in Dhaka we live perhaps, in a sleep-work-sleep-work combination.

Sleep is so predominant in our life that even the teacher-student relations rest on it to a large extent. In our unrealistic system of education, the student finds a way-out from the boredom of burdensome learning in sleep and so does the teacher too, often while teaching.

There is no situation which does not give rise to a need for this sleep. A doctor's chamber is the next place to the growing list of the culture of sleep. With long queue and hours of nothing to do time what could possibly be better than a sleep! And the people of the metropolis hardly let this opportunity of sleep slip away.

Political parties are also conscious about the role of sleep in our life. They call hartals very often to do a great favour to the sleep-happy city dwellers.

Life in Dhaka is by and large dull. This city sleeps early, unlike many other metropolises. What else it can do! It has nothing exciting to offer to its dwellers. The dwellers know this and in weekends they better surrender them to a long sleep. Sleep here works as a form of defence mechanism in Freudian sense of the term. It helps the dwellers to forget the dullness of life.

Besides all these mundane reasons for sleep, there could be a spiritual reason too. In Indian philosophy life is considered a mere illusion or *maya*. May be, the unscheduled sleep for the inhabitants of the metropolis is a way of tackling the *maya*. But, whatever the reason — spiritual or mundane, psychological or sociological — for the dwellers of the city, a sleep, of all the blessings, is perhaps the most divine bestowed on them by the benign Providence.



Mannan visits fire victims

State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan yesterday visited Agargaon Beltala slum area to see the loss and damage caused by the fire last Friday, reports BSS.

He talked to the affected people and distributed some clothes among them.

The state minister assured that all sorts of help and assistance would be extended for their rehabilitation and necessary relief materials would be distributed soon.

He was informed that 262 houses were gutted in the fire and 976 people have been affected.

Diabetic Assoc Ctg branch polls

CHITTAGONG, Dec 26: M. Abdur Rahman Chowdhury and Jahangir Uddin Chowdhury were elected president and general secretary respectively of Chittagong branch of Bangladesh Diabetic Association at the biennial election of the association held here today, reports BSS.

Other office-bearers of the association elected for the years 1995 and 1996 were two vice presidents, one joint secretary, a treasurer and seven members of the executive committee.

Hasina condole death of AL leader

Leader of the Opposition and Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina expressed profound shock and sorrow at the death of Sardar Abdur Rahim, a prominent leader of Mohammodpur thana Awami League, reports UNB.

In a message of condolence, she prayed for the departed soul and expressed sympathy to the members of the bereaved family.

The Awami League chief visited the residence of Rahim to pay her last respect to the late leader and console his family members.



State Minister for Cultural Affairs Prof. Jahanara Begum inaugurating 'Bangladesh Festival of Arts in India' at Mavalankar auditorium in New Delhi on December 20. — PID photo

Holy Hajj to be celebrated May 8

The holy Hajj will be celebrated on May 8, 1995 subject to sighting of the moon, reports BSS.

Arrangements have been made to send Hajj pilgrims under government management under the Hajj policy of 1995. Those who intend to perform Hajj outside the government management having international passports may contact Saudi Embassy for their Hajj visas.

The application forms for Hajj containing rules and regulations along with envelopes are available free of cost at all scheduled banks, offices of the deputy commissioners and Hajj Office at Mirpur, Dhaka. This year a sum of Taka 83,815 would have to be paid for Hajj which is equal to that of last year. No Hajj pilgrim need to pay pilgrim pass fee, Hajj booklet fee, luggage sticker, and waist belt fee, health examination and meningitis injection certificate fee.

The intending Hajj pilgrims who will deposit Hajj amount for Hajj in 1995 will be allowed to go to Saudi Arabia subject to producing health clearance and police clearance certificates. Those who are unable to go to Makkah for Hajj due to old age may get the Hajj done by sending healthy, able and well bodied men as 'badal Hajj'.

The breakup of Hajj cost are Biman fare Taka 40,000, foreign travel tax Taka 1,300,

terminal fee Taka 300, and house rent at Saudi Arabia, tent rent, moallam fee, transportation fee, sacrificial cost and food charge etc Taka 42,215.

Those who have paid advance house rent amounting to Taka 16,000 will have to pay the rest of the amount of Taka 67,815 to the same scheduled bank where the house rent amount was deposited and get a receipt of Taka 83,815 from the bank.

The Hajj pilgrims will be allowed to take extra 550 US dollars with them by depositing equivalent Bangladeshi amount to any scheduled bank which will be the excess of their personal foreign exchange quota.

The Hajj pilgrims will have to apply for Hajj with the original bank receipt of Taka 83,815 to the concerned deputy commissioner's office by January 31, 1995 along with a self addressed envelope with postal stamp of Taka eight.

The Hajj pilgrims will have to report to their own district medical board through the concerned deputy commissioner's office for their health examination from February 5, 1995. Pilgrims declared unfit by their district medical board will not be allowed to perform Hajj.

This year houses hired for the pilgrims are very adjacent to haram sharif and as such there is virtually no difference

Opposition urged not to resign

By Staff Correspondent

A K Faezul Huq, a former minister and only son of Sher-e-Bangla in a statement yesterday urged the combined opposition to postpone all its programmes including the decision to resign and to let the BNP government complete its full term.

Huq also asked the government to arrive at a mutually 'acceptable and honourable solution to the problem of a caretaker government.'

He pointed out that the 'BNP leadership should realise that the Prime Minister is basically a product of the Parliament, and on its dissolution the BNP will lose the moral right to stay in power.'

Faezul Huq said 'A lapse on either side could cost us more than what we have achieved so far. It could jeopardise not only democracy but also our hard-earned independence.'

Condolence book to be opened at Indian HC

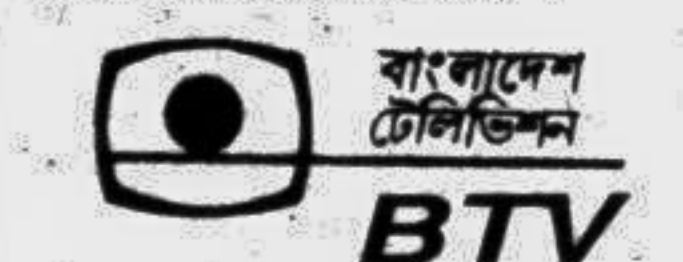
A condolence book will be opened at the Indian High Commission at Dhanmondi road no 2 tomorrow and the day after and for inscription mourning the death of Zail Singh, reports UNB.

The book will remain open from 9 am to 4 pm for the visitors to note down condolences on the demise of the former President of India.

An Indian High Commission press release said that the former President would be given a state funeral.

His body has been brought to New Delhi by a special aircraft and will be kept for public homage at his residence, it said.

The Indian government has declared a 7-day state mourning as a mark of respect for Zail Singh, who passed away on December 25.



Tuesday	
8:45	Opening announcement Recitation from Holy Quran Programme summary
9:00	SAARC Cricket Tournament '94 Today's match Sri Lanka vs Pakistan Live telecast from National Stadium-1
12:30	Closing of the first half of the sports programme Starting of second half of the sports programme
5:10	Sangbad
5:25	Drama series: The Miraculous Melopes National Television debate competition
7:00	Open University
8:00	News in Bangla
8:30	Dream serial: Chhaya Shikari
10:00	News in English
10:30	Film show: Northern Exposure
11:30	Khabar/ The news
11:40	Tomorrow's programme summary
11:45	Closing announcement

Nagarik Sangsad observes founding anniversary

By Staff Correspondent

Nagarik Shilpi Sangsad Sunday observed its 28th founding anniversary at its office in the city's Mohammadpur area.

The founding anniversary meeting recalled its late organising members — Fateh Lohani, Fazle Lohani, Atiqul Islam, Akmal Hossain and Mahmud Goni. The members of the organisation also prayed for the salvation of the souls of the late members and observed one-minute silence at the beginning of the function.

The organisation decided to stage two more dramas in 1995 and '96 and to hold a workshop on drama during the period.

They will also hold a drama festival in 1996 on the occasion of 30th founding anniversary of the organisation.

The function was attended by the organisation's founding member president Mostafa Kamal, first vice president Gazi Sadek and secretary general Feroze Iftikhar.

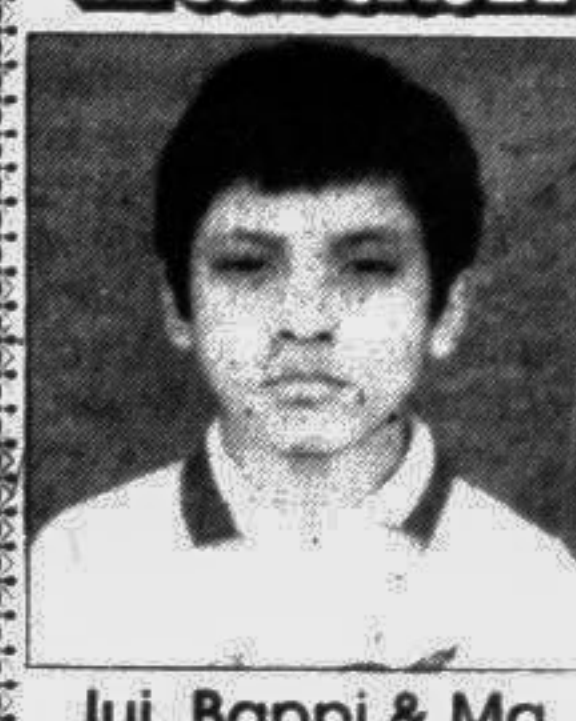
Discussion on Jesus Christ

All Nabis, including Jesus Christ were non-sectional and non-communal in their teachings towards humanity.

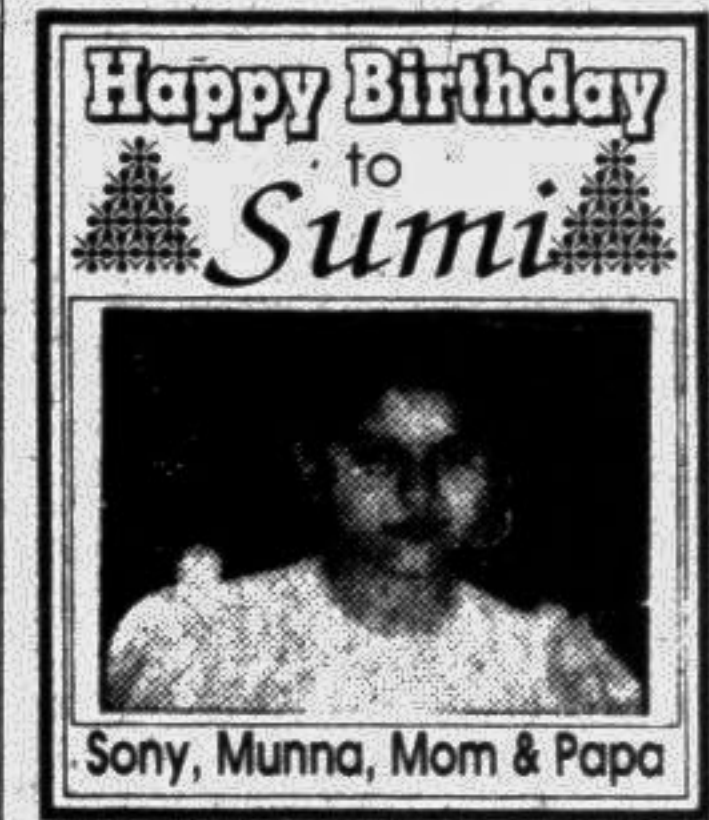
The observation came at a discussion on 'Mystery of Birth of Jesus and His nurturing by the Supreme Authority, and His Spiritual Ascension before Departure from the earth into heaven', organised by Chistia Sangha in the city on Sunday to celebrate the birth anniversary of Christ, reports UNB.

It also called upon all irrespective of sectional belief to work hard for humanity and to maintain communal harmony in the society by adopting the ideals of Nabis.

Happy Birthday to Polash



Jui, Bappi & Ma



Sony, Munna, Mom & Papa

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Weather

Temperature may rise

Dry weather is likely to prevail with partly cloudy sky over the country during the next 12 hours till 6:00 pm today, reports UNB.

The Met Office forecasts night temperature is likely to rise by 1 to 2 degrees Celsius over Rajshahi division and slight rise elsewhere over the country.

It may register a fall in the subsequent two days but little change is predicted in the following week, it added.

Country's highest temperature 28.5 degrees Celsius was recorded at Cox's Bazar and the lowest at 7.9 degrees at Ishurdi.

The sun sets today at 5:19 pm and rises tomorrow at 6:40 am.

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