

Dhaka Day by Day

A Journey to Hell and Back

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



Whatever our religious affiliations are, there is no doubt that at some point in our lives we wonder about that disturbing question regarding the after life. One may go insane imagining the horrors awaiting at Hell's gate and beyond and be on tenterhooks until the final moment of oblivion. The city dweller, however, has already had a glimpse of this much-talked-about place. For him or her, hell is right here in Dhaka and a place that must be visited at least once a day.

This gigantic inferno that would put even Dante's to shame goes by the misnomer of 'Motiheel'. Where the 'motis' (pearls) got lost to be replaced by dust, smog and grime, no one seems to know. What the daily commuter does know is that this is the place where the world's worst traffic jams are, where the most obnoxious odours concentrate and where the worst kind of pollution clogs the air, along with the commuters' lungs. In fact Motiheel could very well be renamed as the ugliest and most dreadful spot on a list of top ten worst places in the city.

It all begins early in the morning when the city dweller grits his teeth and takes some kind of vehicle to the dreaded place. Things are not so bad until Kakrail on one side and Gopbag on the other where the traffic is heavy but bearable. Then, just as one enters Dakin Bangla intersection, the temperature shoots up significantly (remember Hell is supposed to be hot) and one realizes with shock that there are no trees in this terrible place. Everything is concrete, grey and exceedingly ugly. After all, what could be more 'hellish' than a place where there is no sign of greenery?

The choking, the heat and the carbon monoxide clouds continue to build up all the way to Bangladesh Bank and all one can see are oceans of rickshaws, cars and scooters practically on top of each other. With the atmospheric barometer, the city dweller's blood, too, begins to boil. It may be mentioned that Motiheel has the strange ability of transforming even the most benign of persons into an aggressive, sadistic, monster. Says a regular commuter, "Every step forward is like fighting a small battle. You just become mean, feeling smug when you thwart a car's attempts to overtake you and even begin to resent the pedestrians crossing the street since they delay you further."

The congregation at the Shapla Chattar is, perhaps, the worst. A car will zoom out of nowhere from the wrong side. A doubledecker will screech to a halt only inches away from your face with the helper confidently jumping off to give directions to the bus driver, completely unconcerned about the sea of vehicles which have had to 'emergency land' all of a sudden. Pedestrians and *dubba watas* (tiffin carrying boys) will meander through this obstacle race, rickshaws will form at least five lanes, scooters will zig zag their way into every

corner while the cars, will honk themselves hoarse.

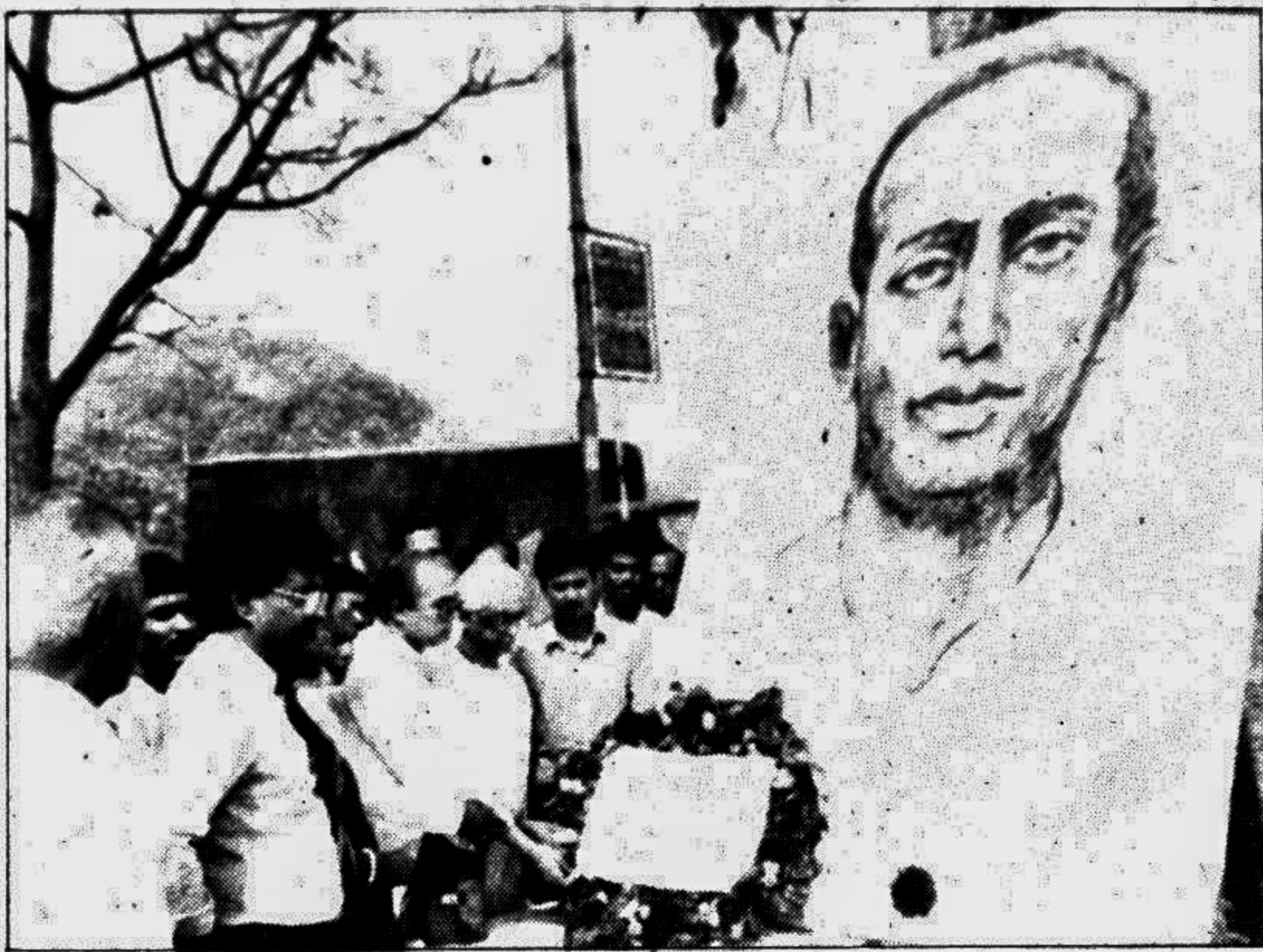
If there is anything worse than the traffic, it is the noises that have made most Motiheel commuters partly deaf and temporarily insane. The screams of buses, screeching of scooters, tinkling of rickshaws and blaring of loudspeakers announcing lotteries; new movies or latest remedies for hairloss, form the "Greatest Cacophony in the world." While 'Mugabala', 'Roop Suhana' and 'Amma-dek', and other hindi film songs, are played simultaneously from various corners of the great 'Jheel', people beckon each other with 'Oy Ibliser poot' (Satan's son) and other appropriate terms of endearment.

To make this hell-on-earth complete are the varieties of odours that seep through the buildings and blow into your face. For those, deprived ones who do not visit Motiheel too often, imagine an exotic mixture of bad eggs (open drain smell), bad oil (the doubtful *tehar* from the eatery next door), smog (from the cars), ammonia (from practically every pavement cum public toilet) topped with some burning tar. After inhaling this diabolic medley of smells, the Motiheel commuter feels either nauseated, breathless or high.

An informal survey revealed that commuters to this awfully, awful area unanimously agree that going to Motiheel is the most hated activity they can think of. The answer to "How do you feel when you go to Motiheel?" is invariably, "horrible" "traumatic" or "I really wish I did not have to go there." Unfortunately, for these poor souls, going to Motiheel is an unavoidable necessity since it is the centre of all business as well as political rendezvous.

Looking at the bleak, dusty buildings and lacklustre roads overburdened by traffic, it is hard to imagine what Motiheel looked like before turning into such an eye sore. Whatever happened to the beautiful, huge *Jheel* that gave Motiheel its name? The only reminder of this great water body is a miniature *Jheel*, behind Bangladesh Bank where, even now many cross over by boat to get to the commercial centre. Home of the infamous aunt of Nawab Sirajudawalla, Ghosheti Begum (where else would she be with a name like that), Motiheel was far from the ugly, overcrowded, hot, polluted hell that it is today. The *Jheel's* silvery water filled with fish, no doubt attracted many birds while the surrounding paddy fields and lush trees formed a rare oasis for those lucky enough to live in this place.

The harried commuter, whose face, and possibly lungs, have become grey with the carbon monoxide emitted all over the area, would be incredulous at such romanticizing of a place so ugly and unwholesome. For him or her, Motiheel is a nightmarish hell hole with no parking space and not a single decent eating place — virtually an unbearable ordeal — that has to be relived at least six days a week. Thank God for Fridays!



Leaders of the Gano Forum stand in front of the portrait of Masterda Surya Sen after laying wreath at the TSC of Dhaka University yesterday. Different programmes were held yesterday to mark the 101st birth anniversary of the renowned anti-British revolutionary. — Star photo

Five comrades of 'Masterda' Surya Sen honoured

The country's five veteran revolutionaries and close associates of Masterda Surya Sen were accorded reception here yesterday, reports BSS.

The Masterda Surya Sen Parishad gave the reception at Dhaka University Teachers-Students' Centre (TSC) to Deben Ghosh, Manoranjan Dhar, Dr Abdul Quader Chowdhury, Rabi Neogi and Binod Bihari.

Presided over by the parishad convenor Justice Kemaluddin Hossain, the reception was addressed by Mahila Parishad president Ayesha Khanam, Gona Forum leader Pankaj Bhattacharyya, JSD leader Hasanul Haq Inu, Awami League presidium member Abdus Samad Azad, litterateur, Faiz Ahmed, Professor Zillur Rahman Siddique and Syed Hasan Imam.



Today's plays

Following plays will be performed on the concluding day, today, of the first ever national children's drama festival at the auditorium of the Shilpakala Academy in the city, says a press release.

The People's Theatre Association has been sponsoring the eight-day festival.

5:00 pm : Drama — *Ek Je Chhito Tui*; troupe — Tarango Laitkala Kendra, Dhaka.

6:30 pm : Drama — *Putul*; troupe — Tongi Shishu Theatre, Tongi.

7:30 pm : *Aback Japan*; troupe — Kendriya Kanchi Kanchar Mela, Dhaka.

8:00 pm : Drama — *Sanhar*; troupe — Children's Theatre Troupe, Lok Natya Dal.

Photo show

By Staff Correspondent

An exhibition of photographs entitled 'Portraits' by Carlos Freire opened at the Alliance Francaise gallery in the city yesterday.

Freire, a Brazilian journalist turned photographer, has lived and worked in Paris since 1968, and this show brings together some rare black and white portraits of personalities from the world of arts, literature and cinema spanning over two decades from 1972 to 1992.

The show was inaugurated by Monzorul Alam Beg, president, Bangladesh Photographic Society. It runs through April 2 and is opened daily (except Saturday) from 9:00 am to 12 noon and 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Happy Birthday to
ATISHA
Best wishes from your wellwishers

MODERN INDUSTRIES (BANGLADESH) LTD.

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NOTICE OF EXTRA ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given for information of all shareholders of MODERN INDUSTRIES (BANGLADESH) LIMITED that an Extra Ordinary General Meeting of the Company will be held on Thursday, the 27th April, 1995 at 12:00 noon at the project site of the Company at RIVER VIEW COLD STORAGE at Mukhtarpur, Munshiganj for the purpose of considering and if thought fit passing the following resolution with or without amendments as special resolutions:

- Resolved that the Authorized Capital be increased from Tk. 1,00,00,000/- (Taka one crore) to Tk. 10,00,00,000/- (Taka ten crore) only.
 - Resolved that the Authorized share capital of the Company be increased from Tk. 1,00,00,000/- (Taka one crore) to Tk. 10,00,00,000/- (Taka ten crore) divided into 10,00,000 (Ten lac) shares of Tk. 100/- each which shall be issued on such terms and at such time (a) as the Board shall determine and which shall be and when issued and fully paid up be converted into stock at the discretion of the Board.
 - Consequent upon the increase of the authorized share capital of the Company it is further resolved that clause No. V (1st para), page 8 of the Memorandum of Association and clause No. 4 of the Articles of Association, page 10 be and hereby amended to read as follows:
- Clause No. V of the Memorandum of Association (1st para)**
- The share capital of the Company is Tk. 10,00,00,000/- (Taka ten crore) divided into 10,00,000 (Ten lac) shares of Tk. 100/- (Taka one hundred) each with power to increase or reduce the capital of the company and to divide the shares in the capital for the time being into several classes and to attach thereto respectively such preferential, deferred or special rights, privileges or conditions as may be determined by or in accordance with the Articles of Association of the Company and to vary, modify or abrogate any such rights, privileges or conditions in such manner as may for the time being be provided by the Articles of Association of the company permissible under the statutory provision in force.
- Clause No. 4 of the Articles of Association:**
- The authorized share capital of the company is Tk. 10,00,00,000/- (Taka ten crore) divided into 10,00,000 (Ten lac) ordinary shares of Tk. 100/- (Taka one hundred) each with power to increase or reduce the share capital for the time being and to divide, sub-divide and consolidate, the shares in the capital of the company into several classes or stocks and attach thereto respectively such preferential, deferred or special rights or privileges or conditions as may be determined by the company in general meeting and to vary, modify or abrogate such rights, privileges or conditions and also to issue shares of higher or lower denominations.
- Resolved that right shares be issued at 100% premium at a ratio of 1:3 i.e. one right share be issued against three existing shares and if any fraction thereof it would be rounded up to the next denomination.
 - Resolved that such right shares shall be issued to those members of the company, who are registered in the Books of the Company on 11th April, 1995 in the proportion of one such new share for three existing shares held and that such new share (a) shall rank pari passu as regards future dividends and in all other respects, with the existing ordinary shares of the Company.
 - Resolved that the Board of Directors be and hereby authorized to give such Direction as may be necessary and to settle any dispute or difficulties which may arise to the effect of issuance of right share.

Date: 22nd March, 1995

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD
KHURSHID AZAM
Director

- NOTE:**
- The Share Transfer Book of the Company will remain closed from the 11th April, 1995 to 27th April, 1995 (both days inclusive).
 - A member entitled to attend and vote at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and vote instead of him/her. Such proxy shall be a member of the company.
 - The proxy form duly signed and must be affixed with revenue stamp of Tk. 4.00 and should be deposited at the registered office of the company not later than 48 (Forty eight) hours before the time fixed for the meeting.
 - Transport arrangement will be made for the shareholders. Details of which are being sent separately.

Humayun elected FPAB hony secy

Humayun Kabir Khandaker, a renowned social worker and industrialist has been elected honorary secretary (information, education and communication) of the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) for the third time, says a press release.

He hails from Pir Shahab Bari of Ragnathpur under Homna Thana of Comilla.

Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology Dhaka

"Tender Notice for Purchase of Scientific Instruments & Lab. Equipments"

No EU/P&D/FP-1006/95/GEND-2124(3) Dated: 22-3-95

Sealed Tenders are invited for the supply of Scientific Instruments, Laboratory Equipments etc. for several Dept/Office of this University from the reputed indentors/suppliers. Tender schedule together with terms and conditions will be available from the undersigned by showing the receipt of Taka 1,000/- (One thousand) only (non-refundable) deposited in the Sonali Bank Branch of this University in favour of the Comptroller, Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET), Dhaka. Each tender must be accompanied by a Bank Guarantee or Bank Draft or Pay Order from any Nationalised Bank in favour of the Comptroller, BUET, Dhaka amounting to 2% of the tendered amount as earnest money without which no tender will be considered for acceptance. Tender will be received by the undersigned up to 2:30 PM on 24.4.95 and will be opened on the same time in presence of the tenderers.

The University reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without showing any reason thereof.

No tender form will be sold against PO, DD, Money Order and on the day of opening of the tender.

Deputy Director
Planning & Development.

JS' body on Textile meets

The 38th meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on the Ministry of Textiles was held yesterday at the cabinet room of Bangladesh Jatiya Sangsad, reports BSS.

State Minister for Textiles Abdul Mannan was in the chair. The meeting confirmed the minutes of the 37th meeting held of February 12.

The meeting discussed various issues relating to distribution of yarn produced by different mills under Bangladesh Textile Mills Corporation (BTMC).

MRK CONSULTANTS Executive Search

GENERAL MANAGER MARKETING & SALES

A large national company engaged in marketing and distribution of health care products in Bangladesh has a vacancy for **General Manager-Marketing & Sales**. This is one of the top positions of the company reporting to the CEO and responsible for a key function.

The incumbent is required to have extensive knowledge of modern marketing theories and practices with broad understanding of the market in which he will operate. He will have a record of personal initiative and impact, creativity, excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to grasp and solve complex business problems. He will provide strategic planning and operational direction to the company for achieving its objectives.

The holder of this demanding job will expand the present distribution network and create new standards for the existing customer base. He will have additional responsibilities for developing, training and sustaining a highly motivated Sales Force.

Interested candidates should have an advanced degree in an appropriate discipline, preferably in Business Administration with major in Marketing. They should have several years' experience of marketing consumer or pharmaceutical products. Willingness to travel frequently and extensively is essential.

The position carries attractive salary with fringe benefits in line with those of the top employers of the country.

If you want to accept this challenging job, please apply in confidence by 4th April, 1995 to MRK Consultants, Bilquis Tower, 6 Gulshan North C.A. Dhaka-1212. Tel : 885074, 885100 Fax : 880-2-885086.

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NOTICE

Provisional Members of the BGMEA have already been requested to become Ordinary Members vide BGMEA circular No. 09/95. But till date a large number of units have not become Ordinary Members.

All Provisional Members are, therefore, requested again to apply with EPB Registration, Bonded Warehouse Licence, Trade Licence, Export-Import Licence etc. to become Ordinary (Regular) Members of BGMEA Latest by April 7th, 1995.

Members who will not apply for Ordinary Membership of BGMEA by 07.04.95 will not get any service from BGMEA including issuance of U.D.

Secretary

COURSE ON "STROKE MANAGEMENT" FOR GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Continuing Medical Education
Department of Neurology, IPGM&R
Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd.

Department of Neurology, IPGM&R and Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. are jointly organizing a 5 day course (16th-20th June '95) on "Stroke Management" for general practitioners who are in general practice for at least 5 years. The course will be coordinated by Prof. Anisul Haque MBBS, FCPS, FRCP, Head of the department of neurology, IPGM&R. Eminent teachers of Neuroscience of the country will conduct the course. Physicians and Surgeons interested in this course are requested to fill the intent form given below (Photocopy may also be used) and send to the "Conference Secretariat" by 20th April '95.

INTENT FORM

Name: _____
Qualification: _____
Year of passing (MBBS): _____
Institution: _____
Special interest: _____
Mailing address: _____

I wish to attend the course on Stroke Management.

Signature: _____

For further details please contact:
Conference Secretariat
Dr. S. M. Zakir Hossain
Medical Services Department
Beximco Pharmaceuticals Ltd. Tel: 861891-5 Ext.-227
17 Dhanmondi R/A Road No. 2 Dhaka 1205