

Metropolitan

**Dhaka Day by Day**

**Where BTV is at its Best!**

by Lamis Hossain

Living in Dhaka, or even worse, Uttara, without a 24-hour transport service or a satellite dish (gasp!) considerably narrows your social life and increases the scope for boredom. Unless, of course, in your hour of desperation you turn to that option of last resort — Bangladesh Television (BTV).

With a fresh round of hartals, sieges, and gheraos gathering full steam, there will be plenty of opportunities for Dhakaites to catch up with programmes on their favourite channel.

But how should you start the viewing fest? One would normally recommend the entertainment offered, but as there is so little of it on BTV, you may as well start with the news.

The news on BTV is bound to entertain you more than the recent attempt at humour in new package dramas. Not only will you become familiar with the 101 chiffoons sarees that a certain politician is fond of, but you may also learn why BTV has nearly everyone fuming.

In a world where "Post industrial technetronic society," "information superhighway" and "communication revolution" are the new buzzwords, we are told that the nations with developed communications will be the rulers of the next century. Manipulation of information is the key to the future. On this count, BTV is on the right track. It has raised "manipulation of information" to an art form.

The brightest jewel in its crown was the 10 pm news on December 28. Viewers waited with bated breath for the revelation of our country's future. Did or didn't the Opposition resign? The news was preceded by "Time Trek, the story of a time travelling cop and a parallel universe, but BTV viewers were left wondering whether BTV was lost in a time warp itself. No mention at all was made of the parliamentarians' decision.

BTV's bias is not always so blatant. Sometimes their actions can be passed off as selective reporting. For example, no reference was made of the newspaper photographers who were seriously assaulted by the police at the rally held by Shibir activists, but much fuss was made of a certain lady editor who was injured by the demonstrators.

Often the information manipulation is coy to say the least. A presenter on a BTV programme on the market place and the price of essentials, seems to be an old hand at this. During an interview with traders on the fluctuating price of food, he kept on asking, "Is the change due to the hartals?" Is your business suffering because of the hartals? He seemed poised to rephrase the question in fifty different ways just to hear the words, "Yes hartals ruined my life."

Just when you think BTV has started in-trepid and impartial reporting, you realise that there may be another motive lurking behind it. The recent report on the increasing congestion and worrying rise in the number of rickshaws was surprisingly candid about the dim situation in the metropolis. You wonder why BTV is so brutally frank until you remember the political colours of the Dhaka city authorities.

But BTV deserves praise as well. After all it has enabled non-Star plus homes to tune in to CNN and BBC. (It has also made it easier for BTV to just cut and paste from these information giants and pass it off as BTV news.)

Without BTV's wonderful initiative to introduce CNN, we wouldn't O.D (over dose) on O.J (Simpson) every morning or have to watch Larry the Lizard King. In fact, without CNN we wouldn't be able to enjoy the plastic good looks of Linden Soles and Bobby Batista from their Atlanta news desk, or listen to the weather presented by someone called Ted Textor. Without CNN we wouldn't have Showbiz Today — the entertainment programme that is unabashedly shallow, and does not even pretend to be intelligent (but we love it!).

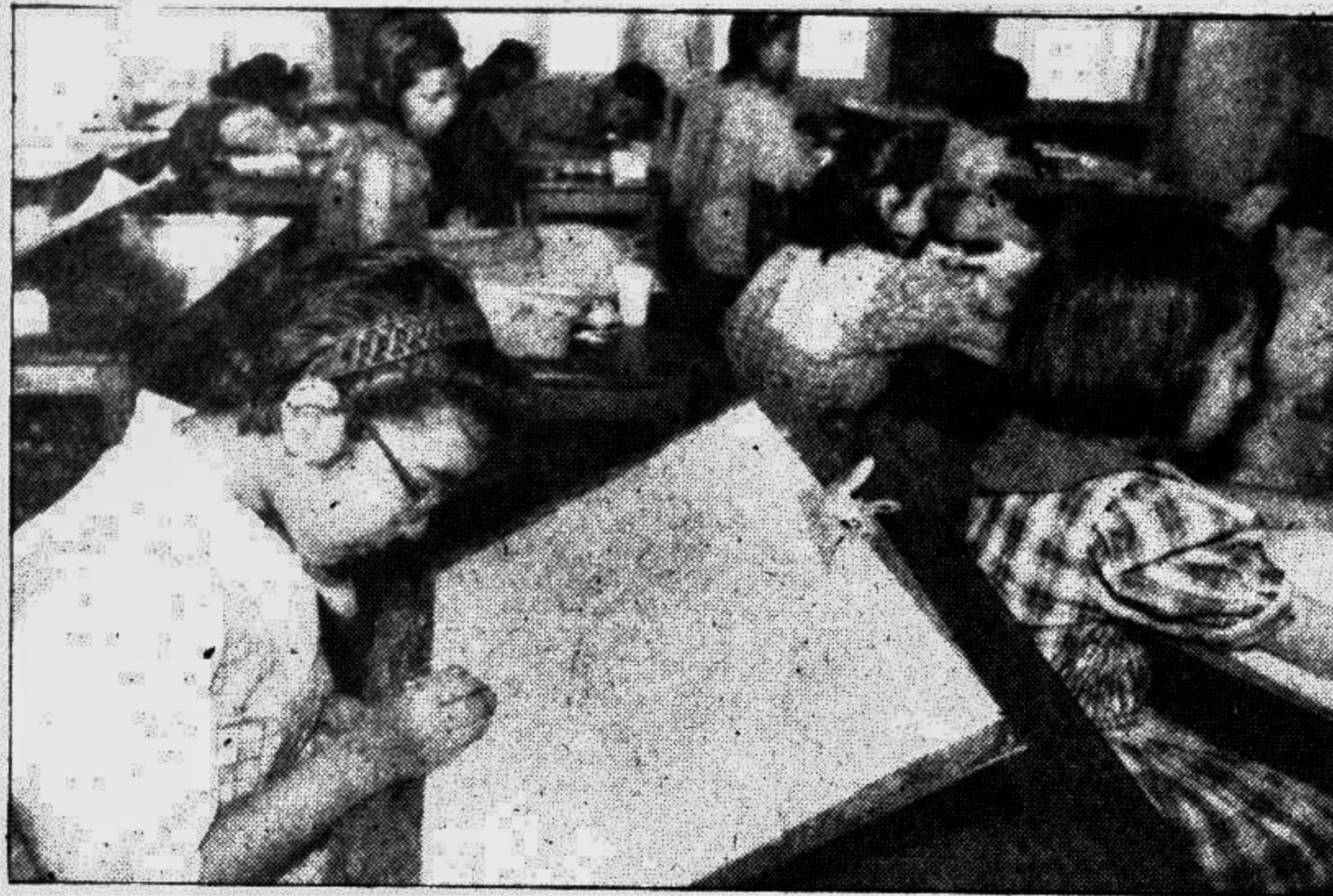
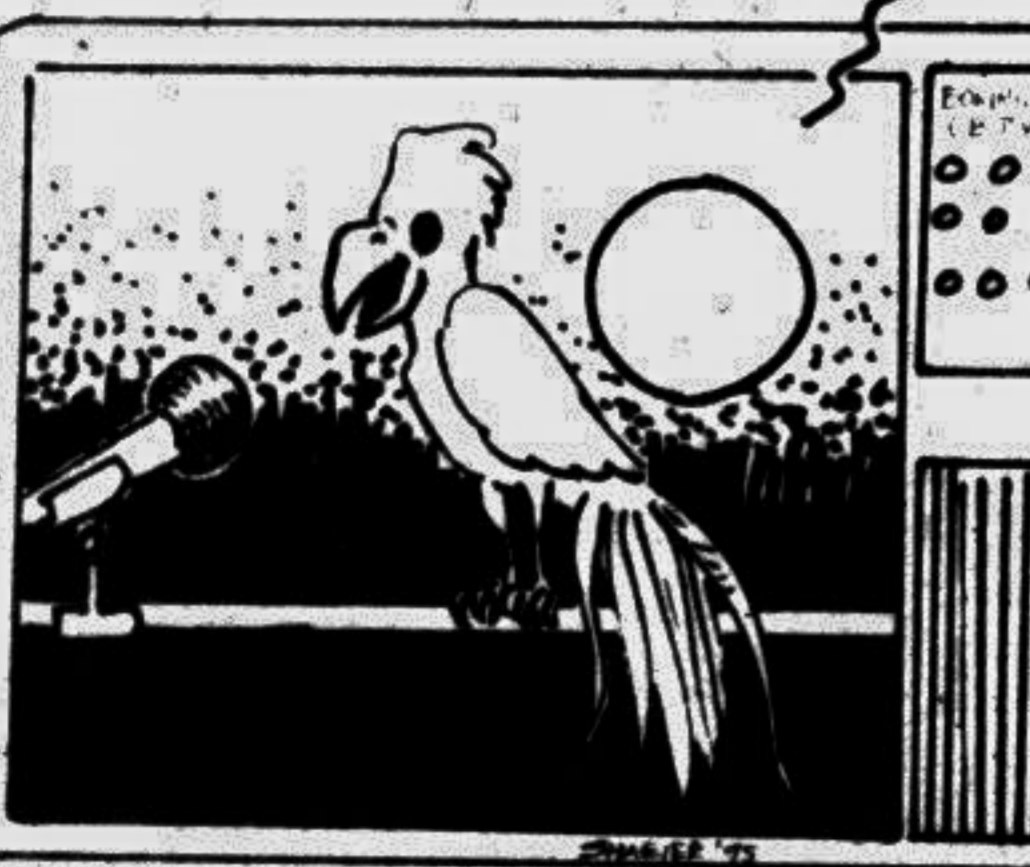
But unless you want to know all about America and do a lot of cable shopping, CNN just won't satiate your information craving. You need BBC for that (obvious favoritism here). Unfortunately, the BBC's no nonsense news reporting and analysis is aired at ridiculous hours. From 7 a.m to 8 a.m. most of us are either fast asleep or too damn busy getting ready for work. From 2 a.m-4 a.m we are either busy at work, or enjoying our afternoon siesta. Couldn't BTV extend BBC after 4 p.m like the good old days and show one hour less of CNN in the morning?

Of course, news isn't everything. BTV does churn out decent dramas once in a while. Matti O Manush is a particularly uplifting programme, and some of the foreign programmes like Northern Exposure, Murphy Brown, Law and Order, and the Equaliser are unmissable.

But perhaps no one's watching anyway. According to a survey last year (by a Bangla daily) of Dhaka viewer preferences, 37 per cent of TV viewers were found to receive foreign programmes through dish antenna and 60 per cent of the remaining 63 per cent were considering a connection. Most worrying, but not surprising is that 41 per cent of satellite viewers prefer Zee TV (yikes).

The message is clear: unless BTV plugs in viewers will tune out.

THIS IS THE 5'O'CLOCK NEWS-THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT...BLAH BLAH... DEVELOPMENT...BLAH BLAH...THE PM...THE MS... NO CRISIS...DEMOCRATIC GOVT...YAMN... 2.2.2



Tiny-tots trying their hands at an art competition in the city on Friday. The Rotary Club of Gulshan organised the contest to mark the Independence Day.

**Jyoti Basu lauds Dhaka's economic progress**

Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Dr Khondaker Mosharraf Hossain, who is now on a visit to India, called on the Chief Minister of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu Friday, according to a message received in Dhaka yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting, the Bangladesh Minister apprised the West Bengal Chief Minister of the progress of Bangladesh economy so far achieved. The minister also briefed the Chief Minister on the programme and strategies of the government for the promotion of energy and mineral resources of Bangladesh.

Basu lauded the economic progress of Bangladesh and expressed the hope that the economic ties between India and Bangladesh would be further strengthened in the years to come.

The Energy Minister, who arrived Calcutta on Thursday evening from New Delhi, also called on Power Minister of West Bengal Dr Sankar Kumar Sen and discussed issues of mutual interests.

Dr Mosharraf Hossain, who is leading a four-member official delegation, yesterday visited Victoria Memorial Hall and Indiana geological survey there.

Energy and Mineral Resources Secretary Mohammad Faizur Razzak, Deputy High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Calcutta Jahangir Sadat and Chairman of the Petrobangla accompanied the minister.

**Death anniversary**

The death anniversary of Shah Suh Hazrat Mujib Hafez (RA) will be observed today at 26/A, Khawja Dewan Second Lane, Dhaka with due respect and religious fervour, reports BSS.

**World leaders greet Biswas**

The head of state of Malaysia Tuanku Jafar Ibtu Al-marhum Tuanku Abdul Rahman in his message hoped that the existing cordial ties and cooperation between the two countries would further be enhanced in the coming years.

President of the Maldives Maumoon Abdul Gayoom greeted the people of Bangladesh on the auspicious occasion.

Pakistan President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari in his message of felicitation said that the existing ties of close friendship, cooperation and mutual understanding between Pakistan and Bangladesh were the reflection of shared history and common faith of the two nations. He was confident that these bonds would continue to grow from strength to strength in the years ahead for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

Indian President Sankar Dayal Sharma in his congratulatory message expressed his confidence that the existing friendly and mutually beneficial relationship between India and Bangladesh would continue to further improve in the coming years.

He also wished prosperity of the friendly people of Bangladesh.

The King of Saudi Arabia, Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud yesterday congratulated President Abdur Rahman Biswas on the occasion of the Independence and National Day of Bangladesh.

In a message sent to President Biswas, the Saudi King wished peace and prosperity of Bangladesh and the brotherly people of the country.

**Malaysian FM greets Mostafiz**

Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Abdullah Bin Haji Ahmad Badawi has felicitated Bangladesh Foreign Minister ASM Mostafizur Rahman on the occasion of Independence and National Day of Bangladesh to be celebrated today, reports BSS.

**Sony exhibition attract large number of people**

By Staff Correspondent. The Sony exhibition, displaying some 116 electronic products, attracted a large number of people yesterday, despite a half-day hartal observed on the day.

Jointly organised by the Rangs Electronics and Sony International Ltd., the three-day exhibition was inaugurated by President Abdur Rahman Biswas on Friday at Hotel Sheraton. The exhibition ends today.

One hundred and sixteen different electronic items, including 60 new products, have been put on display, the organisers said.

"This is for the first time an electronics company has arranged such an exhibition for the general people in our country," an official of the Rangs Electronics claimed.

About 60 new items which have been put on display for the first time in Bangladesh. People have showed much interest about the 'Kirara Basso' wide cinema television and AC/DC TV. These two new items will be available in the local market soon, the Rangs official informed.

They also said that Rangs Electronics is planning to introduce as much electronic items as possible in the local market. According to them now only one fourth of the Sony electronic products are available in Bangladesh.

Attractive hi-fi disk set, video-camera, telephone sets, VCP, and television set of different models are also on display.

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**BHWA workshop begins Mar 28**

A three day workshop on "the role of homemaker women in economic development" will be held at Chitragong on 28-30 March, organised by Bangladesh Home-workers Women Association (BHWA), says a press release.

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