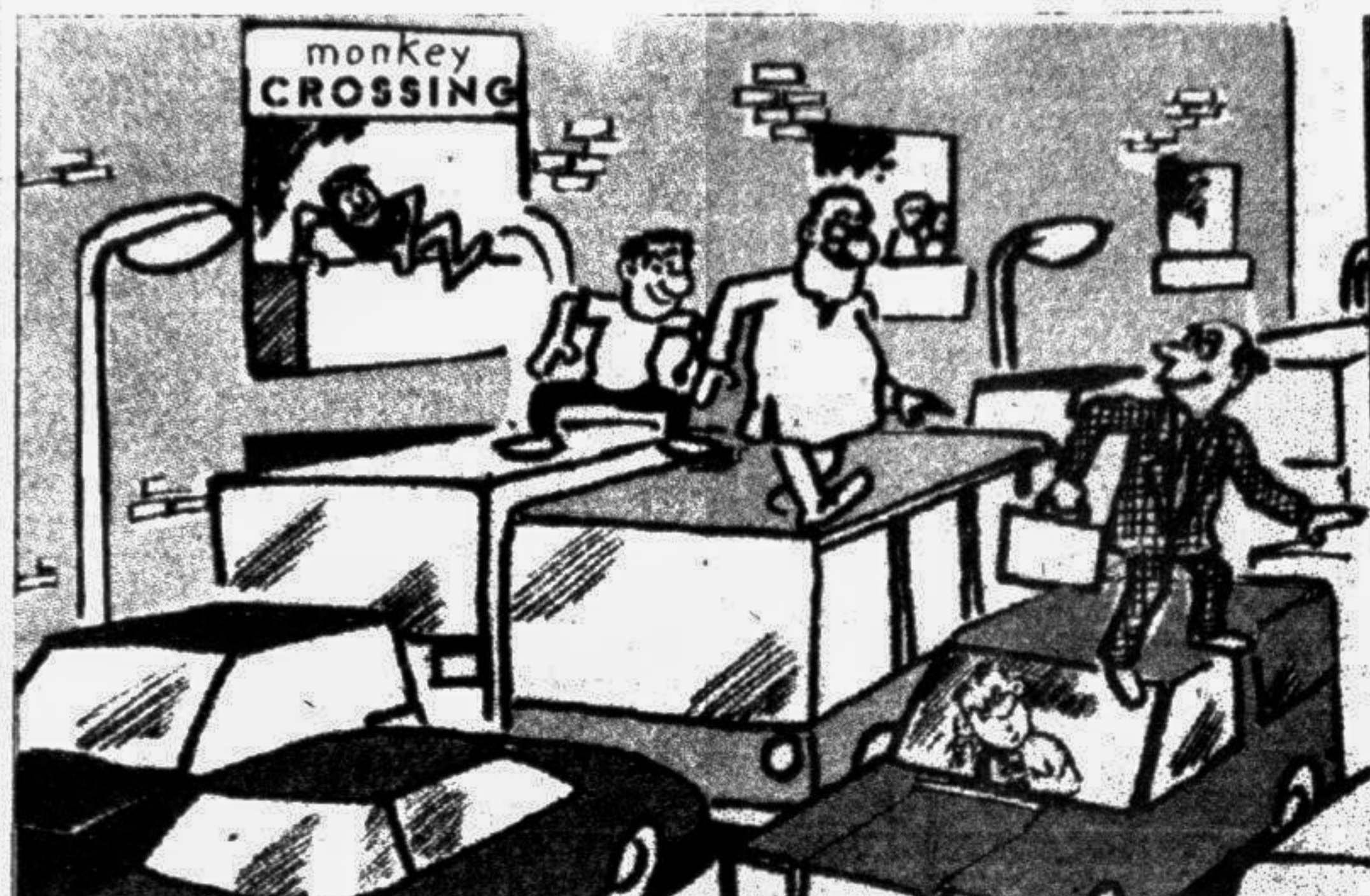


Dhaka Day by Day Entertained Amidst clouds of Poison

by Aasha Mehreen Amin



It was no ordinary traffic jam last week. Practically all the main roads around the heart of the city were choked. All those fools (and there were many of them) who ventured outside after 5:30 pm were in for quite an ordeal that could last for hours.

If you were travelling from Dhanmondi to say, Gulshan, in one of those diabolic contraptions — a baby taxi (baby indeed then the first thing the perverse scooter driver probably did was to take the wrong road — through one of the hell holes of Dhaka — Green Road.

By the time the driver had jerked you to and fro from various points on the way, turning around whenever he met with a jam, you were possibly feeling like a rattle in the hands of a demented infant. But this was just the beginning.

As you approached Farm Gate it seemed as if you were in the world's worst traffic jams. Practically thousands of rickshaws, baby taxis, trucks, buses, and cars were all tangled up in one miserable mess. It was useless to honk away (as many stubborn Dhakaites did) for the traffic was completely immobilized because the Victory Meeting of the Awami League had just broken up and the 'masses' had decided to take their celebrations to the streets.

One must admit that at such times it is worthwhile to take a positive attitude towards such impossible situations. This is what many of the commuters did that day by watching the celebration procession as if it were a drive in film show.

And certainly the colourful procession helped to kill the time, at least for a while.

One of the first things one noticed among the hundreds of processionists as they marched away, was the new versions of the national flag — a green background with four red stars and another white flag with red waves and three green stars. With the thunderous beat of drums and tinkling of tambourines, along came a little black boat symbolizing the party mascot, carried by a few of the marchers. Others held blue flags or posters of Sheikh Mujib and Sheikh Hasina while the whole crowd of some thousands chanted their slogans. In between one could get a glimpse of

an odd ice-cream vendor, a chat-poti wala and chanachur wala and a man with a big sunflower in his deadlocks.

As dusk approached and the sound of the 'magrib azaan' spread across the city, a self-righteous command came from the spectators who had all this time waited patiently, telling the processionists to quieten down in respect for the call to prayer. Amazingly, in a matter of seconds the deafening chants and drum beats stopped and the sea of marchers went by quietly.

And here is where the fun ended. While the drivers of various vehicles craned their necks to see the procession, the cooped up passengers soon were waken up to the reality of being engulfed in a hellish cloud of carbon monoxide. The obnoxious emission of thousands of vehicles which had their engines on were inhaled, making the poor commuters quite dizzy and nauseous. Then came the incessant blaring of horns and the shouts of 'Oy Kutir Bachcha, Zanglir Po' and other unmentionable terms of endearment that left the poor commuters heads reeling.

The ride home was even more hellish. As the baby taxis turned their three wheelers into sure death traps racing each other, the passengers had the benefit of being exposed to even more of the gashly poisons from the buses, trucks and other baby taxis.

It is at this point of total misery that you, the helpless commuter fervently wished that these endless political do's would be taken away from the city to empty spaces of land outside Dhaka. It has been suggested by wise men that even within the city, such meetings could take place in areas like the lot in Bijoy Sarani if the proposed military museum is shifted elsewhere or the space allotted for the International trade fair. Blocking the main roads during peak hours should also be discarded by political parties since it only causes resentment against them by the public. Perhaps we will no longer have the opportunity to see such colourful processions as the one on April 6th. But at least we won't be choked to death.

USIS to introduce membership fees for library users

In order to continue to maintain the services currently provided to its users, the USIS Library in Dhaka will begin to charge a membership processing fee effective May 1, says a press release.

The fee will be Tk 250.00 per year for all members (including students), effective the date of registration. The membership processing fee will be charged to all new members who register. Current memberships will continue through the expiration date on the USIS Library card.

On May 1, the library will also begin to charge modest user fees for overdue and lost books and videos, and for computer searches and print-out of research materials. A schedule of these fees is available in the library.

The processing fee will be charged when current memberships are renewed. All new membership cards will require two stamp-sized photographs.

USTC admission test results

Following candidates have been selected for admission into the first year BBA Programme of the University of Science and Technology (USTC). The last date of admission is May 20, says a press release.

Roll numbers of the candidates are: 203, 231, 248, 204, 250, 240, 253, 06, 225, 252, 01, 249, 226, 222, 201, 243, 239, 209, 229, 256, 237, 257, 216, 214, 235, 251 and 218 (total — 27).

The following seven have been kept in the waiting list: 246, 241, 247, 230, 220, 202 and 254.

Lecture on law, tourism at BC

Professor Douglas Stoddart, a senior lecturer in marketing at the Buckingham University, UK, will give a public presentation at the British Council auditorium at 5 pm on April 24, says a press release.

Organisations and individuals interested in the areas of law, business, hotel management, tourism have been requested to attend.

Theatre Art apex body

The 4th annual general meeting of Theatre Art was held yesterday at a local hotel, says a press release.

Abdus Samad Azad, chief adviser of the organisation attended as chief guest.

A 14-member executive committee for 1996-98 has been formed in the meeting. The members are: Gazi Mohammad Shahjahan — President, Azizus Samad — general secretary, Habib Ullah Tuhin — organising secretary, and Mir Faizur Rahman — accounts secretary.

CHEHLUM

Dr M H Khan, a veteran specialist on Tuberculosis and former Regional Director of World Health Organization, died in the city on Friday 8 March, 1996, following a stroke.

His Chehlum will be held on Friday 19 April, after Asr prayer at his residence, Khan Lodge, Road # 98, South side of DIT Market, Gulshan 2.

All relations, friends and well wishers are requested to attend the Chehlum.

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Annual General Meeting

Day : 10th May 1996 Friday
Venue : Ladies Club, Easakton, Dhaka

Morning Session

0900 - 1000 hrs
1000 - 1100 hrs
1100 - 1230 hrs

Break

Evening Session

1800 - 1945 hrs
2000 - 2045 hrs
2100 - 2230 hrs
2300

Breakfast
Business Session
Election

Organizational Matters
Ceremonial Dinner
Band Show by Renaissance
Adieu

Invites : OFAs & family members And all ex teachers of FCC with their wives.

Circular: Election of OFA, Dhaka Chapter 1996 & '97

Election to the following posts will be held as under:

Posts : President, 2 Vice Presidents, General Secretary, Jt. Gen. Secretary, Treasurer, Secretary-Organizing, Secretary-Sports & Cultural Affairs, 3 Members. 2 Lady VPs will be selected by the elected executive council.

Finalization of voter list

Please clear your annual subscription before 2nd May

Filing of Nomination Paper

Scrutiny of Nomination Paper

Withdrawal of Nomination Paper

Announcement of Final List of Contestants

All above will be executed at OFA Secretariat

Election : At Ladies Club, Easakton

The Election Commission Consists of:

Mr. Mesbahuddin Ahmed (ex-teacher) : Chief Election Commissioner

OFn. Harun Ur Rashid & OFn. Fazlul Haq : Election Commissioner

Please confirm your attendance in OFA, DC AGM by 8th May 1996.

OFn. Musleh Uz Zaman
General Secretary

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Professor Douglas Stoddart
MA (Cantab), PMD (Harvard), PGCE (Oxon),
Senior Lecturer in Marketing
will be pleased to talk to anyone requiring further information.

A presentation will take place on:
Date : Wednesday 24th April 1996
Time : 5.00 pm

Venue : The British Council
Auditorium, 5 Fuller Road, Dhaka
Interviews will be held after the presentation.

The
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Council

For a personal appointment please call
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