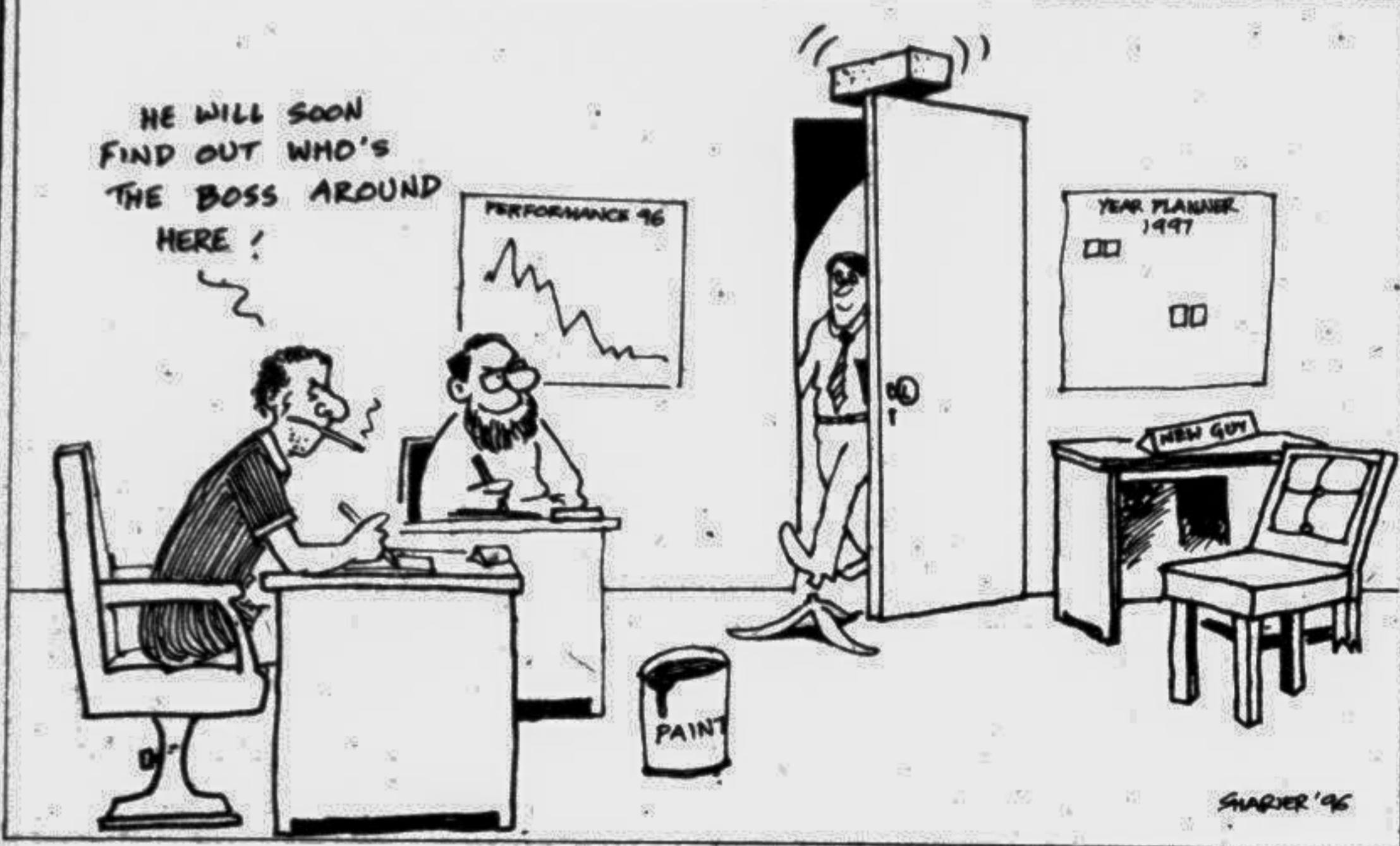


Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day
Joining the Workforce

by Samia Islam



Have you graduated recently and dreaming of your dreams to start off a career? Hold your horses a while and read this article. It's meant to be a comprehensive and trusty guide on the problems and prospects you are likely to face in the jungle of Dhaka armed only with your university education and optimism. There will come times when you'll wind up in an office with an engineering or MBBS degree and people there will talk to you as if any and everybody is one in this country with 35 per cent literacy rate. Prospective employers will put you in your place with looks of contempt or plain indifference. At those specific times, you will need to consult some sort of a guide book, if you can preserve your sanity long enough.

The first thing to remember under the circumstances is that the hostility you face is nothing personal. It either stems from an unwarranted feeling of insecurity that you are there to take up someone's place or it's just your promising youth with all its verve that gets to them. Either way, the other party perhaps feels threatened about rolling over and handing you the reins (which you are not there to take up anyway but they can't be too sure about your ulterior motives).

This is the common picture in the city. You have a degree which you have worked like a dog in a crummy, unsafe educational environment. You got to where you are today after an extended 7 to 8 years of studying to complete a course that should not have taken more than 4 to 5 years. And still the majority of the employment sector treat you like dirt. As if you are encroaching on sacred territory or disturbing the sanctity of Inca burial grounds. Meanwhile, you are left wondering what the discomfort is all about. Keep wondering, and if you have a degree in psychology, maybe you'll figure it out.

If you are not willing to stoop to string pulling, then chances are your mornings start out with looking for situation vacant ads. But that's no way to start your search! There are rumours making the rounds that usually these

ads are a formality. The candidates have already been chosen and therefore, it's futile to apply for the post. But you, with your naive exuberance, discard all the pessimistic talk as sensible chatter. However, browsing further into the ad you are likely to find that all of the vacancies require 5/7/10 year experiences in the same field. So, the revelation hits you: fresh, young talent joining the work force are not the concern of these companies. They'd rather take on people who are already in the workforce but who have a penchant for playing musical chair with their jobs.

The other obstacle facing you is the new trend of contract payment. These days the employers propose to pay you on terms and conditions whether they have any projects on hand or not. You don't necessarily get to take a salary home every month. Who needs a boring salary? They are giving you a desk in some 900 sqft office building, you can call yourself employed and look at the guy on the street through sanctimonious eyes, feeling superior because you are not the one out there with a file folder in your hand and no where to go. However, all this contracting makes you feel like the men who sit in front of the Shantinagar Bazaar with a wicked basket and a shovel in hand. The same principle of probability applies to them too. Either they get a project or they don't, but at least, they are professionals at something. Makes you wonder why you bothered to go through hell on a roller coaster all those years of your life, slaving away at the university, dodging bullets and getting a free training on survival techniques.

If you have always thought that you are not cut out for the businessman's life, well, now the system has devised a policy to make you one whether you like it or not. They have taken away the safety net and put in the risk factor in your pseudo safe employment trajectory. So, wouldn't it be better for you to venture out on your own? Try something new. Not having to answer to anyone for your decisions? Calling all the shots etc.? Alas! Looks like you are going to need a guide for the optimistic entrepreneur next!

Discussion on Thomas Ansell held in city

Thomas Ansell Foundation in Bangladesh held a discussion and executive committee meeting in connection with the 8th anniversary of death of the English poet Thomas Ansell, at the foundation's office in the city Wednesday, says a press release.

Born in England in 1907, Ansell came to Bangladesh in 1956 and died in Dhaka in 1989.

The discussion was attended by poet Shamsur Rahman and Dr Ahsanul Haque, Professor, Department of English, DU, as chief and special guests.

Chaired by the foundation's president, poet and writer Sultana Nahar, executive member, poet Asad Chowdhury, executive president and chief coordinator of the foundation, Ali Neyamat and Rukshana Kakan took part in the discussion.

The meeting decided to publish a collected poems of Thomas Ansell, both in English and Bengali versions, soon.

Medicines worth Tk 28 cr exported in '95

Although medicine is still on the import list, Bangladesh exported locally produced medicines worth Tk 28 crore in the 1995 calendar year, reports UNB.

The income is increasing gradually every year. Health and Family Welfare Minister Salahuddin Yusuf said in reply to a written question from M Nurul Islam Talukder (Netrokona) in the House yesterday.

Bangladesh, however, imported medicines worth Tk 69 crore in 1995, he said, but added that about 95 per cent of the country's annual demand was met by locally produced medicines.

Some 16 Bangladeshi companies have been exporting medicines for the last few years, he said.

The companies are: Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Beximco Infusion, Acme Laboratories, Jems Pharma, EDCL, Gano Shasthya Pharma, Fisons (BD) Ltd, Ciba Geigy Bangladesh Ltd, Rhone-Poulenc (BD) Ltd, Oposonin Chemical Industries, Opos Saline, Jesson Pharmaceuticals, Global Capsule Ltd, Gaco Pharma, Reneta Ltd and ACI Pharma Ltd.

US Embassy, USIS closed Sunday

The American Embassy, the United States Information Service (USIS), the USIS library, and the Student Counselling Service in the city will be closed Sunday, in observance of Labour Day, an American national holiday, says a press release.



Poets Asad Chowdhury (L) and Shamsur Rahman (2nd R) attended as guests a discussion on poet Thomas Ansell, organised on his 8th death anniversary, in the city Wednesday.

What's on today

BGSF open discussion: Bangladesh Garments Sramik Federation will hold an open discussion on 'Education, Rehabilitation of Child Labourers in Bangladesh and Their Future'. Chief guest: M A Mannan, State Minister for Labour & Manpower. Venue: Jatiya Press Club, VIP lounge. Time: 10 am.

Theatre: Loknatty Dal will stage 'Sonai Madhab' as part of the ongoing Theatre Week presented by the High Commission of India. Venue: Indian Cultural centre, 754 Satmasjid Road. Time: ?

Old Faujians get-together: The Old Faujians Association's 18th batch will organise a 25th anniversary get-together. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 7 pm.

Lions Club of Dhaka Mahanagar: The installation ceremony of office bearers of the club will be held. Venue: Family Lounge of Dhaka Club. Time: 7:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Ramna: The 918th weekly meeting of the club will be held. Venue: Rotary Centre, 7-13 Satmasjid Road. Dhamondi. Time: 5:30 pm.

Photo exhibition: The inaugural ceremony of the photograph exhibition by Sajjad Chowdhury will be held. Chief guest: Donald M Bishop. Director: USIS, Dhaka. Venue: Gallery Tone, House 47, Road 1, Dhamondi. Time: 5pm.

Prize-giving ceremony: The prize-giving ceremony of Kirat competition, organised jointly by Anjuman Hidayatul Ummat and Islamic Foundation will be held. A discussion on Strutunabhi (SM) has also arranged. Chief guest: Maulana Nurul Islam, State Minister for Religious Affairs. Venue: Anjuman Madrasa premises, Dattapara, Tongi. Time: 5 pm.

Weather**Moderate rainfall likely**

Light to moderate rain may occur at many places over the country during the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB.

Day temperature is likely to remain nearly unchanged over the country during the period.

Country's highest temperature was recorded 33 degrees Celsius at Rajshahi and the lowest 24.5 degrees at Teknaf.

The sun sets today at 6:19 pm and rises tomorrow at 5:40 am. Maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and town yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity	
	in Celsius	in percentage	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.8	26.5	84	92
Chittagong	30.8	26.2	92	95
Rajshahi	33.0	25.5	78	85
Khulna	32.0	26	78	94
Barisal	31.0	25.2	80	94
Sylhet	27.5	25.0	96	100
Cox's Bazar	29.5	25.5	92	90

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Discussion concludes

Budget full of contradictions: BNP

Deputy Leader of the Opposition Prof Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday asked the government to be consistent with its political and economic philosophy for taking firm decision in running the administration, reports UNB.

"I hope this government will not be an organised hypocrisy," he said in Parliament while participating in the discussion on the national budget yesterday afternoon.

The new budget is full of contradictions as regard the ruling party's political thinking and economic ideology, Chowdhury said.

"How this government that pursues free economy could call the 1972-75 period a golden era when the then government policy was based on socialist and command economy? How will you reach that golden era when you don't believe in that philosophy of politics?" he said.

In his 35-minute speech mingled with humour pungent but subtle criticism, Chowdhury pointed out some positive aspects of the past BNP regime and made some suggestions.

The Deputy Opposition Leader questioned the concept of the government of consensus and said even the new President has expressed his doubt about it.

The present government is a strange combination of Awami League, JP and JSD which believe in completely different politics, he said, adding that it is amazing that the Secretary General of JP has become a minister while Chairman HM Ershad is sitting in the opposition.

Responding to the ruling party's criticism of 21 years rule after 1975, Chowdhury said

this period also included the nine-year rule of Ershad whose party is now a partner of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government.

He said Awami League came to power apologising to the people for its past rule marked by formation of one-party BKSAL, political killing and repression and famine. He cautioned that this should not be repeated by the new Awami League government.

Referring to the government's clamour for stamping out terrorism, the Deputy Opposition Leader said they must be consistent with their words and deeds.

"Corruption and extortion must be stopped to make politics clean," he told the House.

Chowdhury criticised the Awami League leadership for Bengali translation of 'Bismillah' and 'Zindabad' asking whether they also translate Quranic verses while performing namaz, haj and qurbani.

"Will the words 'Awami League' be translated into Bangla and how will it stand as 'Awami' is an Urdu word and 'League' is an English word," said the Deputy Opposition Leader. He, however, said his BNP is called by only one name — Jatiyatatabadi Dal.

Responding to an allegation by former President Ershad, he said after the fall of his government, acting president Shababuddin's government detained Ershad in a Gulshan residence. He was later transferred to Dhaka Central Jail following pressure by the then opposition (AL) in parliament.

Responding to the ruling party's criticism of 21 years rule after 1975, Chowdhury said

regarding Begum Zia's houses, Chowdhury said the houses were allocated by the army au-

thority but the decision was approved by the parliament where Awami League was there at that time.

On controversy about Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib and Zaur Rahman, he said it is not fair to undermine the contribution of any great personality.

Commenting on the national budget, Chowdhury praised the Finance Minister for producing the budget in a short time. However, he said the new budget to a great extent reflects the policy and philosophy of the BNP government and Finance Minister Saifur Rahman.

The Deputy Opposition Leader said some incorrect statistics were given by the Finance Minister about economic achievements of the BNP government.

He claimed that the average GDP growth during BNP's rule was 4.4 per cent and not 2 per cent. The per capita income in 1995 was 265 US dollars and inflation was 3.68 per cent when BNP left power.

Besides, the child mortality rate and birth rate came down while enrollment of primary education increased to 1.72 crore from 1.20 crore.

He made a set of proposals which include monthly allowance of Tk 400 for aged people above 65, construction of maximum security prison, special buses for women, tiffin and school uniforms for primary school students, scholarship for SSC girl students and wage board for journalists.

He suggested that politicians who have got their own houses and cars be brought under the income tax net.

Taking part in the discussion, Opposition Chief Whip

Khandaker Delwar Hossain observed that Tk 100 crore subsidy fund is just a move to gain "cheap political support" by the Awami League government.

He said the past BNP government had waived agricultural loan to the tune of Tk 3,000 crore, giving relief to the farmers. "Further relief from the subsidy fund will largely depend on its implementation," he remarked.

Delwar said the finance minister himself has undermined the budget by incorporating language of criticism against BNP. The successes during the BNP rule should have been recognised in the budget speech.

Accusing the minister of suppressing facts in his speech, the Opposition leader said he cited the growth rate of 1973-74 fiscal, but did not say anything about the following years.

Pointing at the general discussion on the budget, Delwar said the budget is discussed in a special committee in every country and suggested formation of such a committee where the budget should be referred to.

AK Faezul Haq regretted that a minister of the past government gave employment to thousands of workers who earlier left the jute mills and wage board for journalists.

Others who took part in discussion were AKM Hafizur Rahman, Shamsul Haq, Alamgir Mohammad Mahfuzullah Farid, Habibur Rahman Molla, Prof Mohammad Shahjahan Mi, Advocate Rahmat Ali, Alhaj Golam Morshed, Raziaul in Ahmed Razu, Noor-Uddin Khan and Prof AQM Badruddin Chowdhury.

A rare gift for PM

The family of a government employee who died eight years ago handed a life-size portrait of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib to Rahman to his daughter Sheik Hasina in the city yesterday, reports UNB.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was found in an unusually emotion-charged composition when the members of the family met her with the portrait at the PM's office, officials said.

The family of late Md. Samsuddin, an Upper Division Assistant (UDA) of the Jatiya Sangsads, braved all odds for 21 long years to preserve the rare portrait in oil by artist Soeb.

Mesbahuddin, who worked with Bangabandhu at the Jatiya Sangsads till his last day in office, took the piece of art of rare excellence to his house after Sheikh Mujib was assassinated on August 15 in 1975.

Meanwhile, Mesbahuddin died of heart attack at the age of 42 in 1988.

His widow, Lutfi Ara Begum handed over the portrait to the daughter of Bangabandhu.

The Prime Minister embraced her and expressed her gratitude in an emotion-choked voice saying no death could be compensated by money not to speak of that of an ardent lover of the Father of the Nation.

She, however, handed over a cheque of Tk one lakh to Lutfi Ara Begum for bearing educational expenses of her children who also went with their mother to see the Prime Minister.

"Bloom as flowers and wash away our failures by your fragrance as the nation needs you," Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina asked the children in the city yesterday, reports BSS.

She also urged the guardians and parents to rear up their children in a manner so that they could realise the history and tradition of the country as well as identify the enemies of independence.

The Prime Minister was addressing a host of children and adolescents at a function held at the Jatiya Jadughar Milanayatan marking the first founding anniversary of 'Chotader Kagoj', a newspaper for children, edited by rhymer Lutfar Rahman Riton.

It was also addressed by Prof Montazuddin Ahmed and a little girl named Nadi. Lutfar Rahman Riton was in the chair.

The Prime Minister said a nation is happy when its children are happy with smiles on their faces like thousands of glittering stars in the sky.

"I want to erase the identity of street urchins as 'takas' as my government is committed to ensure a better future for all children of the country," she said.