

Bangladeshi-American Celebrate Fourth of July with Flare

by Arif Kamal

THE Fourth of July marks a celebration of independence in the United States. Though Bangladesh celebrates its independence on March 26, also known as Swadhinata Dibosh, Bangladeshis in the United States have come to celebrate both glorious occasions in marvelous fashion.

Celebration for the Fourth of July begins in the late afternoon when the Bangladeshi community meets at a Bengali's residence. Men and women alike present their finest attire: men wearing nice shirts and slacks and women presenting their most precious saris. Little girls wear flowery dresses and little boys do their best to imi-

tate their fathers' clothing while displaying the three colours that have come to stand for American independence: red, white, and blue. The standard appetizers on the backyard patio are freshly fried somosas and fruit salads. Cold drinks and ice tea are perfect cool-downs after tough, hard-fought matches of soccer or cricket. Discussing politics, talking soccer results, trading recipes, and catching up on the latest Bangladeshi gossip is always popular among the celebrators. The serving of biryani and borhani becomes one of the highlights of the evening. Side dishes include barbecued chicken and sheek kababs with signature Bangladeshi spices

like cumin seed and red pepper. Desserts like sweet mishtis and cakes are a definite must. My mother always cooks my favorites for the holiday, rosogolla and rosomalaye. Bengalis of all ages enjoy these delicacies while sipping hot tea and watching the sun set on another successful Fourth of July. But the setting of the sun is a reminder that the festivities are just beginning.

To everyone's delight, firecrackers are brought out and sparklers are handed to each child. As the children watch their sparklers in awe, the adults light bottle rockets and everyone watches in enjoyment. My fondest memory of

the Fourth of July is snagging a three pound catfish at Smithville State Park while fireworks exploded over the lake. I used a piece of kabab as bait and it worked to perfection. It must have liked the Bangladeshi moshal!

Family and neighbours join the display of colours with their own fireworks and the night sky becomes lit with the colours of Independence. I remember going to a fireworks show put on by the city where firecrackers of various colours and shapes would blast off fifteen stories into the sky and burst to produce glittery sparkles. The fireworks show was special because the whole Bangladeshi community was celebrating and rejoicing together.

The adults begin to tell the children the story of how America fought for its independence and how their mother country, Bangladesh, followed the same path. War stories from Bangladesh's Independence War begin circulating and the lessons of fighting oppression and preserving Bengali heritage are passed down from one generation to another. I remember hearing stories about families huddling in their homes at night while gunfire interrupted their dinner during the war. Ironically, these stories and the struggle that families endured match those of families during the American Revolution that I have read about in American History classes.

"We fought for our right to speak Bengali!" one father will proudly say.

"The Fourth of July reminds us that freedom should not be taken for granted," a mother will remark.

With those words, the Fourth of July in everyone's mind becomes a reminder that American and Bangladeshi revolutionaries fought two different wars, in two different centuries, halfway across the world from each other, but for the same reason. Now Bangladeshis are free to speak Bengali whenever and wherever they like. Now the United States is a successful and free democracy. Now Bangladeshi families in America can celebrate the Fourth of July with firecrackers and biryani and proudly announce, "Joy Bangla, Joy America!" And they joyously do.

Arif Kamal is currently in the 12th grade and an intern serving at the United States Information Service. He is the son of Dr Mustafa Kamal and Dr Saima Kamal and resides in Warrensburg, Missouri, USA.



FACT OR MYTH? — This painting by J L G Ferris shows Betsy Ross (right) and the first American flag, which she purportedly sewed. The legend is traceable to none other than Ross herself, who told the story to her 11-year-old grandson in 1836, on her deathbed. He kept the tale to himself until 1870, when he presented it to the local historical society — which enshrined it in American legend. Photo from Library of Congress (No. 49-14464).

Patriot Alley

Continued from page 6

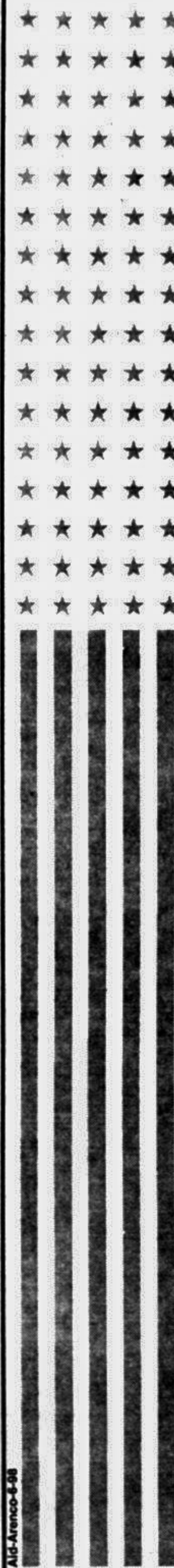
categories: patriotic (four contestants) and environmental (six). In 'patriotic,' there just happens to be a tie for third-place, so no group has finished last. And now we close, as we have for six decades, with 'God Bless America.' Strangely, I miss a few notes. Glancing furtively around, I see I am not alone in experiencing a very brief abduction of the throat. We're off now to the rest of

the day, living in the 90's again, off to sailing and sunbathing at the Big Lake or finishing at one of the many small lakes or shooting a round of golf (which will have to be truly horrible to cast a pall over this day). To do what we ought to do and to enjoy doing it — that makes us feel good. There's some strength in this old country yet.

The alley empties. The kids leave with popsicles, successors

to the paddle pops of yore. The silly things are coloured red, white, and blue.

Edward E. Ericson, Jr., is a professor of English at Calvin College, and a Solzhenitsyn scholar who abridged *The Gulag Archipelago* in cooperation with the author. Reprinted from *The American Enterprise*, a Washington-based magazine of politics, business, and culture.



Heartiest Congratulations
on
American Independence Day



A good reputation
is not bought.

It is earned.
Through dependable, timely supplies of cotton.
On quality sold, and quality delivered.
The way Calcot earned its good reputation.



P.O. Box 259
Bakersfield, California 93302, USA
Telephone : (805) 327-5961
Fax : (805) 861-9870
Telex : 6839421

Calcot is proud to be associated with Bangladesh in supply of
US Pima, San Joaquin Valley and California/Arizona Raw Cotton.

For Enquires Contact ARENCO LIMITED
Tel : 406330, 406332 Fax : 837465
Telex : 642481 RNBJ
Email : rncot@citechco.net

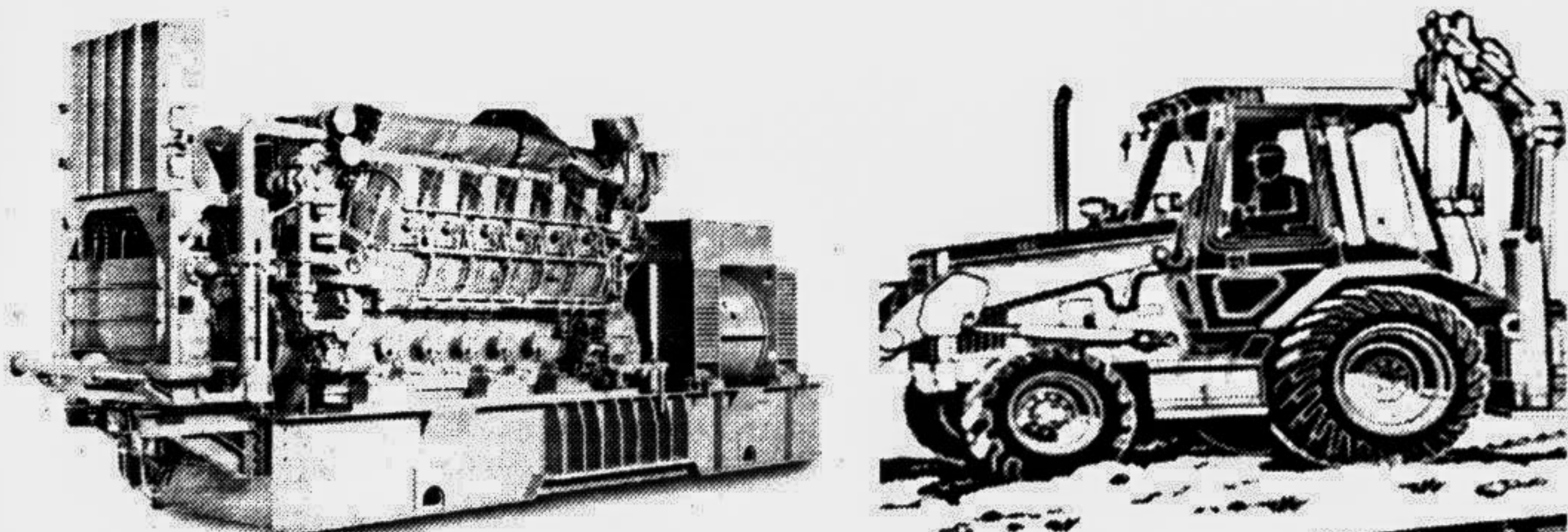
Our Warmest felicitations on the occasion of the 222nd anniversary of US Independence Day on 4th of July

CATERPILLAR®

THE GLOBAL POWER REACHING OUT AND DOING MORE IN BANGLADESH

CATERPILLAR® ENABLES THE WORLD'S PLANNERS AND BUILDERS TO TURN THEIR IDEAS INTO REALITIES. WE ARE PROUD OF OUR ABILITY TO CREATE AND SUPPORT THE BEST ENGINE AND MACHINE ON EARTH. IT'S NOT ONLY WHAT WE MAKE THAT MAKES US PROUD—IT'S WHAT WE MAKE POSSIBLE.

Behind every customer success story is an efficient
Parts and Service System



CATERPILLAR® DIESEL & GAS GENERATORS PROVIDING POWER ALL OVER BANGLADESH

GETCO



GREENLAND ENGINEERS & TRACTORS COMPANY LIMITED

26, Shyamoli, Mirpur Road, Dhaka-1207

PHONE: 811251-53, 812164, 812175, FAX: 813319

EMAIL: nazmul@bangla.net

Our Heartiest Felicitations to the People and Government of USA

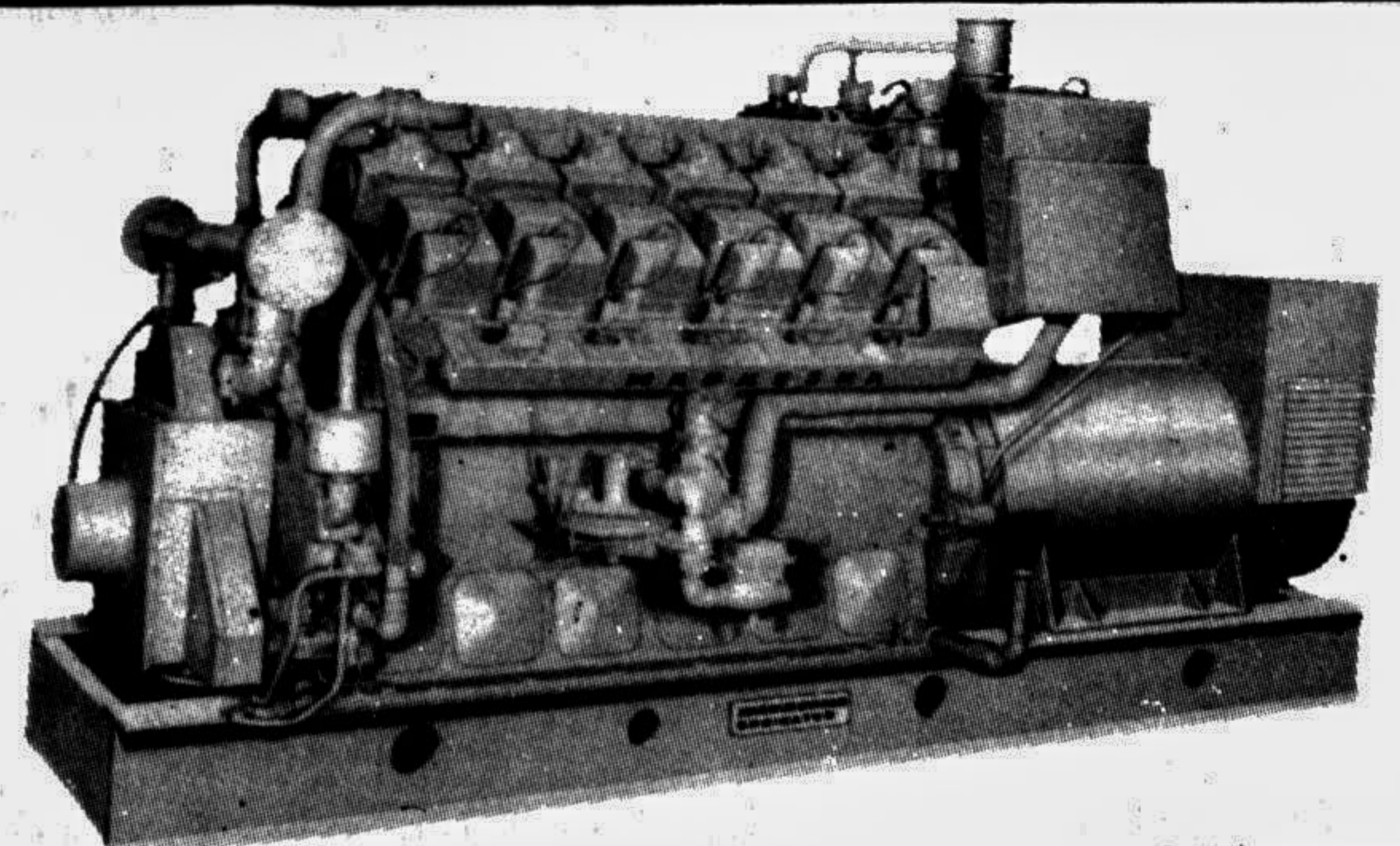
Waukesha



1000 RPM

GAS ENGINE GENERATOR

MOST RELIABLE SOURCE FOR INHOUSE POWER GENERATION
No. 1 SOURCE OF PRIVATE POWER GENERATION IN BANGLADESH



PROVEN TRACK RECORD FOR CONTINUOUS OPERATION OVER 50,000 HOURS IN SPINNING & TEXTILES, PAPERS, JUTE, CHEMICALS, PHARMACEUTICALS AND ENGINEERING INDUSTRIES ETC.



Distributor in Bangladesh.

DANA ENGINEERS INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

Tower Hamlet, 16, Kemal Ataturk Avenue, Banani, Dhaka-1213, Bangladesh
G.P.O Box - 914, Dhaka - 1000, Bangladesh

☎ (880)-2-9882225, 9882263, 9882265, Fax : (880)-2-873108