

A rather unusual experience

"GLAMOUR to me is...." I stared blankly at the incomplete sentence on the purple flowery entry card. This was not really a subject that I have ever given much thought to and to suddenly have this question thrown at me was completely unexpected. Biting my lips I wrote the first thing that came to my mind "....a perfectly proportionate combination of beauty, confidence and sophistication along with a personality that emanates from within to express one's individuality." I reread the sentence; frankly it did not seem to make much sense. I did not have the time or patience to write another one so I submitted the first. That day when I walked out of the shopping centre the last thing I ever expected was a call from Unilever one month later, telling me that I was one of the 20 lucky winners of the Lux Glamour Contest.

The caller had requested me to be at Persona at 8:30 the next morning for my prize, which was a daylong pampering session at the beauty parlour. They started off with an extremely relaxing hair oil massage followed by steaming and shampooing. Next was a facial treatment complete with scrubbing, cleansing and a face mask, (yes with the chopped up cucumber and all). While all this was going on, another person was doing my pedicure and



manicure. Here there was a bit of an awkward moment when I splashed over all the water in which my feet was soaked because the scrubbing on my sole tickled unbearably. Well, the facial also tickled at certain times and that's

when I broke into fits of uncontrollable laughter. Then came the hand and feet massage (more tickling!) you see I'm not used to all this and neither had I expected to get used to such 'posh adulthood' anytime soon. Overall the thorough cleansing was a very refreshing and relaxing experience that seemed to loosen up the muscles and the nerves, not to mention the fact that all of it was free!

The makeover session came next. First my hair was blow dried and ironed to make the crow's nest on top of my head to fall down like flowing silk. I was doubtful of the makeup that would be applied, since I never was a fan of overdoing my face, but to my relief the makeup was actually quite perfect. The foundation was subtle, the rouge and eye-shadow suitable for daylight, the gloss barely noticeable and the eye-lining and lip lining done with particular precision. Finally my Star Treatment had come to an end and I must admit I was looking quite presentable. This worker at Persona commented, 'Chanai jacche na... (You can't be recognised)' and I felt myself blushing under the layer of makeup, well the whole event was rather overwhelming. Kaniz Almas came by at one point for the 'personal touch' that had been promised by the advertisement on the coupon. She did a bit of this and that to prepare the

winners for the photo session. That part was particularly intriguing with all the silvery umbrellas for the light reflection, sophisticated camera equipment and so on. One would think this was enough for one day...but guess what! It wasn't.

All this while we were getting ready for a Star lunch at Sonargaon. We were eating away at Café Bazaar utilising the buffet to its optimum level, when Bipasha Hayat arrived as the final part of the package. She was apparently the Lux Star who would lunch with us. There was good food, pictures and light pleasant conversation. The atmosphere was easy and casual but even then had touch of glamour and excitement to make it a rather memorable moment. Right after Sonargaon I had to join my friend for her birthday party, the first part of which I had already missed. When I entered the jaws literally dropped. There were only eight of my closest friends and they were quite open about the fact that from the walking-talking disaster that I generally resembled, this was a pleasant change. For the next hour I was the centre of attention, relating the day's experience careful not to miss out on any details and I concluded by saying..."Well this sure proves one thing, even I can look good if I want to!"

By Aniq Moinuddin

Study buddies

UNIVERSITY selection is one of the major decisions of our lives. As you may know now, that your uni applications are nearing pretty quickly. In anyone between class 10 and 12 should be thinking of applying in about two months. We all know the application process for applying abroad can be a very grueling and stressful and difficult task and hence we dedicated to open a column simply dedicated to the University Application. Here we hope to start with the basics of Application and go on to SAT tips, Financial Aids and scholarship applications and as well as emphasizing on reviewing universities in particular Bengali universities, which we feel are hopelessly under-represented. So, stay with us and keep on reading 'cause that's gonna help you all.

CHECKLIST FOR TODAY:

- US University Application Timings
- Different Types of Universities

WHY APPLY AND WHERE?

Why apply? Of course you know why, but are you really sure where? Most of us would want to apply to USA, which by far is the best place to apply. But some people apply to UK, Australia, Singapore, Malaysia and even in New Zealand. As far as options go there are simply a lot to choose from. Deciding where you can go is more important than where you want go, especially since some parents reserve judgment on where you can apply. Talk to your parents about it and be sure to keep them regularly posted - I even know cases when students get selected with aid, then their parents do not let them go.

TIMINGS?

Now, when are you exactly applying? It depends on places to places. In USA, it is generally before January the first your application has to be post-marked and sent to the universities. But, it also differs. In USA there are actually three application systems:

- 1) Early Decision 2) Early Action 3) Regular Decision

The Early Decision is so called, because firstly you have to apply early and secondly you will be notified the admission decision early. You can apply to only one university under early decision plan - and you have to apply by November 1, this year - although it varies from unis to unis. You get your results by Dec 15, and if you are admitted you must enter that school, and withdraw your application from other schools. Ok, you might think that sitting here in Bangladesh they will not know, if you apply - but believe me they do. In fact if you withdraw without showing any valid reasons, you might be denied admission in other colleges through out the state. However Early Decision has plenty of advantages. Firstly statistically you have a better chance of getting into a college under early decision plan. For example in Harvard the acceptance rate is 11% whereas in Early Decision the acceptance rate is 23.2%.

In a very few colleges there also are two Early Decision options, one usually by November 1st and the other by January 1st.

Early Action isn't offered in many colleges. Under early action you get to apply to more than one colleges, early by Nov 15. You would obviously get to know your admission decisions early, but you can choose any of the colleges. In fact it's more flexible. As again statistically your chances of getting accepted is higher, but its not really useful since either early action mode isn't widely used and if used, in most cases these are for the American citizens - so start sweating...

Keep in mind though, if you plan to go for ED or EA, you have to fit all of their criteria i.e. if any college also wants SATII along with SATI, you have to give it before they make their decisions, for e.g. if the college will give you their decision by December 15th, if you give your SATII on the coming November 5th date, it will still count.

The Regular decision, is as the name suggests 'Regular Application' - which you must complete by January 1 next year. The admission decision would be notified to you the latest by May 1 (sometimes also by March 31st). Thus, under regular decision it takes about 3 months for the unis to decide, and there are no limits to how many universities you can apply in under the regular decision plan - although most students do apply to only 10 universities (More about choosing unis - next issue) - keep in though the applying process is expensive. Apart from that you get more time, of course to set everything right. In fact that's one of the main reason, why many differ from the other two options for this option. This gives them time to prepare for the SAT more thoroughly and etc. and etc. Another reason, is unless you are really sure where you want to go, go for regular decision because you might end up regretting later on.

University, Colleges, Liberal Arts?!!@?!@?!!

You may have confusion, regarding the name of the colleges. In fact you obviously may have come across words like university, colleges, liberal arts and etc and etc. There is basically no big difference between a college and a university. In fact, its interchangeable - a college is only smaller. However there is a big difference between Liberal Arts College and universities.

Liberal Arts Colleges are colleges where you do not have to choose your major immediately. This means you can basically go there without having any idea what you want to do in life, or what you want to study. Then you take a couple of courses or a minor, and try out a variety of activities. You see what you like for a year and choose a major later on. In other words, they focus a lot on diversity. I guess that's how American's look at things: "being good at lots of small things". So consequently Liberal Arts Colleges, puts a lot of focus on ECA - because ECA's show how diverse you really are. So

when are you sure you want to apply to liberal arts colleges:

- 1) When you have a very strong ECA background.
- 2) When you do not know basically what you want to study on.
- 3) When you want to try out different activities
- 4) When you want to keep your options open and not be tied down - to regret it later on.

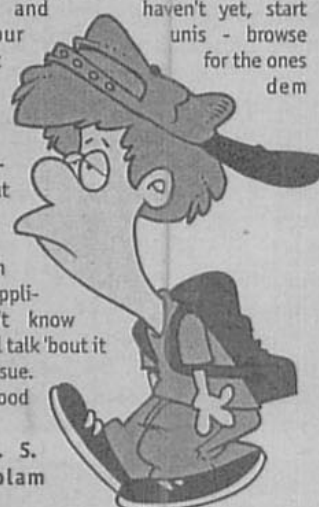
In fact, the chief advantages of liberal arts colleges seem to be this. When you specialize you are seriously limiting your life, without you realizing it or not. A liberal arts education lets you study and switch to studying anything you want. You become a more flexible individual with broader knowledge and in some - ways more competitive.

Consequently a university is ahem "more serious" - you have to immediately choose a major and enroll in a department. You cannot switch and universities focus a lot on your academics. In fact the main criteria for your admission are academics. Of course, unis do look at your ECA's but relatively the focus is less. So you know universities are for you:

- 1) When you are a determined person with a set future plan
- 2) You have strong academics
- 3) You have relatively weaker ECA background
- 4) Again, I repeat that you are set on doing what you want.

So consequently one can derive out the advantages of a university. Truth be told, you do not have to worry too much about these criteria's. In fact at the end of the day, colleges or unis - they would both want academically sound students. ECA's just acts as a big big bonus. So do not think that you are restricted into applying to a liberal arts college, if you are restricted. It's best to go for a mixture of the two - universities and liberal arts colleges. It's also best to keep your option of countries open a bit - supposedly US and Canada. There is the hauntingly harrowing VISA you know. Don't apply to too many countries though; it acts as a draw back. We'll talk about that later. That's all for now, next issue we are going to talk more about the requirements, tests and blah blah blah. For now, those who are planning to and haven't yet, start selecting your unis - browse day and night for the ones meeting your a n d s . . . and get familiar with the common application... don't know what it is? We'll talk 'bout it on the next issue. Cya all and good luck!

By Adnan M. S. Fakir & 'Golam Rezwon Khan



Blizzard Gaming café

GAMING Cafes are not new in Dhaka. There are quite a few of these cafes offering LAN-based multiplayer gaming to gamers at a hourly charge. There is Bass Gaming Zone in Dhanmondi Road 27, another in Kalabagan offering console gaming and there's another in Uttara. The Blizzard Gaming Café at Shat Masjid Road, Dhanmondi, is a relatively new addition.

Of course, the centre has been around for a while, but it was after the recent overhauling of its service did Blizzard come under limelight.

The main difference between Blizzard and its few competitors is that the place offers better service. After the overhaul, the PCs simply rock. All of them are 3 gigahertz powerhouses accompanied by sweet NVIDIA GeForce FX 5500 graphics cards. And when you add the 512 megabyte RAM, it's just perfect for all your gaming needs. And for your viewing pleasure, huge 17 inch LCDs are used for displays.

The selection of the games in Blizzard is also quite extensive. Right in the desktop were shortcuts to every good multiplayer game today's time.

The service is very smooth. The hourly charge is 25 Tk per person. When you go there for the first time, an account is created with your name and this comes handy when you leave before you finish your allotted time.

When you come back next time, your remaining minutes are easily accessible from your account. Also, if you are in the middle of a game and your time runs out, you can easily refill your account even while you're busy with the game; and that is very convenient.

There is, of course, a problem with this place. With a service this good, the place attracts a huge crowd. Most of the time it's fully jam-packed with at least 3-4 gamers waiting. And sometimes that number grows to more than a dozen. So if you're planning for multiplayer gaming with a few of your friends and don't want to wait a few hours, make it there within 10 am. If you can't, you should change the plan.

There are also some other things for me to nitpick on, for example, the headphones are often faulty and the (optical) mice don't feel smooth enough at times. Also, some of the regular gamers often resort to the use of profanity when faced with superior competitors and that can be annoying. Well, you can't really expect anything to be perfect.

That's it. That's the place. To sum it up: the PCs rock, the service is great but it's mostly crowded. If you're interested and are into multiplayer gaming check out the place and you'll probably love it, but make sure you go there early.

Blizzard Gaming Café
Third Floor,
House no. 99, Road no. 11 A,
Dhanmondi Residential Area
By Ahmed Ashful Haque