

From the
RS Desk

Dear Readers,
We bid farewell to 2007 and it's been yet another eventful one. We've had the good such as the anti-corruption drive and lifting the import restriction on 150cc motorbikes. Now the young men can crash faster and in more style. Most importantly, it's been a great year because of the brand new RS layout. 2007 has had its share of the bad what with Sidr ripping the country apart as well as RS coming out with a brand new layout. Some loved it, others hated it. We ignore the latter. Rising Stars wishes all its readers a great new year.

Laff lines

Dead man paying

Joe passed away. His will provided \$30,000 for an elaborate funeral. As the last guests departed the affair, his wife, Helen turned to her oldest friend.

"Well, I'm sure Joe would be pleased," she said.

"I'm sure you're right," replied Jody, who lowered her voice and leaned in close. "How much did this really cost?"

"All of it," said Helen. "Thirty thousand."

"No!" Jody exclaimed. "I mean, it was very nice, but \$30,000?"

Helen answered. "The funeral was \$6,500. I donated \$500 to the church. The wake, food and drinks were another \$500. The rest went for the memorial stone."

Jody computed quickly. "\$22,500 for a memorial stone? My God, how big is it?"

"Two and a half carats."

Tale of one city

Two shoe salespeople were sent to Africa to open up new markets. Three days after arriving, one salesperson called the office and said, "I'm returning on the next flight. Can't sell shoes here. Everybody goes barefoot."

At the same time the other salesperson sent an email to the factory, telling, "The prospects are unlimited. Nobody wears shoes here!"

Paper trail

Working as a computer instructor for an adult-education program at a community college, I am keenly aware of the gap in computer knowledge between my younger and older students.

My observations were confirmed the day a new student walked into our library area and glanced at the encyclopedia volumes stacked on a bookshelf.

"What are all these books?" he asked.

Somewhat surprised, I replied that they were encyclopedias.

"Really?" he said. "Someone printed out the whole thing?"

RS Mailbox

I am a newcomer to this fantastic supplement of Daily Star. And all I can say is that it's "insanely mind-blowing" wrapped around with a heavy dose of fun. I particularly liked the "Crysis" game review. Each section, including the cover story was too good to overlook. I hope Rising Star keeps that up.
Monty (Chittagong)

I know you guys probably get this a lot, but I just had to praise the excellent Babu comic by Shahrier. The artist is refreshingly witty, and after the hilariously clever 13th December edition where Babu climbs out of a sticky patch with the mummy, I just couldn't refrain from being fan-girlish and typing this out.

Thank-you RS and Shahrier for making me smile on the worst of Thursdays (and trust me, my Thursdays are usually cursed). You guys deserve every ounce of love and far, far more.

Love and Best Wishes,
Alaka Halder

The week in re(ar)view

Statues gain life, seek greener grass on other side

Many of our countryfolk go to all lengths to get on a plane, get on a different land and disappear. It's the story of grass being greener and better fertilized on the other side. That's why so many manpower agencies manage to rip off so many people.

But lately, it seems even inanimate objects are wanting to disappear.

Couple of 1,500-year-old terracotta Vishnu statues bound for an exhibition in Paris disappeared before even leaving motherland. They upped and vanished while in the custody of Air France at the Zia International Airport (ZIA) Saturday.

The statues seem to have come to life, got up, strolled down the runway, dismissed the wooden crates they were in and left a Tk 45 lakh dent in the country's wallet. It's not surprising that something like this happened at Zia. It's not surprising that it happened while en route to France. It's not even surprising that the statues came to life apparently. What boggles our mind is that how did those statues walk out? One of them was a bust. Did it grow legs? Did it use a skateboard?

Such baffling thoughts keep us awake 24/7.

Downloads in peace

The High Court in a rule recently stayed an order of the Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) and allowed a private company to sign a deal with Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) for swapping an optical fibre network.

What all this techno and legal gibberish means that when our accident-prone submarine cable is snapped once again (count on it), we can continue visiting forbidden sites without interruption.

What's more important is that the line swapping is cost free for the government. There is nothing mentioned anywhere as to how much you, us or other end users will

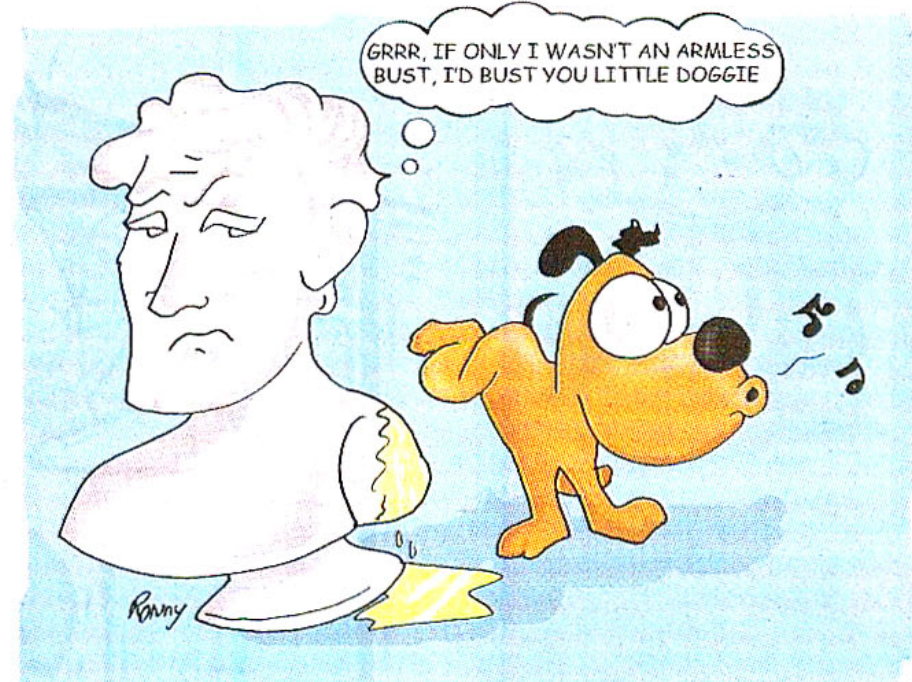
have to pay.

Cattle profoundly shocked

Cattle were initially feeling like hotshots as their prices were quoted quite high due to scarcity. Some of them were even letting out great big gaseous sighs of relief as they felt this Eid they would escape losing their heads. Their relief was short lived as prices dropped

Many animal traders claimed that even though they did not have to make payments to extortionists this year, the cost of transporting the animals to the markets did not get cheaper due to the rise in truck rental fare. Oil price increase and unavailability of trucks have led to the truck rental hike, they added.

Demand for larger animals have dropped



just the day before Eid. Some cows were so shocked at this reversal of fortunes that they stopped chewing grass for as long as two minutes.

Turns out people were not so hell bent on painting the towns red so the supply of sacrificial animals was much higher than their demand.

this year as a large number of their main buyers, politicians and businessmen, are either arrested or are on the run after the present government had launched anti-corruption drives. So the smaller cattle were on the most wanted list. It's one of those times when being ignored is a better option.

By Mood Dude and Gokhra

The ultimate index of Bangali lifestyle

U for Unplanned Constructions

Dhaka is a growing metropolis, as our politicians would love to say. Now imagine a child growing up with different sized limbs and odd bulges sticking out of places. That's how Dhaka is growing up. There is no planning or regulation for the buildings that are mushrooming at any available space in the city. There is no air ventilation, thanks to the sky-high apartments clustered around each other. You can stand on your veranda and watch your neighbour's TV and 'visually' taste the food being cooked in another neighbour's kitchen.

V for Vendetta

Bangalis love holding a grudge. We never forget an insult and never forgive an injury. The first thing any self-respecting Bangali political party does when it comes to power is to round up and beat up the activists of its rival parties. This is in revenge for similar actions by those parties when they were in power. When those rival parties get back in power, they do the same thing again. Rinse and repeat. Bangalis also love to express their frustration by breaking shop windows and burning buses.

W for WASA

WASA is known for never supplying water when you need it the most. This involves holidays, festivals and when you're in the shower before a job interview. There are long lines of people, waiting for a bucket of water from the local tubewell; in short, we all suffer from water shortage at some given time of the year. Being Bangalis, we love to blame it on the government, and hence, it's all WASA's fault. The government is considering replacing the WASA officials with hydrophobic monkeys.

X for Xing-Xang-Xong

One of these words will always be found in the name of a Chinese restaurant, be it Xindian or Xinxian or Xing Ling and so on. At least, they call themselves Chinese restaurants, although we are yet to actually taste Chinese food in any of them. The flavours, spices and everything Bangladeshi is very much evident in their menu. We can assure you that if you have

tasted real Chinese food, you will throw up. These restaurants cater far superior Bangali meals, slightly altered and given Chinese names.

Y for Yaba

Bangalis have very short attention spans. For a fleeting, however, we were all drawn to the recent spur of catching Yaba dealers and sudden awakening of the given fact that drugs are everywhere. Unfortunately, the yaba trade hasn't really stopped and only moved out of Dhaka. The only difference is that addicts now travel a few extra miles to get their stuff. Yaba benders have more reason to increase the price of their 'products'.



Z for Zoo

Bangladeshi zoos are a stark contrast to any other zoo in the world. Animals get more entertained by watching the visitors than the visitors do by watching the animals, which are mostly lying around and wallowing in their own waste products. Most of the cages are empty and there are far more employees than actual creatures. It takes four people to look after a tiger; one to feed it during the day, one to feed it in the evening, one to clean its excrements and the last one to sing lullaby to the tiger at night, and perhaps fan it during warm weather. The final position is currently vacant due to the tiger not liking the last lullaby sung to it.

By Sabhanaz Rashid Diya and Aaqib F. Hossain

10 things we learn from real life

WE have seen that there are lots of things to learn from watching Bangla cinema, hindi serials and TV series in star world. But isn't there anything to learn from watching (or living) life as it is? There are my friends, and here they are:

1. If you get mugged in a movie, the hero will come to save you. If you get mugged for real, only God can save you.

2. In movies, the hero is the most successful athlete, the scholarship winner and the star of his school. In reality, you do not even get to have your name in the school yearbook.

3. In movies, the hero character gets the hottest chick. In real life, the chicks ignore you.

4. In a movie, a happy situation calls for songs, dances and praises. In reality, happy situation usually lands you having to treat your buddies who had no hope of your success.

5. In a romantic movie, love at first sight. In life, every sight is first love.

6. In movies, you hero marries the girl of his dream. In life, you marry the girl of your parents dream.

7. In movies, money is not a problem. In life, money is the biggest problem.

8. In movies, school is fun and the principal is stupid. In life, school is boring and the principal is strict.

9. In movies, heroes can dodge bullet. In life, you cannot even dodge the incoming crow spitfire.

10. In movies, everything is solved in the end and everybody is happy. In reality, the problems are heap and everybody else but you is happy.