



## Woman invents new economic system because of cat love

NAZIBA BASHER

In a remote village in northeastern Bangladesh, a middle-aged woman has started a new economic system to bring disruptions to the well accepted systems in place.

In the wee hours of Monday, Malekul Huda, 47, was seen bowing and paying homage to three cats – a black one, a white one and a Calico. All economic systems need a face after all, so why not pick the cutest ones?

She, however, has ensured that her cats had nothing to do with the Egyptian gods, underscoring the 'secularism' she intends to promote.

Asked, Malekul said, "As I did not previously have any intentions of conforming to any one system, I started feeling left out. Everyone is fighting with everyone and I am the only one with no say. Thus, me and my cats are beginning a new journey to join into the global fight."

Furthermore, she said people are welcome to join her, but she does not "believe in atheists". Asked why, she said, "Either you have a religion, or you don't. What is all this atheism? I do not understand it. Either you are religious or non-religious. If you can't worship a god, you probably cannot adhere to an

entire system of living."

Speaking to one of her cats, the Calico said, "I don't care. This woman, like all other humans, is crazy. But she gives me food and so I let her worship me or whatever. Me and the other cats have a good laugh about it. Don't tell her."

This new economic system -- Meowism -- has no rules or written text. "All you need to do is be like the black, white and Calico cats and do everything you can for them. Bathe



them, feed them and clean their poo. But the fundamental part of this is that we will hate everyone else abiding to a different system. Pretty much like the status quo around the world."

A neighbour of Malekul, preferring anonymity, said, "I think it a good idea to be involved in the global issues. She is a smart woman and her cats are so cute and fluffy. They also make more sense than most humans. I might join her."

Asked about what she wants to achieve from this, Malekul said, "Nothing. I just want to fight. I also want to burn things and homes and hit people with rods. I want people to join me in this violent adventure. I was always a violent kind of person and I think now is my time to shine."

## Office without female wash-room celebrates women's day

NONE-OF-YOUR-BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

DHAKA: Techstosterone, a tech firm situated in Mohakhali New IT Park, observed International Women's Day on March 7 at their office premises.

But, as usual, not everyone was all too happy about that.

"This was supposed to be our day off. They kept the office open on a weekend to celebrate us for some reason. When I told my boss that IWD is tomorrow and not today he just told me that as a tech company, we must always be ahead of the curve," said Sharnila Kishore, a junior developer at the firm.

The office was cheerfully decorated with pink banners and posters that said #EachForEqual.

"As someone working in the IT industry, I am all too aware of the fact that the sector has a serious case of gender inequality. Even though out of 55 employees, we only have three women, it's extremely important that we celebrate them and the role they play in our success," said Noman Akash, the CEO of Techstosterone. However, Hamida Rahman Chowdhury, a lead iOS developer, had a different outlook.

"I am not one of the three women, I am one of the two. The third woman our CEO spoke of is actually our new intern who just has long hair. I really don't understand what's happening here. We are celebrating IWD all of a sudden, while all five washrooms in the office look like the Kawran Bazaar fountain with yellow fever. I am so bloody done with this."

She ended the sentence with a hoarse yell and stormed out of the office. We asked the founder if they are coming up with any technology to help women in the future.

"I strongly believe technology can solve all of our issues. Right now, we are looking into an app that women can use to notify their boyfriends or husbands of their location in real-time so that if they face any crisis, help is only a tap away," he said while showing our correspondent screenshots of an app with a big red circle in the middle.

Techstosterone is now looking for a new lead iOS developer.

## The Shackles of Womanhood

AASHA MEHREEN AMIN

No this is not about all the stuff that will make you want to exterminate the male members of the Homo Sapien species. Let's leave that to the regular pages. Let's talk about the heaviness of other burdens that we women have been made to believe are crucial to our happiness.

I'm talking shoes. Sorry ladies, I know you're gasping with outrage at such fashion blasphemy but seriously, do you not see the conspiracy of the industry, a construct of surreptitious sexism that perpetuates a kind of entrapment that is borne by the tendons and balls of the feet?

Think of all the gorgeous stilettos you have worn or coveted -- those contraptions that expect unrealistic contortions of your feet that must move gracefully without major injury. I mean, would any man in their right mind voluntarily walk in those things inflicting such pain on the balls of the feet, to the knees and permanent misalignment of his spine?

Yes, we have been brainwashed into thinking we must all walk on tiptoes with stork-like movements to be accepted in cool company. Think about the borderline anorexic models with endless legs trotting along the ramp in those symbols of discomfort and pain. What they don't realise is that there's nothing sexy about tendonitis, back and hip pain or knee replacement surgery, which is often the price a woman must pay for all those swanky stilettos (original or copies) by Jimmy Choo and Manolo Blahnik.

By the time you hit the 40s and 50s you can write an eulogy for your knees as you put all that menopausal weight on those poor knee caps just because you wanted to conform to the tall, sexy image of your golden years.

What about the daily fashionwear -- those skinny jeans that stop blood circulation and those backless blouses that you wear even in sub-zero temperatures? Think of all the "dream sequences" in Hindi films -- among the snowy mountains while the hero will wear a sensible turtle-neck pullover, the sultry heroine will wear the sheerest chiffon sari with a threadbare bandana for a blouse. Why must she risk pneumonia and bronchitis or even hypothermia just to get a few wolf whistles

from the movie theatre enthusiasts? You can just see the poor young woman barely able to stop her teeth from chattering as she smiles as sunnily as possible and bats her watery eyes (stinging from the blistering cold no doubt) at the cashmere adorned Romeo.

Yet the biggest burden that has off-shooted from the fashion addiction is the ridiculous range of cosmetics that few women can resist. And it's not just the zillion fairness creams that you must have, apparently, to be a heroic journalist saving kids from a fire or landing an executive job at a snooty corporation. It's a Leviathan proportion of products churned out by the cosmetic industry that promises to paint you into the 'fantasy you', the supermodel, age-defying you. It's no longer just 'sunu powtar' (a local derivative of vanishing snow and powder) that are part of your essentials.

Now you must have a primer to smoothen out the pores, the fifty shades of eyeshadow to make your eyes smoky or dreamy or just slightly flirty, a sneaky range of concealers and correcting palettes (apparently green has incredible powers of camouflage), eye brighteners, contour palette to create mythical cheekbones out of chubby cheeks, highlighters to give you that dewy (or shiny sweaty) look, the liquid foundations, the 'pancake', the loose translucent powder, the bronzer and blusher, eyeliner by tattoo artists, the blue and green mascara... an exhausting list that never ends. They may take up half the bedroom and force you to forget about that holiday in Phi Phi Island because of the astronomical bill but they are, to a huge number of women, the bare necessities of life. Meanwhile, one must not forget the philanthropy behind all this buying of gunk-on-the-face that can make you look perfect for a Halloween party -- it is making some people very, very rich.

So there you have it -- a glimpse into the burdens imposed by the worldwide web of fashion. It is just the tip of the iceberg of what the beauty business has burdened women with -- an irresistible compulsion to spend limitless hours and money on all the war paint, the voluntary traumatising of their feet and the illogical sartorial defiance of sub-zero temperatures, all for the sake of facing a looks-obsessed, ageist world.

## Woman irked after day with shelf goes awry



INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIP CORRESPONDENT

Sultana planned out the whole day in impeccable details. As someone prone to anxiety attacks, she had to. She was going out with her shelf.

After a long hiatus as a newly single woman, she decided to be shelf-partnered. Her childhood idol had recommended it. Her friends kept saying, "Love your shelf, love your shelf!"

And of course, the year 2020 was also all about "shelf love and shelf care" anyway. At this point it is important to note that sometimes Sultana misunderstood words.

Fast forward to Pohela Falgun, Sultana walks out with her shelf, only to find out Falgun was cancelled. But she didn't let that bother her.

She ended up calling a CNG through the OAPA app at a 2 percent discount for shelf-partnered people. Sultana decided to show up to work to submit her story on "10 places in Dhaka with the most discount for shelf-partnered people on Valentine's Day".

"It's been a hard couple of months. With all my friends getting married, updating their relationship statuses on Facekindle and still constantly reminding everyone around them to be shelf-partnered, I am a little confused and frazzled, you know. At least at work I can pretend that I have it together," says a by-now distraught Sultana.

But what happened at the end of the day sent Sultana into a spiral. She was returning home when she got mugged, lost her shelf and felt absolutely distraught. The incident launched her quest for another therapist in this crazy city. And in digital Bangladesh, where else would she look other than on bikirikridotcom, where you can get anything from therapists to shelf-partnering options.

And guess who she found? Her very own old shelf.



## RMG MAN EXPLAINS WRITING TO FEMALE WRITER

FEMALE PROBLEM CORRESPONDENT

As I was writing a report on International Women's Day, sitting at West End with my laptop, pretending to understand the struggles of women who are actually battling femicide, child marriage and violence, while I continue to live a highly sheltered life of drinking skimmed milk shalghom-spice latte with a hint of cardamom, I felt the gaze of a man behind me.

His eyes were fixated on my screen, where I'd managed to write two sentences on how people misconceive International Women's Day. "Are you, like, a writer or something?" he asks.

Upon hearing that I am, indeed, a Writer or Something, he took the liberty

to take a seat at my table. "Oh great, you seem to have hit a block."

He flashes me an all-knowing smile. "Let me help you."

As soon as I open my mouth to say he's making wrong assumptions, he starts talking again. "I'm Kazi Sakib, currently trying to launch an activewear label for Instagram influencers. It's a spin-off from my father's RMG empire," he says, while reaching into a very tight pocket to bring out visiting cards.

Wondering how that qualifies him to give me advice, I think to myself, "Ah yes, another dude who will undermine my expertise with his unearned confidence."

"I see you've written that people are wrong to think IWD is unnecessary because women's rights have already



been achieved. Are you trying to say men think that?" he asks. Hoping I will finally get a chance to speak and tell him I don't need help, I begin, "No,

many people..."

He cuts me off. "Well actually, not all men think that. They just think that it's, like, unfair to have a day to celebrate

women while men are constantly neglected, you know. Like I got chocolates for my girlfriend today. She didn't even, like, post it on Instagram stories. On which day will I get some appreciation?"

Just as I'm looking for something to give him as a trophy, he begins to ramble on again. "My friend told me that there is a Men's Day, but dude, y'all get flowers and stuff and we get nothing. IWD is all about these corporate events. A friend of mine works at Techstosterone and he said their office went all out," said Kazi Sakib.

He stops for a breath and I spot my opening. "It says on your card you studied operations management in Australia. How are you such an expert on IWD?" I ask.

"Well, actually I've known enough women in my life," he said, clearly agitated. "How dare you question my expertise? I have a foreign degree and you're just some dumb Writer or Something."

I'll be honest, at this point I was starting to enjoy the conversation enough, wanting to egg him on for some more of that sweet writing material. But his ego had been too wounded.

"I cannot believe I wasted my time trying to help you. How typical of women! Even when I wanted to participate in your IWD or whatever, you didn't appreciate me," Sakib said before he stormed out, leaving behind quite the manpersion.