

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Tinkering with a Purpose

by Fayza Haq

It is only the nouveau riche or the extremely well-to-do, who think of discarding their furniture when it gets old. Specially in the east, where repairwork is relatively cheap, chairs and tables are simply not put in the rubbish bin, once they have come a little apart, or the cloth or cane is a trifle worn off. Everybody does not have the wild craze to have the latest chairs and tables in town, and many even take great pride in the age of the furniture. People in the west even have the fad of collecting antique beds, footstools and sideboards.

Mukul Chandra Das, 25, who repairs furniture, specially cane-work, going from house to house, learnt his trade from an uncle. Mukul began his career early and has now been working for 16 years. He repairs chairs and tables of all types.

He earns Tk 100 to Tk 200, every day and visits areas ranging from Banani, Gulshan, Dhanmandi and Eskaton to Shaymoli, Asad Gate, Mirpur and Purana Dhaka. "I go to Motijheel 'para' too," he adds.

He has a family of six members. Of them a young brother does spring repair jobs of furniture. This brother used to do harmonium repair work at first, but this did not prove very lucrative.

He has a feather in his cap that he had two of his sisters married. "At each marriage we spent about Tk 15,000. We had dinner for 50 guests each time, apart from giving cash money to the bridegroom, and 'saris' and jewellery to the sisters. We didn't get involved in items like watches, radio or bicycle. Yet each time it was hassle enough. However we don't really mind paying as long as our sisters are happy. We cannot wipe out the dowry system in a day, according to our wishes. It is ingrained in our culture," Mukul narrates.

Discussing his job he admitted "I do get tired roaming the big city. Yet, at the same time, I am glad to get work." For repair on a large chair, where three people can sit, he gets Tk 150. A single seater with a handle can go up to Tk 125. Single chairs without handles are usually for Tk 100. He does a set of three cane chairs and table repair for Tk 3000 at times.

"I do spring work as well, and deal with material covering too. I handle stitching. The material, of course, is given by the owner," he adds with pride.

He has no money in the bank but he tells me with confidence that his family owns a cow, has a house of their own and possesses one and a half 'kathas' of land as well in Abdullapur in Karaniganj across Sadarghat.

Mukul does not take weekly holidays. He certainly does not miss out working on Fri-

days. "In fact," he informs me, "there are more people at home on weekends who are ready to be my customers." He adds, "For me it is 'no work, no pay,' so I try to put in as much work as I can."

He loves to listen to the radio but has no time for the cinema. Although he is a simple furniture repair worker yet he has the intelligence and sensitivity to realise that the local films have very little to offer to the thinking man. "There is little in them except violence and incredible love stories. I can't relax watching people beating each other up or seeing unrealistic delineation of daily life. I don't like doing 'adda', smoking or sipping cups of tea. I think that is a complete waste of time," he tells me.

Though a Hindu living in a Muslim surrounding, Mukul has no problems at all. He jokes about having "13 festivals in the 12 months". He says he loves the "pujas", "puri", "luchi", fish and curds served at the "puja" specially during Durga and Kali "pujas". The "jatra" during this time is an entertainment for the entire community. He also looks forward to the "holi" time.

The "pujas" are held by donating money as a group, he informs me. "My family spends at least Tk 1000 during each 'puja'. We have 125 Hindus in our group in the village. "Puja" involves not only delicious food but also sometimes new clothes," he says.

"I have lots of Muslim friends who come to my house and I visit them in turn. Of course I have to be careful of what I eat at my Muslim friends' houses as long as we try and avoid meat. Some of the elderly don't even have garlic or onions. They take only oil, saffron and chillies," he comments.

He has never been to India, although he is of Hindu origin and he has great curiosity about the neighbouring country. But his family discourage him from packing up and trying to go and settle down in India. "You'll never get a job as easily there," they warn him.

He does dream of going to the Middle East like so many Bangladeshis but he does not have the means. "You need a lump sum to start you off," he says. "I have to see to the marriage of my youngest sister before I can daydream of a fancy future for myself. I have not married myself as I must see to it that all my sisters are well established. When my sisters come visiting we can't send them off empty handed. The birth of grandchildren in the families too have to be celebrated," he adds.

With his bag of clippers, knife, large nail, pliers and paint brush, the tinker is certainly an industrious young man.



Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia recently attended the inaugural session of a national seminar on future strategies for the water supply and sanitation sector in the country at the Sheraton Hotel. John L. Eaton General Manager and Director PR of the hotel Rashida Muhiuddin received Prime Minister at the hotel.

## Dhaka to seek stronger UN role for small nations

Bangladesh will seek a stronger role of the world body in preserving peace, stability and sovereignty of the member-countries, especially the smaller nations at the current session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), Riaz Rahman, the new Foreign Secretary, who assumed his office on Saturday said, reports UNB.

Rahman is due to leave Dhaka for New York today (Tuesday) to attend the 46th session of the UNGA.

Foreign Minister AMS Mostafizur Rahman left Thursday for the United Nations leading an 11-member Bangladesh delegation to the UNGA which already began

last week.

The Bangladesh delegation includes Ziaul Haq, MP, Muhammad Akhter Hammed Siddiki, MP, Dr. Abdul Mayeen Khan, MP, Barrister Aminul Haq MP, Bangladesh Ambassador to the United States Abul Ahsan, Director General (UN) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Motahar Hossain, Principal Information Officer Abdus Sobhan and Hasanuzzaman Khan, Chief News Editor, BSS.

Rahman said that Bangladesh, being a leader of the Least Developed Countries (LDC), will obviously urge the world body to protect the interests of the developing nations to ensure their socio-economic progress.

"We will also draw the attention of the world community to the decisions of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Organisation of the Islamic Conference and Commonwealth — forums where we have been playing effective role," he said.

The Foreign Secretary said, "Bangladesh advocates for further strengthening the rules of the international laws to tackle the problems of the refugees and violation of human rights as well as to protect ecological balance."

Bangladesh, will express its readiness to contribute to UN peace keeping efforts at different parts of the world particularly in Kampuchea and Western Sahara, Riaz said.

The country has been participating in UN peace keeping forces on both Iran-Iraq borders and Iraq-Kuwait demarcation lines.

## Dhaka-Harare ties to grow

The new High Commissioner of Zambia Lt Gen Gary Mushaala Kalenge presented his credentials to Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed at Bangabhaban Monday morning, reports BSS.

The envoy while presenting the credentials, said Bangladesh-Zambia relations would grow increasingly strong in the days ahead. He said Zambia was interested to enhance cooperation with Bangladesh in all fields.

Bangladesh greatly valued the fraternal ties between the two countries which were deeply rooted in shared beliefs.

## Body to probe irregularities in BCSIR

A high level committee of science and technology division, at a meeting in Dhaka Monday with State Minister for Education Principal Md Eunus Khan in the chair, discussed various problems and irregularities of the subordinate organisations of the division, reports BSS.

The meeting approved a three-member committee to investigate irregular appointments in the Bangladesh Council for Science and Industrial Research (BCSIR). The committee will formulate their report within 10 days.

Speaking on the occasion the State Minister said that the present government had attached priority to science and technology sector. Eunus Khan called upon the scientists to devote themselves in the suitable research work.

## Plea to follow teachings of Prophet

The Speaker of the Jatiya Sangsad, Abdur Rahman Biswas, Monday called upon the people to apply the teachings of the Great Prophet Hazrat Mohammad (SM) in individual, and national life for establishing justice, rule of law and exploitation-free society in the country, reports BSS.

The Speaker was addressing as the chief guest a milad mahfil organised by the Dhaka city unit of the BNP at Nawab Yusuf Market after Aar prayer, marking the observance of Serratun Nabi.

The President of the city BNP, Lt Gen Mir Shawkat Ali, MP, also spoke on the occasion. General Secretary Salauddin Ahmed, MP and other city leaders were present on the occasion.

## Weather

### Light rain likely

By Staff Correspondent

Met office forecast on Monday light to moderately heavy falls and rain or shower accompanied by temporary gusty wind are likely to occur at most place over Chittagong and Khulna divisions and at many places over Dhaka and Rajshahi divisions during the next 36 hours commencing from 6 pm Monday.

Day temperature may fall by one to three degree Celsius over the country.

Met office also said that monsoon was fairly active over Bangladesh and moderate elsewhere over north Bay.

Seasonal low lies over Bihar, adjoining Madhya Pradesh and neighbourhood. Axis of monsoon runs through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, to Assam across central Bangladesh.

Rainfall activities may increase during the subsequent two days, Met office also said.

Heavy fall, were recorded all over the country on Monday which were at Sandwip-66 mm, Rajshahi-61 mm, Rangpur and Ishurdi-32 mm each, Sylhet-46 mm, Patuakhali-31 mm, Sitakundu-30 mm, Teknaf-22 mm, Comilla-17 mm, Bogra-16 mm, Kutubdia-10 mm.

Rainfall was also recorded in Chittagong, Mymensing, Cox's Bazar, Jessore, Rangamati, Srimangal, Matjdicourt, Faridpur, Madaripur, Bhola, Khepupara and Dinajpur.

Temperature and humidity recorded on Monday over the country were:

Town/Cities	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	29.8	26.6	79	90
Chittagong	30.5	25.6	83	89
Rajshahi	34.2	24.4	85	94
Khulna	31.3	26.5	86	89
Dinajpur	32.0	26.5	83	89
Rangpur	31.5	26.5	90	89
Barisal	27.5	26.1	93	94
Sylhet	28.5	24.0	100	89
Mymensing	30.0	22.5	93	92
Cox's Bazar	29.6	24.5	77	93

## What's on today . . . .

### Islamic Foundation

Islamic Foundation Bangladesh will hold a Waj Mahfil at the east square of the Baitul Mokarram Mosque today (Tuesday) after Magreb prayer as part of its fortnight-long programme in observance of the Eid-e-Miladun Nabi. Maulana Shamsuddin Kashemi, Maulana Abdul Basher Akhanda and Maulana Habibullah Misbah will address the Waj Mahfil.

### Shilpakala Academy drama

Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy will stage the drama 'Khetmajur Khoimuddin' at its auditorium today (Tuesday) at 7 pm.

Directed by Goiam Sarwar, the drama is based on the story by a Chinese writer.

Admit cards are available at the academy gate.

### Reception to Finance Minister

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Bangladesh will arrange a reception at the Hotel Purbani International in the city today (Tuesday) at 7 pm in honour of the Finance Minister M Saifur Rahman.

### Rotary Club meet

The regular weekly meeting of the Rotary Club of Dhaka, will be held today (Tuesday) at 5 pm at the Dhaka Sheraton Hotel.

Former Justice Abdur Rahman Chowdhury will be the guest speaker. He will speak on 'campus unrest and violence.'

### Khomeni's birth anniversary

Imam Khomeni Smriti Parishad, will hold a discussion to be followed by a special prayer at its office at 115, New Circular Road in the city in observance of 90th birth anniversary of Imam Khomeni.

Parishad members and interested persons have been invited to attend.

### Mir Shawkat greets PM

By Staff Correspondent

City BNP President Lt Col (ret'd) Mir Shawkat Ali MP Monday felicitated the Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and her cabinet members.

Addressing as the chief guest the conference of Ward No. 30 of the city BNP, Mir Shawkat recalled the uncompromising attitude of Begum Zia during the anti-autocratic movement and said she created a glorious history by establishing parliamentary democracy in the country despite conspiracies hatched by evil forces.

The conference was also addressed by the DUCSU VP Amanullah Aman, MP, Lalbagh Thana branch President of the party Mesbahuddin Sabu, JCD city unit GS Nasiruddin Pintu, Kotwali Thana BNP GS Abu Mohammad Moynuddin and Sutrapur Thana BNP GS Habibur Rahman Mondol.

President of the BNP Ward No 30 Md Azizullah was in the chair.

### Compensation for RAJUK acquired lands assured

Works Minister Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mia paid a surprise visit to the office of RAJUK Monday morning, reports BSS.

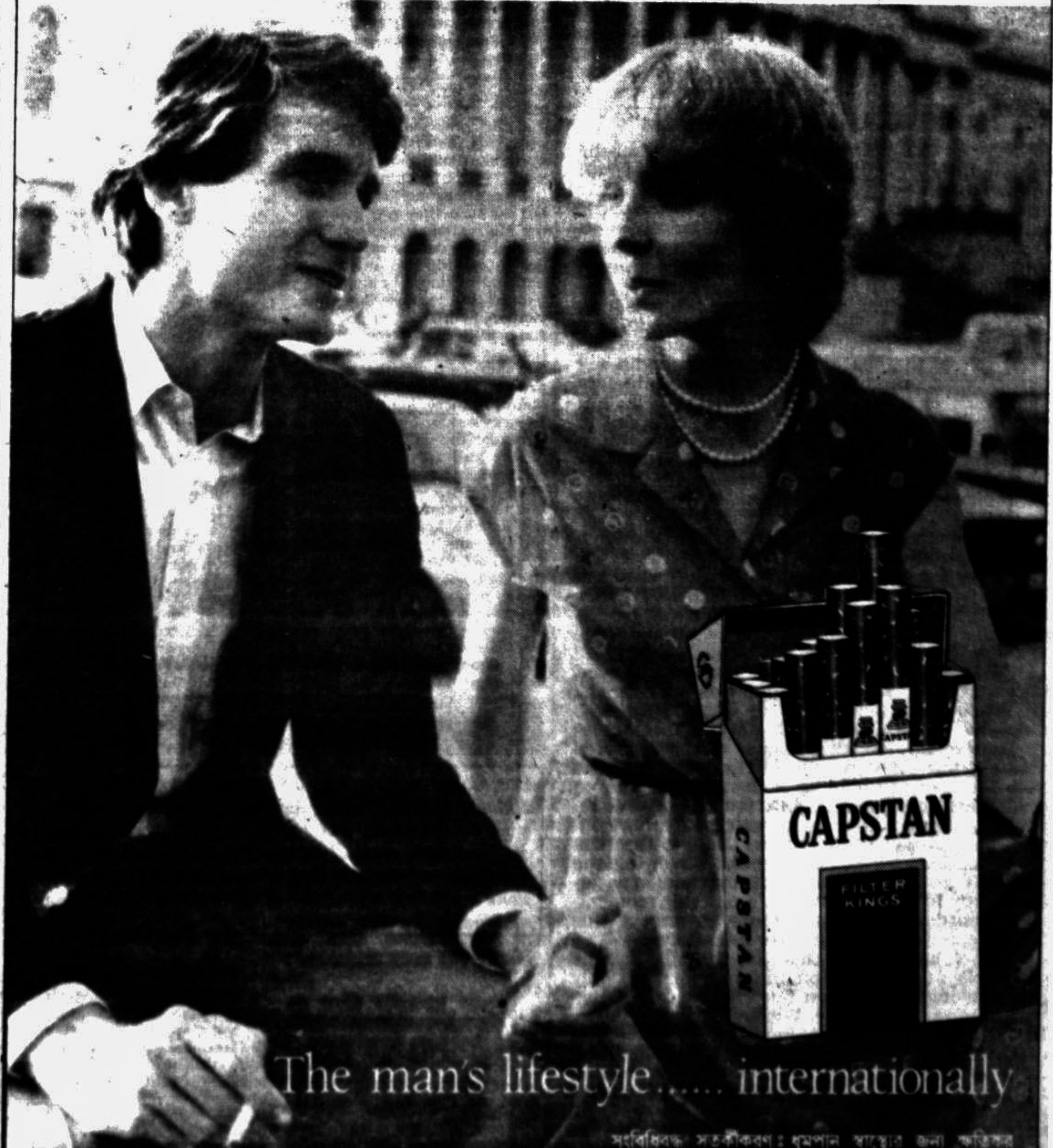
During the visit the minister assured that the sufferers will be provided with all possible help and cooperation from the government who did not get compensation for their lands acquired earlier by RAJUK.

### Labour leader leaves for India

Star Economic Report

The Central Committee Member of Bangladesh Jatiya Samik League and the General Secretary of Garments Samik Karmachari Union, Md Taubidur Rahman left for India on September 20 to join a seminar on health and security organised by International Textile Workers Asian Regional Organisation.

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সংবিধিত: সতীকরণ: ধূমপান স্বাস্থ্যের জন্য ক্ষতিকারক