

Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

Quilting from door to door

By Fayza Haq

"I believe that all women must have some job of their own that is income generating and they should not depend on their husbands only. Also, if a woman finds herself in some straits, as I was in when I found myself a widow with four children, a skill always helps out. To be a widow or divorcee is not uncommon in our society," says Hamida Begum, better known as Akbarer Ma.

Stitching 'kathas' from door to door, Akbarer Ma says, "I am too old to work as a cook woman or an odd job maid. I am not rich enough to lead a life of idleness and luxury. I must support myself and family. So I knock on doors and take in whatever work I am given."

"There are factories I know where women do handicrafts to be sold to handicraft shops, and to be exported abroad. I am in touch with such employers but I prefer to stay at home with my family, and work at my own pace at my job. I must supervise my six grandchildren and keep an eye over my daughters-in-law. Earlier, fifteen to twenty years ago, I had four young children of my own to tend for, and did not have so much of leisure to pursue a task that I enjoy," she adds.

Elaborating on her 'katha' stitching, she narrates, "I do about five 'kathas' in a month. I get Tk. 40 to Tk. 50 for each piece. I can get as much as Tk. 200 for the ones with pattern or 'nakshi'. The payment is made according to the extent of the detailed work and the length of the 'katha'. Sometimes I go in for 'nakshis' for pillow cases, tablecloth and for fronts of women in the neighbourhood for Tk. 200. "This was just not enough. I started 'katha' making as well which brought me an additional Tk. 400 per month. I did my stitching at night at that time," she recalls.

"Now that my son is grown up, I can devote all my time to 'katha' making and have money of my own for my cloths

'kurtas'. We do these in dozens and get paid Tk. 25-50 for each piece. Embroidery on the 'sari' gets me Tk. 150 at least. This involves minute work and so gives one more money."

Talking about her work again, she elaborates, "There are patterns in books. People choose whatever design they want. I get the thread from the 'ferrywallas' and from the market. A 'katha' pattern will involve about Tk. 50 worth of thread and

this is paid by the customer herself, otherwise the business of 'katha' making would get too expensive. Plain 'kathas' may sometimes involve only Tk. 20 worth of thread."

Where does she get the materials—the cloth for the 'kathas'? "This is usually 'sari' material with old bed sheets and table-cloths for inner lining. The cloth for the 'katha' is given by the patron," she says.

Akbarer Ma handles her work with considerable ease and spaces out her labour. "It takes me two days to make an ordinary 'katha'," she informs. "If I can get help from my daughters-in-law it can be finished in a day. But the 'nakshi kathas' take 15 days at least. I put in various colours in the 'nakshi'—yellow, red, green, brown—you name a colour and it is there. Some like roses others like plain plots. I put it all there. For items like table-cloths I put in dolls and animals like horses and elephants. This obviously involves more labour and time. Although I get my patterns from books I have learnt by watching others stitch," she says.

When her husband Sikander died of cholera during the Liberation, she went in for a job of a cook

and for nicknacks for the grandchildren I would have liked to be able to save enough for a house" of our own but that is impossible for us in a city like Dhaka," Akbarer Ma continues.

"I may not have a shop of my own but I get customers through the display of my handicraft in the homes of my patrons," the 'katha' woman who lives in Jhikatala, adds.



Akbarer Ma busy sewing a 'katha' with thread and needle at one of her customer's house

Haj lottery Jan 31

The lottery for this year's Haj and Haj-e-Badr for the persons who have applied from Dhaka district for going to Mekkah by air at the government's fixed rate will be held on January 31, reports BSS.

The lottery will be held at the Dhaka Zila Parishad Hall at 10 a.m. according to a district administration press release.

Smuggled goods worth Tk 3.25 cr seized in Ctg

CHITTAGONG, Jan 27: Smuggled goods worth about Tk 3.25 crore were seized by the anti-smuggling task-force in the month of December 90, reports UNB.

M. A. Bari, Divisional Commissioner and Convener of Regional Task Force disclosed this at a meeting held here last week.

The meeting was called to evaluate the performance of different agencies working under Regional Task Force on smuggling.

The seized goods included 630 pieces of VCR, VCP and other electronic gadgets and a large quantity of automobile spares. The automobile spares were recovered from Fatiha here last month by Chittagong District Police.

The anti-smuggling task force and associate agencies conducted 676 operations last month.

Aid talks between Bangladesh, UK begin today

Bilateral aid talks between the UK and Bangladesh will begin in the city from today (Monday), reports UNB.

The British team will be led by visiting Under Secretary of the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) Richard Manning.

According to a press release, the 3-day talks will focus on Britain's present and future aid programmes in Bangladesh.

EEC to give Tk 7 cr grant

Bangladesh will receive about Taka 7 crore as grant for the North Central Regional Study Project under a memorandum signed by the Government of Bangladesh and the Commission of the European Community (EEC), reports UNB.

The financing memorandum was signed in Brussels on January 23 by A K M Kamaluddin Chowdhury, Bangladesh Ambassador and Abel Matutes, Commissioner EEC for their respective sides, according to a message received in Dhaka Saturday.

The objectives of the study project are to prepare a water development plan for the North Central Region of Bangladesh with emphasis on flood control, drainage and irrigation measures and to undertake pre-feasibility studies of the main projects identified in the regional plan for implementation during 1990-95 flood control action plan period.

The project also includes feasibility study for the Jamalpur priority project.

Peace Council

Under the auspices of the Bangladesh Peace Council, a seminar on "halting of Gulf war and the way to peace" will be held today (Monday) at 4 pm at Dhaka University TSC Seminar Hall, a press release of the council said, reports BSS.

Bapi Shahriar Children Award

A meeting of the writers for Juvenile Literatures held in Dhaka recently decided to introduce Bapi Shahriar Children Literature Award, according to a press release, reports BSS.

The meeting, presided over by Dr. Abdullah Al-Muti, formed a three-member Bapi Shahriar Smriti Committee with Mr. Rokunuzzaman Khan (Dada Bhai) as President, Mr. Lutfar Rahman Riton as convener and Begum Daulat Ara Mannan (mother of Bapi Shahriar) as treasurer.

Among others, Dr. Abdullah Al-Muti, Prof. Mamtaujuddin Ahmed, Mr. Shamsuzzaman Khan, Dr. Muntasir Mamun were taken as members of the committee.

BUET teachers' call to stop Gulf war

Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology Teachers Association (BUETTA) called upon the countries, involved in the Gulf war, to stop hostility immediately, reports BSS.

Dr Zasim-Uz Zaman and Dr Nizam Ahmed, President and General Secretary respectively in a joint statement condemned all sorts of international aggression.

They condemned the killing of innocent people, environmental pollution, destruction of historical relics in the war.

They urged the United Nations to find a solution to all Middle East issues

TV Monday

- 5:00 Opening announcement and recitation from the Holy Quran
5:15 Recitation from the Geeta
5:20 Cartoon film: Frankenstein Junior and the Impossible
5:15 Shikhhargon: Educational Programme for the SSC Students
6:10 Sports Programme
6:55 News in Bengali
7:05 TV debate competition
8:00 News in Bengali
8:30 Programme on family planning
9:00 Surer Bhuboney: Musical Programme
10:00 News in English
10:30 Film serial: The Last Outlaw
11-10 Closing.

13 firearms seized in Khulna

KHULNA, Jan 27: Police in a raid seized 13 firearms belonging to local Jatiya Party leaders from an arms shop in the town midnight Friday night, reports UNB.

Owners of the arms, all licensed, have been in hiding since the fall of the Ershad regime. Police said they seized 3 revolvers, 2 pistols, 2 double barrel guns and 4 rifles from the shop.

T & T Board recast

A lot of changes have been made in the T and T Board to improve subscribers services and restore better public image of the board, according to an official source, reports BSS.

The changes have been brought in after Mr Serajul Islam Khan has been appointed the new Chairman of the Board by the Interim Government.

In order to maintain administrative discipline, changes have been made in the post of Board Members, Directors General, Directors, Divisional Engineers, Deputy and Assistant Engineers.

The sources said the changes were made to make the board people oriented and dynamic.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for Across and Down. Includes 'Answer to Previous Puzzle' section.

Completed crossword puzzle grid.



A section of big audience enjoying an international cultural night organised by Guishan Ladies Club on Sunday. —Star photo

'Ershad repealed Special Powers Act before exit'

By Supreme Court Correspondent

The very existence and validity of the Special Powers Act 1974 came under attack when Rafiqul Haque, Senior Counsel and former Attorney General placed his writ petition challenging the detention of former Vice-President Moudud Ahmed.

The question as to whether the Special Powers Act 1974 is still a valid law or not is made one of the grounds in the writ petition. Rafiqul Haque, however, during his course of argument on Wednesday before the Division Bench comprising Mr. Justice Abdul Jalil and Mr. Justice Quazi Shafuluddin of the High Court Division submitted that he would not press his ground as he thought it would embarrass the present Government and he did not want to do the unpleasant work.

Nevertheless, he submitted promulgation of an ordinance in order to become law does not require publication or notification in the official gazette under Article 93 of the Bangladesh Constitution read with Section 30 of the General Clauses Act 1897.

Haque further alleged that the fact that the Special Powers Act was repealed by the former President was known to all concerned and was carried out by Voice of America, BBC and other media also. He said much arguments were made about the birth of an Ordinance in a recently heard case, popularly known as Dhaka University case and our memory is fresh about those arguments and as such, he refrained from making those arguments afresh.

Postal link with 5 Gulf states re-established

Postal link with five countries in Gulf region have been re-established, reports UNB.

An official handout on Sunday said postal services have resumed with Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran and United Arab Emirates.

The postal communication with several countries in the Middle East was suspended on January 18.

Dry weather to continue

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather is likely to prevail over Bangladesh till Tuesday morning. Meteorological Department says the night temperature is likely to rise by one to two degree Celsius at different places.

Outlook for subsequent two days: little change. Extended outlook for another five days: no marked change. On Sunday, the night temperature remained nearly unchanged over the country except Sylhet, Srimangal and Comilla where the temperature rose by two degree Celsius. The night temperature, however, still remained two to four degree below the normal for the time at most places.

On the day the lowest minimum temperature—08.5 degree Celsius—was recorded in Srimangal.

Temperature and humidity recorded in important cities and towns of Bangladesh on Sunday were:

Table with 3 columns: Cities/towns, Temperature in Celsius, Humidity in percentage. Lists cities like Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Khulna, Comilla, Sylhet, Bogra, Dinajpur, Rangpur, Jessore, Barisal.

International Cultural Night

The Guishan Ladies Community Club in Dhaka on Sunday presented an International Night featuring cultural traits of Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Tashkent of the USSR, says a press release.

The club is a women's voluntary organisation which is working for the upliftment of underprivileged segment of the Bangladesh society since its inception in 1984. It is running various welfare projects devoted to health, education, and recreation. The projects include free clinic, family planning centre, immunisation centre and adult literacy centre.

Hundreds including foreign nationals enjoyed the superb cultural night.



PROGRAMME

Pantomime show

The 'Friends of Bangladesh, Dhaka,' a humanitarian organisation having its parent society in UK will stage a 'solo pantomime show' by Md. Zakir Hossain, a member of Padatik Drama Group, at the Guide House Auditorium on Tuesday, at 6.30 pm as part of their fund raising campaign, says a Press release.

Discussion meet

A meeting of the Executive Committee of the Bangladesh-China People's Friendship Association will be held on Wednesday at 4 pm at the Office of the Association to discuss organisational matters including holding of biennial general meeting and election.

Advertisement for Jhalani's Dam Dighun H'le O. Includes text in Bengali, images of a pump, a tractor, and a generator, and contact information for Farmaland Traders Ltd.