

Dhaka Day by Day

Of Sticks, Twigs and Leaves

by Fayza Haq

Most of the women of the poorer classes who go to work in our cities are often widowed, divorced or separated. They cling on to whatever source of income that they can get hold of and make their last Taka eke out. Their jobs are their entire existence and they have little time for respite or recreation.

Ferozar Ma, who originally comes from Manikganj, is a widow of 46, with two grown daughters Jahanara and Feroza. Ferozar Ma is not a "Tokal" as she has a full time job as a cook-maid at a house in Dhanmondi, and is paid Tk 275 plus other benefits like food, clothes, a bed for the night, and medicines. But she spends her spare time collecting branches of trees, dry leaves, empty cigarette boxes and sweetmeat containers, squabbling with other rivals in the vicinity for the booty.

While she sells the cigarette and sweetmeat boxes to earn only as much as perhaps Tk 10 per month, this gets her part of her pocket money which comes to Tk 40 a month. With this she obtains her stock of "pan-supari" which keeps her going as she labours in her mistress's kitchen through the heat of the day.

As for the sticks and branches she gathers at six different houses in the neighbourhood, they are used to keep the fires lit at her sister Rabiya Ma's hovel at Jhikata. Ferozar Ma is beholden to her sister for sheltering and feeding her divorced daughter Feroza and her three-year-old grandchild Shati.

Rabeyar Ma requires more than the usual load of dry wood to keep her fires lit. This is because she supplies lunch in tiffin boxes to eight shopkeepers in the neighbourhood. Different customers have different tastes and Rabeyar Ma has to cater to them all. Some like fine rice, some care for only vegetables, while others must have their "murg-mussalam".

Feroza herself has a job of a sort as a house-maid. She toils at two different houses but only brings home Tk 100 a month for her effort, and this

in no way covers for her expenses and that of her child. Her mother, in fact, parts with Tk 200 from her own salary for the upkeep of her homeless daughter.

The fate of Ferozar Ma's other daughter, Jahanara, who works in a garment factory, is far from a bed of roses. "Her husband beats her up regularly and often comes home late at night. There is not a minute's peace in that house," her mother says. The husband is a rickshawpuller, but he brings home nothing to his wife.

With the nagging problems of two discontented daughters and an oft-neglected grandchild Ferozar Ma keeps herself occupied cooking the daily 'daal bhat' and fish curry for the family she works for. She will tell you with a proud smile "I can make a meal comprising roast chicken, palau korma, 'kebab', pudding and 'firi' for twenty guests."

Having done threshing of rice in the village for three years 15 years ago, Ferozar Ma drifted to the city, guided by her more enterprising sister. She tried to do her best for her daughters. She spent Tk 4,000 for the elder daughter's wedding and Tk 3,000 more for the younger one's nuptials, but apparently both the marriages have proved to have been total disasters. She constantly saves her new clothes and tasty morsels from the kitchen for her daughters. But all her persistent efforts are never enough. Her latest concern is her grandchild. "Because of her Feroza can't get work in a garment factory. We'll have to put her in an orphanage."

Ferozar Ma is not working for prestige, honour, name, or any sense of glamour or excitement which a career woman will go in for. "Who wants to struggle and work all her life? My head often spins, and heart pounds unusually, but if I decide to quit work who will feed and clothe me? I wish I had the 'kismet' of having had sons to support me, even if there is no question of an old age pension as my mistress tells me exists abroad."



The collector of wastes.

Feb 27 public holiday

The government has declared public holiday on February 27 on the occasion of the Jatiya Sangsad elections, an official announcement said Saturday, reports BSS.

It said: "This public holiday will be observed in all government offices, courts, autonomous and semi-autonomous organisations, bank, insurance companies, mills, factories and industrial establishments etc. throughout Bangladesh."

The holiday will not be applicable to newspapers, it added.

DU registered graduates' poll on March 12

The election of 25 representatives from the registered graduates of the Dhaka University to the Senate will be held on March 12, reports UNB.

It will be for the first time that direct election of the registered graduates will be held for this body.

Strike in BTV withdrawn

By Staff Correspondent

The Non-gazetted Employees Union of Bangladesh Television on Saturday called off their strike after a tripartite meeting between the authority, All-Party Students Unity (APSU) and the union leaders.

"We postponed our strike to respect the request of APSU," President of the union Sheikh Sohrab Hossain told The Daily Star.

Some 1,200 non-gazetted employees had started indefinite strike from February 7 to realise their one-point demand of a complete job structure.

The union leader said that 230 promotional posts were approved by the Government in August last year but the authority did not yet implement it.

Saturday's meeting was presided over by Dr Saadat Hussain, Director General of Radio and TV, which was attended by Joint Secretary, Ministry of Information, I.R. Bhuiya, Director (Admin), BTV, Chowdhury Fakuruzzaman, APSU leaders Khairul Kabir Khokon, Ashim Kumar Ukil, Shafi Ahmed and Nasiruddin. Union President and General Secretary Giasuddin Ahmed were also present at the meeting.

Bijoy Mancha at JU opens

SAVAR, Feb 16: The Vice-Chancellor of Jahangirnagar University Prof. Kaji Saleh Ahmed, inaugurated the Bijoy Mancha at the Mir Mosarrat Hossain Hall premises today, reports BSS.

Reinstatement of 21 newscasters demanded

The Bangladesh Sangbad Pathak Samity, the association of radio and television newscasters, in a memorandum sent to the Director of News, Bangladesh Television Saturday called upon the TV authorities to reinstate 21 English and Bengali newscasters who have been kept out of the monthly schedules for the past few months for no apparent reason or rhyme.

In the memorandum, the Samity called upon the TV News authorities to ensure that the said 21 newscasters are included in the monthly roster not later than February 22 failing which its members would have no option but to refrain reading the news bulletins.

The Samity, citing the proceedings of its two General meetings over the past couple of months, said its members strongly resented the recent tendency on the part of certain quarters to put the news-casters in a spot over strictly political issues that have nothing to do with newscasting. They also complained of being subjected to unnecessary harassment and humiliation and degradation in the eyes of the general public. The Samity urged upon all concerned to put a stop to such unwarranted actions.

Following is the list of 21 newscasters who have not been seen on the TV screen for sometime now: Rehana Parveen, Saleh Akram, Shamima Nasreen, Monwara Begum, Abdul Hye, Rizia Jobed, Aminul Huque, Nilufar Banu, Leena Khandaker, Saqi Rizwana, Imran Ahmed, Mun Mun Ahmed, Khaleda Firdous, Dilruba Alam, Ehsan Ahmed, Zayed Iqbal, Fazle Haider, Rifat Mahmud, Ismet Zerin Khan, Ahsanuzzaman and Jesmin Javed.

The press release was signed by Aminul Huque, President of the Samity.

Weather

Dry weather likely

By Staff Correspondent

Dry Weather likely to prevail all over the country today (Sunday). Night temperature fell by one to three degrees Celsius at many places over the country on Friday night and likely to remain nearly unchanged on Sunday night, according to Met office.

Dry continental air likely to continue over the country during next 24 hours.

The highest temperature recorded on Friday was 31.0 degree Celsius at Teknaf and lowest 10.2 degree at Rajshahi.

The sun sets today (Sunday) at 5:55 pm and rises Monday at 6:30 a.m.

Outlook for subsequent two days: Little change. Extended outlook for another five days: Tempo-thundery-activity likely at the end period.

Temperature and humidity recorded at important cities and towns are:

	Max	Min	9 a.m.	6 p.m.
Dhaka	26.6	16.2	41	32
Chittagong	27.8	15.5	78	47
Rajshahi	28.4	10.2	56	-
Khulna	27.5	14.0	68	60
Cox's Bazar	30.0	17.6	47	67
Sylhet	26.6	12.9	70	56
Rangpur	26.5	10.3	66	48
Bogra	27.4	13.0	54	44

Minimum temperature recorded on Saturday in the major cities of this region were:

Calcutta	16°C	Bombay	20°C
Bangkok	24°C	Beijing	8°C
Colombo	21°C	Karachi	8°C
		Delhi	8°C



Adviser for Food and Cultural Prof Iajuddin Ahmed addressing a discussion meeting on 'Amar Ekushey' organised by Bangla Academy on Friday.



A children's procession in city on Saturday in commemoration of the death of Shaheed Nur Hossain. Hossain, a pro-democracy activist, was killed in police firing in 1987. He was shot dead when he, with slogan 'let democracy be free' embossed on his back, participated in a mass agitation against autocratic rule of H. M. Ershad. —Star photo

Call to arrest musclemen

Tk 50cr spent on President's Secretariat: Dr Kamal

Awami League leader Dr. Kamal Hossain on Saturday urged the caretaker government to arrest musclemen and recover illegal arms to ensure free and fair elections on Feb 27, reports UNB.

"The mass upsurge of 1990 brought about fall of the autocrat. Now time has come to establish democracy... We want to see the country free from mafians, illegal arms and black money", he told an election meeting in Montpur here.

Dr. Kamal, who is contesting the ensuing election from Dhaka-11 constituency, called upon the people to vote for "boat", the election symbol of

Awami League, for what he called installing a constitutional government accountable to the people.

The struggle ahead will be to restore democracy and build the country as dreamt by Bangabandhu, he said.

The AL presidium member said Sheikh Mujib was killed at a time when he had been successfully carrying forward the rehabilitation and reconstruction works in a country ravaged by the bloody war of independence. His assassination paved the way for autocracy, he added.

Criticising the past regime,

he said Ershad had spent Tk. 50 crore in renovating the President's secretariat, Tk 22 crore for beautification of Bangabhaban and installed sodium light in the city at a huge cost. The money could be used in ameliorating the lot of common man, he said.

He also criticised Ershad for trying to cling to power by using religion in politics.

"Ershad is interested, some of his ministers detained while other associates including Leader of the Opposition in so-called parliament are absconding. Their trial will be held on the soil of Bangladesh", he said.

Bankim's works discussed

By Staff Correspondent

Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir Saturday discussed on Bankimchandra in its opening day of Amar Ekushey, says a press release.

Badruddin Umar discussed on the contribution of Bankim in Bengali literature.

Sattar denies manhandling

NARAYANGANJ, Feb 16: Former Chief Whip of the Jatiya Party M. A. Sattar today contradicted a news item that he was 'manhandled' by students yesterday, reports BSS.

RU Provost, 4 others locked in hall office

RAJSHAHI, Feb 16: Angry students today held a Provost and four house tutors of a Rajshahi University hall for an hour, charging them with favouritism in seat distribution, reports UNB.

Provost Dr. Faisal Islam Faruqi and the four house tutors of Suhrawardy Hall were locked in the hall office in the afternoon.

Later, they were rescued by student leaders of the hall union from the hour-long confinement.

Witnesses said the enraged students also disconnected the telephone line, broke the

nameplate of the Provost and smashed windowpanes of the hall office where the teachers were holding a meeting, and ammunition during the last one month.

A police press release said the arms recovered were: one rocket launcher, one SBBL gun, one .303 rifle, seven pistols and revolvers, 16 pigeons, two bayonets, two magazines and 151 rounds of different types of bullets.

Rotary meeting cancelled

The regular weekly meeting of RC of Dhaka North West scheduled to be held on Wednesday at its regular venue, Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka has been cancelled as the club will have an Inter-city meeting with five other Rotary Clubs today (Sunday) at 4 pm at Sonargaon Hotel, Dhaka.

Death anniversary of Nurul Momen observed

The first death anniversary of Nurul Momen, satirist and former professor of the Department of Law of the University of Dhaka was observed on Saturday. Besides Quran Khwani and Milad Mahfil discussion meeting was also held on the occasion at Biswa Sahitya Kendra and Department of Law, Dhaka University, says a press report.

Artists to uphold Language Movement

Adviser for Food and Cultural, Prof Iajuddin Ahmed urged the artists to uphold the spirits of Language Movement, War of Liberation and recent democratic movements through their works. These are the sources of inspiration for our existence, he added, reports BSS.

Prof Iajuddin Ahmed was speaking at a prize giving ceremony of ninth young artists exhibition organised by Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy in Dhaka on Saturday.

116 selected pieces by 94 young artists were displayed in the exhibition. The theme was 'Bangladesh Language Movement to Liberation War'.

The function was presided over by Director-General of the Academy, Kamal Lohani.

The Adviser stressed the need for spreading the works of art on national events to the remote corners of the country.

Momtaz elected Dhaka Bar President

Mr. A.K.M. Momtazuddin was elected President of the Dhaka Bar Association in the general election held on February 13 and 14, a Press release of the association said, reports BSS.

Seven other office bearers and 15 members of the Executive Committee were also elected for the 1991-92 term.

The office bearers are: A.K.M. Momtazuddin, President, Munshi Fokrul Islam, Vice President, Abdul Gaffur, Vice President, S.M. Altaf Hossain, General Secretary, ABM Waliur Rahman Khan (Wali) Treasurer, Gazi Zillur Rahman, Assistant General Secretary, Abdul Hye Fakir, Library Secretary and Md. Shamsul Haque, Cultural Secretary.

Members of the Executive Committee are: Abul Kalam Md Akhtar Hossain, Roxana Khandker, Md. Rezaul Karim Nejam, HM Lutful Kabir (Babul), Gazi Md. Shah Alam, Md Enamul Hasan Majumder, Md Nazrul Islam, Monzil Morshed, Mahmud Majiduddin, Md. Borhanduddin, Mahbubur Rahman Khan Lodi, Md Mahbubur Rahman, Md Abdur Rahim, Md. Delwar Hossain and Sarder Mustafizur Rahman.

PROGRAMME

Chhatra Sena seminar

Seminar on 'Amar Ekushey' organised by Bangladesh Islami Chhatra Sena will be held tomorrow (Monday) at 4 p.m. at TSC of Dhaka University.

Principal Dean Mohammad Azraf will attend the seminar

General meeting of BCCMCC

The Annual General Meeting of Bangladesh-China Cultural and Mass Communication Centre (BCCMCC) will be held on Tuesday at 6 pm at Canton Chinese Restaurant, Malibagh, Dhaka-17.

'Mass movement not reflected in films'

By Staff Correspondent

Bangla Academy on Saturday organised a discussion on "our mass movement and films" as a part of its programme in connection with the commemoration of Amar Ekushey, 91.

Film maker Kabir Anwar presented the key-note paper. Gazilul Huq, Syed Salauddin Zaki, Morshedul Islam participated in the discussion. Khan Ataur Rahman presided.

Kabir Anwar said different mass movements which were a part of our heritage were not reflected properly in our films. He said workshops free from the influence of bureaucracy, film-educated workers and positive political decision were necessary for the production of good and healthy films.

Salauddin Zaki said absence of healthy film criticism was responsible for the present crisis in film industry.

Gazilul Huq said aspirations of the masses could not be reflected in films unless there were democracy in the country.

In his presidential speech Khan Ataur Rahman said after the fall of autocracy a scope for production of people-oriented films was created for the first time.

Moinuddin Nazir, Hasi Biswas, Iflat Ara Khan, Rokaiya Hasina and Tapon Mahmud rendered Rabindra sangit in the evening.

Selina Hossain will present key-note paper on "growth of democratic values" at 4.30 p.m. on Sunday at Bangla Academy. Mohammed Abu Zafar, Asad Chowdhury and Rizia Rahman will discuss while Professor Anisuzzaman will preside.

Death condoled

The ex-students of Bera B.B. High School, Pabna, residing in Dhaka, condoled the death of Azimuddin Ahmed, a senior teacher and President of the School Students Association, on Saturday, says a Press release.

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Jewish month
- 5 River in Asia
- 9 Shoemaker's tool
- 12 Ten-cent piece
- 13 Withered
- 14 Meadow
- 15 "Lawrence"
- 16 Station
- 18 Petition
- 20 Iron symbol
- 22 Virginia
- 24 Small dogs
- 27 Apportion
- 29 Woody plant
- 31 Make lace
- 32 Wear away
- 34 Gilbert of "Roseanne"
- 36 Concerning
- 37 Negation
- 39 Give

Answer to Previous Puzzle

LEA MILL LOB
TELL OLIO ANA
AM BUD PONDER
POD PET KID
SNOB LAW PERT
TIP TED RIO
MA GAITERS PO
OPT COL YEW
PEAL NEW WARD
RAH SAP RYE
DAGGER TAA ON
OWE RALE LETT
GET SPAR PAS

DOWN
1 Both
2 Dissimilarly
3 Part of "to"

