

Dhaka Day by Day

Beauty and Elegance from Weeds

by Fayza Haq

You think of water hyacinths in our rivers as a nuisance that clog the flow and help the breeding of mosquitoes. Out of this weed the workers of Barisal, with the help of the Menonite Central Committee (MCC) and the cane workers at Baridhara, Dhaka are producing elegant and comfortable furniture, and beautiful pieces of household accessories such as lamps, tables, baskets and decorative vases and jars. They are even making exotic jewellery from this weed.

Speaking to Scott Ainslie of the MCC, one gathered that the target of the group are the heads of the household women, who have few other employment opportunities. They extend some credit as well as marketing and business management assistance. The ultimate goal of the project is that after six to seven years they will have complete independence from MCC. The projects are entirely owned and operated by the women at Barisal.

They harvest the hyacinths, Ainslie explained, from the ponds and cut away the leaves and the roots so that all they have is the stem. They split open the stems and clean out the inside tissues. The outside of the stems are solar dried, and these stems are then woven into ropes. The women sell the ropes to the furniture makers. There are three different types of ropes: one thick and plaited, one thin braided, and the third, a finer one, used to make jewellery. In addition to the furniture, lamps, baskets, and couches they make paper out of the water hyacinths, which are used by artists, while much of it is exported abroad.

Jim King, also of the MCC, explained how a woman in Thailand, Plearnpit took some advice from the ministry of industry in Thailand,

where they had done extensive research on water hyacinth. Plearnpit developed a project using water hyacinth rope with cane. Some of the people from Bangladesh, which included Rolfin Rheinheimer, Tom Wenger and Jim King, talked to Plearnpit, and shared her technology. These people who are technical engineers, worked on the technology of producing the ropes from the plants. "The workers slice the stem in half, remove the pulp, dry the stems and plait it into a rope. Next they soak it in a saline solution to prevent fungus and it is dried again before being sold," King elaborated.

"I went to the cane producers and saw all the designs they made. I asked them to make the existing cane designs in the water hyacinth and cane combination. I developed my own designs and adapted western ones, plus added some that people brought to us. The people in Dhaka were very interested and that is why we had this exhibition at 'La Galerie'. Through this exhibition we want people to

know how creative, decorative and useful objects can be made from water hyacinths which are found in abundance in Bangladesh," Mr. King added.

Hubert Penhetro, who has been working at the water hyacinth and cane furnitures for six months said, "This is the first time we are doing it. I think the binding from the weeds is even more decorative than pure cane. It gives it a new look and is more lasting. Of course the cost is a little more — ten per cent to be accurate, but it is worth it. There are 15 of us working on this project at Baridhara. In the beginning I was nervous whether it would turn out to be a success or not but now we are all confident, and longing to take in as many orders as we get. We get five per cent of the profit."

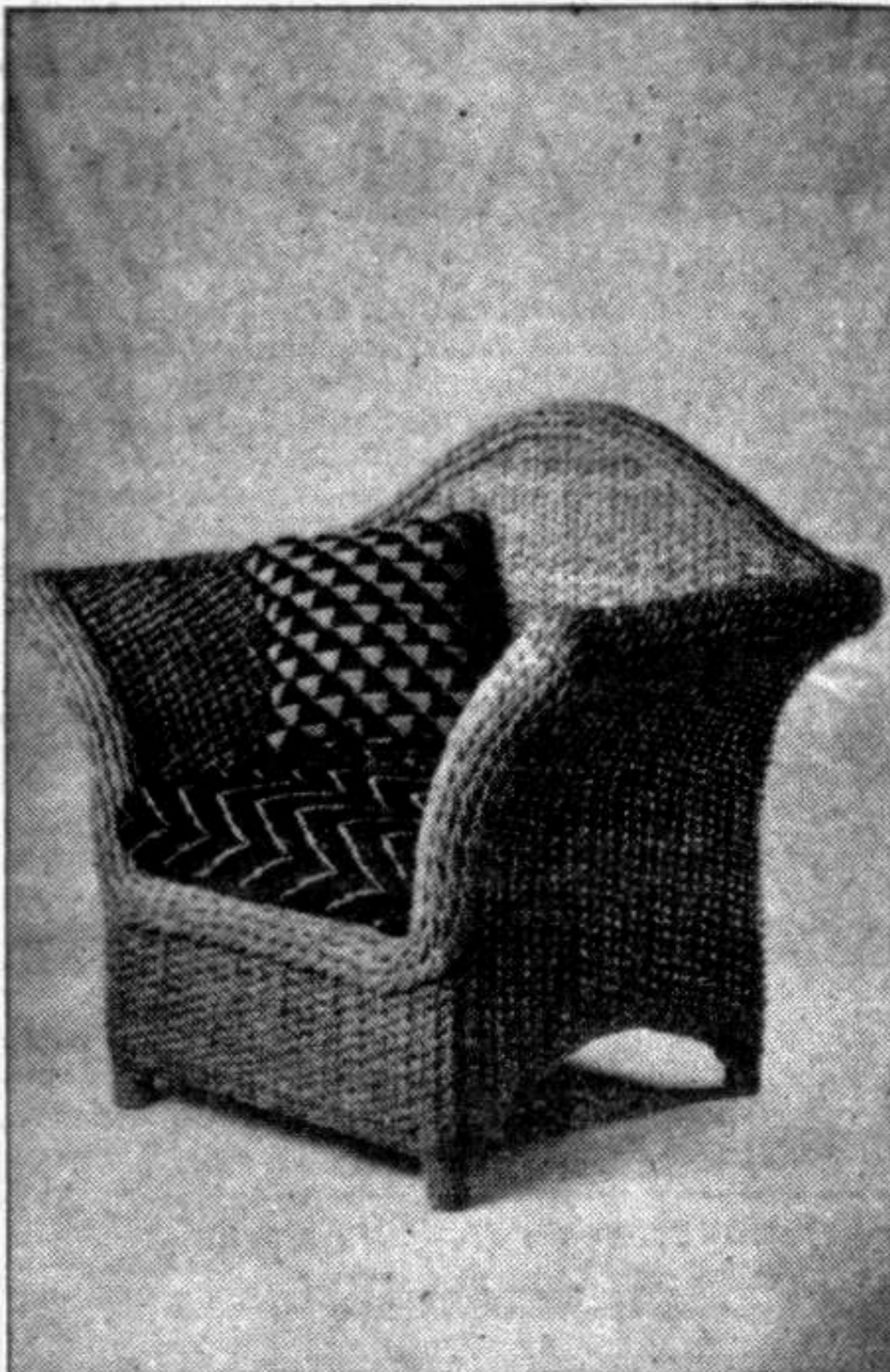
The chairs were modern, neat, decorative, comfortable and minutely worked on. The candle stands with the terracotta had the water hyacinth ropes to decorate them, as did the ceramic pots with elephant head decorations. There were stationery kits, with envelopes and notepads. Many of them had motifs and marble patterns. The jewellery with the terracotta, glass beads and fruit seeds would have been popular with foreign visitors.

The paper made from the water hyacinth at the MCC project at Barisal district was unique because the women who produced it, worked in their homes, rather than at a central production centre. This allowed them to be close to their children and their other daily chores. In addition, they produced it without any need of electricity. The water hyacinth is processed into a pulp using a rice "dhecky", and the sheets are lifted by hand. The source will begin marketing these botanical looking papers by the middle of '93.

At the exhibition were also the gorgeous paintings on hyacinth paper by Saleha, a woman who resides in Noakhali, who lives with her four children and her physically impaired husband. The MCC provided her with handmade paper, brushes and paint and encouraged her to paint pictures of scenes from her home in the village. Earlier, due to lack of education she could barely have a meal a day but now she is fairly well established. Saleha even plans to buy land with the money that she has earned.

There was one piece with brilliant squares of red, grey and yellow. There was another one with snake like patterns with human beings and birds. Yet another delightful one had red flowers growing on blue and black stems.

It was marvellous indeed to see the tastefully designed furniture and fittings for the home made from the unwanted water hyacinths. Something undesired had been converted into something wanted and beautiful. It also created jobs for many in the process.



Camelback chair.



Planning Minister A M Zahiruddin Khan presented the three-year rolling investment programme at a meeting at the NEC auditorium in the city yesterday. —PID photo

Zahir presents 3-yr rolling investment

Planning Minister AM Zahiruddin Khan yesterday presented the updated version of the three-year rolling investment programme in the public sector for the period 1992-93 to 1994-95 with a total outlay of Taka 31,386 crore, reports BSS.

The programme has been formulated within the general framework of the fourth five-year plan adjusted with the new development perspective of the present government. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister K M Rabbani, secretaries to the government, members of the Planning Commission, heads of the diplomatic missions and chiefs of donor agencies were also present at the function held at the National Economic Council (NEC) auditorium.

The three-year rolling plan has been formulated with the objective of achieving the following socio-economic scenario by the end of the present millennium.

Anniversary of fall of autocracy observed

By DU Correspondent

Different student organisations yesterday brought out processions and held rallies on Dhaka University campus in observance of the second anniversary of the fall of autocracy.

The pro-Awami League Chhatra League (M-I) held a rally in front of the DUCSU building yesterday morning. The leaders, at the rally condemned the government for what it said non-implementation of the Joint Declaration of the three alliances.

Addressing the rally the BCL President Motiuddin Hasan Chowdhury said that the rule of law in the country could not be established if the administration was not neutral.

The leaders also condemned the government for not realising the student's ten point demand even after two years of the fall of autocracy.

The rally was addressed, among others, by the BCL leaders Pankaj Nath, KHM Lazu and Shafigur Rahman Shafig.

Qulkhwani

Qulkhwan of Hasina Begum, wife of late Moyezuddin Ahmed will be held today (Monday) at her residence 168, Fakir Pool (adjacent to Fakir Pool Water Tank) at 4 pm.



Monday

- 5.00 Opening announcement
- Al-Quran Programme summary
- 5.10 News in Bangla
- 5.20 Recitation from the Geeta
- 5.30 Sports programme
- 6.30 Open University
- 7.05 TV debate
- 8.00 News in Bangla
- 8.30 Special programme on late Ataur Rahman Khan
- 9.00 Barnali
- 10.00 News in English
- 10.30 Film: Hill Street Blues
- 11.30 Khabar/ The News
- 11.40 Tuesday's programme summary
- 11.45 Closing.

Ataur Rahman's anniversary of death today

The first death anniversary of national leader and eminent parliamentarian Ataur Rahman Khan will be observed today, reports UNB.

Ataur Rahman Khan Jatiya Smriti Sangsad has chalked out elaborate programmes to mark the day.

It will hold Quran Khwani, place wreaths and offer munaajat at the Mazar premises from 7 am to 12 pm and distribute food among the destitutes at 11 am.

The sangsad will also hold a discussion meeting and milad mahfil at 3:30 pm at the residence of late Ataur Rahman Khan.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas is expected to attend the milad mahfil. Members of the cabinet, justices, politicians, lawyers, educationists and litterateurs will participate in the discussion, said a press release.

Weather

Night temperature may fall

By Staff Correspondent

Dry weather is likely to prevail over the country during the next 24 hours commencing 6 am today (Monday).

Night temperature is likely to fall by one to two degree Celsius over the country, the Met office forecast adding that night temperature may rise slightly after two days.

The minimum of 9.6 degree Celsius was reported from Srimangal yesterday (Sunday) and the maximum of 27.5 degree was reported from Sathkhira.

The sun sets today at 5.11 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.29 am.

The maximum and the minimum temperature and humidity of some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	26.0	12.7	75	66
Chittagong	25.7	15.8	79	54
Rajshahi	25.7	11.7	77	71
Khulna	26.0	14.2	87	77
Cox's Bazar	26.6	17.5	71	66
Sylhet	26.4	13.5	72	76
Dinajpur	24.5	12.0	87	80
Barisal	26.4	14.0	80	79



Installation of and certificate giving ceremony for the executives of the Lions Club of Dhaka Shurovee for the year 1992-93 were held at Dhaka Club on Saturday. Lioness Nargis Sultana chaired the function.

Defeated parties hatching organised conspiracy: Noman

CHITTAGONG, Dec 6: Minister for Forest, Fisheries, Livestocks and Environment Abdullah Al-Noman today called upon the people to build up a strong resistance against those who were out to undo the democratic process set in motion in the country after a hard struggle and many sacrifices for long nine years, reports BSS.

He alleged that an organised conspiracy was being hatched by some defeated political parties including the so-called Nirml Committee to frustrate the achievements of nine-year-long struggle against autocratic government of HM Ershad.

Addressing a big public meeting held in observance of Autocracy Day at Laldighi Maidan here this afternoon the Minister said, we do not find any logic to stand in the way of institutionalisation of democracy for which people had given their verdict in favour of BNP in the free and fair elections of February 27, 1991. The opposition political parties, particularly Awami League could not reconcile with BNP election victory and as such the party had adopted

a negative attitude towards BNP government, he said. The meeting held with Chittagong city BNP acting President Advocate Badrul Anwar in the chair was also addressed by State Minister for Textile Abdul Mannan, Chittagong City Corporation Mayor Mir Muhammad Nasiruddin, Amir Khashru Mahmud, MP and about two dozens of Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal, Jubo Dal, Sramik Dal, Jatiyatabadi Sanskritik Dal leaders.

Supporters of BNP and its front organisations came in procession from all corners of the city to attend the meeting.

French TV team calls on Huda

A five-member French Television team led by Director Benquet called on Information Minister Nazmul Huda at his secretariat office here yesterday, reports BSS.

During the meeting they exchanged views on different aspects of regional and international issues.

BNP throws economy into shambles: Hasina

Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina yesterday accused ruling BNP of "confining democracy and throwing economy into shambles through its un-planned and autocratic rule" in last two years, reports UNB.

"The BNP lost trust in democracy and the people and took recourse to repression on the opposition by various black laws... Since it lost the confidence of the people, it should not stay in power," she said.

The Awami League President was addressing a discussion in front of her party's central office in observance of democracy day.

Recalling the objectives of the anti-autocracy movement, Hasina said although the dictator was pulled down through the mass movement, autocracy still exists in the country.

She said after assuming power with the help of anti-liberation Jamaat-e-Islami, BNP has backed out from its election commitment as well as the joint declaration of the three alliances.

"Democracy is not safe in the hands of BNP which was born in cantonment... The party has already endangered

democracy by making un-democratic laws and steps," she said.

The Awami League leader also blamed the government for behaving like an autocrat and creating obstruction to true functioning of the parliament.

She called for a united movement to put an end to "neo-autocracy" of BNP and save democracy for bringing about economic wellbeing of the people.

Presided over by City Awami League President Mohammad Hanif, the meeting was addressed among others by Zillur Rahman, Amir Hossain Amu, Mofazzal Hossain Chowdhury Maya, Akhtarul Alam and Advocate Kamrul Islam.

To Flopsy Bear
A Big Birthday Hug
from Goldilocks

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Policy term	Accumulated bonus at end of term	Annual rate of bonus per Tk.1000 SA
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20 "	" 730	" 37
25 "	" 1,000	" 40
30 "	" 1,320	" 44

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