

Dhaka Day by Day

They Help Where Legs Fail

by Lavina Ambreen Ahmed

Anybody passing by the Pangu Hospital (hospital for the disabled) in Sher-e-Bangla Nagar seldom fails to notice the row of small crutch shops on the opposite of the hospital. The crudely made wooden crutches and walking frames displayed stand out like a notice board, as if announcing: life is very unpredictable.

The nine shops or rather shacks are pretty much the rudimentary type with a couple of worn-out chairs and tables. The essential materials for making crutches and other contraptions for the injured are stacked on the shelves and scattered everywhere on the floors. For the crutch-makers the shacks are their workshops as well as sales centre. They work there from morning till night.

All the shops offer the same kind of apparatus. It is a very basic but sturdy-looking wooden frame encased with red, blue and green resin hand supports. The shopkeepers confide that they sell 3-10 pairs of crutches each day, reminding one of the high accident rate of the country. The crutches usually made from Mango or Gamari wood cost about Tk 150 each. While there are some Thai Aluminium ones available at Tk 700-800, also displayed at one of the shops was a pair of solid steel crutches. The shopkeepers quickly point out that, it is made in China and costs Tk 1000. However they don't really deal in foreign made stuff as they are too expensive and the demand for them is low.

Among the workers an authoritative, shrewd looking businessman comes forward and talks about their entry into the business. They have been making crutches for almost twelve years. He informs that they were mostly poor rickshaw-pullers and restaurant workers in the beginning. At that time they were frustrated from having to live from hand to mouth. Then they heard of this training centre at Tongi, which rehabilitated the handicapped and the poor of society. It was a turning point in their lives. The renowned American Dr R J Garst virtually himself collected these vagrant, disillusioned people and gave them a new meaning of life. Notably, there are a few disabled workers with them. "We were taught how to make crutches and other vital things like, walking frames, lumber corset, spinal corset, fake legs, pelvic traction, collar traction etc," he exclaims proudly, showing

some of the specimens of their work.

But unfortunately no occupation is free of hassles, say the aggrieved crutch merchants. Firstly, there are the police to keep happy. Confusion? After all as the men state, "it is a government property and the shacks are not authorized. There is the constant fear of being thrown out of the area, hence the 'private pact' with the law enforcing agents. Until now, they have been forced to vacate a couple of times, one of them informs. Indeed hold quite cynical views regarding human nature. "Most people are dishonest, so why take on us?" As for the government, why does not it build for us a permanent shop and provide us with electricity? — the question. At present, they have to make do with batteries, which is not only bothersome but also very costly. They believe that they are doing something worthwhile for the crippled.

To make things worse there are also those self-appointed 'dalais' (agents) always on the lookout for making some easy bucks. Normally the hospital staff, these people direct the patients to their shops and incessantly harass them for a commission.

They profess to be the only crutch dealers in the metropolis, even some of the hospital are supplied by them. If they can sell 5-6 pairs each day, they can make a profit of Tk 200-300. Regrettably though, a few honourable physicians of the adjacent hospital make a small fortune out of them.

Despite their occupation, they have just as much as compassion as the next person, they assure us. They claim to have sold crutches at give-away price like Tk 80-90 to the really hard-up. At the moment they are busy making a wheelchair and exhibit an unfinished one dexterously attended by two craftsmen. It will cost about Tk 2000-3000, they say, adding that a similar Indian one would cost no less than Tk 5000. Still people (who can afford) opts for the 'bideshi mal' (foreign item). It is not a wise decision, because if a part breaks it is often irreplaceable and the whole gadget lies useless, they explain, pointing at an Indian wheelchair which will require Tk 900 for its repair.

There is nothing we can't construct if the samples are shown or explicit details given, they announce. One can't help admiring their quiet confidence and simplicity.



some of the specimens of their work.

But unfortunately no occupation is free of hassles, say the aggrieved crutch merchants. Firstly, there are the police to keep happy. Confusion? After all as the men state, "it is a government property and the shacks are not authorized. There is the constant fear of being thrown out of the area, hence the 'private pact' with the law enforcing agents. Until now, they have been forced to vacate a couple of times, one of them informs. Indeed hold quite cynical views regarding human nature. "Most people are dishonest, so why take on us?" As for the government, why does not it build for us a permanent shop and provide us with electricity? — the question. At present, they have to make do with batteries, which is not only bothersome but also very costly. They believe that they are doing something worthwhile for the crippled.

To make things worse there are also those self-appointed 'dalais' (agents) always on the lookout for making some easy bucks. Normally the hospital staff, these people direct the patients to their shops and incessantly harass them for a commission.

They profess to be the only crutch dealers in the metropolis, even some of the hospital are supplied by them. If they can sell 5-6 pairs each day, they can make a profit of Tk 200-300. Regrettably though, a few honourable physicians of the adjacent hospital make a small fortune out of them.

Despite their occupation, they have just as much as compassion as the next person, they assure us. They claim to have sold crutches at give-away price like Tk 80-90 to the really hard-up. At the moment they are busy making a wheelchair and exhibit an unfinished one dexterously attended by two craftsmen. It will cost about Tk 2000-3000, they say, adding that a similar Indian one would cost no less than Tk 5000. Still people (who can afford) opts for the 'bideshi mal' (foreign item). It is not a wise decision, because if a part breaks it is often irreplaceable and the whole gadget lies useless, they explain, pointing at an Indian wheelchair which will require Tk 900 for its repair.

There is nothing we can't construct if the samples are shown or explicit details given, they announce. One can't help admiring their quiet confidence and simplicity.

Metropolitan

DR NAFIS SADIK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNFPA; MS EIMI WATANABE, RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION; DR MR XHANG XUJIANG, AMBASSADOR OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA; DR ABDUL MOYEEN KHAN, MP, MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS; DR KALAM IBNE YUSUF, STATE MINISTER FOR PLANNING; DR NAFIS SADIK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNFPA.



Speakers at a workshop titled 'From Cairo to Beijing: Women, Environment and Development' held at city's NEC Auditorium yesterday. From left: Health and Family Welfare Minister Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, State Minister for Planning Dr Abdul Moyeen Khan and Dr Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of UNFPA. — Star photo

Job Opportunity

Personal Assistants are wanted. Salary will be around Tk. 6,000/- tax paid. Graduates proficient in English shorthand and typewriting with reasonable command over English not more than 32 years old may apply with complete bio-data, two passport size photographs, testimonials/certificates with two references by 20 December 1994.

SABINCO
BSEC Bhaban (5th floor)
102, Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue,
Dhaka-1215.

D-1227

To
S. M. Ali

*Dolce et decorum
et pro patria mori.*

— Fayza

SK+F

Excellence through quality

We are a pharmaceutical company having diversified marketing activities with a range of locally manufactured and imported products. We are looking for young, energetic and ambitious people to join in the sales team as **Medical Services Officer**. The deserving candidate should be aged below 30 years and must be science graduate or master in allied subjects having aptitude for selling with an ambition to build-up a career in the pharmaceutical field.

Candidate should personally report to ICMA Bhaban, Nilkhet, Dhaka for written test with detailed resume and a recent passport size photograph on December 10, 1994 at 9:00 AM.

ESKAYEF BANGLADESH LIMITED
52, Motijheel C/A., Dhaka-1000.

At Reliance Your Security Comes First



With its strong back-up of human resources, indepth know-how and wealth of experience, Reliance is fully geared to meet all your general insurance requirements in a fast changing world.



EXPERIENCE * STRENGTH * SECURITY

**RELIANCE
INSURANCE
LIMITED**

BSB BUILDING, 8 RAJUK AVENUE
DHAKA-1000, BANGLADESH
Phone : PABX - 240105-6, 235080
Telex : 671186 RIL BJ



ISHIIYA
DRY CLEANING

- ISHIIYA uses the latest Japanese machinery to clean your clothes.
- ISHIIYA washes with water which is purer than drinking water.
- ISHIIYA has special machines to clean winter clothes.
- ISHIIYA makes your clothes softer and smoother.
- ISHIIYA has 18 showrooms in Dhaka.
- ISHIIYA's quality is maintained by Japanese engineers.

THAI FLIGHT SCHEDULE

This is for the kind information of our valued clients that there will be following changes in Thai flights schedule during 6-31 December 1994.

Flight no.	Days	Dep.	Arr.
Bangkok-Dhaka	Mon/The/Wed/Thu/Sat/Sun	1540	1700
TG 321			
Dhaka-Bangkok	Mon/Tue/Wed/Thu/Sat/Sun/	1810	2120
TG 322			

Thai Thai Airways International Public Company Limited
Dhaka Sheraton Hotel, Dhaka, Telephone : 834711-19

MH

MENG HORNG SHIPPING PTE LTD

NOTICE TO CONSIGNEES/SHIPPERS

M. V. FONG SHIN V-9430 IMP. ROT. NO. 976/94 WILL TAKE BERTH CHITTAGONG PORT ON OR ABOUT 5TH DECEMBER 1994 WITH IMPORT CONTAINERS RELAYED AT SINGAPORE FROM VARIOUS PORTS AND ALSO CONTAINERS EX-SINGAPORE.

CONSIGNEES ARE REQUESTED TO TAKE DELIVERY OF GOODS IMMEDIATELY AFTER DISCHARGE. SURVEY APPLICATION MUST BE PRESENTED TO US WITHIN 3 DAYS OF DISCHARGE. NO CLAIM WILL BE ENTERTAINED NOR ANY LIABILITIES ACCEPTED IN RESPECT OF DAMAGE TO AND OR SHORT LANDINGS OF CONSIGNMENTS WHICH HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM STORAGE SHED. IN EVENT OF CONSIGNEES TAKING DIRECT DELIVERY SURVEY TO BE HELD AT SHIP'S SIDE ONLY.

CONSIGNMENTS NOT CLEARED WITHIN 45 DAYS FROM THE DATE OF UNLOADING EX THE SHIP ARE LIABLE TO BE CONFISCATED AND AUCTIONED AS PER SEC. 167(8) AND SEC. 82 RESPECTIVELY OF THE CUSTOMS ACT 1969 WITHOUT ANY FURTHER NOTICE/REFERENCE.

THE VESSEL WILL LOAD CONTAINERS UNDER EXP. ROT NO. 902/94 FOR SINGAPORE AND ALSO FOR FORWARD TRANSHIPMENT TO EAST/WEST COAST OF U.S., CANADA, U.K., CONTINENT, MEDIT FAREAST/JAPAN AND AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND PORTS.

AGENTS:

Bangladesh Shipping Lines Ltd.

(A TEC COMPANY)

CHITTAGONG

GPO Jibon Biru Bhawan

1053 St. Muzib Rd., Agrabad

Tel: 904313, 502123, 500793

Tel: 633027 BOSHP BJ, 632656 HRC BJ

Telex: 880-31-225625

KHULNA

1 Muzib Road

(PTI Moor)

Tel: 25255

Tel: 633302 HRC BJ

Telex: 880-41-21175

Failed robbery

By Staff Correspondent

Three youths, disguised as students, entered the flat of a professor on the BUET campus at 9 pm Saturday to commit robbery.

However, their attempt failed when the wife of the professor raised an alarm and people in the area came to their rescue. The three fled immediately.

Professor Dipak Kanti Das told The Daily Star over telephone last night that the three youths pressed the door bell of his flat and when asked about their identities introduced themselves as his students.

"When I opened the door, I found the three chaps carrying daggers which they held against my chest and they pushed me inside the house," he said, adding that they instantly snatched the gold chain he was wearing.

However, Dipak's wife, who was present, rushed to a room, closed the door and started screaming for help. The robbers fled with only the gold chain.

A general diary has been filed with the Kotwali thana in this connection.

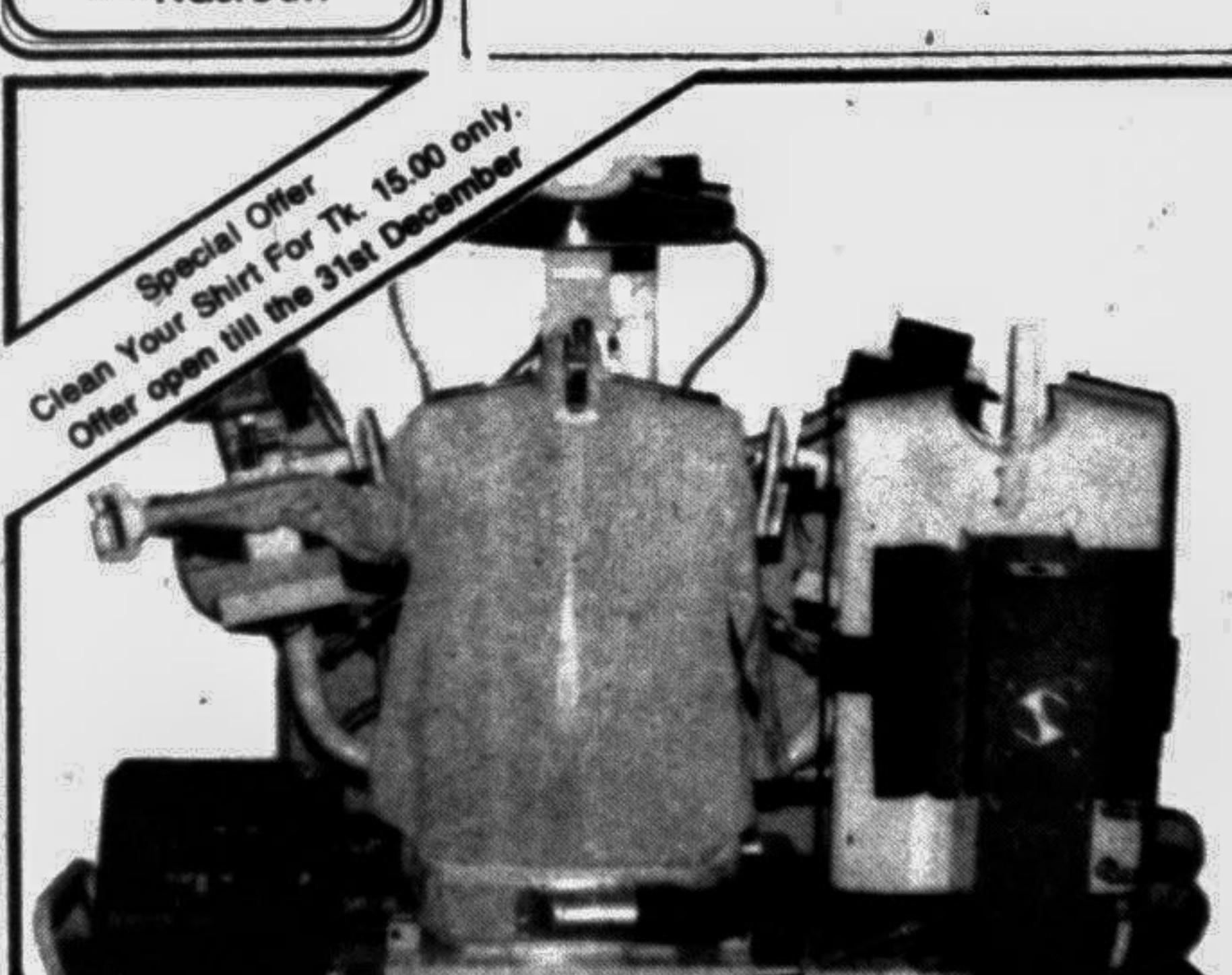
6 KCC woman commissioners sworn in

From Our Correspondent

KHULNA, Dec 4: Six female ward commissioners of Khulna City Corporation (KCC) elected on October 11 were sworn in by Mayor Shaikh Tayebur Rahman at a simple ceremony here yesterday.

The commissioners are Fatema Chowdhury, Naznin Sultan, Razia Sultan, Mamta Ashraf, Rumia Khatoon and Rozy Rahman.

Special Offer
Clean Your Shirt For Tk. 15.00 only
Offer open till the 31st December



Address

UTTARA London Plaza # 32 Ground Floor, Uttara, GULSHAN NO. 1 20 Habib Super Market, Gulshan, GULSHAN NO. 2 North D M C Supermarket, Shop # G-22, Gulshan, Tel: 601351 SHANIN SCHOOL 546, Sene Kallan Shopping Complex, Shop No 9 (1F), Shahid Jahangir Gate, Airport Road GATE 78, New Airport Road (VIP Road), Tejkunipara, Tejkunipara, NEW ESKATON, BANGLA MOTOR 52, New ESKATON, T.M.C. Market, Shop # 7 & 12 MOUCHAK 507, Maltibagh, Begun Bari, KALABAGAN 67, Yeskun White House, Kalabagan B.D.R. GATE B.D.R. Gate # 4, Road # 2, Dhanmondi R.A., Tel: 504773, 885714 DHANMONDI D.I.T. Mansion, East Mirpur Road # 13, Shobhabagan PALLABI 12-B, 3/53, Mirpur (Near Purabi Cinema Hall) PURANA PALTAN # 8, Purana Paltan, G.A. Bhaban (In Kasuri Hotel) SIDDIQUE BAZAR 16/A, Siddique Bazaar, North South Road, Tel: 243400. EASTERN PLAZA Eastern Plaza, Haltipool, MOTIJHEEL Baitul Aman Zame Mosque, Al-Helal Zone. NEW MARKET 301, Islam Mansion Shop No. 54 (1st Floor), Elephant Road. SHAMOLI 4, Mirpur Road, SATMASJID ROAD Shop No. 4, 754, Satmasjid Road, (Star Kabab Building). MIRPUR-10 Room-4 (Ground Fl.), Chaurangi Market, 95, Sonpara, Parbata, Mirpur-10 Circle.