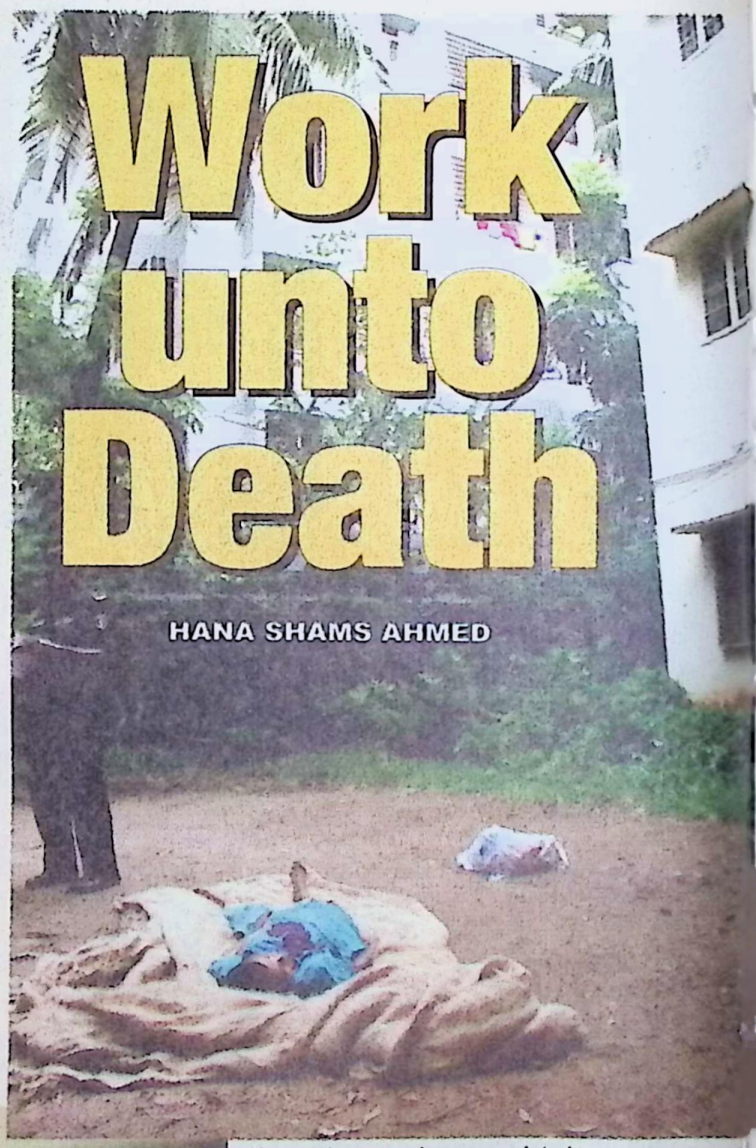
Work unto Death

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No one has ever been convicted of murdering a home worker.

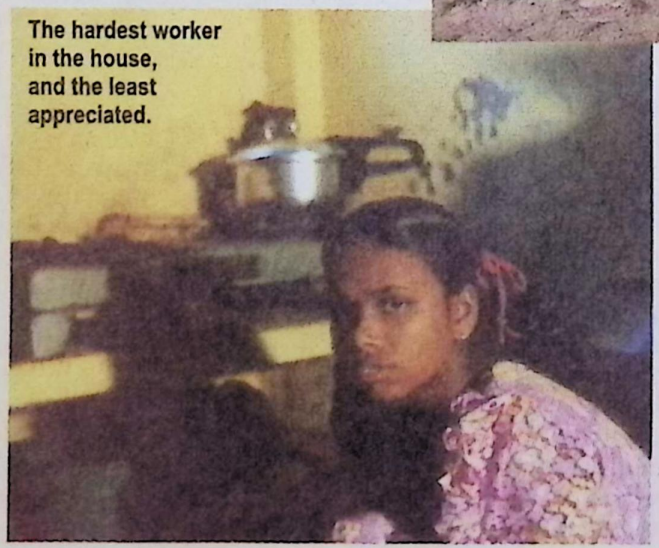
Five mysterious deaths took place in different parts of the capital city last month. All of the deaths took place in middle and upper-middle class homes of the so-called well-to-do families. And all of the victims were the poor, helpless modern day slaves of our society the silent, overworked and underpaid home workers. The news of their deaths went amazingly unnoticed, taking up little columns of our cold, morning newspapers.

The most shocking incident took place at the New DOHS home of Shila Islam. Shocking not only because of the circumstances of the death but also because Islam happens to be one of the very respected members of our educated society. A teacher of General History at the Eden Women's College, Shila Islam brutally murdered 50-year-old home worker Fatema Begum on November 30, 2006. The reason for her wrath was chillingly simple she had failed to serve her mistress' breakfast on time!

In an attempt to cover up the crime Shila in collusion with her husband Tajul Islam stuffed Fatema's dead body into a car and was on their way to Joypurhat, the home district of Fatema. Shila Islam's neighbours tipped off the police who then ordered him over cell phone to return to Dhaka.

There were several injury marks all over her body. Shahjahan, another house help at Shila's house, told the police that Shila beat up Fatema on Thursday morning as she delayed preparing breakfast. Shila also admitted that she sometimes beat Fatema as she was not regular in her work and had a stealing tendency but denied the allegation of murder. Family sources claimed that Fatema committed suicide by hanging herself from the ceiling fan.

Another home worker, 17-year-old Arefina Akhter allegedly killed herself by hanging herself from the ceiling fan of their house in sector 4, Uttara. According to Investigation Officer Sub Inspector Abbas, Engineer Golam Mostafa, the owner of the house after discovering Arefina hanging from the ceiling fan took her to a hospital in Sector 6, Uttara where she was declared dead. Police then sent her body to Dhaka Medical College Hospital for an autopsy. The post mortem report confirmed her death from hanging.



The hardest worker in the house, and the least appreciated.

But what led such a young girl to take her own life? SI Abbas confirmed that no one else working in that house. So it can assumed that she had to do all the work in that house by herself. So was it the work pressure that got to her? Was she getting lonely in the house? Was she allowed to go out and interact with other people? What was her life like? Arefina, in her death has buried the answers to all these questions in her grave.

On December 9 two more home workers allegedly killed themselves in two different incidents. 10-year-