

# Mena Hasan

By Mrs. Habeeb

People who visit Dacca either from West Pakistan or from Khulna Chittagong, Sylhet and other places usually hear of and visit Maison Mu'ique. The shop has electric light fittings, 78 speed records made in Pakistan, silver-ware, West Pakistan arts and crafts locally made toys perfume and a variety of things which one can use in the home or for presentation—and Zarina fabrics.



Maison Musique is owned and run by Mena and the choice of the shop's name, she explained was that she had started with the idea of having only Philips radios, record players and records but when the Government banned the import of long playing records she had to change her plans.

About the same time she came to know that Zarina Fabrics from Karachi wanted an agent in Dacca. She got the agency and then gradually added the other things.

Mena felt that educative toys for children between the ages of 10 and 14 were not easily available and so she planned the toys that would fulfil their needs and has been making them locally.

She recently visited Karachi to see if she could market them here too.

Seeing Mena Hasan you would not take her to be a business woman. She is the good-looking mother of two girls aged 18 and 14 and a boy of nine. She has a serene confidence and seems to know what and how to do the necessary jobs in, what seems to be, the most relaxed manner.

But there is nothing relaxed about her achievements. Her

friends say that since starting her shop in 1960 she has put in a lot of hard work. She herself admitted that in the beginning it was strange to meet and talk business with people men in particular. But when she realised that it seemed stranger to them, it was upto her to put them at ease. And that feeling had to go.

When asked if it was a handicap to be a business woman she replied smilingly that on the contrary one of the advantages she enjoyed was that she was never kept waiting.

Mena Hasan has always been good at organising and has done much pragmatic social work. She started helping to house the great influx of refugees in 1947 in Chittagong; getting them medical aid and providing them with some sort of facilities immediately on their arrival. Setting up of hospitals, schools and sewing and handicraft centres have all had her zealous contribution. She has worked with the W.V.A. and the A.P.W.A.

In 1959 Mrs. Hasan went to America in the Leaders Exchange Programme and last year to Japan as a delegate to the Conference on the status of Women and is the President of the Business and Career Women's Club of Dacca.

She feels that her experience at organisation helped her with her own business. Mena tries her best to see that her children do not feel that mother is too busy. She is both mother and father to them.

Shopping at W.P.I.D.C. hand craft shop for Maison Mu'ique with Mena I noticed her eye for the really attractive things, especially with price tags that invite people's attention and quick decisions soon did away with 'should I' and 'should I not' kind of hesitations.

Calm and unruffled, in the minimum of time Mena Hasan

MORNING

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# Introducing Rukia Fikree

By MRS. HABEEB

The first Women's National Table Tennis Champion of Pakistan is blithe and pretty Rukia Fikree.

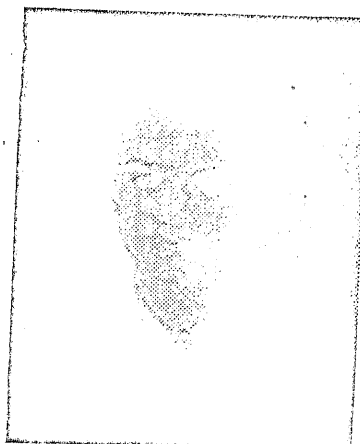
Fikree is a well known name among the Table Tennis fans as Rukia and her sister Munira have been among the top players in Karachi for over a decade. I asked Rukia how the sisters feels when one beats the other especially when Rukia beats the older sister. She said "the few times I beat Munira people usually asked the same thing," but she said, "a healthy competitive feeling exists between us."

Normally Rukia considers Table-Tennis as her chief hobby and does not seriously put in her daily one and a half to two hours practice but when the tournaments are approaching, "I am caught in the rising excitement and anticipation especially when the Nationals are on," said Rukia. "One feels so responsible, you don't know the feeling of relief when they are over." As far as I can remember Karachi has rarely been let down by the Fikrees or the other participants.

Rukia said she started playing Table Tennis in '52 and gradually found herself involved in all the tournaments and finally the very pleasant surprise of finding herself the Women's National champion one day. She is one of the calmest players and is generally described as a defensive player.

Just as she calmly takes packed halls or a losing game in her stride so also the tall lanky teenage students of class 10 of Jufelhurst High School. Talking to her students I gathered that she is one of the popular teachers and commands respect and obedience from her pupils. Though she has a Master's Degree in Political science to her credit she hardly looks more than a student herself, dressed in her smart skirt and blouse.

What she likes about teaching



says Rukia is the different kinds of students she comes in contact with. "I find them very interesting", she said. Even though a heap of books for correction go along with them I asked, "Oh Yes!" she laughed.

Another unusual hobby of Rukia's is collecting brooches. She has a large collection of brooches, some of attractive workmanship, others in different coloured stones. Not content with beautiful brooches she also has enough pairs of attractive shoes to enable her to start a shoe shop of her own!

Talking of travel, Rukia spoke of her six month stay in London along with her two sisters. "Even though I couldn't appreciate the cold weather, we enjoyed ourselves attending plays, sight-seeing and learning a few evening classes." She said that they also stopped en route and visited the capital cities on the Continent, and everywhere sight-seeing was the first and the most important item on her agenda.

Lively Rukia related the fun they had on another trip, this time to Hong Kong by Lloyd Triestino's luxury liner. Now with sparkle in her eyes she dreams about a trip to the Far-East.