

Unit Nine: Diaspora

Lesson 3 Bangladeshis in Italy

Last month, a 20-year dream came true: we visited Italy. While it was an amazing lesson in history, I was also taken by surprise at the Bangladeshis in Italy. I heard estimates of between 200,000 and 600,000 Bangladeshis in Italy. I saw them in Rome, Florence and Venice (but not in Siena.) The ones I saw all had small to medium-size businesses. In Rome, they were selling handbags, sunglasses and tourist material on the streets. In Florence, we walked into a store selling 'Indian-looking' things - a 'monohori dokan' -only to find the owner was a Bangladeshi who had a chain of these stores in the city. In Venice, they were selling trinkets-like little puppets made from balloons - on the Accademia Bridge and in San Marco Square. One seller told me these would not sell in Rome, but in Venice the tourists buy them. They were incredibly kind and polite to us. The person in Florence-much to our protestations-treated us with cokes and ice cream, and sold things to us at large discounts. When it came to prices, they said "Pay us what you want-we are so happy to see a Bangladeshi tourist here." It was a kind of haggling in reverse. One street vendor in Rome, after selling a sunglass at 18 Euro to a European person, turned around and sold me a similar sunglass at 4.5 Euro. I wanted to pay him more, but, incredible as it seems, he would not take it. I think this barely covered his cost.

At a mini-flea-market of Bangladeshi stalls at the Tiburtina station in Rome, I fell into a discussion of the business. It costs them 1000-2000 Euros a month to rent each stall. The work is very hard, and they live frugally. So they are able to save some money which they send home.

One seller in Venice said he can save up to Euro 1000 a month, but only if a lot of conditions are met (e.g. he has to sell an average of 50 euros' worth daily; his food expenses cannot exceed Euro 80/month, etc.) I was inspired by their entrepreneurship and touched by their generosity and hope their Diaspora comes true soon.

A Choose the correct answer from the alternatives:

1x5=5

(a) The word 'Trinket' refers to-----

- i. Huge furniture ii. A large dress iii. A costume iv. Piece of jewelry

(b) What does 'the chain of stores' means-----

i. In a large shop	ii. Huge number of vendors
iii. Set of shops in an arranged manners	iv. Dispersed shop

(c) The word of 'protestation' is replaced by-----

- i. ideas ii. words iii. aggression iv. assertion

(d) What is Florence?

- i. The capital city in Italy ii. A city in Europe iii. A city in the sub-continent iv. A barren city

(e) The author saw Bangladeshis selling balloon puppets-----

- i. In Siena ii. In Rome iii. In Venice iv. In Florence

B. Answer the following Question:

2x5=10

- (a) What is the author's dream?
 (b) What are the some of the occupations of the Bangladeshis the author meet in Italy?
 (c) How was the author treated by the expatriate Bangladeshis?
 (d) What kind of bargain took place between the author and some of these Bangladeshis?
 (e) What kind of savings do these Bangladeshis make?

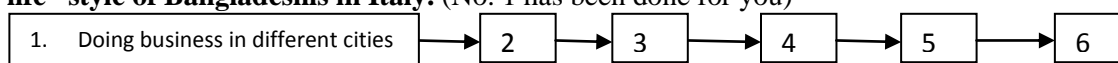
2. Read the passage and complete the table below with the given information.

1x10=10

Who/what	Source	What	When/where
A 20 year dream	Coming true	(i)-----	(ii)-----
Bangladeshis in Rome	Small to medium size (iii)-----	Selling hand bags, sunglass and tourist materials	(iv)-----
(v)-----	Kind and polite to Bangladeshi visitors	(vi)-----	On the academia Bridge and San Marco Square
Bangladeshis in Florence	Having a(vii)-----	Selling things at a large scale	
(viii)-----	Bangladeshi stalls	Monthly rent 1000-2000 Euros for each stall	(ix)-----
Triburtina station	Having a mini-flea market		(x)-----

Or

Based on your reading of the Passage below, make short notes in each of the boxes in the flow-chart showing the life –style of Bangladeshis in Italy. (No. 1 has been done for you)



3. Summarize the text.