

# Dhaka Day by Day

## Requiem for a Master Cook

By Masud Hasan Khan

Haji Mohammad Hossain, master cook of the legendary 'Haji's Biriyan', passed away silently closing a chapter of Dhaka's culinary delight and also the mystery that shrouded the special mutton-and-rice food for nearly two decades.

Haji, 74, passed away in real silence. A few in the crammed neighbourhood of Kazi Alauddin Road learnt about his death very late. Even fewer noticed the pall bearers carrying his body on March 10 to the Chawk Bazar Mosque, some two kilometers off. The sooty shop of the brazier stopped its usual brisk business on the day.

What was there in Haji's brazier that charmed the Dhaka gourmets so long? "It is the quality of the food that makes all the difference," says Advocate Abdul Matin, a local resident who witnessed Haji's business booming from a tiny eating place during the 1950s. "The cook never compromised with quality," he says.

In the two varieties of brazier — "pakke" and "katchhe" — Haji excelled in the former kind. Old timers in the neighbourhood say, that Haji's preparation of his special kind of brazier was a bit ritualistic. He never cooked more than two "deckchis" a day — not even in return of a king's fortune. He had a 'spiritual guru' who forbade him not to cook more than that amount, says an insider.

Before cooking, the late Haji used to take Oju (absolution) and offered prayers so that the guests could enjoy the delicacy of his brazier to their ultimate satisfaction.

Then he used all the fresh ingredients — the fine "chigurra" rice, pure mustard oil, fresh mutton and spices. The result was a strikingly plain-looking food excellent in taste. The brazier was usually whisked away by the people before

he could have time to decorate it. The recipe was, of course, exclusive and old neighbours say that his phalanx of assistants and even his son were ordered to move off at a certain period in the preparation of his brazier, a claim brushed

aside by his son Haji Golam Hossain.

The seniors in the neighbourhood inform that Haji Mohammad Hossain opened his present food stall in the early 1950s. During early years of his career, he used to cook brazier for the people on order, but no other foods than brazier.

In later years, Haji Mohammad Hossain visited Western Asia and the Middle East improving the craft to add to the excellence. On return, his small shop prided delicacy and a rare simplicity. It paid — as guests thronged the brazier shop in the morning and in the evening.

Besides, the taste of the food, there was yet an interesting factor for the increasing fame of the brazier. The Dhaka University students of the 1950s, 60s and 70s were the regular guests of the Haji because of the proximity of the shop from their dormitories. In independent Bangladesh, these young connoisseurs grew up to add to the chorus of his praise.

The price of Haji's brazier in those days was unbelievably cheap as compared to the present. It staged a steady increase of Taka two a year. During the early days a full plate brazier cost 50 paisa. For a second serve it was 25 paisa. Now, a full plate is taka 30 while for a second serve Taka 15 only.

And now, after the death of Haji, Dhaka gourmets would look forward for the same master touch from Haji Golam Hossain, the master's only son.



Haji is no more — yet brisk business of Biriyan at his shop continues

## BCIC production increases by 101 pc

Bangladesh Chemical Industries Corporation (BCIC) registered increase of production by Tk. 82.66 crore in its 23 running enterprises during the last financial year (1991-92), reports UNB.

The BCIC enterprises produced goods worth Tk 1326.17 crore in 1991-92 as against Tk 1243.49 crore in 1990-91. It achieved 101 per cent of the production target of Tk 1316.23 crore for 1991-92, said a press release.

The actual installed annual production capacity of the Factory is 5,61,000 tons which was exceeded by the actual production in 1991-92 by 18,326 tons setting a new record of production.

The total production in all the Urea fertilizer factories increased by 2,17,000 tons to

16,41,000 tons in 1991-92 from 14,24,000 tons in 1990-91.

Chittagong Urea Fertilizer factory produced 5,79,326 tons in 1991-92 as against 4,93,318 tons in 1990-91.

Zia Fertilizer Factory, Ashuganj, produced 4,75,855 tons in 1991-92 as against 4,52,334 tons in 1990-91. Polash Urea Fertilizer Factory produced 1,18,540 tons in 1991-92 as against 1,07,056 tons in 1990-91.

Other enterprises of BCIC like Eagle Box and Carton Mfg Co, Chittagong Cement Clinker and Grinding Factory, Usmania Glass Sheet Factory, Ujala Match Factory and Bangladesh Sanitary and Insulator Factory also registered increase of production during the last financial year.

## Indonesian Green Bike team in city

A three-member Indonesian 'Green Bike' cyclists team arrived in the capital yesterday on a global mission to save environment, reports UNB.

On arrival at the Zia International Airport, the 'Green Bike' team was received by national cyclists of Bangladesh, officials of Bangladesh Cycling Federations and Indonesian diplomats in Dhaka.

The Indonesian cyclists are scheduled to cover 21 countries during their 200-day tour under the banner of "Green Bike tour for world peace and friendship," sponsored by Indonesian Forum for Environment WALHI, an NGO.

Two of the five-member Green Bike team could not accompany their colleagues to Dhaka and will proceed for Pakistan to join the team there.

The three members of the team who arrived here Saturday are: Rachman Wibisana (leader), Rachmat Zainuddin and Cyprianus Viverius Rowalecta.

Addressing a press conference here in the evening, team leader Rachman Wibisana said they had started the programme aiming to solidify

world friendship and to increase world consciousness of the need to live together in harmony.

He said another aim of the journey is to take responsibility as 'citizens of this planet' to save it from environmental disasters and pollution.

The Green Bike team started its journey on June 18 from Jakarta and so far covered Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand before reaching Dhaka. After Bangladesh, the team will proceed to India and continue the journey to Pakistan, Turkey, Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Austria, Switzerland, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, England, USA and Japan.

During their stay in Dhaka, the team is likely to call on Environment Minister Abdullah Al-Noman. They will tour round the city today (Sunday) morning accompanied by local cyclists.

Indonesian Ambassador in Dhaka Air Vice-Marshal (Retd) S Iswadi held a reception in honour of the Green Bike team immediately after their arrival here.

## Number of Ansar, VDP men to be increased: Matin

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury Saturday called upon the members of Ansar and VDP to work for the betterment of common people to attain the goal of economic self-reliance, reports BSS.

The Ansar and VDP members would be increased to one crore from the present 45 lakh in phases for the rural economic development in the country, he added.

He was speaking as chief guest at Narayanjanj a district rally of Ansar and VDP in Narayanjanj at Shaheed Zia Hall.

Presided over by Habibur Rahman, Deputy Commissioner Narayanjanj, the rally was addressed, among others, by Rezaul Karim MP, Abul Kalam MP and Director-General, VDP, Major-General Syed Badruzzaman.

Chowdhury said the present democratic government has a plan to provide a milch cow to each Ansar and VDP family to meet the shortage of milk

production in the country and thus saving about Taka 400 crore in foreign exchange for the import of condensed milk annually.

He said the government was determined to fulfil the five basic needs, food, clothing, shelter, education and primary health care for the teeming millions.

Referring to the population boom, he said the Ansar and VDP members should adopt family planning methods to curb population explosion.

He called upon them to make the tree plantation drive a success by planting more trees in the rural areas of the country at the call of Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

Later, the minister planted Christmas tree sapling at the premises of Shaheed Zia Hall. Fifty Ansar and VDP members donated blood to "Sandhan", a voluntary social organisation in Dhaka. He awarded 98 prizes to Ansars and VDP members for their good performance.



Two members of the Los Angeles musical troupe preparing for their tomorrow's show. — Star photo

## Call to evaluate contribution of famed to benefit society

Deputy Leader of the Jatiya Sangsad Prof A Q M Badruddoza Chowdhury on Friday laid stress on the true and correct evaluation of the work and contributions of the named and famed to benefit the society both politically and socially, reports BSS.

He was addressing as chief guest at a reception at the National Museum auditorium accorded to litterateur M A Mohaimin on his completion of the 70 years of age and for his contribution to literature.

Organised by Bangladesh Writers Forum the reception was addressed, among others, by Principal Dewan Mohammad Azraf, a renowned philosopher, Prof Shamsul Huq, Chairman, University Grants Commission, Justice Ashraf Rahman Chowdhury, Dr Ashraf Siddiqui, Ramzan Ali Khan Majlis, Prof Shahed Ali, Mafruha Chowdhury, Prof Khaleda Salahuddin, Ayesha Khanam, Sadaka Shafiqullah, T Hossain and M A Mohaimin.

Dr Ali Nawaz, President of the Bangladesh Writers Forum, presided over the function.

Prof Chowdhury said politics was important as far as the people's welfare was concerned and called for the true evaluation of the activities of the genuine social workers and politicians.

The Deputy Leader lauded the 'positive' contribution of Mr Mohaimin in the field of literature and politics.

## HERE and THERE

### Deshbachao Forum

A new organisation named "Deshbachao Forum" (Save the country forum) has been formed Saturday with M A Jalil as its President and S M Zahid Reza as General Secretary.

The forum will work towards motivating the people in resisting the killers and collaborators of 1971.

### Bikrampur Naari Mongal Samity

Bikrampur Naari Mongal Samity held a discussion meeting at its office in the city in observance of World Population Day yesterday at 3 pm.

The speakers called upon the women folk of the country to follow family planning programme for the sake of socio-economic condition of the country.

Presided over by Begum Azmeri Zaman, Chairman of the Samity the meeting was also addressed, among others, by Begum Hasina, Halima Khondoker, Begum Nurunnahar while Razia Banu spoke as the chief guest.

### NAP (Bhashani)

Meeting of the national committee of Bangladesh National Awami Party (Bhashani) held yesterday viewed that the country's economic, social and political situation is in a turmoil.

The meeting was presided over by the party General Secretary Miah Sadequr Rahman.

Happy Birthday  
**Haikal & Salma**  
Love Sadaf

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## SACPA team emphasises on food security in SAARC states

A 17-member delegation of the South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (SACPA) called on President Abdur Rahman Biswas at Bangabhaban yesterday, reports BSS.

Led by Dr Poona Wigneraja, Vice-Chairman of the commis-

sion the delegation had apprised the President about the activities and policies undertaken by the commission for the alleviation of poverty from the SAARC nations.

Participating in the discussion, the members of the dele-

gation opted that a well coordinated plan should be prepared for the people of the regional countries with a new sense of direction towards alleviation of poverty, solution of unemployment problems and enhancement of the social position of the rural women.

They also discussed the 'dal-bhat' concept put forward by Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia for the people of SAARC countries with due emphasis on food security.

The delegation informed the President that certain recommendations in this regard would be submitted in the next SAARC summit to be held in Dhaka at the end of this year.

President Biswas advised the commission to proceed with fortitude having a close view on the changes that have been taking place in the economic sectors of far-eastern countries.

The President said that the government was striving hard to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the commonman through democratic means.

He hoped that the outcome of the ongoing meeting of the commission would help adopt some common policies and specific action plans in this regard.

Among others, Abdul Sattar Moosa Didid and Hassansobir of Maldives, Dr Warnasena Rasaputram of Sri Lanka, K R Venugopal and Dr B N Minhas of India, Salfar Hossain Kazmi and Shoaib Sultan Khan of Pakistan, Dasho Sangay Ngedup of Bhutan, Dr Sheikh Maqsood Ali and Dr Saadat Hossain of Bangladesh, Madhukar S J B Rana of Nepal and Secretary to the President Atauul Huq were present.

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## Weather

### Thundershower likely

By Staff Correspondent

Rain or showers accompanied by temporary gusty wind with moderately heavy falls likely to occur at most places over Dhaka, Khulna and Chittagong divisions and at many places over Rajshahi division during the next 24 hours commencing from 6 am today (Sunday).

Day temperature is likely to fall by one to three degree Celsius over the country.

The Met office forecast, heavy or moderately heavy rainfall is likely to occur at one or two places over the regions of Faridpur.

Rainfall activities are likely to decrease at the end of the current week, Met office said.

The country yesterday (Saturday) experienced rainfall at most of the places and the sky remained cloudy most of the time. The highest rainfall of 49 mm recorded in 12 hours from 6 am to 6 pm was reported from Rangpur. Rainfall recorded in other places were: Dinajpur 40 mm, Bogra 23 mm, Rajshahi 31 mm, Patuakhali 33 mm, Barisal 18 mm, Jessore 13 mm, Khepupara 9 mm, Tangail 26 mm, Faridpur 18 mm, Mymensingh 19 mm, Dhaka 11 mm, Chittagong 12 mm, Sylhet 39 mm, Feni 31 mm and Cox's Bazar 20 mm.

The maximum temperature of 31.1 degree Celsius was reported from Satkhira and the minimum of 23.6 was reported from Feni and Barisal.

The sun sets today at 6.50 pm and rises tomorrow at 5.19 am.

The maximum and minimum temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

Cities/Towns	Temperature in degree Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	9 am	6 pm
Dhaka	28.0	25.1	93	84
Chittagong	30.0	24.0	92	82
Rajshahi	29.5	25.0	89	90
Khulna	30.4	23.5		89
Dinajpur	27.5	24.0	95	92
Cox's Bazar	28.9	24.2	97	85
Sylhet	28.2	23.8	92	97
Jessore	30.4	23.8	97	85

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