

Dhaka Day by Day

Jhal Food is hot Stuff!

by Farah Ghuznavi

A few months ago, I was reading a magazine article which said that eating chillies (and by extension, hot food) makes you feel good, because it causes a chemical reaction which stimulates the pleasure centres in your brain. This seemed to be regarded as a major revelation by the author of the article, but the average Bengali could have told him the same thing even without the benefit of laboratory testing!

The amount of "jhal" food consumed in this country would probably point to a belief on the part of its inhabitants that eating hot food makes you feel good. When I was studying abroad, my friends were horrified by the fact that for the whole of the first year, I carried a bottle of West Indian pepper sauce or Tabasco around with me and poured it over whatever I was trying to eat, since English food was not my idea of great cuisine. While my English friend, Katy, ate buttered toast when she wanted to cheer herself up, I ate Chinese chili oil on toast, with disbelieving English friends looking on!

I remember a school friend of mine, who spent the month before the matric exams subsisting on a diet of rice with "morich bharta" (made from dried red chillies and chopped onions) and loud pop music, much to the horror of her poor mother, who was convinced that she would fail her exams. As it happened not only was she in a remarkable good mood prior to the exams (while the rest of us quivered in dread, anticipating the storm to come), she passed with flying colours! An eloquent testament to the "feel-good factor" involved in the consumption of chillies, if ever one was needed.

A colleague of mine recently confirmed belief that Bangalis of all ages are in the habit of eating fairly hot food. She mentioned that once, when young child of the woman who worked in their house was hungry, she gave him some rice and vegetables. The three year-old rejected the food outright, and they could not figure out why. In the end, he re-

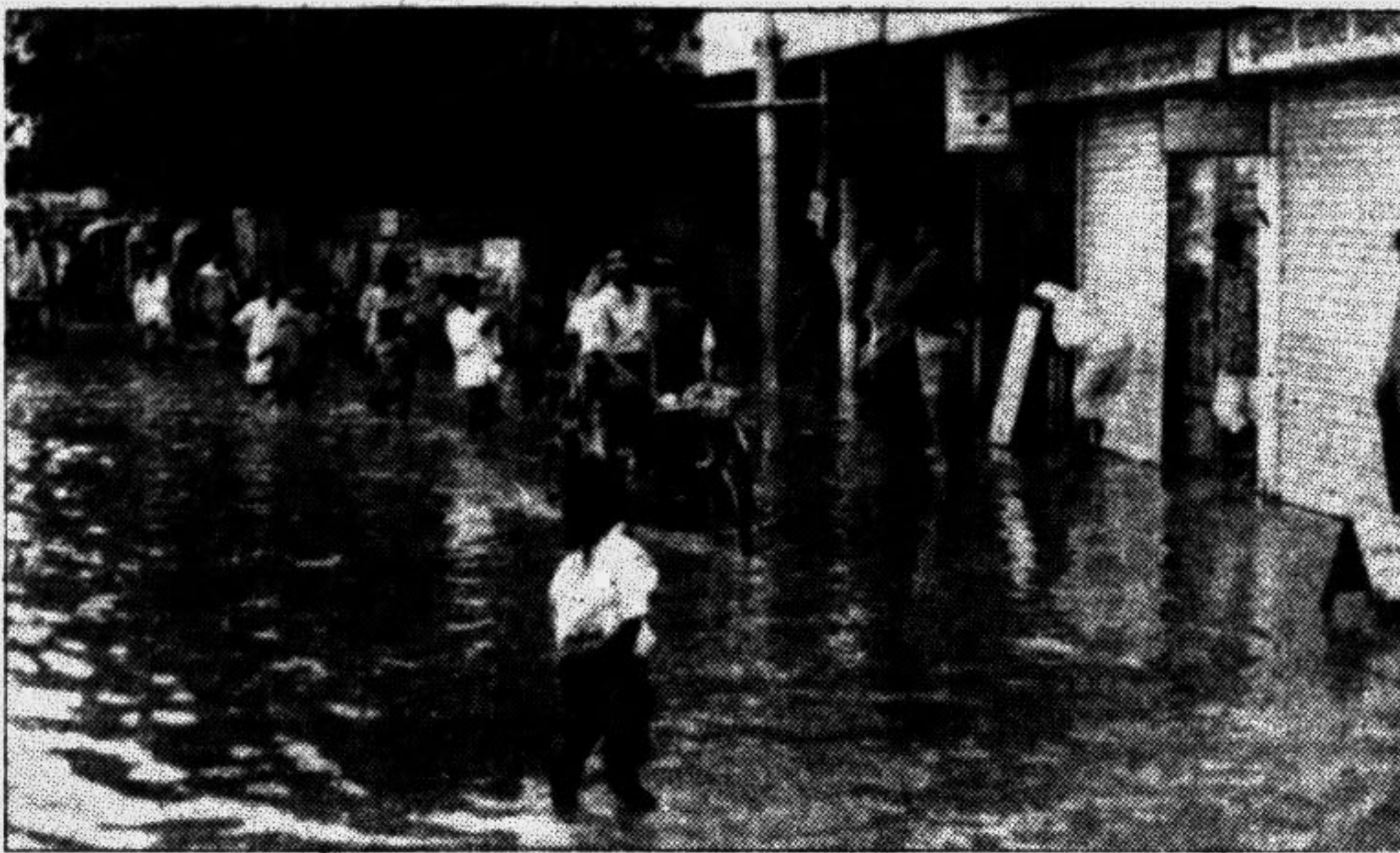
fused to eat the rice until his mother added some green chillies to it!! I wonder how soon he'll get his first ulcer!

Even the junk food we eat caters to this love of "jhal". Have you ever looked at the number of people in Dhaka doing a roaring trade in *phuchka*, *chatpati*, *jhal-muri* and so on? Nor are we happy simply with eating it ourselves, we frequently convert others to our habits as well. If you check out some of the restaurants serving *phuchka* and *chatpati* in East London, you will see a fair number of English people in there as well!

One of the most amazing conversions I have ever seen concerned an American friend of mine, Phil, who was notorious for his love of bland food, and his disinterest in food in general (the fact that he didn't mind eating in our university cafeteria proved this beyond the shadow of a doubt!). While he was visiting Dhaka, a group of us went out for *phuchka* and in deference to his tender taste buds (not to mention his easily-upset bideshi stomach!), we sat him down with an icecream and a bottle of coke, and settled down to enjoy our goodies.

After watching us stuff ourselves for a while, Phil became curious to find out how *phuchka* tasted. I warned him that he shouldn't try it—that he would find it too hot, that he would get an upset stomach—but he insisted. To our amazement, he followed up his initial *phuchka* by eating seven more in quick succession, while his icecream melted unnoticed. To our even greater amazement, he suffered no ill-effects from this session, despite having to face a long flight on Aeroflot (with a seventeen hour stopover in Moscow) the next day! Today, he is a complete convert to deshi food in general, and *phuchka* in particular.

And if anyone still has doubts about whether "jhal" food makes you feel good, I have just one question—have you ever seen anyone look unhappy while they are eating *phuchka*?



A large part of the Nilkhet-Kataban thoroughfare goes under knee-deep water everytime even it rains for a short spell. Despite repeated assurances by the WASA the woes of the inhabitants seem exaggerated by the stink and putrefied water. This picture was taken recently. — Star photo

What's on today...

IIT inauguration ceremony: The formal inauguration and ninth congregation ceremony of Islamic Institute of Technology (IIT) will be held. Venue: IIT, Board Bazar, Gazipur. Time: 10:30 am. Chief guest: Prime Minister Begum Khaleida Zia.

Case study: Carl Duisberg Samity will organise a case study on "Role of Literacy for Industrial Take-off." Venue: Goethe Institut. Time: 7:00 pm. On invitation.

Roundtable discussion: Russian Cultural Centre and Soviet Alumni Association will jointly organise the discussion on "Education in Russia." Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 5:30 pm.

Rotary Club of Jahangirnagar Dhaka: The weekly meeting will be held. Venue: Officers Club. Time: 5:15 pm.

Dhansiri Shishu Kishor Songathon: The sixth founding anniversary of the organisation will be held. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 4 pm. Chief guest: Sabir Ahmad Chowdhury.

Lions Club of Dhaka Aristocrat: The regular fortnightly meeting will be held. Venue: 11, Dilkusha Commercial Area. Time: 5 pm.

BSP meet: An emergency meeting of the Bangladesh Sangbadpatri Parishad (BSP) will be held. Venue: Office of the Daily Inqilab editor. Time: 7 pm.

Leo Club of Dhaka Madhumoti: The installation ceremony will be held. Venue: Plaza Hotel, 62/63 Motijheel C/A. Time: 4 pm.

Chalachitra Film Society: Rene Clair's Paris qui dort will be screened as part of the Avant-Garde and Surrealist Film Festival. Venue: Alliance Francaise de Dhaka. Time: 5:30 pm.

..... and tomorrow

Theatre workshop: Centre for Asian Theatre will organise the workshop. Venue: Goethe Institut, Juni Dhar will conduct the workshop. On invitation.

Govt stand on war criminals dubious: Nirmul

By Staff Correspondent

The acting convener of the Ekattorer Ghatok Dalal Nirmul Committee, Shahrier Kabir said, BNP is pursuing a "dilly-dallying" tactic in trying the war criminals and banning communal politics as the party has been in quest of an election entente with the Jamaat. Kabir was addressing a workers rally of the Nirmul Committee in the city Tuesday.

Distribution of Share Certificate

Honourable shareholders of the company are hereby informed that the share certificates are ready for distribution. They may collect the certificate(s) in person or through authorised representative on production of Allotment letter(s)/ Renunciation receipt(s) from the Company's registered office with effect from 23rd September 1995.



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Applications from Bangladeshi nationals are invited to fill up the vacant position of Deputy Director (Research & Publication) in the pay scale: 6300-10x175-8050/-. The ideal candidate for this position should be an ACMA/M.Com./M.A.(Economics)/MBA (major in finance or operations research). He should have at least 5 years working experience in senior level positions in govt./semi-govt./multinational/autonomous or research organisations. Candidates having good academic background and experience in research and publication works will be given preference. Interested candidates should send applications alongwith curriculum vitae and attested copies of educational and experience certificates and one copy of passport size photograph to G.P.O. Box No. 2629, Dhaka-1000 by 30.09.1995.

NOTICE FOR PREQUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS

Applications are invited from suitably qualified and experienced contractors who are interested in the Renovation of Cyclone Shelters in remote coastal areas. These include the greater districts of Chittagong and Barisal.

The basic pre-requisites for the prequalification are as follows:

1. The applicants must have at least 5 years of practical experience in construction/renovation in remote areas of the coastal belt. Special preference will be given to contractors in the near local areas.
2. The applicant must be a minimum class-II category govt. and non-govt. organizations contractor and must furnish necessary supporting documents.
3. The applicant must have successfully completed one construction/renovation project of at least 5 lakh taka in a single contract during the last 3 years.

The prequalification document may be obtained from the office of the Consultant **Shapati Sangshad Limited**, House No. 4, Road No. 9, Dhanmondi R/A, Dhaka-1205, from September 25, 1995 to October 04, 1995 on payment of Tk 200.00 (non-refundable). The prequalification document duly filled in is to be submitted with a forwarding in the respective letter head pad in the office of the Consultant during the office hours on or before October 08, 1995.

The successful prequalified firms will be notified by post. The authority reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reasons whatsoever.

Managing Director
Shapati Sangshad Ltd.

ANNOUNCEMENT

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The Management Development Unit of the Ministry of Health and Family Planning (MDU) is a government-executed project that is administered under UNDP/UNFPA administrative and financial procedures.

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Please contact the MDU Team Leader by telephone or in writing if your organization or project should have vacancies for staff in the following categories:

- Field Officers (GS-level 5) with extensive knowledge of field operations of the GOB's family planning, MCH and primary health care program
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Please Contact:

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BWJF condemns Yasmin killing

The Bangladesh Women Journalists' Forum (BWJF) has strongly condemned the killing of Yasmin Akhter and subsequent death of seven others in police firing in Dhanpur, reports BSS. The forum members at its meeting held at the Jatiya Press Club Tuesday urged the government to take action against the persons responsible for the incident.

Presided over by forum president Sitora Musa, the meeting was addressed, among others, by forum general secretary Rasheda Amin and its members Kazi Rasheda Anwar, Gulshan Akhter, Ismat Mausami, Shrin Sultana, Dilruba Khan, Kazi Anjum and Homeera Khatun.

UNICEF-RDRS immunisation programme

UNICEF has launched a programme of dissemination of educational and motivational messages on immunisation for children against preventable diseases in collaboration with Rangpur Dinajpur Rural Service (RDRS), says a press release.

The project will cover some 150,000 families in 28 thanas of Panchagarh, Thakurgaon, Nilphamari, Lalmonirhat and Kurigram districts. Divided into two phases the whole project is likely to be completed by February 1998.

Cable operators' convention in Oct

A national convention of cable operators will be held in the city next month, reports UNB.

The decision was taken at an emergency executive committee meeting of the Bangladesh Satellite Cable Network Owners' Federation (BSCNOF) held on Friday at the federation office.

The BSCNOF meeting also urged the government not to introduce the Multi-Channel Multi-point Distribution System (MMDS) for satellite TVs.

The meeting was attended by Federation leaders Talat Iqbal, Farhad Hossain Chowdhury, K M Ahmed Razu, Farhad Hossain Badal, Mesbah Uddin Mizu,

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If any one deals with this property he/she shall be doing so at his/her own risk and responsibility and subject to the mortgage created in favour of the BANK.

Schedule of the Property

1 (one) bigha (33 decimal) land with residential building at Plot No. 240 (old), 87 (new), Road No. 21 (old), 11/A (new), Dhanmondi Residential Area, Dhaka. The property is owned by Mr. Khwaja Mohammad Zarrar.

Iqbal U. Ahmed
Vice President