

Dhaka Day by Day

They Serve Us with a Smile

by Aditi Mubin Chowhury



There was a time when you could hardly find a restaurant to eat international cuisine but now it's different. Today restaurants are found almost at each corner of the street. Besides Chinese restaurants there are Thai, Korean, Italian, Indian and not to mention traditional Bengali restaurants. Whenever it calls for a celebration, we usually plan to go to a restaurant. Sometimes we like to go to a restaurant just to have a quiet evening dinner with an intimate friend or someone. As we enter a restaurant, a man dressed up in a uniform comes right up to us and guides us to a table, pulls the chair and hands over the menu. These guys are usually known as waiters. A waiter's job is to serve the food and clean the table. Then there are stewards who, besides fixing the appropriate table according to the number of the customers and handing over the menu, are always there to help them if they find any sort of difficulties in deciding what type of food they want to eat. Sometimes they even explain the recipes and ingredients. For this they have to know each and every item of the menu. Every item number must be well memorised. They usually memorise them during their leisure time. Then a test is taken by the head steward to see how well they have done. Besides, they have to stand near the customers to know whether they are satisfied with the taste of the food or not. If the customers are not pleased then the stewards have to take the blame not the waiters. It was learnt that sometimes these guys get quite offended when a well dressed man shouts at them rudely by saying 'Aal,Beara!' All they can do then is to tolerate such behaviour. Anyway they are seen working together as a team. These guys usually work from 12 noon to

3.30 pm. Then after a few hours they start working again from 6.30pm to 11.00pm. Whether they are not in a mood to work or feel unwell, they have to remain stand-by with a smile on their face. They hardly get enough time to think about themselves. Most of the time is spent on attending customers. They have no weekly holidays but they can take leave if required. During Eid they hardly get any time to rest. Though their job is tiresome, the bright side is that they receive large amount of tips. In some restaurants they have a small box in front of the cashier which is known as 'Tips Box'. The waiters save their tips in that box and then at the end of the week the box is opened and the money is distributed among the waiters, stewards and of course the chefs. The chefs usually get a little bit more than the waiters. Waiters do receive a reasonable salary, including the tips. These young men are not educated enough. Most of them have just passed their SSC or HSC. Although there are some graduates who can speak English, they usually entertain the foreigners. Most of the waiters hardly have a degree on hotel management. With years their experiences count. One wonders whether these young men ever want to taste the delicious food which they serve from morning to night. Well, in most cases the answer seems to be a negative one. They rather prefer to go home and enjoy the food which is cooked by their dear mothers or grand mothers. Whatever family backgrounds they have, to us they are waiters and the only thing that they demand from us is polite behaviour which obviously is not hard to give.

Zillur tells protest rally BNP resorting to repression

From Our Correspondent

Awami League general secretary Zillur Rahman yesterday said, the ruling party has resorted to repression and killing because it is losing grounds. "As part of this move, the government-backed terrorists had killed Chhatra League leader Sheikh Shahnewaz," he said while addressing a public rally at Lokenath Maidan in the Brahmanbaria town. The rally was organised to protest the killing of Shahnewaz, organising secretary of Chhatra League, Brahmanbaria Government College Unit on October 16, the first day of the 96-hour hartal, by a rival students group. Zillur Rahman said, the days of the BNP government were numbered. They could not stay in power by killing, he said and assured that the killers of Shahnewaz would be tried even if his party went to power for a single day. Presided over by acting

president of the district Awami League, Advocate Syed Sirajul Islam the meeting was also addressed, by among others, AL presidium member Amir Hossain Amu, Chhatra League central committee president Inamul Huq Shamim, general secretary Ishaq Ali Khan Panna, Kamruzzaman Ansari, M A Karim and wife of late Abdul Kuddus Makhan, Hasnat Jahana. **Prayer for recovery of BNP leaders** A manajat was offered at the Baitul Mukarram mosque after Jumma prayers for the early recovery of BNP secretary-general and LGRD and Cooperatives Minister Abdus Salam Talukder and Foreign Minister A S M Mostafizur Rahman. The two leaders of BNP are now undergoing treatment in the United States of America.

● What's on today... ●

Exposition '95: The week-long exposition will present works of 15 young artists. Venue: Zainul Gallery, Institute of Fine Arts. Time: 12.00 noon. Widow of Zainul Abedin will inaugurate.

Rapport management programme: The day-long programme will be attended by senior executives. Venue: Sonargaon Hotel. Time: 9 am.

..... and tomorrow

Russian film show: A discussion on Nikita Mihalkov and His Work in Russian Film, and the screening of the film. A Private Conversation will be held to mark the 50th birth anniversary of film-director, Nikita Mihalkov. Venue: Russian Cultural Centre. Time: 5:30 pm.

Opposition urged to sit with PM

Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury yesterday called upon the opposition parties to come forward in response to Prime Minister's invitation for dialogue to overcome the present political crisis, reports BSS. The minister was addressing a public meeting organised by Keraniganj thana unit of BNP at Jingira Eidgah ground here. Presided over by Keraniganj thana BNP president Nazir Uddin, the meeting was addressed by Aman Ullah Aman, MP, Neyamat Ullah Sabu, MP and other local leaders. Referring to Prime Minister's announcement of resignation 30 days before the general election, the minister said that it was a gesture towards democracy of the present government. The opposition demand for a caretaker government has no basis in the present democratic dispensation, he said. The home minister said that the opposition's resignation had only hampered the cause of democracy, but it did not make any loss to the government. BNP is ruling the country with the mandate of the people, he added.

Weather

Light rain forecast

Temporary light to moderate rain or thundershower is likely at a few places over Chittagong, Barisal divisions and at one or two places over Dhaka, Khulna, Sylhet and Rajshahi division in the next 12 hours till 6 pm today, reports UNB. Met Office says day temperature may remain nearly unchanged across the country. Country's highest temperature 32.7 degrees Celsius was recorded at Madaripur and Chuadanga and the lowest 22.6 degrees at Khulna. Meantime, Jessore experienced the highest 43 mm rain yesterday. Sun sets today at 5.28 pm and rises tomorrow at 6.00 am. Maximum and minimum temperatures and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	32.1	24.4	74	80
Chittagong	31.5	24.8	73	82
Rajshahi	28.5	26.2	93	92
Khulna	32.6	22.6	73	78
Barisal	31.3	23.2	78	85
Sylhet	31.7	23.3	74	77
Cox's Bazar	32.0	24.0	77	78

Directive to sell jute seeds in labelled packets

The government has directed to sell jute and radish seeds in labelled packets showing purity, germination percentage, date of expiry and name of the packer to ensure quality. The National Seed Board has taken the decision in the wake of recent reports about widespread malpractices in seed trading as farmers become victims of contaminated, low quality and outdated seeds from the market. Officials told UNB that Bangladesh Agricultural Development Corporation (BADC) supply only 15.8 per cent of the required jute seeds and only 0.025 per cent radish seeds to the farmers. The rest are procured from the open market or produced by the farmers themselves. BADC's supply comes to 760 tonne jute seeds and 1.87 tonne radish seeds. The estimated annual requirement of jute seeds is about 4465 tonne worth Tk 9 crore and radish seeds around 560 tons worth Tk 4.5 crore. Farmers generally use their own seeds. A small amount of the seeds available

Japanese experts on origami due today

Two Japanese specialists on origami, a form of Japanese handicraft, will arrive here today on a six-day visit to Bangladesh, reports UNB. During the visit, Takenao Handa and his wife Junko Handa will introduce the traditional Japanese folk-art of paper folding to students and members of various cultural and educational institutions in Dhaka. The visit organised by the Japanese Embassy in Dhaka, will be sponsored by the Japan Foundation.

Home students' rally Oct 22

Students of different homeopathic medical colleges of the country will hold rallies at their colleges on October 22 demanding holding of their examinations of 1995, reports UNB. The students, preparing for DHMS examinations, will also submit memoranda to the chairman of Bangladesh Homeopathic Board through the principals of the colleges.

Speaker back home

Speaker Shaikh Razzak Ali returned home after attending the 94th conference of Inter-parliamentary Union in Bucharest, reports BSS. The Speaker led a six-member Bangladesh parliamentary delegation to the conference. The other members were Anwarul Hossain Khan Chowdhury, MP, Syed Wahidul Alam, MP, M Akbar Ali MP, and Abul Hashem, Secretary of the Parliament Secretariat. He said quality can be ensured if traders sell their seeds in packets showing the date of packing, germination percentage, crop name and variety, packer's name and address, and other relevant information. Some unscrupulous seed traders often sell contaminated, low quality Indian seeds, said Mohammad Humayun Kabir, a seed expert. He said the government restriction on import as well as the latest instruction on labelled seed packets could check smuggling of low quality Indian jute seeds, known as "Bankim seed". President of Bangladesh Seed Merchants Association, Komol Banerjee told UNB that it is very difficult to ensure quality in the absence of any seed packing equipment in the country. Imported seeds, he claimed are vacuum-sealed maintaining proper moisture control and percentage of germination. "We have no organised seed production mechanism. So, it is very difficult that about 400 seed traders under the banner of the association can assure quality of seeds as they used to collect seeds from mostly unorganised farmers." Banerjee urged the government, the donors, and the NGOs to develop an organised seed production mechanism and a system ensuring availability of adequate equipment for quality packing of seeds.



Rokeya's solo show begins today

A solo art exhibition by noted artist Rokeya Sultana will begin today at the Divine Art Gallery of Sonargaon Hotel, says a press release. Tore Toreng, Charge d'Affaires of the Royal Norwegian Embassy will inaugurate the exhibition. A familiar name for the individual form and primitiveness of figures, Rokeya was awarded the grand prize at the 3rd Bharat Bhawan International Art Biennale. The exhibition will continue, till October 27, from 9 am to 9 pm, the press release added.

One electrocuted in the city

By DMCH Correspondent One person was electrocuted and two others injured in two separate incidents in the city yesterday. Manirul Hasan, 32, of Meradia under Sabujbagh thana received electric shock when an iron rod, held by him, touched an electric wire near his house at about 10.15 am. He was immediately sent to the Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where the attending doctor declared him dead. Abdur Rahman, 35 of Kunipara in Tejgaon thana was admitted to DMCH with severe stab injuries on his body in the afternoon. He was attacked by a group of five youths in sequel to an earlier enmity, source said. Nizam, 25, a tannery worker sustained injuries when a bomb was hurled at him. He was taking tea at a wayside tea-stall at Jhigata at about 4 pm.

Sugarcane crushing season begins

The sugarcane crushing season began in the country yesterday to produce 243,312 tons of sugar, the target set for the current fiscal, reports UNB. Bangladesh Sugar and Food Industries Corporation (BSFIC), which runs the state-owned sugar mills, plans to achieve the target by crushing 28.93 lakh tons of sugarcane at a 8.40 per cent rate of sugar recovery. State Minister for Industries Lutfur Rahman Khan opened the sugar production programmes of Natore and Rajshahi Sugar Mills at separate functions at the two mills yesterday.

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