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Eating dangerously

Showcased sweetmeats not what they seem

PINAKI ROY

Rasogolla, Kalojaam, Chamcham, Jilapi, Paantao, Shandesh, Mihidana, khirsa -- these are the essential delicacies for all festivals in Bengali culture.

But food and sanitation officers from the Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) say most of these mouthwatering sweetmeats, despite looking attrac-

tive in the showcase, are made with adulterated ingredients and produced in a filthy environment.

In a survey conducted in February, DCC officials found that 100 percent of examined samples of Rasogolla, Kalojaam, curds, and Sandhes were adulterated.

Consumers, when recently told about the findings, SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

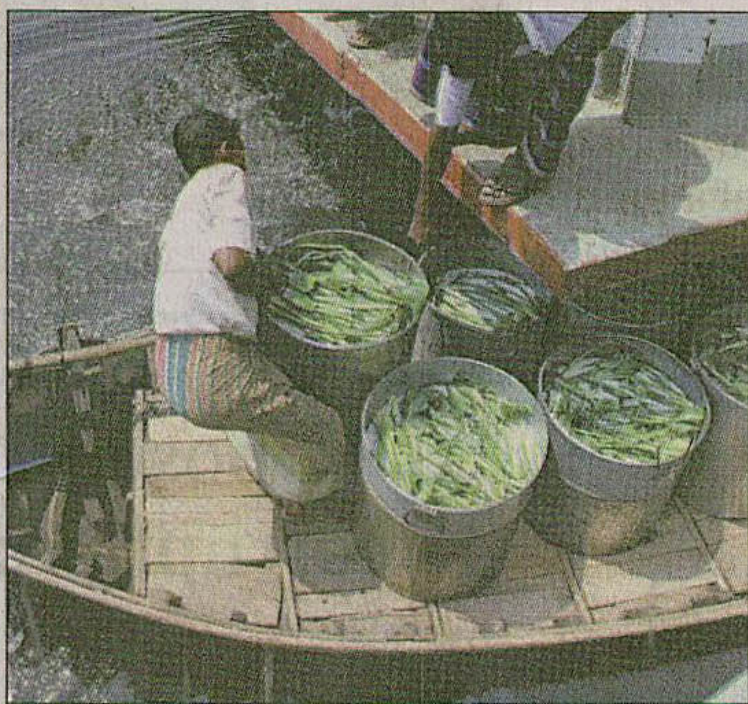


PHOTO: STAR

Milk carried in the most unhygienic manner is supplied to sweetmeat shops in Dhaka, posing serious health hazard.

Bangladesh dangerous place for journalists

US envoy comments

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The outgoing US Ambassador Harry K Thomas yesterday said Bangladesh is a "dangerous place for journalists" whose job is the toughest in the country.

He made the comment while talking to reporters after a farewell meeting with Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman at his secretariat office.

The minister however rejected Thomas's remark and said the journalists of the country are enjoying much freedom except some isolated incidents.

"The dangerous place for journalists may be South America, surely SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Ministry dreads mayhem in CHT

UPDE, PCJSS rivalry getting stronger

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) affairs ministry fears that rivalry between pro-peace accord Parbattya Chattagram Jono Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDE), the outfit opposed to the accord, might anytime lead to extensive bloodshed in Khagrachhari.

The ministry report on law and order of the three hill districts, which was submitted before the parliamentary standing committee on CHT affairs yesterday, voiced the concern. It recommended alerting the police, paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), and army personnel to the possibility of violence.

The standing committee meeting chaired by Mosharraf Hossain at the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban yesterday decided to invite state minister for home and BDR director general to discuss the law and order of the CHT in its next meeting.

The report said the law and order in Khagrachhari is much worse compared with that of the previous years. The situation in the two other hill districts -- Rangamati and Bandarban -- is relatively stable.

"For now, the situation in Khagrachhari appears to be under control thanks to stepped up activities of the police, BDR, and army, but a fierce fighting might break out anytime between PCJSS and UPDE SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

MONEY WHITENING Saifur still in a fix

UNB, Dhaka

Finance and Planning Minister M Saifur Rahman yesterday said he is still in a dilemma over allowing black money for another year as proposed in the budget for the 2005-06 fiscal year.

"Still I'm in two minds," he told a delegation from Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) at his office. The minister expressed this view when the delegates advocated for black money to be allowed in terms of investment in the capital market and industries.

Saifur kept mum about their call, but explained the pluses and minuses of allowing the money whitening provision the way he did in Friday's post-budget press conference.

The delegation led by DSE President Shahiq Khan apprehended the undeclared money SEE PAGE 15 COL 6

Essentials prices on the up again

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prices of daily necessities have increased in the city market after the new budget was proposed in parliament.

Many essentials, including rice, vegetables, oil, pulses, meat, fish, eggs and spices, have marked an increase from Tk 2 to Tk 10 per kilogram. Products like soap and stainless blades have also increased by Tk 1 as the finance minister proposed to tax them.

Traders in the city's kitchen market cautioned that many prices might experience a further rise in the coming weeks as the govern-

ment does not have any control over the market. The traders said their sales saw a sharp decline as the price of essentials has increased.

"We see a negative effect in the market when the price increases. But we have to increase the price as we buy at an increased rate," said Zakir Hossain, a trader in the Karwan Bazar market.

During a visit to the city's Karwan Bazar and Hatipul kitchen markets yesterday afternoon, it was found that the price of potatoes and cucumbers has increased from Tk two to four per kg within the last two days.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

Another shady case of Rab 'crossfire'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The killing of a plumber in Rab 'crossfire' on May 11 in Narsingdi has now taken a new turn with witnesses saying it was a murder in cold blood.

"The Rab men fired a couple of rounds in the air and then fired Nazmul in cold blood shoving him to the ground with a foot on his chest," a witness told The Daily Star in the locality this week.

The Rab-3 members said Nazmul Islam Bhuiyan, alias Nazu, resident of Malita village under Palash Police Station (PS) in Narsingdi, was killed in an "encounter" at the BSCIC industrial estate at Kararchar under

Shibpur PS in the district.

They said Nazmul, armed and accompanied by several friends, gathered near a water tank at the BSCIC area with the aim to commit muggings. The Rab also claimed to have recovered a pistol from Nazmul's possession and arrested two youths--Nurul Islam Dulal and Sohel Miah--from the spot.

Witnesses' account

Witness accounts, however, gave a totally different picture. The spot where Rab men shot Nazmul was just some 100 yards east of the Dhaka-Ghorasal highway and at the southwest corner of the BSCIC area. The witnesses were sitting at SEE PAGE 15 COL 4

Bidisha gets bail in theft case

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Despite securing bail yesterday in the theft case filed by her former husband HM Ershad, Bidisha was not yet let out, as she stands accused in a passport forgery case.

Judge Mohammad Momin Ullah of the Metropolitan Sessions Judge's Court, Dhaka gave her an ad-interim bail after her counsel filed a criminal appeal against the bail rejection order of a lower court.

The Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's (CMM's) Court, Dhaka on June 8 rejected a petition for Bidisha's bail and sent her to Dhaka Central Jail. She was produced SEE PAGE 15 COL 5

Myanmar rebel leaders arrested in Bandarban

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Bandarban

Security forces yesterday arrested chief of Myanmar's antigovernment guerrilla group National United Party of Arakan (NUPA), Tai Jo Khoy, and his three associates at Naikkhongchhari.

BDR sources confirmed the arrest but did not disclose the whereabouts of the arrestees. But a well-placed source said the four were being interrogated in a secret place and they have disclosed significant information about hidden firearms and ammunition.

Acting on secret information, the security forces comprising army and SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members raided Narkelbunia area in Naikkhongchhari upazila yesterday afternoon and nabbed Tai Jo Khoy, Mohin, Maisha and Domo, BDR sources said.

Tai Jo and his associates, aged below 30, were unarmed and could not resist the security forces during the raid in the remote bordering village. Tai Jo admitted that he is the president of the antigovernment guerrilla group, the sources said.

Details of the operation were not available immediately.

The operation was part of an army-BDR joint anticrime SEE PAGE 15 COL 8

Kala-azar outbreak in Dinajpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Two persons died of kala-azar or visceral leishmaniasis, and 35 were affected in Parbatipur and Phulbari upazilas in the last four days where an outbreak of the deadly parasitic fever is feared.

Sources in Phulbari and Parbatipur health complexes said among the 35 affected patients, the condition of five is critical.

The civil surgeon of Dinajpur yesterday admitted the outbreak of the disease in the district. He said they have an adequate reserve of vaccines, which have already been sent to the affected areas.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

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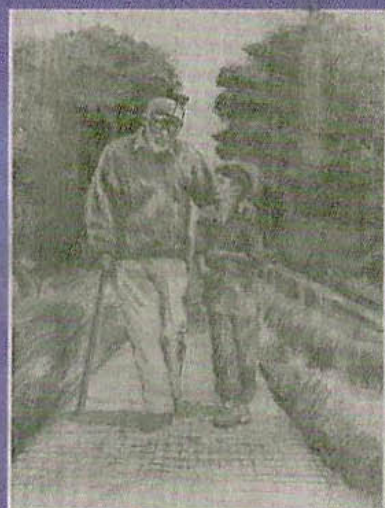
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Bidisha plotted to overthrow coalition govt

Alliance MPs say during House debate

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Parliament yesterday debated briefly, and heatedly, about Bidisha, the estranged wife of former military ruler HM Ershad, with ruling coalition deputies alleging that Bidisha had conspired to overthrow the government.

Opposition Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League lawmaker Kader Siddiqui, who raised the issue on a point of order, contradicted his SEE PAGE 15 COL 7

Villagers clash with Rab men on trivial issue

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

At least 15 people, including four Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) members, were injured in a clash between locals and Rab men at Bagher Bazar in Gazipur over a trivial matter yesterday.

The clash ensued when Rab men plying on a training bus beat a driver of Soukhin Paribahan on the Dhaka-Mymensingh Highway in the morning.

Witnesses said 13 Rab members of the headquarters reached Bagher SEE PAGE 15 COL 1

ELEVATED EXPRESSWAY Thai delegation arrives today for talks

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A six-member high-powered Thai delegation arrives in Dhaka today to discuss with the government the financial and technical support for constructing a 13km-long elevated expressway in the city.

The delegates include the vice-president of Thai Exim Bank, which is likely to provide 60 percent loan for the estimated Tk 1,218-crore project, sources said.

SEE PAGE 15 COL 3

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