

T A N G E N T S

BY IHTISHAM KABIR



Iftekhar and Mamoon at Jasmine Restaurant.

PHOTO: IHTISHAM KABIR

Taste of Home
in Bangkok

I admire Bangladeshi entrepreneurs doing business abroad. It takes courage and persistence to succeed in a foreign land. So, finding myself in the neighbourhood recently, I drop by "Jasmine Bangladeshi Cuisine," a Bangladeshi-owned restaurant in Bangkok.

Jasmine's founders are Iftekhar Ahmed Khan, a Dhaka-based restaurant entrepreneur (of El Toro fame) and Talukder Siraj Mian (Mamoon), a Bangkok-based businessman of Bangladeshi origin. Between them, they have several decades of restaurant experience.

Jasmine is eight years old. It is located close to the Bangkok Hospital, halfway between the Amari apartments and the hospital entrance. Entering, I am greeted by a sparkling clean interior, simple but tastefully decorated, that can seat 48 people.

I request the menu and get a 22-page booklet featuring hundreds of dishes. In addition to Bangladeshis, Jasmine caters to Middle-Eastern and South Asian visitors, particularly patients at various Bangkok hospitals. The menu has Bangladeshi, Indian, Arabic, Mediterranean and Thai food. Everything is halal and the restaurant serves no alcohol.

I ask Mamoon and Iftekhar why they started this restaurant. "We saw many Bangladeshis coming here for treatment and craving home food, especially *daal-bhat*, and decided to serve them," they said.

Indeed, Bangladeshi specials include several types of fish, including Koi, Pabda and Hilsa. A typical Bengali meal costs 150-200 Baht (1 Baht=2.5 Taka.)

Also popular are kababs, lassi and several variations of biriyani. Jasmine

offers boneless versions of all their dishes for a higher price.

From the menu, I order Tandoori chicken, garlic nan and daal. The chicken is flavourful and succulent. The nan is light, fluffy, and delightfully chewy. The daal is thick and hearty.

I also ask for a cup of tea. It comes steaming in a large mug, rich and flavourful.

Chatting with the entrepreneurs, it becomes obvious that running such a business is intense, hard work. The restaurant is open daily from 8:30am to 11pm.

They have also opened a convenience store next door called Jasmine Halal Mart. When I walk in for a look, I get to meet Mrs. Jathaththa Mian, Mamoon's Thai wife, who looks after it.

"What advice would you have for Bangladeshi entrepreneurs wanting to do business in Bangkok?" I ask them.

"Doing business in Bangkok is difficult. Thai law requires that you have a local partner. It is important to find a trustworthy partner. Remember all official documents are in Thai, so you will rely on your partner to fill them out properly," says Iftekhar.

"Finding a good spot in Bangkok takes persistence," adds Mamoon.

Did they have any unusual experience here? "A young man called me one night asking for help. He had brought his elderly uncle for treatment at the hospital. The uncle was desperate for some Bangla-style patient food. I ended up making a *pishpash* of soft rice with vegetables and his uncle loved it," says Mamoon.

But Jasmine's food is not just for patients. Anyone can enjoy it. They are at 11/2-3 Soontivai Soi 3, Bangkok.

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Political crisis feared over constitution

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Former president Prof AQM Badruddoza Chowdhury yesterday warned of an imminent crisis in the country's political arena if the ongoing debate over constitutional amendments is not resolved soon.

He said the government and the opposition failed to discharge their duties properly, paving the way to a rise of alternative political forces.

Badruddoza, also president of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh, was addressing a discussion at Engineers Institution Auditorium in the city on the occasion of his party's seventh founding anniversary.

Abdul Kader Siddiqi of Krishok Sramik Janta League, Commander Adbur Rouf of Gono Forum, Ferdous Qureshi and Abul Hasan Chwodhury of Progressive Democratic Party and Major (retd) Abdul Mannan of Bikalpa Dhara Bangladesh also spoke with Badruddoza in the chair. Mahi B Chowdhury conducted the programme.

Gono Forum President Dr Kamal Hossain sent a message, read out by Abdur Rouf. In the message, Kamal urged all to work together to save the country from a disastrous situation, created due to politics of intolerance.

Badruddoza said ruling Awami League government will not be able to win the election if it is held in a free and fair manner.

"We will go for movement at the end of this year to unite people so that a government of alternative political parties (excluding the present ruling and opposition parties) can form a pro-people government," he said.

He also criticised the Supreme Court verdict on caretaker government system, saying that this verdict opened a way of confrontational politics.

Kader Siddiqi termed the present government as "fraud" and said it would be better for the country if the present government was forced to leave power without further delay.

Domestic help held for engr murder

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested slain engineer Golam Rahman's domestic help for his involvement in the killing.

Rab said the arrested Nurul Islam, 20, admitted his involvement in primary interrogation.

Public Works Department additional chief engineer Golam, 58, was stabbed to death on Tuesday night at his residence in the city.

Rab said acting on a tip-off they arrested Nurul from Jessor. Nurul planned to flee away to India, said Rab officials.

They recovered 20 tolas of gold ornaments and Tk 20,000 from him.

Quoting Nurul, Rab said he mixed sleeping pills with Golam's food that night and hit him on the head after he fell unconscious.

Later, Nurul with his cousin tied up Golam and stabbed him to death to steal the gold ornaments and money, said Rab.

NEWS IN brief

Implement women policy: CPB

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Leaders of the Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB) yesterday demanded implementation of the Women Development Policy with necessary amendment.

They also demanded formulation of a unified family law and inclusion of the provision of equal rights for men and women in the inherent law.

They placed the demands while speaking at a discussion organised by CPB Women Cell at Mukti Bhaban in the city, says a press release.

CPB Women Cell Convener Laxmi Chakrabortee chaired the programme, while the party Acting President Haider Akbar Khan Rono, presidium member Shah Alam spoke.

Their other demands include increase of reserved seats for women in parliament, appointment of women in policymaking level and abolish of all laws that create gender discrimination.

Facilities for UISCs to increase

Bss, Chittagong

National Project Director of Access to Information (A2I) Programme Nazrul Islam Khan said here yesterday that the government would increase infrastructure facilities to make the union information service centres (UISCs) economically viable.

"We know that some UISCs have been facing problems in functioning smoothly due to load shedding and lack of training of the entrepreneurs," he said at a meeting with upazila nirbahi officers (UNOs) of different upazilas at the local Circuit House.

Khan, also the private secretary-1 to the Prime Minister, said the government would provide necessary equipment including solar power as well as training for the entrepreneurs to run the UISCs smoothly.

Presided over by Chittagong DC Fazay Ahmed, the function was also addressed, among others, by Fatiqchhari UNO Anjana Khan Majlish, Hathazari UNO Farid Ahmed, Patia UNO Abul Hossain and Focal Point of BSS-A2I Media Campaign and City Editor of BSS Ajit Kumar Sarkar.

In line with the present government's vision to build 'Digital Bangladesh', union information service centres (UISCs) were inaugurated in 4,501 unions across the country on November 11 last year.

Four held with smuggled drugs

Bss, Rangpur

Police seized a huge amount of smuggled medicine worth Tk 7.38 lakh and arrested four smugglers from Joyrampur Anwar under Mithapukur upazila on Thursday, police sources said.



These two offspring of fishing cats were rescued by the Department of Forests from Dhakdhol Dangapara village in Singra upazila of Natore on Thursday evening.

'Punish Rab men for maiming Limon'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a human chain yesterday demanded the government withdraw false cases against maimed Limon Hossain and punish the Rab men who shot him into disability.

A number of poet, writer, teacher, journalist, social activist, student leader, and artiste joined the programme and voiced against the torture and extra-judicial killing by law enforcement agencies.

A team of Rapid Action Battalion (Rab-8) shot 17-year-old Limon, a college student from Chhaturia village in Jhalakathi, in the

left leg on March 23. Rab later filed two cases against Limon who had to amputate the leg.

Badruddin Umar, an author and columnist, said the law enforcers are killing people pointing gun on chest and making stories of crossfire, as not a single law enforcer has been punished for such killing.

It seems they shoot people as part of their firing practice, he said.

Describing Limon's issue as an example, the speakers also demanded thorough investigation and fair trial of all such incidents.

Golam Mortuza, editor of the weekly Shaptahik 2000, said the government is standing against people denying existence of extra-judicial killing and torture, instead of ensuring people's right and justice.

Poet Sazzad Kabir and well-known singer Krishna Koli also spoke at the human chain formed in front of the National Museum in the city.

Prof Piyas Karim Chowdhury of Brac University, poet Muzib Mehedi, and student leader Manobendra Dev took part in the programme.

2 newborn fishing cats rescued

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Natore

The department of forests in Natore rescued two offspring of fishing cats (Mechho Bagh) from Dhakdhol Dangapara village in Singra upazila on Thursday evening.

Sultan-ul-Azim, forest officer of Sadar upazila, said locals recovered the newborns from a paddy field.

On information, Natore forest department officials went there and received them. Later, they handed the two over to Rajshahi divisional office on Thursday night.

The villagers beat the father fishing cat to death on May 8. The forest officials are searching for the mother.

GlaxoSE WEATHER TODAY 100% GLUCOSE

Change in temperature unlikely

UNB, Dhaka

Rain or thundershowers accompanied by temporary gusty or squally wind is likely at one or two places over Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Rangpur, Dhaka and Sylhet divisions in 24 hours till 6:00pm today.

Mild heat wave is sweeping over Khulna division and the regions of Rajshahi and Pabna and it may continue.

Day temperature may remain nearly unchanged over the country, MetOffice said.

The sun sets in the capital today at 6:33pm and rises yesterday at 5:17am.

Country's highest temperature 37.2 degree Celsius was recorded yesterday at Rajshahi and Chuadanga and lowest 20.0 degrees at Sylhet.

Highest and lowest temperature and humidity recorded in some major cities and towns yesterday were:

City/Town	Temperature in Celsius		Humidity in percentage	
	Max	Min	Morning	Evening
Dhaka	34.1	27.3	75	85
Chittagong	32.2	26.5	71	81
Rajshahi	37.2	26.4	86	70
Rangpur	30.9	22.5	75	76
Khulna	36.5	27.5	00	63
Barisal	35.1	27.6	84	70
Sylhet	28.1	21.9	91	86
Cox's Bazar	34.0	26.4	67	79

Instant energy, Instant recharge

Bismillahir Rahmani Rahim

HABIDI'S 9TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY



MAHMUDA AND ANSAR RAHMAN

Today, the 14th of May, is the 9th death anniversary of our only daughter Fatima (Habidi) Rahman. Our beloved Habidi passed away on this day in 2002 at St. Mary's Hospital in London. Habidi is no longer with us but her sweet memories remain in our hearts for ever.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for the eternal peace of her departed soul.



Some citizens under the banner of Limoner Jonno, Jiboner Jonno form a human chain in front of the National Museum in the city yesterday demanding a fair investigation and trial of all incidents of extra-judicial killings as well as maiming Limon Hossain.

PHOTO: STAR