

The stories behind the scenes: from Rajshahi to Rangpur

After the end of the regional round in Khulna, the Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef team continued their journey onwards. Covering the districts of Rajshahi, Bogra and Rangpur, the team uncovered more culinary gems.

It provided an opportunity for the people involved to tell their stories-tales of their inspiration, hard work, determination and of course sheer willpower almost took attention from the competition itself. These are the real stories of the real people; the tale of the individuals who are truly the pulse of this great country.

Take the case of Akram, a professional chef based in Rajshahi. Originating from Naogaon, the aspirant Super Chef currently resides in Rajshahi, with his family living separately in their own village. Akram is not able to afford the cost of living in the city for his whole family and thus has to settle for staying alone while supporting his family's livelihood.

"Super Chef means a lot to me. I have been following the programme from the start and while prestige is a factor, it is also a way out of poverty for me and a way to bring fame," he said.

He dreams of one day opening his own restaurant and the Super Chef crown is one step in the right direction. His take on Bele fish is what impressed the judges, but only determination, fierce and firm, can see him through.

Another individual worth noting was Sirajhum Monira. A daughter of parent's unbound by societal ideas of patriarchy, Sirajhum was nourished in an environment where equality was the end all. No distinction was made between her and her brother and this helped give her confidence and built her character to become what it is today.

Sirajhum is passionate about her cooking but nobler are her intentions for entering the competition. "I hope to use the prize money to send my son abroad for higher education,"



she says, a nod to her progressive upbringing.

To truly capture the popularity and the craze that Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef has given birth to, one needs look no further than Milon, from Bogra. A former employee at a bank, Milon came from Narayanganj to Bogra for a job interview. It was here that he heard that the Super Chef competition's auditions would be taking place.

Putting everything on hold, Milon, a passionate cook, decided to follow his heart and appeared for the audition. His natural penchant for culinary skills did not go unnoticed and thus he was awarded a 'YES' card. The judges singled out his cutting and chopping skills, exclaiming surprise at how professionally he went about his task while his own recipe itself proved to be a hit.

However, no story could make one fully

comprehend the numerous aspirations people hold for the Super Chef crown better than Dilruba Ripa's tale. Hailing from Rangpur, Dilruba narrated an oft-heard story of love, family pressures and sacrifice.

Ripa fell in love with her soon to be husband one year into dating him. Understanding that they both felt the same way for each other and they both wanted to be with each other, Dilruba decided it was time to approach their parents. Alas, Dilruba's parents did not consent to the marriage. However, love found its own way and Dilruba decided to elope and get married.

Her parents never fully supported nor agreed to this. Two years later, after the birth of their first child, Dilruba's mother has accepted the couple but her father remains stubborn.

"If I win this competition, if I become the

Super Chef, I am sure my father and my grandfather will see me in a different light. They will once again be proud of me and finally I can have my full family back," Dilruba said, eyes glistening with tears.

These are the people that make up the competition and if Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef has gotten as big as imaginable, it is down to these stories and these people. Every individual brings a different story to the competition and it is within these stories that these characters on TV come alive. They are bigger than just their culinary creations. They are what Bangladesh is - a country of diverse hopes and dreams with all converging in one ambition; the pursuit of happiness.

By Osama Rahman
Photo: Anwar Ali



Tibet Pomade With Rose Oil

কাছে রাখতে কি আসায়...

