

# GLUTTONY OR GASTRONOMIC DELIGHT

Gluttony is the fifth among the western grouping of seven deadly vices or cardinal sins. It was introduced in fourth century CE for ethical education and confession. The others are pride, greed, lust, envy, wrath and sloth.

For sheer delight, gluttony, nay, over eating, is considered and cultivated as a gastronomic feat. There was a time in our society, when love of eating besides being considered as a gastronomic feat was celebrated as a mark of bounty and of eminence. So, many celebrated luminaries used to love their food to the limit as a dietary habit. Among the countryside ordinary folks it was an amusing gastronomic feat.

I remember one Siddiq in our native village, a share cropper who used to cover ten miles to and from the village market on foot. Obviously, he had a big hunger. An earthen plate full of rice, a palmful of salt and a number of green chilies and lentil soup was his daily diet. It never filled up his stomach nor did it satiate his

SYED MAQSUD JAMIL  
PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

palate. At ajiyat (religious feast) few pieces of beef left him crestfallen. A bucket full of rice and beef curry filled his belly. My child's wondrous eyes stayed glued to Siddiq in disbelief!

Among the celebrities Sher-e-Bangla was legendary for his love of eating. My deceased friend Shabbir, a scion of Mohon Mia (Yusuf Ali Chowdury) enlightened me on the matter. This was his account about Sher-e-Bangla's enormous love of food. He used to take more than 20 Koi (climbing carp) fish in

one sitting. He used to put the entire Koi of largest conceivable size into his mouth and roll it around in his mouth and out came the mashed bones of the Koi. The kois followed after another! Amazing feat!

Egg is a common and popular food item in our country. Sher-e-Bangla was a great lover of eggs. He used to consume eggs one after another. When he used to stay at his KM Das Lane Hatkhola residence in the fifties folks from my mother's side used to visit him. Once my

mother took me along with her to the place. I had a glimpse of that big man. He was ambling around. It was afternoon and there was a jug full of milk on the table. He took it and gulped it down with effortless ease! That was Sher-e-Bangla - big like him in every respect!

In the fifties and sixties Shabbir's father Mohon Miah used to live around Tara Masjid with his family and a retinue of domestic hands. They were 10 siblings. Mohon Miah also had great love for food. He was of reasonable height with ruddy complexion and a gaze that froze people. One of Shabbir's account of a Mohon Miah evening is that he ate up the entire dish of mutton curry cooked in the house. Later he was not feeling well. And Shabbir was sent to K.P.Shaha, the leading pharmacist of Mitford for a mixture to relieve the pressure in his stomach.

I understand that is how many eminent people of the time celebrated their love of eating! That was the living style; driven by zest for life, not by gluttony.

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## THE WINTER'S TALE

A chilly morning coated in a thick blanket of fog declares the arrival of winter in rural Bangladesh. Life becomes perilous for the poor villagers in the nearly-freezing temperature. Huddling around small fire pits to feel the life saving warmth becomes their principal activity. However, for many farmers, the chilly winter brings a bounty of opportunities. Cultivation of fresh, winter vegetables, fruits, date-palm juice and many other winter crops bring activity and prosperity to the farmhouses of rural Bengal. This is indeed a season of hardship but it offers fortune for those who dare to cultivate it.

PHOTOS: PALASH KHAN  
TEXT: MD SHAHNAWAZ KHAN CHANDAN



### ABOUT TOWN

**"NO ONE HOME"**  
TAYEBA BEGUM LIPI'S SOLO EXHIBITION  
December 5 to January 9, 6pm to 10pm  
Bengal Art Lounge, 60 Gulshan Avenue

**UNMAD JCC COMIC CON 2015**  
December 25 to 26, 10:00 am to 10:00pm  
International Convention City, Bashundhara

Better late than never  
Last few seats left to grab!

**CHITTAGONG MODEL UNITED NATION**  
December 25 to 27, 9:00 am to 8:00pm  
Location: To be announced