

Take your next step to connect to us. Email us if you have an interesting story to share related to career.

facebook.com/  
thedailystar.nextstep  
Email: nextstep@thedailystar.net

The Daily Star

DHAKA, FRIDAY, MAY 5, 2017

BAISHAKH 22, 1424 BS

e-mail: nextstep@thedailystar.net

# NEXT STEP

## THE SECRET TO ACING THE CULINARY ARTS

A member of the World Gourmet Society, Chef Unity (Master Chef), American Culinary, and Infront Hospitality Management, Chef Daniel C Gomez has indeed taken the culinary world of Bangladesh by storm. Currently a judge of Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef, Chef Daniel has worked in places all over the world, including U.A.E, Bahrain, and India. In an exclusive interview, Next Step caught up with him to learn more about the world of culinary arts.



### What inspired you to become a chef?

Well my grandfather and father were both chefs. Culinary arts are in my blood. Even my younger brother is one! I guess you could call it somewhat of a family business.

### Why would someone want to be a chef?

Most people pursue this career out of a passion for the culinary arts and a love of food in general. Other than that, there are plenty of perks to the profession. You get to travel to different hotels all over the world and try out various cuisines. You are constantly learning and experimenting with different kinds of foods. So, there is plenty of scope to be creative. Altogether, I would say that being a chef is more of a journey and less of a profession.

### How long are the working hours?

Initially, the hours are quite long. At least 14-16 hours a day! But I promise that it pays off in the end, as you get to pick up a lot of techniques along the way. So, the more effort you put in, the better it is for your career.

### What is the current situation of the food industry in Bangladesh?

With the huge number of restaurants, hotels and resorts opening on a regular basis, there is no doubt that the food industry is growing. People are much busier and now prefer going out to eat instead of cooking at home. Over the next decade, we can expect further increase of opportunities in the industry. This means that the country is going to need more and more chefs and unless proper training is given, there is bound to be a shortage.

### How does Bangladeshi cuisine compare to international standards?

The world adores the Bengali flavours – our cuisine is quite rich because of the variety of spices used. However, we need to work on presentation. On international platforms, presentation is usually what lures customers. Also, since most of our food items are quite spicy, we need more



fusion food so that it appeals to the different taste palettes of people around the world.

### A lot of franchises are opening in the country recently. With more international influence, what do you think the chefs have to do to adapt?

Chefs need to watch YouTube videos, follow cooking blogs, and read cookbooks and recipes of famous culinary legends from all over the world. It is important to join a culinary institution if you want to be a professional. Also, keep track of cooking competitions worldwide, and if you can, compete in one as well. Times are changing fast, and unless you keep up with recent trends, you are likely to lose out.

### Which is the most difficult cuisine to learn?

The French cuisine is by far the hardest, in my opinion. It requires a great deal of skill to work with the raw materials and master the consistency of the food, the making of

which is often a complicated and delicate process.

### What advice would you give someone who wants to pursue this career?

Be passionate about it. And grab every opportunity you get to learn new things. The world of culinary arts is huge and you can never know too much!

### What are the qualities one should have as a chef?

The most important quality for a chef is to be hygienic. Cooking people's food means that you are in charge of their lives. It is very important for what you cook to be safe and hygienic.

Secondly, you must be punctual and hardworking. People do not like to wait too long for food, and with the industry always being short of skilled chefs, the pressure is immense. So, you need to be able to rise to the challenge. Other than that, the love for food and an artistic palette is also a must, along with good leadership skills.

### How important is having a mentor in this career?

Very important. Without mentors, you will never be able to master the nitty-gritty details of food. You need someone to give you instructions, guide you, and introduce you to people who can help you build your career.

### How expensive is the training?

Courses start from about BDT 60,000, but can be up to BDT 2 lakh in Bangladesh, depending on the courses and teachers. However, before joining an institution, do a bit of research on the faculty and how they teach. For the culinary arts industry, training under the right chef is really important.

You can get certified after a three-month course. You can also get a diploma, which is a year-long course or a graduation which takes three years. Unfortunately, there is no institution in Bangladesh that provides a graduate degree, so you will have to go abroad for that.

### Why did you join Super Chef?

Our country is a rather talented one! I wanted to find talented chefs who are passionate about their work. I also wanted to teach more chefs about my experiences. This is one thing all chefs must do – teach others so that the art lives on!

### How do you think shows like Super Chef help those who want to start a career as a chef?

Since they are being taught and feedback is constantly being given on their work, shows like Super Chef will definitely help them improve. Also, competitions like this help them showcase their talent to the world. So, they get an advantage in terms of job prospects.

### What future plans do you have regarding shows like this?

More seasons of Super Chef to start with. And perhaps, even one for kids!

ADIBA MAHBUB PROMA

Adiba is a second-year Computer Science and Engineering student at BRAC University.

## The Bossman

By E. Raza Ronny



37 MINUTES LATER



WE HAVE THE BIGGEST INBOXES FOR OUR EMPLOYEES. FINALLY THEY CAN STOP COMPLAINING WE DON'T GIVE THEM ENOUGH.



## REALISING THE CULINARY DREAM

While most of the world is busy embracing new businesses and startups, we often leave the artsy and creative stories out for the fag end. Cooking is one such promising art and a career that many in our country aspire to. The cooking show Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef is a quintessential platform that has found a tremendous number of raw talents over the years. We caught up with some ex-participants and an organiser to find out how this show has paved the way for living the culinary dream.



### Super Chef at a glance

"Super Chef started off with the motive to provide a recognisable platform to the home-grown, amateur cooks out there," says Faisal Mahmud, Marketing Manager of Bangladesh Edible Oil Ltd. and the brains behind Super Chef. Each season consists of 30 episodes full of mind-boggling culinary challenges. Even though the show struggles to garner viewership, it has still proved to be the giant leap toward materialising the participants' dream of becoming a chef. "Some ex-contestants are now chefs by profession, some have opened up hotels and restaurants, some have acted in TVCs as Super Chef or are doing their own cooking TV shows, while some have opened up cooking classes at home. So the platform has indeed proved to be no less valuable than a university certificate," quips Faisal Mahmud.

### Their success stories

Not only did the cooks manage to impress judges and audiences at Super Chef, but post-show job prospects soared like anything. Moreover, Super Chef employs some ex-participants back as tasters and even judges. "Ex-winners later become regional round judges and are invited as guest judges in later episodes. Top seven to eight participants are also allowed to take classes at Shopno Super Shop, all expenses borne by us," adds Faisal.

At the end of the day, however, the success and impact of a show as



Rafia Ahammed

promised can be vouched for by none other than the participants themselves. Nadim Sarker, second runner-up of Super Chef 2015 and now a chef at Platinum Suites says, "Months after the show ended, I got calls from both Radisson and Platinum Suites and although I got selected by both, I ended up choosing the latter. Since then I have cooked for foreign diplomats, Mashrafe Bin Murtaza and even the entire Bangladeshi cricket team. Every day at the kitchen is a new challenge. And besides being featured in a TVC, I am a regular at cooking shows." Rafia Ahammed, winner of Super Chef 2016, is also hosting a cooking show, Glitter Rannaghor, on NTV and was a cooking coach in this year's Super Chef.

Nadim, whose forte is Arab and continental cuisine, studied engineering and used to work as a business initiative. Tough choices had to be made as he shifted from the corpo-



Nadim Sarker

rate world to the culinary world. Nadim confesses, "I gave up on all the luxurious benefits that a corporate job offers because my passion for cooking was calling out to me way louder. Now I have no regrets at all."

Rafia, whose specialty is Italian, was also a student of science, but chose cooking due to a knack for the creative. However, she has faced her share of turndowns. "I've spoken at so many hotels and unfortunately most believe that a woman can't work long hours a day as a chef. It's disappointing." She didn't stop there though. Rafia is now doing short courses on cooking and applying abroad for a long course to establish her career as a chef. Both chefs suggest that to stay in flow with all latest food trends in our country, a chef must keep learning international, up-to-date techniques.

But a lot of families do not see a chef's title as a reputed one in our country, and both ex-contestants

vented about this. "It's frustrating when you are labelled a *baburchi* and looked down upon. A chef is no less than a doctor or an engineer and so this profession must not be degraded," says Rafia. What the culinary career offers, according to them, is greater value and respect over time because it is a globally demanded profession with a vast scope. "An added satisfaction is when you can bring a smile to someone's face with your cooking," remarks Nadim.

With more and more young blood embracing this art as their passion, Nadim sees a ray of hope: "Many youngsters in Dhaka are now either pursuing careers as chefs or have already opened up successful restaurants in spite of having studied a 'reputable' subject Super Chef 2017's winner is an NSU graduate who skipped an MBA to hone her culinary skills. This passion needs to keep surfacing until the tag of *baburchigiri* fades away."

"If you choose to be a chef, do so because you love cooking, not because it pays well to be a chef nowadays. Once you master the art, money and respect will follow in ample amounts," concluded Nadim. Cooking is thus an art that must be followed as a profession only if one is completely and utterly passionate about it. Half-hearted dedication will take you nowhere.

HALIMA SADIA

The writer is a junior at the Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka.

## BIPF celebrates World IP Day

In celebration of World Intellectual Property (IP) Day, Bangladesh IP Forum (BIPF) organised the 'Volunteer for Intellectual Property' (VIP) boot camp on May 2 at Dhaka University to raise awareness on the importance of intellectual property rights (IPR).

300 university students, budding entrepreneurs, and professionals engaged with experts in speaking and training sessions. Manzurur Rahman, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information, pointed out the need for IP awareness so that no other Bangladeshi has to meet the same fate as the late Lucky Akhand, and added that one should seek legal help for one's intangible property the way one would for tangible property. Barrister ABM Hamidul Mishbah, Founder of Bangladesh IP Forum, highlighted the importance of IP awareness in the thriving "idea market", where even young children are making games.

The event was inaugurated by Her Excellency Leoni Cuelenaere, Honourable Ambassador of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Bangladesh. Other speakers included Mustafa Jabbar, President, BASIS; Md. Mustafizur Rahman, Director, a2i, Prime Minister's Office; Tanvir Haider Chaudhury, CEO, Kazi Food Industries Ltd.; Asif Munier, filmmaker; Ahsan Habib, Editor, Unmad Magazine; Naveed Mahub, Former CEO of IBM Bangladesh and comedian among others.

Upon completion of the training, the volunteers are now expected to spread IP awareness and act as ambassadors of IPR in their communities and networks.

## First-ever National Demo Day



The ICT Division of the government and BetterStories Ltd. are jointly organising the first-ever National Demo Day and Bangladesh Startup Awards under the umbrella of Startup Bangladesh with support from Grameenphone Accelerator and Venture Capital and Private Equity Association of Bangladesh. To inspire startup culture across the country, the government will be awarding ten Bangladeshi tech startups on May 25, National Demo Day, where startups will be linked with a host of local and foreign investors.

Startups that are at least a year old, have a solid revenue model, and are operating from one of the divisions in Bangladesh can apply for the awards until midnight May 14. Startups that are graduates or winners of platforms such as incubators, accelerators, or other competitions can also apply for investor networking. Startups can submit their applications at: [www.startupbangladesh.gov.bd/ndd](http://www.startupbangladesh.gov.bd/ndd).