

SPOTLIGHT

May Day — how it came to be

The Day has its origin in the USA. In the late nineteenth century, the working class was in constant struggle to gain the 8-hour work day. Conditions were severe, and it was quite common for labourers to work 10 to 16 hours a day in unsafe conditions.

Death and injury were commonplace, and no compensation was given to the victims' families. There was no insurance for workers' safety, and they were hardly given any days off. To put it simply, they were treated more as machines, and not living beings.

At its national convention in Chicago, held in 1884, the Federation of Organized Trades and Labor Unions (which later became the American Federation of Labor), proclaimed that "eight hours shall constitute a legal day's labor from and after 1 May, 1886."

An estimated quarter million workers in

the Chicago area became directly involved in the crusade to implement the eight-hour work day. There grew a sense of a greater social revolution beyond the more immediate gains of shortened hours, but a drastic change in the economic structure of capitalism.

Not surprisingly, the entire city was prepared for mass bloodshed. On 1 May, 1886, more than 300,000 workers in 13,000 businesses across the United States walked off their jobs on the first May Day celebration in history.

In Chicago, the epicentre for the 8-hour day agitators, 40,000 went out on strike, with the anarchists in the forefront of the public's eye. More and more workers continued to walk off their jobs until the numbers swelled to nearly 100,000, yet peace prevailed.

It was not until two days later, 3 May,

1886, that violence broke out between police and strikers.

For the next six months, violence continued between the police and the workers.

Full of rage, a public meeting was called by some of the anarchists for the following day in Haymarket Square to discuss the police brutality. Due to bad weather and short notice, only about 3,000 of the tens of thousands of people showed up from the day before.

This affair included families with children and the mayor of Chicago himself. Upon hearing of this gathering, the police arrived and started to disperse the crowd. During this time, a bomb was thrown near the police vehicles and personnel (it could not be identified who threw the bomb).

Enraged, the police fired into the crowd, killing as many as eight civilians and

wounding forty more. Many of the prominent protesters were arrested, convicted and put on trial, and most were given capital punishment.

In 1889, the International Socialist Conference declared that in commemoration of the Haymarket affair, and to pay respect to the innocent victims, 1 May would be an international holiday for labour, now known in many places as International Workers' Day.

Ever since then, May Day is observed as a holiday all around the globe.

For most countries, Labour Day is synonymous with, or linked with, International Workers' Day. For other countries, Labour Day is celebrated on a different date, often one with special significance for the labour movement in that country.

By Faiza Khondokar

CHECK IT OUT

A serene spot amidst city chaos: Samadi Yoga Studio

How do we satiate a soul that is tired of city living? Samadi Yoga Studio — a dedicated yoga place, that opened its doors on 5 April, 2019 in Gulshan, Dhaka, might be the perfect answer. An initiative of Eza Chowdhury in partnership with Aamra Active, Samadi aims to be the space to achieve that perfect harmony between soul and body.

"Samadi yoga is the highest level of consciousness. As a yoga practitioner and teacher, I really wanted a dedicated yoga space so that we can have different kinds of yoga for people," Eza said.

This studio is meant to be a place where everybody feels comfortable, without judgement.

Eza Chowdhury has been dreaming of a studio since coming to Dhaka more than a year ago. For the past year, she has been teaching at Aamra Active gym, but the combination is not ideal. It changes the aura and throws off all the energy. A yoga studio must be clean, and spacious.



Eastern culture used to be very involved in practicing yoga and understanding energy, but the culture started to fade, Eza said. "We became very westernised and now westerners are doing more yoga than we are. They are adapting more into energy breathing," she said, adding that we need to find the balance again.

Samadi offers yoga customised for different ages, body weight, and even with injuries or pain, through dedicated facilities and certified expert trainings in three different forms of yoga: Beginners, Kundalini, and Power Vinyasa.

Beginners —

People with pain, injuries; those who are starting yoga or restarting after a long time.

Kundalini —

A lot of deep meditations along with breathing exercises accompanied by bodily movements.

Power Vinyasa —

For those looking to strengthen their body, toning up — lots of cardio involved.

Rumana Akter, the yoga instructor for beginner's class added, "Students come to my class, feeling insecure and thinking that they need to be very slender to practice

yoga. People come with back pain and other problems; my job is to make students feel comfortable, ease their body and make it gradually flexible over time."

She shared the remarkable story of a lady in her late fifties, who came with complaint of not being able to sit properly or having balance. Nevertheless, over the series of classes, she is now fit and flexible enough to be able to jump!

"We practice inhaling positivity and exhale the negative energy. With this, people become more aware of their soul. In addition, after yoga, we conduct the Shavasana — the resting pose — for 5 to 15 minutes," Rumana added.

Class schedules are flexible and caters to all kinds of people, so even if you are working 9-to-5, there are classes afterwards as well.

To learn more about Samadi Yoga and their class schedules, visit their Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/samadiyogadhaka>

By Mayesha Raidah

'The Great British Food Festival' at Le Méridien Dhaka

Le Méridien Dhaka has arranged a food festival from the land of royalty, which will run till 4 May, 2019, at Latest Recipe Restaurant on the hotel's 15th floor. The festival menu is crafted and prepared by Executive Chef Austen Reid, and he has prepared the recipes with exclusive British ingredients.

There are a series of delicious foods like mini classic prawn cocktails, seared tuna, deep fried fish and chips with tartare sauce and fresh lemon, Scotch quail eggs with parsley remoulade, and other delicious treats. There is also a roast corner where the Chef serves roasted leg of lamb, beef rib, carrot and potato fondants and much more.

Meanwhile, Latest Recipe will be decorated in a British theme like London Bridge, London Eye, Houses of Parliament, and flags of the four nations which are England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Various British music will be playing throughout the whole festival like The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Oasis, The Proclaimers, Elton John, Ed Sheeran, etc. The dinner buffet for British Food Week is priced at Tk 3,900++ per person. Buy One Get One offers with different banks is available during this festival.

For more information, please visit www.facebook.com/LMDhaka

NEWS FLASH

Mermaid Beach Resort charms foreign journalists

Bangladesh Tourism Board had invited 26 foreign journalists and tour operators from 10 countries to visit some of Bangladesh's most attractive tourist destinations. Hailing from Japan, Thailand, China, UK, Belgium, South Korea, Lebanon, the Netherlands, Italy, and Spain, the invited guests reached Bangladesh on 13 April, 2019. Among them was Sebastian Dunn, a British actor famous for his roles in Downtown Abbey and Arrow.

Out of the places visited, the journalists

were dazzled with Cox's Bazar, particularly the sandy beach of Mermaid Beach Resort at Pechar Dwip in Himchori. The visitors highlighted the 128-km long sandy beach, and were optimistic that tourists around the world would love to visit this corner of Bangladesh again and again! Mermaid, in particular, took their attention as they enjoyed quality time in various activities, or just relaxing, while savouring the organic local spread of the region.