



BAKARKHANI

A LOVE STORY

|| HASAN MEER ||



PHOTO: STAR

Every day at the break of dawn, Yakub Ali heads out to his bakery at Nazira Bazar.

The 70-year-old resident of Old Dhaka walks slowly but confidently through quite a few alleys, then finally on Siddique Bazar Road.

He has been taking the same route for over six decades. Many things have changed along the way -- the neighbourhood, number of people, types of shops, amount of piled up garbage on roads and his walking speed. Then again some things did not -- his determination and destination.

He reaches his shop after 15 minutes. It's already bustling with activities. His two sons -- Younus and Lokman -- are busy with preparation. Younus has already rolled the dough and cut it into small round pieces. Lokman, sitting next to a clay oven, was hooking those with a steel pointer and sticking them to the sides of the oven.

The place hasn't changed much. Yakub still makes and sells one item at his shop -- bakarkhani.

Ask anyone in the old town about this crunchy delicacy and you'll quickly learn that bakarkhani is personal. There is something deeply comforting about this traditional bread.

When this correspondent caught up with the trio on a Saturday morning, the first batch of bakarkhanis -- eaten as snack or breakfast with a cup of tea -- just came out of the oven.

A sweet aroma filled the air. The flat breads were dry and crumbly. The bakarkhani, with a kiss of sweetness, melts in the mouth with each bite. It also comes in various flavours -- regular, sweet and paneer (cheese).

Though stacks of freshly-baked bakarkhani at bakeries are a common sight in Old Dhaka, it still has not lost its appeal.

"It's not just about making

bread, it's about doing what you love," said Yakub while handing a pack to a customer.

The longtime patron nodded. "Bakarkhani is a must-have item on weekends."

Bakarkhani is part of the Mughlai cuisine that consists of dishes developed in the medieval Indo-Persian world at the centre of the Mughal Empire.

Amid various Mughal delicacies what makes this biscuit-like bread unique is the history behind it, as narrated by Najir Hossain in his "Kingbadantir Dhaka".

It was around 1700 when Murshid Quli Khan became Dewan of East Bengal and came to Dhaka. With him, he brought along a young boy named Aga Bakar.

Khan took a liking to the boy from the beginning and trained him in the arts of statecraft and warfare. Bakar was a quick learner too, and under Khan's patronage

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People lost faith in BNP for spreading lies: Quader

BSS, Dhaka

Awami League General Secretary Obaidul Quader yesterday said people have no faith in BNP as it always spreads lies and rumours over Khaleda Zia's health and other issues.

"They [BNP] are propagating falsehood and rumours from the party's central office," he said in a speech prior to the 25th founding anniversary rally of Awami Swechhasebok League on Dhanmondi Bangabandhu Bhaban premises. "Even if BNP tells the truth now, people won't believe it."

"The BNP central office has become a factory for manufacturing rumours and this party is behind the incidents of

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2

Frank discussions on extremism needed

Speakers say at National Youth Peace Assembly 2019

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

With the aim to raise awareness against violent extremism, the first ever National Youth Peace Assembly 2019 was held at Krishibid Institution Bangladesh (KIB) auditorium in the capital yesterday.

Alokito Shishu, a voluntary organisation working for underprivileged children, in association with Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) arranged the assembly where some 200 youths from different parts of the country participated.

Speaking at the event, media personality Shampa Reza said various turmoils in the society are on the rise as youths in recent times are engaging in misguided and antisocial activities.

She urged youngsters to develop a healthy reading habit and engage in sports for better mental health.

In his speech, Mithun Das Kabbo, founder and CEO of Alokito Shishu, said there are many issues in the society, including extremism, that have remained beyond discussion or have been avoided.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3

Bangladesh has achieved hepatitis B control: WHO

BSS, Dhaka

Bangladesh is among the first four countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve hepatitis B control, with prevalence of the deadly disease dropping to less than one percent among five-year-old children.

"Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand have become the first countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve hepatitis B control..." announced the World Health Organization (WHO) on Friday.

The Expert Panel for Verification of hepatitis B Control in WHO South-East Asia Region recommended verification of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand, after reviewing childhood immunisation data that showed consistent over 90 percent coverage with hepatitis B vaccine doses provided during infancy for past many years.

Studies conducted on five-year-old children in these countries corroborated the high immunisation rates, and that hepatitis B prevalence in these four countries among children was less than one percent.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 3



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Important of Technical Textiles in Bangladesh
Venue: The Institution of Engineers, Bangladesh,
Time: 5pm

WORKSHOP

Methods & Techniques of Research
Venue: Central Auditorium, Jagannath University
Time: 10am

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