

Chui jhal, must-have for a southerner's Eid

PARTHA CHAKRABORTY, Bagerhat

It's a long-held heritage of the southerners to use "chui jhal" (piper chaba) along with other spices to cook meat. This spice is extremely popular in the region throughout the year. However, the demand multiplies before Eid-ul-Azha.

In Bagerhat, seasonal traders have set up mobile shops selling the item in different places. Crowds at these shops are a common scene. At regular times, it is sold at Tk 600 to 1,000 per kilo. But at present, it's being sold at Tk 800 to 2,000 depending on the size.

According to Bagerhat Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE), the spice is cultivated in the south-western districts of Bagerhat, Khulna, Narail, Jashore and Satkhira.

At present, its popularity as a spice is also increasing in other districts. Chui is a creeper plant; its stems are grey, and the leaves are like betel leaves. The roots and stems of chui jhal are all medicinal.

The spice goes wonderfully with duck, beef and goat.

Gauranga Das, a vendor in Bagerhat's Kachua upazila, said the item sells well all year round. However, during Eid-ul-Azha, sales shoot up. As a result, wholesalers raise prices, and retailers also have to sell at higher prices.

Depending on the size of the stem, it's sold at Tk 800 to 2,000 per kilo, he added.

Saddam Sheikh, who came to buy the spice, said, "Even if the price goes up a little, chui jhal is a must have for our household to cook meat."

Ilias Kabir, a buyer, said, "The chui jhal price may go up further before Eid. So I've come to buy it in advance to avoid crowds."

Azizur Rahman, Bagerhat deputy director of DAE, said about 30 tonnes of the spice is produced by cultivating on 15 hectares of land in the district. Its market value is more than Tk 1.5 crores.

MINIMISING WATERLOGGING CDA-CCC joint probe body submits report with recommendations

ARUN BIKASH DEY, CtG

A joint probe committee of Chattogram Development Authority (CDA) and Chattogram City Corporation (CCC) has submitted a report to the mayor with six short- and 11 long-term recommendations to resolve the city's waterlogging problem.

The committee was formed following a meeting of CDA and CCC on June 22, chaired by Chattogram City Corporation Mayor Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, after most of the port city's low-lying areas recently remained underwater for several days.

CDA Chief Engineer Hasab Bin Shams was made its convener, and CCC Chief Engineer Rafiqul Islam member secretary.

The short-term recommendations include refraining from throwing waste into canals and drains, legal actions against grabbers, cleaning water bodies regularly, and removal of pipelines set up by different organisations that obstruct water flow.

The long-term suggestions include land acquisition for the project of digging new canal from Bahaddarhat Baroipara to Karnaphuli River, taking steps so that household and kitchen-market waste cannot be thrown into canals and drains, ensuring silt trap and trash trap, formation of drainage and waste management cycle, building new water reservoirs, entrusting the charge for the management of 40 tidal regulators to a specific organisation, and removal of earth from the box culvert on Sheikh Mujib Road.

Both the sources at CDA and CCC confirmed that the recommendation report was submitted on Thursday.

To know about the next course of action following the submission, this correspondent phoned the mayor, but he did not respond to the calls. The CDA chief engineer did the same.

The committee convener Rafiqul Islam declined to give further details.

Similar refusal came from Mobarak Ali, a member of the committee and a ward councillor of Chattogram City Corporation.

He said the mayor himself will talk about it to journalists if necessary.

Japan ex-PM Abe assassinated

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The suspected killer admitted targeting the politician and said he held a grudge against an organisation he believed Abe was connected to, police said.

Police declined to give details of the "particular organisation" mentioned by the suspect, saying investigations were ongoing, but several Japanese media outlets described it as a religious group.

"I am stunned, outraged, and deeply saddened by the news that my friend Abe Shinzo, former Prime Minister of Japan, was shot and killed while campaigning," US President Joe Biden said in a statement.

"This is a tragedy for Japan and for all who knew him... He was a champion of the alliance between our nations and the friendship between our people."

Similar messages of

sympathy and shock poured in from around the world following news of Abe's death.

Russian President Vladimir Putin called the death an "irreplaceable loss". British Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed the leadership role taken by the former premier, saying the UK stands with Japan "at this dark and sad time".

India announced one day of state mourning, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailing Abe as a global statesman.

Abe had been making a campaign speech outside a train station when two shots rang out.

Security officials were then seen tackling a man in a grey T-shirt and beige trousers.

Kyodo news service published a photograph of Abe lying face-up on the street by a guardrail, blood on his white shirt. People were crowded around him, one administering heart

massage.

Abe was showing no vital signs when he was taken to a hospital. He was declared dead at 5:03 pm (0803 GMT), having bled to death from deep wounds to the heart and the right side of his neck.

He had received more than 100 units of blood in transfusions over four hours, Hidetada Fukushima, the professor in charge of emergency medicine at Nara Medical University Hospital, told a televised news conference.

Members of the public laid flowers near the spot where Abe fell. TV Asahi reported that Abe's body would be transferred to his Tokyo home today.

It was the first killing of a sitting or former Japanese leader since a 1936 coup attempt, when several figures including two ex-premiers were assassinated.

Post-war Japan prides itself on its orderly and open democracy. Senior

Japanese politicians are accompanied by armed security agents but often get close to the public, especially during political campaigns when they make roadside speeches and shake hands with passers-by.

The killing might change the practices, analysts said.

Abe served two terms as prime minister, stepping down in 2020 citing ill health.

The hawkish conservative had pushed for the revision of Japan's pacifist constitution to recognise the country's military, and stayed a prominent political figure even after his resignation.

Kishida, who won the premiership with Abe's backing, said the LDP would continue election campaigning today to demonstrate its resolve to "never give in to violence", and to defend a "free and fair election at all cost".

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