



MY DHAKA

EID PREPARATIONS IN DHAKA

The spice, the hustle, and the feast

RBR

The last two days before the grand Eid day are packed with frenzied fuss about anything and everything.

From buying a pair of leather slippers at the last moment from Elephant Road on Chand Raat or to airing out the old panjabi, starching and ironing it, (just in case you didn't go for a new one).

The lady of the house, along with her entourage, is the busiest of all because now is the time for all the month-long effort taken to fall in place – festival grocery shopping, getting fresh notes for Eid salami, booking henna artist, the salon girls, and barbers – everything must be done within the next 48 hours.

I love this hullabaloo, even though Eid rituals are now passé for me. Nevertheless, I put a meek effort into



setting the menu, which is a chore, only because I love spice and condiment shopping. Getting the right ingredients is another hurdle to cross, especially during festivals, because you do not want to compromise on the quality of spices and condiments; they make or break the dishes.

Spices and seasoning are used to enhance and temper flavours of any rich curry or Mughal recipe, and to cut the rawness of poultry, red meat, and fish, whereas condiments are add-ons and garnishes used while serving.

A tedious search for Rabri, which is a creamy clotted cream or malai, that goes so well with your vermicelli zarda, is a must. A dollop of Rabri with crunchy nuts on top of your delightful dessert of vermicelli, sautéed in ghee

and sweetened with sugar, cardamom, and saffron is the absolute Eid favourite. If you are not making your own Rabri from scratch, the city's sweet shops like Premium Sweets are selling it for around Tk 900 a kilo.

The almonds, pistachios, and sultanas, the fragrant green cardamom, the mild spicy rolled-out cinnamon, and nutmeg, to availing the best quality poppyseeds are tasks to be reckoned with. Karwan Bazar grocers stock them from Kaptan Bazar or Chawk Bazar, and sell them at a reasonable price. Like a hundred grams of poppyseed are sold for Tk 280, whereas the local grocery store in your lane sells it for Tk 450. They score their stock from Tongi, and there is the fear that half your poppy seed in those hundred grams is suji

or semolina. Poppyseed paste, along with cashews and almonds, is essential for any korma or braised with yoghurt gravy.

I found that mildly earthy-scented green cardamoms are pricy; Tk 550 to Tk 600 for a hundred grams is consistent in Karwan Bazar and any grocery store in your locale. Mace is Tk 350, while a single nutmeg is Tk 10. The one ingredient that you cannot do without is raisins; the spice markets are flooded with black sultanas and golden raisins; and all less than Tk 100. These prices are for hundred grams only. Aloo Bukhara or plums for your biryanis cost Tk 80 or more, and maybe five or six pieces make for a hundred grams.

Gulshan 1 DCC market, Old Dhaka spice lanes, and Karwan Bazar are the best options to shop for Eid spices, seasonings, and condiments. Though all stores are now in a 'no-bargain' mode, open markets ensure quality and are fairly priced compared to supermarkets and local grocery stores.

Festival cooking for Eid-ul-Fitr is always elaborate; you opt for the best Dhaka cuisine with Mughal influence. Rich menus boasting lamb kababs, mutton rezala, koftas with tomato gravy, biryanis, kheer, and firni have you spoilt for choices. I emphasised local taste because hands down, Dhaka's kacchi biryani recipe is the best in the sub-continent, for which, you need to get your hands on the best spices.

Plating the dishes, serving, and setting the table are all part of the grand show down, and Eid lunch is where you shine the most.

Eid Mubarak to all My Dhaka readers.

BNP to take to streets again if people's interests are in jeopardy

Says Fakhrul

UNB, Dhaka

Warning of a plot to deprive people of their right to vote, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday said their party will once again take to the streets if the interests of the party and people are in jeopardy.

"We are not on the streets right now. We are going to people with iftar items and Eid gifts and standing by them in their joy and sorrow. But, if any obstacle arises against the interests of the party and people, we, the BNP, will take to the streets once again," he said while distributing Eid gifts among the poor in Beraid area of Badda.



Fakhrul called upon the people of the country to prepare for a movement, as a plot, both from within and outside the country, is underway to deprive people of their right to vote and delay the elections.

"We will not allow this to happen," he said.

He said over the past 15 years, their party leaders and activists have endured serious repression in their fight for the restoration of people's voting rights.

The BNP leader also mentioned that the people of the country were freed from Sheikh Hasina's "monstrous and fascist" regime on August 5 after 36 days of movement and the united efforts of political parties and students.

He said the interim government, led by Prof Muhammad Yunus, was formed with the primary responsibility of holding a national election by creating a level-playing field within a short time.

"But whenever we discuss elections, many claim that the BNP only raises the issue of elections. It is natural for us to do so, as we have fought for that very cause," he observed.

Myanmar quake toll soars past 1,600

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with me, he might have escaped like me," she told AFP.

Elsewhere in Mandalay, AFP journalists saw dozens of people preparing to bed down for the night in the streets, preferring to sleep in the open rather than take the risk in quake-damaged buildings.

This was the biggest quake to hit Myanmar in decades, according to geologists, and the tremors were powerful enough to severely damage buildings across Bangkok, hundreds of kilometres (miles) away from the epicentre.

AFP journalists saw a centuries-old Buddhist pagoda in Mandalay that had been reduced to rubble.

The monastery also collapsed.

One monk died, some people were injured, we pulled out some people and took them to the hospital," said a soldier at a nearby checkpoint.

There are reports of damage to Mandalay Airport, which would complicate relief efforts in a country whose rescue services and healthcare system have already been ravaged by four years of civil war sparked by a military coup in 2021.

Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing

issued an exceptionally rare appeal for international aid on Friday, indicating the severity of the calamity. Previous military governments have shunned foreign assistance, even after major natural disasters.

The US Geological Service's predictive modelling estimated

Myanmar's death toll could exceed

10,000 and losses could exceed the country's annual economic output.

The country declared a state of emergency across the six worst-affected regions after the quake, and at one major hospital in the capital, Naypyidaw, medics were forced to treat the wounded in the open air.

Offers of foreign assistance began coming in, with President Donald Trump pledging US help.

An initial aid delivery arrived from India, while China said it sent more

than 80 rescuers to Myanmar and pledged \$13.8 million in emergency assistance.

Aid agencies have warned that

Myanmar is unprepared to deal with

a disaster of this magnitude. Some

3.5 million people were displaced by

the raging civil war, many at risk of

hunger, even before the quake struck.

Across the border in Bangkok,

rescuers were continuing to work

yesterday as a second night drew

in, searching for survivors trapped

when a 30-storey skyscraper under

construction collapsed.

Bangkok governor Chadechart

Sittipunt told reporters that eight

people had been confirmed dead in

the building collapse so far, while at

least eight others were rescued.

But he said 79 were still

unaccounted for at the building,

close to the Chatuchak weekend

market that is a magnet for tourists.

"I can't describe how I feel -- it

happened in the blink of an eye," said

construction worker Khin Aung, who

escaped the collapse.

"All my friends and my brother

were in the building when it collapsed.

I don't have any words to say."

Sniffer dogs and thermal imaging

drones were deployed to seek signs

of life in the rubble -- Chadechart

said that the locations of about

30 people could be ascertained by

radar.

Bangkok city authorities said they

will deploy more than 100 engineers

to inspect buildings for safety after

receiving over 2,000 reports of

damage.

On Wednesday, mobile courts of the

Bangladesh Road Transport Authority

fined nine private bus operators for

overcharging and failing to display fare

charts.

The REASONS

Mosharref Hossain, general manager

of Hanif Paribahan, said the long

holiday is the main reason behind the

smoother journeys this time.

A rare nine day Eid holiday began

on Friday, giving people at least three

days before Eid, assuming it is observed

on Monday. Usually, people get only

one day off before Eid.

"We used to spend six to eight

hours stuck in traffic when heading to

northern destinations. The situation is

different this year," he told The Daily

Star yesterday.

Although the price hike is not as

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