



Decades of delicacy

The enduring legacy of Fakir Kabir Bakery's semai

SIFAYET ULLAH, Ctg

The process of making semai (vermicelli) begins with mixing flour and hot water, then shaping the dough into thin strands through a round die, which are placed in bamboo baskets. After drying in the sun, the semai is roasted in a furnace, turning a rich reddish colour, and is then ready for sale.

This meticulous process is what gives the "Chak Semai" at Fakir Kabir Bakery in Chawkbazar its unmatched quality.

The bakery has been using this traditional technique for 89 years, offering people a delicacy that has stood the test of time.

Despite the rise of mass-produced semai brands, Fakir Kabir Bakery has maintained its reputation for excellence.

Founded in 1936 in a rented space, the bakery started with a simple goal: to produce high-quality, handmade semai.

In the past, people would travel from far and wide to buy Chak Semai, especially during Eid, when long queues of customers would form.

Now, the demand for semai remains steady throughout the year, with peak seasons during Ramadan and Eid.

During these times, the bakery sells up to 200 kilograms of Semai daily, priced at Tk 240 per kilogram.

During a recent visit, this correspondent observed workers preparing semai in a clean and well-maintained environment.

Dilip Kumar, the bakery's manager, pointed out that the sun-drying process is the most crucial part of production.

"It's essential for maintaining the semai's high quality," he explained.

After drying, the semai is roasted in a traditional tandoor, which enhances its texture and flavour.

Over the years, Fakir Kabir Bakery has built a strong reputation for consistency and quality, a sentiment echoed by many loyal customers.

Anwarul Islam, a customer who travelled from Boalkhali upazila to purchase semai, shared that its taste is unlike any other in the market.

"I mainly buy the semai during Ramadan and Eid to offer my guests a unique recipe," he said.

Carrot farmers count losses as prices plummet

S DILIP ROY, Lalmonirhat

Farmers across five districts in Rangpur division are facing significant losses due to a sharp drop in carrot prices this year.

Many farmers said their production cost was Tk 9-10 per kilogramme, but the vegetable is now selling wholesale at only Tk 5-6 per kg, leaving them frustrated.

"Last year, we sold carrots at Tk 14-15 per kg from the field and made a good profit, but this year prices have plummeted. We now have to sell carrots at half the cost of production," said Sirajul Islam, a 55-year-old farmer from Panchgachhi village in Kurigram Sadar upazila.

He said he has already incurred losses of around Tk 70,000 after cultivating carrots on seven bighas of land.

Nur Alam, a farmer from Char Kalmati in Lalmonirhat Sadar upazila, said he cultivated carrots on one hectare of shoal land on the Teesta riverbed, investing Tk 2,55,000.



"At the end of February, I sold 1,000 kg of carrots at Tk 25 per kg. In early March, the price dropped slightly, but I still earned some profit, selling 2,000 kg at Tk 15-16 per kg. However, after the first week of March, the price crashed to Tk 5-6 per kg. I had to sell 20 tonnes at this rate, incurring heavy losses. I still have 6-7 tonnes in the field, and if prices remain this low, I will suffer a severe loss this year," he said.

Delwar Hossain, a vegetable vendor in Rangpur city, said they are buying carrots from wholesalers at Tk 8-9 per kg and selling them at Tk 15-16 per kg in the retail market. "This year, supply is high, but demand is low," he added.

According to the Department of Agricultural Extension (DAE) in Rangpur, carrots have been cultivated on 2,420 hectares, mostly in shoal areas across Kurigram, Lalmonirhat, Gaibandha, Rangpur, and Nilphamari districts.

"Carrot is usually a profitable crop for farmers. Those who harvested early benefited from high prices, but later, an oversupply caused prices to drop sharply," said Shafiqul Islam, additional director of the DAE in Rangpur region.



A henna artist applies "mehendi" to a client's hands, copying a design that can be seen on the phone. Ahead of Eid, such henna artists are busy round-the-clock serving customers who want to indulge in henna art as part of the celebrations. The photo was taken from Prabartak Mor in Chattogram city yesterday.

PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

Ration for Secretariat staff

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Corruption Commission.

The latest appeal, submitted on March 12, argued that Secretariat officials often work beyond office hours, including holidays, without additional financial benefits.

In contrast, approximately 8,00,000 military and civilian personnel across various government departments receive both ration facilities and special risk allowances.

The appeal further mentioned that this has created "extreme discrimination against the officers and employees of the Secretariat."

Mahmudul Hasan, general secretary of the Bangladesh Government Employees' Claim Recovery Council, expressed concerns that introducing ration benefits exclusively for Secretariat employees

would sustain the existing disparity.

"We collectively demanded a ration facility. If it is allocated only for the Secretariat, the discrimination will persist. The government should ensure it for all lower-grade employees," he told The Daily Star.

The "11-20 Grade Government Employees' Forum" also condemned the move, calling it a "deliberate attempt to implement the decision without informing everyone" just before the Eid-ul-Fitr holiday.

In a press release issued

yesterday, the organisation accused the government of ignoring widespread demands for a revised pay scale and dearness allowance.

"Granting benefits to a select group will only deepen inequalities and weaken the ongoing movement for fair wages," the statement said.

The group further warned that limiting ration benefits to Secretariat employees violates the constitutional principle of equal rights and that the government would be held accountable for any unrest resulting from the decision.

Seismograph at PSTU

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Experts note that part of the seismograph, a plate embedded underground, measures ground displacement relative to sea level. However, setting up a new device with institutional or government funds is not feasible due to high costs.

They suggest seeking support from international development agencies to re-establish earthquake monitoring capabilities.

PSTU Vice-Chancellor Prof Dr Kazi Rafiqul Islam acknowledged that the seismograph is outdated and analogue-based. He emphasised that modern countries use advanced equipment for seismic monitoring. He suggested that, like Japan, Bangladesh should establish a multidisciplinary team and install state-of-the-art equipment to enhance seismic research.

667 patrol teams

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With thousands leaving Dhaka for Eid, security forces and law enforcement agencies such as police, Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), and Ansar, remain on duty.

During his visit to Gabtoli Bus Terminal, the adviser made queries over reports of excessive ticket pricing.

"Fare charts have been posted at each counter. If anyone is overcharged, they should file complaints with

the BRTA vigilance team or the police control room," he said.

He acknowledged minor complaints and assured that action was being taken.

The adviser also addressed road safety concerns, saying that he had spoken to bus drivers about the risks of fatigue-related accidents.

"I have instructed transport owners to ensure drivers get proper rest, as exhaustion often leads to accidents," he said.

Another Eid without Shishu Park

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Shishu Park within the stipulated time."

SHISHU PARK: A TALE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

"Our childhood Eid was spent on the swings and trains of this Shishu Park. But since my daughter started understanding things, the park has remained closed. Taking children to other entertainment centres is quite expensive nowadays," said Sharmin Hasnat.

Shishu Park is the country's first amusement park for children, located in Shahbagh. Originally, it was a venture of the Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation and was named after former President Ziaur Rahman.

Later, in 1983, the then Dhaka City Corporation took over the 15-acre park. After the corporation was split into Dhaka North and Dhaka South in November 2011, DSCC took charge of the park and renamed it after Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy on December 30, 2021. However, in the fourth governing committee meeting of DSCC on February 19 this year, it was decided to restore its previous name, Shahid Zia Shishu Park.

Since its inception, Shishu Park has been a

major recreational hub for children in the capital, especially during holidays.

But since January 2019, a total of 16 Eid holidays have passed, and the park has remained closed throughout.

In January 2019, a DSCC notification stated that the park's modernisation and development would be carried out under the third phase of the "Independence Monument Construction" project in Suhrawardy Udayan, overseen by the Ministry of Liberation War Affairs. To prevent any accidents during the project, the park would remain closed to the public.

Initially, the project cost was estimated at Tk 78 crore. However, after Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh assumed the role of DSCC mayor in May 2020, the cost surged to Tk 603.81 crore. Former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the renovation work on May 25 last year.

CURRENT STATE OF SHISHU PARK

A recent visit to the park revealed high fences surrounding the area, preventing public entry. However, many families still visit the site with their children, only to leave

Case filings increase

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Court received 18,967 cases and resolved 6,597. Lower courts settled 2,67,666, while getting 3,62,402 new cases.

In the previous quarter (July-September), 3,36,421 cases were filed, and 2,71,917 were settled, according to the reports.

Currently, the Appellate Division has five judges, including the chief justice, down from 11 in 2009.

Meanwhile the High Court has 96 judges, of whom seven are barred from judicial functions due to ongoing inquiries, said SC sources. Lower courts have 2,187 judges.

Contacted, Supreme Court's Special Officer Muajjim Hossain said case disposal rates have remained similar despite changes in the political landscape since August 5 last year.

He attributed the rising backlog to an increase in the filing of cases and the transfer of around 900 lower court judges after August 5.

To address the shortage, the Supreme Judicial Appointment Council, led by Chief Justice Syed

Rafat Ahmed and formed under the Supreme Court Judge Appointment Ordinance, 2025, is working to appoint new judges, he also said.

Lower court judges are recruited regularly through the Bangladesh Judicial Commission, he added.

Advocate Mohammad Shishir Manir, a Supreme Court lawyer and head of Law Lab, which conducts research on constitutional, legal, and rights issues, warned that the growing backlog is eroding public trust in the judiciary.

It is not possible to deal with the backlog with the small number of judges, he said.

He urged immediate measures, including increasing the number of judges, appointing more support staff, reducing court vacations, forming special benches for miscellaneous cases, expediting police investigations, and accelerating the e-judiciary project.

The police should also complete investigations as soon as possible, Shishir Manir added.

4 children rescued

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Police Outpost, said Aduri was detained and four children were rescued. The rescued children have been reunited with their families, while legal proceedings against the suspect are ongoing.

Majid Ali, commissioner of Rangpur Metropolitan Police, said an investigation is underway to determine if others were involved in the incident, he said.

Abul Kalam, in charge of Rangpur Railway

Indians

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As villagers came to know of the incident, more people gathered at the border, creating tension between the Bangladesh-India nationals.

On information, members of the Border Guard Bangladesh and the Indian Border Security Force arrived on the spot and brought the situation under control.

"A verbal altercation and agitation occurred between a Bangladeshi farmer Madhab Chandra and some Indian nationals over fishing in Malda river. Informed, we went to the spot and brought the situation under control. Later, a protest was made to the BSF through a flag meeting," said Lt Col Mehdi Imam, commanding officer of Lalmonirhat 15 BGB Battalion.

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e-Tender Notice 42 (Forty-Two)/2024-2025

(Open Tendering Method)

e-Tenders are invited in the National e-GP System Portal (<http://eprocure.gov.bd>) by Executive Engineer, RHD, Sylhet Road Division, Sylhet for the procurement of following work.

Tender/ Proposal ID No. & Package No.	Name of work	Tender/proposal document last selling/downloading date and time	Tender/proposal closing/opening date and time
Tender Id: 1093908 Package No. eGP-6/2024-2025/EE/RHD/Sylhet	Expansion Joint Work of Shahjalal Bridge at 7th Km. (Ch. 6+037) on Sylhet-Sunamganj Bypass Road (3rd Hazrat Shahjalal Bridge Approach Road) (R-283) under Sylhet Road Division, Sylhet during the year 2024-2025	08-Apr-2025 17:00	09-Apr-2025 14:00
Tender Id: 1094064 Package No. eGP-6/2024-2025/EE/RHD/Sylhet	Construction of 01 No. Double Vent 2x 3.00 meter (Clear) length & 3.00 meter (Clear) Height RCC Box Culvert with U-Type wing wall at Ch. 07+907km of Darbast-Kanaught-Shahbagh Road (Z-2011) under Sylhet Road Division, Road Division, Sylhet during the year 2024-2025.	16-Apr-2025 17:00	17-Apr-2025 14:00

This is an online tender, where only e-Tenders will be accepted in the National e-GP Portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, please register on e-GP System Portal (<http://eprocure.gov.bd>).

The fees for downloading the e-Tender documents from the National e-GP Portal have to be deposited online through any member of schedule bank for e