

EVENT

# Super Chef is Back

**S**UPER CHEF is back and it's bigger, better and more competitive than ever before. Bangladesh's biggest culinary competition, Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef returns for a second straight season. Having already carved a niche for itself not only for television viewers but also in the heart of the people of Bangladesh, this year the competition picks up in full steam from where it left off. Who is going to be Bangladesh's next Super Chef? Could be you, only if you have the gumption for the fight that is to follow!

It all began again on 15th January, 2015, when a press conference held at the Daily Star centre officially kicked off the beginning of Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef 2015. Mr. Shoeb Md. Asaduzzaman, HSM, BEOL, began the proceedings by explaining to the gathered audience how Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef 2015 would be different from its predecessor. "Due to the huge response that our first season generated, we decided to do it all over again, except with some key differences. We have increased the prize money but more importantly have brought forth an internationally recognised panel of judges," he said. Indeed, the panel of judges comprising of Mrs. Shaheda Yesmin, founder, Jewel's Kitchen, Mr. Syed Tazammul Huq Tareq, Executive Chef, Watercross Restaurant and famous actor Mr. Tarik Anam Khan will represent the local culinary experts while the judges coming from abroad will focus on the more international aspects of food preparation. Emma Dean, the MasterChef Australia season 5 winner, Fredrik Insisienmay, French Chef, Consultant and Culinary Expert, Be your Guest, Thailand and Gerard Wallace, Executive Chef, Bellagio will perform as guest judges in Super Chef 2015, bringing alongside them a wealth of experience and knowledge that can only make the Super Chefs even better.

Mr. Mostafa Kamal Syed, Chief of Program, NTV, also praised the programme on the



occasion. "This has indeed been a great programme and leaving no gap between the two seasons shows just how much the response has been." He went on to explain how with the addition of international judges, Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef has become a truly global programme, catering to a worldwide audience. Mahfuz Anam, Editor of the Daily Star spoke next, explaining how this would be the perfect platform to clearly show the distinction between Bangladeshi cuisine and Indian cuisine. "Why is the Daily Star involved in this project? Only to prove that lifestyle journalism has progressed and as further testament to how important food and eating as a whole has become for us," Mr. Mahfuz Anam said, using the analogy of how much is now spent on kitchen renovations alone when decorating a new house. He further praised this year's programme for its technical brilliance. Shaheda Yesmin came next and invited everyone to take part in this year's competition,

which she called scientific food experimentation, reminding them of the prestige that came with being associated with the biggest competition of its nature in Bangladesh.

Ever since the inauguration of the programme, the interest generated has been immense. Since the hotline number went live, the centre has been inundated with calls and with good reason. The prize money of 10 lac, 5 lac and 2 lac for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prize winners is an incentive but it is the prestige factor that has been drawing most people in. The event's Facebook page is also buzzing with interest, with discussions already underway on what to cook, what techniques to use and general tips and tricks banter. It seems the chefs of Bangladesh had been waiting for such a platform and with the Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef, their prayers have been answered. Speaking to some of the participants who have already registered, another aspect of the competition was revealed; that of meeting and mingling

with like-minded individuals. Navid Hassan, 36 a restaurateur and professional chef, said that although he had never taken part in such competitions before, this was too big a platform to ignore. "This is a great opportunity for me to meet people who think like me and it is indeed an exciting chance, not only to challenge my skills as a chef but to develop them further." Mohammad Rabiul Hasan, 25, a student, said it was his friend who signed up for the event and signed Rabiul up too. "I am looking forward to it. I don't really know what to expect," he said when asked where he hoped to end up.

Others have been expressing the same amount of excitement and joy at just being part, with no one so far promising victory but hoping to grow as chefs. Journalists, businessmen, business-women, students, housewives and people from almost all walks of life have taken to the competition. Perhaps that is what makes Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef so exciting; it isn't a competition for professionals but rather one for food lovers and those that indulge in celebrating food and not just consuming it. With such a huge platform on offer for so many, this year's Super Chef is guaranteed to be a hit. With previous learnings incorporated, expect Rupchanda-The Daily Star Super Chef to be the most talked about event of the year!

For registration, call 09612777888. Or you can do the registration by sending an SMS also. For registration go to message option and type: RSC<space>ZONE CODE<space>AGE<space>NAME and send it to 6969. Zone Codes are: Jessore - JES, Bogra - BOG, Dhaka - DHA, Chittagong - CHI, Mymensing - MYM, the 5 districts where the auditions will be held. Or log on to the facebook page at Facebook/RupchandaDailyStarSuperChef2015 for more information!

**By Osama Rahman**  
**Photo: Star**

## Celebrating "Thrive"

**T**HRIVE started out when three mothers got together with the simple but meaningful intention of giving hungry children in Dhaka some nutritious food.

Development worker Priscilla Heffelfinger and teachers Regina Landor and Gina Gabel were deeply affected by the dire situation of underprivileged children upon moving to Bangladesh.

"I have been to many countries where there are many underprivileged people, but the situation is really tragic in Bangladesh, with small children begging on the streets," says Regina Landor.

The three mothers decided they must do something to help, and when they visited various small schools across the city to see what they could do, they found that most students and teachers agreed on the fact that the children required food. There are a lot of NGO's working to improve children's education, but many donors and grants don't fund school feeding programs because it is not easy to monitor and evaluate. A lot of children were coming to school hungry, and they couldn't concentrate on their studies because of it.

The founders then launched the initiative "Thrive" in November 2012, by providing a

banana a week to school children with money from their own pockets. When the founders started posting photos of their work on their Facebook page, there was a huge response from their friends who wanted to know if they could help in any way. Slowly but surely, their volunteer base grew to over 100 volunteers on and off, and now Thrive provides more than 1600 meals per week to schools around Dhaka. The meals are nutritious, consisting of a banana, a hard boiled egg, a handful of peanuts and a piece of seasonal fruit or vegetable. Thrive is particular about always providing nutritious, seasonal local food to the children, and the volunteers also promote good hand washing practices.

The founders and volunteers of Thrive organised an event on Saturday, 24 January to highlight this humbling initiative among a larger audience. The event brought together potential volunteers, donors and others who are genuinely interested in making a difference in any way possible. Thrive now has a Board of 13 members, and is an official NGO. American International School Dhaka is in charge of managing Thrive's funds. From February 1, Unimart will purchase the food items on behalf of Thrive. Thrive is a com-



pletely voluntary organisation with no paid staff.

"Our founders conducted a meeting with local businesspeople to make a sustainability plan, and we were really excited by the support we got from people who have pledged to keep up our hard work in the future," says Priscilla Heffelfinger.

The event was organised by Amna Rahman, Sadia Moyeen, Sarah Karim and Samreen Moyeen. Food, drinks, tea and coffee were donated by volunteers of Thrive, along with Holey Artisan Bakery, North End Coffee Roasters, and Kazi and Kazi Tea. The brochures and card support was provided by



graphic design firm Jot Workshop.

"Putting this event together was important because Thrive has been doing such great work for so long, and many of us did not know about it. Those who are privileged are often protected from the reality of our country's people, and I hope by volunteering for Thrive we can become more active citizens," opines Amna Rahman.

For more information and to become a volunteer, visit

[www.facebook.com/thrivefeededucategrow](http://www.facebook.com/thrivefeededucategrow)

**By Mehreen Aziz**  
**Photo: Mehreen Aziz, Thrive**