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How unlimited pizza became an iftar tradition

| AANILA KISHWAR TARANNUM |



generation. The photo was taken at Pizza Hut's Dhanmondi branch.

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Over a decade ago, Dhaka was introduced to the phenomenon Ramadan, and we finally of unlimited pizza and its faithful stopped after eight years in 2016 as we'd grown too old companion, the bottomless drink. The first and only time I have ever availed this offer was his friends reminisce those memories fondly, and their back in fifth grade. My mother, a dedicated pizza lover, took me to yearly iftar tradition has simply

Tabasser Ahmed, another For an eleven-year-old, the concept of unlimited pizzas was quite baffling. I had imagined there would be a mountain of pizzas, and I would definitely eat around 50 slices. However, both assumptions turned out to be wrong fortunately, as the for unlimited pizza this year pizzas were served by waiters because it's reliable." and I could only manage to eat five slices.

Pizza Hut had introduced unlimited pizza for the first time in Bangladesh around that time -- an offer only available during Ramadan. Back then, Dhaka's restaurant scene was not booming as it is now.

Pizza Hut on Satmasjid Road.

Shafquat Ameen, a recent graduate from Bangladesh University of Professionals, reflected on a tradition that he had with school friends. "We were eighth graders when we

first went to Pizza Hut during for it." However, Shafquat and

fresh graduate from Dhaka University, believes one can never be too old to devour a staggering 23 slices. He thinks it's the Bengali thing to do. "I think it's in our nature to love unlimited offers. I chose 'Cheez'

shifted to other restaurants.

Pizza is not a Bangladeshi food, yet it has defined Ramadan hangouts for an entire generation. "I started going for this offer when I was really young and looking back, it was just for fun. The human body is not designed to appreciate 17 slices of pizza in one go but it took me five years to realise this. In my friend circle (like in many circles) it's part of the yearly iftar tradition," said Azmin Azran, a second-year

DU student, who has been to different pizza joints for iftar every year since 2012.

The spirit of competitive eating definitely comes into play in these offers, which is difficult when you're ordering a la carte. "I do love pizza and even now, the prospect of unlimited dough and cheese seems dangerously enticing, but I can tell from experience that the physical stress and mental guilt is really not worth it," said Azmin.

the "struggle" was worthwhile. How does one become the champion of eating pizza? "Yes, 23 slices are definitely a lot. The secret is to not keep count when you're eating. When you're aware of the number, your body gives up when it could've had more," he said.

Tabasser begs to differ, saying

Azmin points out that while the pizza joints have certainly changed, the crowd has not. "There was just Pizza Hut way back then, but now the local establishments are also doing well. The crowd still mostly consists of young men, eating their way through entire pizzas

PRABIR DAS

PHOTO:

to prove a point." While all-you-can-eat offers are fun for customers, it seems quite stressful for the restaurant staff. Labib Tarafdar, a partner at Cheez, said they plan out pizzas for the day according to the number of bookings, so that there is no delay in service or deterioration of quality. "This is the first time we're offering unlimited pizza and the response has been great so far. We can seat 95 people at a time, and for that we would need around 150 pizzas. We do our best to prepare beforehand, while still making sure the ingredients remain fresh."

As the customer-base grew, the restaurants also upped their game. Labib created a number of different toppings for Cheez that blend Bengali flavours with the Italian base. "Our two most popular toppings are kala bhuna and shorisha shrimp, and average slice count for customers is around 10-11, I think," he said.

Do you have a Dhaka Vibe story to share? Email us your ideas or reports to dhakavibeds@gmail.com.

Exempt fishermen from 65-day ban on sea fishing

Rights activists urge govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Right activists yesterday urged the government to exempt poor and marginalised fishermen from a 65-day ban on fishing at sea and pay each of them Tk 8,000 per month as compensation during the ban.

The demands were made at a human chain, organised by COAST Trust and Bangladesh Fish Workers' Alliance (BFWA) at Jatiya Press Club.

The government should not impose such a ban without taking rehabilitation measures, right activists added.

While presenting a keynote paper, BFWA General Secretary Mujibul Huq Munir said marginalised fishermen, who catch fish in sea on their small boats, cannot harm the fish reserve or ecosystem of Bay of Bengal.

"The big polluters, who are the real threat to the sea and its biodiversity, are hardly held accountable," the BFWA general secretary claimed.

At the human chain, he proposed a 13-point recommendation, which include exempting poor fishermen from the ban and compensating them; holding polluters accountable; stopping foreign vessels from entering country's maritime territory during the ban and registering fishermen.

Mustafa Kamal Akanda, assistant director of COAST Trust, said 40kg rice per family during the ban as compensation is not enough.

He claimed that fishermen of Odisha and Tamil Nadu are given 5,000 Indian rupees per month during this kind of ban. Rehana Akter, vice president of Bangladesh Krishak Federation (BKF), emphasised the need for registering fishermen so that they can be properly monitored and assisted.

Rezaul Karim Chowdhury, chief moderator of EquityBD and executive director of COAST Trust, said the country needs a poor-friendly policy.

Among others, BKF members Badrul Alam and Barkat Ullah Maruf spoke at the human chain.

Meanwhile, our Barishal correspondent talked to some fishermen, who expressed their dissatisfaction over the government policy.

Delwar Gazi, 40, of Bheduria village in Sadar upazila, said the government's support of 35kg rice during the ban for his six-member family is inadequate.

Mamun Majhi of the village alleged that there are over 1,200 fishermen in the village, but 535 of them are getting the rice support. Amid such circumstances, Eid will not bring any joy to

them, said fishermen. To ensure smooth breeding of sea fish, the government, for the first time, imposed a 65-day ban on fishing in the sea from May 20 to July 23.

MALIBAGH BOMB ATTACK A ploy to get funding: CID chief

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STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The May 26 bomb attack on a police van in Malibagh was carried out to attract donors' attention to raise funds and grow fear among law enforcers, chief of Criminal Investigation Department (CID) said yesterday.

"If those involved in militancy fail to demonstrate their activities, their funding from abroad will stop. In Bangladesh, they did not get any media attention for a long time," said CID chief Mohammad Shafiqul Islam at a media briefing at its headquarters.

Replying to a query, Shafiqul, also the additional inspector general of police, said, "They [militants] are now trying to attract donors' attention by doing these types of activities."

On May 26, a female assistant sub-inspector and two others were wounded after an Improvised Explosive Device blasted off in a police pickup. In a similar explosion in Gulistan on April 29, two traffic constables and a community police member were injured.

Hours after the explosions, SITE Intelligence Group, an American that tracks company online activities of white supremacist and jihadist organisations, said the Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Asked if militants were involved in the blasts, DMP Commissioner Mia on Asaduzzaman Tuesday said, "This cannot be said right now... we have to consider both local and international aspects during the investigation."

Fasting & Chronic Airway Disease In Ramadan regular medication intake is very important for patients with chronic airway disease. By not stopping their regular maintenance drugs they can rearrange their medication times in a different way on iftar and sehri in discussion with a Respiratory Medicine Consultant. Inhaled steroids might be recommended twice daily twelve hours apart; though taken RAMADAN together all inhaled asthma medications used in iftar and sehri times are not expected to decrease the regular efficacy of the drugs. This seems to be acceptable for patients who do not want to use their inhaled drugs during fasting hours. Dr. Khan Md. Sayeduzzaman Consultant, Respiratory Medicine & **Chest Disease** Hospital **CALL 10666** For Appointment Exceptional People... Exceptional Care Emergency & Ambulance 9852466

NHRC appointments must be transparent: speakers

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The selection of chairman and members of the National Human Rights Commission has to be transparent, neutral and without political influence to ensure that it regains public confidence and plays its role as an independent statutory body. At a discussion yesterday organised

by Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) at Cirdap auditorium, civil society members and rights activists also demanded that participation of the civil society be ensured in the selection process and a formal procedure be developed to make the appointments.

The Commission began its journey in December 2008 after much advocacy by civil society members and international bodies for an independent body to oversee the country's rights situation and hold the government accountable in this



Discussants at the programme.

PHOTO: STAR

and two members.

After the passing of National Human Rights Commission Act 2009, it was reconstituted with seven rights institutions -- backs the claim. members.

able to live up to the expectation of

people in the last one decade, a press

regard. It was comprised of chairman

NHRC's reviews conducted by the Global Alliance on National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) -- the international association of national

GANHRI NHRC reviewed The commission has not been Bangladesh twice in 2011 and 2015, and gave it "B" rating for not being fully in compliance with Paris

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WAR CRIMES

Evidence found against 3 Feni men

statement from ASK said.

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The investigation agency of the International Crimes Tribunal yesterday claimed to have found evidence against three Feni men, including a former chairman of a private bank, over their alleged involvement in crimes committed during the Liberation War.

The three were allegedly members of the Razakar Bahini, an auxiliary force of the Pakistani army, and committed crimes including murder, abduction, torture, confinement, looting and arson in Feni Sadar

upazila in 1971. Investigation agency's coordinator Abdul Hannan Khan and co-

coordinator Sanaul Huq revealed the Bank, Sanaul said. information at a press conference at

its Dhanmondi office in the capital. The accused are: Tofazzal Hossain alias Tazu, 67; Abu Yusuf, 71; and Nur Mohammad, 73.

Of them, Nur Mohammad was arrested on May 20 and is now in jail while the others are on the run, said the agency officials.

Tofazzal was involved with Islami added. Chhatra Sangha, the then student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

He got involved with Razakar said. Bahini during the war, Sanaul Huq

After the Liberation War, he got the chief prosecutor's office on June 3, involved with the BNP and was the

He fled the country after investigation of the case started in January 2017 and is believed to be in the US now.

Yusuf and Nur were involved with Jamaat and joined Razakar Bahini in

They continued their affiliation with Jamaat after the war, Sanaul Nur left Feni after the war, fearing

reprisal and settled in Nilphamari, he The agency will hand over the

probe report and other documents to said Aminur Rashid, the investigation former chairman and director of NCC officer of the case.

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