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Life

Style

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An earthy ensemble

UNLOCK THE POWER OF RELAXATION
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PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED
MODEL: BORNO
MAKE-UP: MD HOSSEN
WARDROBE: ARANYA
STYLING: ZABIN IQBAL JAHIN
LOCATION: BENGAL CARPET MILL,
FORD NAGAR, DHAMRAI

সুরক্ষিত দেয়াল নিরাপদ পরিবার

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Chobi Mela Shunno – a new beginning

After a rather bleak 2020 due to the unprecedented onset of the global coronavirus pandemic, the dawn of a new decade acts as a ray of hope as we try to accommodate ourselves within the new normal. With this very notion, the theme for this year's Chobi Mela, the largest biennale photography festival in South Asia, has been termed as "shunno."

Shunno – an amorphous infinite space, which has the same beginning as its end, raises questions about the purpose of life and its relevance. "There are two reasons behind this special and self-reflective edition of Chobi Mela," stated Festival Director and Curator, Tanzim Wahab. "The first being that this is a time when we need to reunite and regain our willpower. Secondly, the realization that we are in the midst of a new beginning and thus, we must start to think anew."

Organised by Drik Picture Library Ltd. and Pathshala South Asian Media Institute, the 10-day photography festival was held from 12 – 21 February, 2021 and exhibited the works of 75 artists across eight curated shows involving six curators. Due to its limited nature given the current circumstances, the international event comprised of works from just five South Asian countries.

However, international visitors did not have to miss out on the most significant photography event in Asia, as everything

was available on the website. Furthermore, this time there has been extensive usage of digital content, along with the inclusion of panel discussions, artist's podcasts, gallery walks, portfolio reviews, educational programs and web radio, known as "Baba Betar."

Although Chobi Mela started as a photography exhibition, 22 years down



the line this festival became a platform to connect a plethora of photographers and artists in myriad ways. Owing to this, the 11th edition of Chobi Mela featured a range of multidisciplinary and experimental art projects to include paintings and installations as well.

Highlighting the changes brought about

by the passage of time, Shahidul Alam, Festival Chief Advisor, said in retrospect, "When we started back in 2000, we had only one digital print but now we have plenty! Furthermore, back during that time curation was less common, but in this event we ensured that every work of photography received the due treatment it respectfully deserves."

Reminiscing the individuals lost, Chobi Mela paid tribute to their contribution towards this field via two essential individual retrospective exhibitions. "Wishing Tree" portrayed the work of critically acclaimed Late Architect Bashirul Haq, whose very last architectural project was designing the venue of the festival itself – DrikPath Bhubon.

The extraordinary work of Sayeeda Khanum, a pioneer female photographer and role model for photojournalists was displayed in the exhibition titled "The Rebel with a Smile." Apart from these, a temporary photo studio had been set up named "Pappu Studio" with an attempt to revive the lost tradition of taking family pictures and dreamy photos inside a studio.

Among the various other exhibitions, [Off] Limits was the largest group exhibition, which featured the work of 14 South Asian artists that displayed works on socio-political issues and movements. Furthermore, the exhibition entitled "Bodh"

included the work of 14 young artists who have been awarded the Chobi Mela Fellowship.

The festival was inaugurated with a lot of pizzazz and the first five days were dedicated towards the most significant parts of the occasion termed Drik Day, Pathshala Day, Solidarity Day and Baba Betar Day. Among these, in Solidarity Day, several booths were setup representing various photography schools in Bangladesh followed by an exciting discussion session on topics of freelancing, journalism and photography.

Albeit Chobi Mela Shunno was geographically bound to some extent, it also connected cities via art. "Crossroads" portrayed a collection of four art collectives across three cities, which was a first in Chobi Mela. Daagi Art Garage, Colomboscope, Kaali Collective and Jog Art Space were all part of Chobi Mela Shunno, which warrants the solidarity among neighbours.

Chobi Mela Shunno was unlike any previous edition with its unique amalgamation of physical and digital content and extensive application of curation. Creating a common ground for artists, photographers, activists and visionaries alike, the festival was truly one of a kind.

By Fariha Amber
Photo: Chobi Mela Shunno

Shaheda Yesmin acknowledged as Master Chef by WAMC

In recognition of her efforts to promote Bangladeshi cuisine globally, Shaheda Yesmin has recently been recognised as Master Chef by the World Association of Master Chefs (WAMC). She is the first female member to be

honoured with this title.

The World Association of Master Chefs was established and is continuously supported by fellow culinary masters and professional chefs from around the world who migrated

to Australia in the early 1950s. The association strives to connect and combine the culinary art and food culture of the world.

For years, Shaheda Yesmin has penned the popular column, "Recipes from Siam" for

Star Lifestyle. She is also managing Jewel's Kitchen, which is a privately run cooking school where many aspiring professional and non-professionals attend to enhance their knowledge of authentic Thai cuisine.

us on /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেনন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

অ্যান্ডালিনা

সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...





#FASHION

The prince of bespoke styling

Zabin Iqbal felt a passion for styling from a young age. But he didn't have the courage to pursue his dreams until much later. In 2012, only after completing a diploma in Fashion Designing did Zabin realise that he was finally on the right track. And when this realisation set in, there was no turning back for the designer. First, he experimented with blouses, which are an essential

is easier. There's little chance that someone else will copy my designs," said the designer.

Discussing cocktail dresses, the inevitable question emerged; whether cocktail dresses are even popular.

To this question, Iqbal laughed out in amusement, "What do you think the beautiful people wear at the numerous soirees, kitties and night parties in tinsel town. Some wear sari, but what about the others? Of course, cocktail dresses are popular in Dhaka! I even have NRBs living abroad that order cocktail dresses from me," said the designer.

Besides being a bespoke designer, crafting the perfect dress for his muse, Zabin Iqbal has also heavily invested his time to 'styling,' especially for renowned magazines, dailies, and tabloids.

"Styling is in my blood. If I am not making something, I am choreographing or styling. This is my life," disclosed Iqbal.

I know, I am already a fan; however, to all the others who wish to know him more, message Zabin Iqbal on his official Facebook

complement of the beautiful sari. "I personally believe that every Bengali belle looks their best in a sari and when that sari is complemented with a perfectly tailored blouse, any look is enhanced by a thousand times," the designer said.

And right he was, because appreciation of his designing skills soon spread like wildfire and in no time at all, there were many women queuing up to get a blouse stitched by Zabin Iqbal himself.

"It's not always about the thread-work, the intricacies of the embroidery or the embellishments, sometimes it's just about complementary cuts. I feel that if a blouse fits perfectly, then no matter what the external design, it will look great on the wearer," said Iqbal.

Iqbal's creativity didn't stop there, because soon after, he began experimenting with cocktail dresses, gowns and even lehengas and shararas. "Designing cocktail dresses are a favourite because they are mostly unavailable in Dhaka and hence, experimentation



and Instagram page.

Till then, happy shopping! Oops shouldn't I say tailoring, instead...?

By Fashion Police

Photo: Sazzad

Ibne Sayed

Model: Arpita

Make-up:

Hossen

Photo: Zabin

Iqbal

Model: Shirin

Akhter Shela

Make-up:

Noyon Ahamed

Wardrobe: Zabin Iqbal



KitchenTale: A cloud-based food court centred on innovation

With pizzerias adding Bengali twists to their pans, restaurants focusing on regionally specific strands of international cuisines, along with the advent of specialty bakeries, and cloud platforms designed for home cooks, one thing that the Bangladeshi food industry has perfected over the last few years is the ability to constantly evolve. Keeping the importance of novelty in mind, the founder of "KitchenTale," Mashrur Reza, decided to revolve his cloud food court around innovation.

The story of KitchenTale started with a crisis, namely that of COVID-19. Although Mashrur Reza and his partners had planned to venture into the food industry back in January 2020, with plans of a brick and mortar restaurant, the pandemic obstructed their dream. As they had already invested in capital and the popularity of food delivery was on the rise, they decided to set up a cloud-based food court, with the intent to bring a focus to



the food itself.

"I have a personal yet scientific take on food. As a foodie, I believe that there is nothing more important than the chef's tongue. However, as someone taking part in competitive business, I knew we had to take a scientific approach. We had to experiment and fuse, in order to have customers coming back for more. We spent months feeding people for free, to figure out what the customers wanted. We plan to add fusion items, to update, edit and change the menus as frequently as possible, and add new brands, so that the constant evolution gives

us a competitive edge," Mashrur stated.

KitchenTale has two brands at the moment, namely SliderSquare which focuses on sliders, and Wings&Wedges specialising on wings. Wings&Wedges exemplifies KitchenTale's drive for variety, with a menu consisting of Louisiana Crispy Fried Wings, Bangkok Street Fried Wings, Hong Kong Glazed Wings, and Shyloti Naga Wings, amongst others.

The Shyloti Naga Wings skilfully combine various different flavours all in one, allowing each flavour to be clear-cut and distinct. While a zesty tang hits at first, it is soon followed

with the spiciness of different varieties of chilli peppers. A very subtle and tangy sweetness also encompasses most of the flavour experience. Unlike what can often be the case with naga dishes, the heat does not mask the other flavours and herbs, making way for multiple layers of taste.

KitchenTale's coleslaw compliments the Shyloti Naga Wings well as a side dish. The coleslaw incorporates fresh and crisp cabbage, with a light and invigorating low-fat dressing. The coleslaw is a great option for those who are health conscious and weary of salads oversaturated in heavy dressing.

"I designed the coleslaw with mostly just my health concerns in mind, and it was a pleasant surprise when I liked how it tasted as well," Mashrur remarked.

KitchenTale has two more brands in the works as of now, with one centred around biriyani and tehari, and the other around kulfi. Mashrur Reza plans to add fusion aspects to these traditional local dishes as well.

"Even name brands such as Coca-Cola have the need to add variety, and if they do, so do we. That is one of the only ways in which you can properly capture the attention of an audience, who are always on the lookout for something new to eat," Mashrur observed.

By Tasfia Ahmed

Photo Courtesy: KitchenTale

Essentials

Website: <https://www.kitchentalebd.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KitchenTalebd/>

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Don't neglect your problems. Avoid jumping to conclusions. Romantic encounters can develop through colleagues. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

You may have problems with children. You're undergoing changes. Pleasure trips will promote new romantic encounters. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Get together with peers. A co-worker can try to undermine you. Deal with the needs of children. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Romance can develop at unlikely situations. Be diplomatic and honest. Lowered vitality could affect your work. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Don't spend unnecessarily. Work at home if possible. Channel your energy into professional endeavours. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Side ventures will be lucrative. Your ability to be practical will help. Your communication skills will help win hearts. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

You will be in high spirits this week. Consider volunteer work. Your passionate mood will be appreciated by your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Emotional upset at work will set you back. Don't leave things unfinished. Don't bother retaliating. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Throw yourself into work. Don't confide in anyone for now. Don't let your emotions take over. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Your involvement in physical activity could lead to new romances. Relaxation should be on your mind. Socialise with friends. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Residential moves will be favourable. Don't overspend on unnecessary luxury. Use your charm at work. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Take your time. Your diplomatic approach will enhance your reputation. Make time for yourself and family. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

HATIL Chairs: Finding the Right One

HATIL's newest ergonomic swivel chairs

Exams are just a week away. So, you decide to sit at the table to study a little- it's about time. You start like any normal person would, but after half an hour, you no longer feel comfortable, so you try to adjust your sitting position. Maybe tuck in your knees or lean back a little; and before you know it, you end up in a sitting position that has neither any physical explanation nor any name in known human history. Sounds familiar?



HATIL recognises your struggle to find a decent chair and that's why they are focusing on chair ergonomics so that you can find the chair that's right for you.

Ergonomics is a scientific approach that ensures that the design of products is well suited for the users, thus reducing human errors and discomfort and increasing productivity. But most importantly, ergonomics in chairs ensure that you are comfortable in it, even if you have to sit for hours in the same chair.

We're talking about office hours. Six to eight hours of sitting in the same chair can be tedious in the simplest way possible. More importantly, if you are not using the correct chair, you are bound to have some back pain. Add into the mix a bit of uneven workstations or space issues to that and you got a whole list of physical impact points, starting with wrist pain, neck pain

and a variety of other issues.

HATIL offers ergonomic chairs that have a proper seat depth, ensuring that you don't have to take too much pressure on your hips. Or if you feel like a harder surface is more after your taste, you can choose one of the chairs without the cushions. Either way, you can pick from HATIL's collection.

What most office workers complain about, after a long day of working at a workstation is back pain. Lumbar support is probably the most important issue about back pain. Ergonomic chairs come with a lumbar profile that's curved to be comfortable against your back and well blended with thoracic support, ensuring that you don't get lower back pain from sitting on a chair.

A supportive backrest that is padded with comfortable material will go a long way. If you need neck support, make sure that you have a headrest on your chair and it is adjustable. Armrests are just as important, if not more. An adjust-

able armrest is more desirable for your office chair because you never know who will claim the chair and what will be their physical dimension. Adjustable features allow you to modify the chair in ways that make it most comfortable and feels just right for you.

An ergonomic chair ensures that your feet are on the ground while you sit comfortably in the chair. This ensures that you can maintain your posture. Good posture keeps shoulder and neck tension at bay. Whoever said- 'keep your feet on the ground' sure knew what they were talking about.

An ergonomic chair will usually come with seats that are adjustable in height and tilt. This maintains your posture, regardless of your body dimension.

Sure, the design aesthetic is important as

well. But while buying a chair, comfort should be considered with equal gravity, if not more. A worker with back pain will not provide you with the most efficient productive hours. A worker in comfort, on the other hand, won't have his mind occupied with back pain, which means he can actually concentrate on the job. The same applies to the little boy who has to study for his tests next Monday. Fortunately for you, HATIL offers chairs that are both aesthetically pleasing and ergonomically designed. Style and comfort blended in an impressive cocktail.

Try and see for yourself.

For more information, visit their website: <https://hatil.com/>

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro



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Ask anyone who has lived through the sixties and seventies what different shades of brown means to them and you'd be surprised at the answer; especially at the broad similarity of their responses. Anyone who has lived through the times of a lesser concrete world would be able to relate to the warm hues as 'home,' anything that is comfortable and close to their hearts.



Revelling in earthen TONES

While trends come and go, this particular style stays put and reigns over wardrobes all throughout the year – all throughout the seasons – all throughout the mood swings. Amen to that.

By Fashion Police
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Borno, Arpita, Noble, Antora, Efa, Simmi
Make-up: Md Hossen
Wardrobe: Aranya
Styling: Zabin Iqbal Jahin
Location: Bengal Carpet Mill, Ford Nagar, Dhamrai



Brown is one shade that is available almost anywhere, from the pathways we walk on to the walls of our homes. "Browns always make me feel safe and comfortable," said Fatema Zohra, an avid fan of Aranya Bangladesh, a sustainable and ethical fashion and lifestyle brand in the city, chockfull of handcrafted wardrobe in earthy hues.

Brick red, terracotta, moss, indigo are such colours that can be worn anytime of the year, including summer, spring, fall and even winter. "These are my favourite colours, alongside the usual black and white of course," said Lamisa Rahman, a college-going and self-proclaimed fashionista.

Earthy tones can effortlessly transition between being subtle and fabulous, or even both at the same time.

Imagine a random girl wearing an indigo blazer over a saffron midi, it'd be as if the brightest and coolest being on earth was right there parading in front of you. And the only thing that can top earthy tones is a patchwork in similar hues.

The current favourite in Bangladesh seems to be different shades of madder red, indigo and moss, because the streets are made more vibrant with people carrying these colours in style. Earthy tones are neutral shades that can be attributed to both the genders and since these colours suit all the seasons, they also look exceptional on both the genders.

She may be wearing her favourite sunflower yellow, and there's no reason why he cannot match her

equally with his panjabi in chestnut brown. Colours like these resemble all the good things in life from coffee to vacationing, tans, and summer fun.

Earthy tones look sophisticated, whichever way you want to wear it, be it western, Asian fusion or purely traditional. If it's earthy, it is judged classy, even while people may be commenting about the loud and the bold. While we personally take no sides, we agree with the popularity of the earthy tones outshine the bold and the bright.

Maybe it's because most people want to feel warm, comfortable and natural when they wear their clothes. Whatever the case maybe, there's one thing that is certain: earthy colours are a mainstay of fashion!



#FASHION

Aatong: a Mro splendour

As your four-wheeled transporter snakes its way up the verdant mountains of Bandarban, you fail to recognise the difference between heaven and earth—the lines virtually disguised. The outrageous beauty of the surroundings captures your heart, the hospitality of the local people outshines any other, and most amazing of all, when you get to see them, the indigenous peoples of the community at work, creating exquisite jewellery simply out of silver and broken plastic, you realise how lucky you are to have witnessed splendour at its best.

The Mro people, as they love to call themselves, are a hardworking group that were mostly dependent on *jhum chash*— slash and burn method of cultivation, which is infamous for harming the ecology, biodiversity and the fertility of the lands. But living far away from the centre of economic activities, mostly existent in the cities, there was no other way to sustain livelihoods.

This is when Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), Bengal Craft Society and Creative Conservation Alliance (CCA) have been working together with the indigenous Mro people of Bandarban to form a Community Based Organization (CBO) to create and market their traditional crafts as an alternative income source and also reduce their increased dependency on the hill forests.

Aatong The catchy term, literally meaning 'jewellery' in Mro dialect, consists of exclusive pieces that can be considered 'Wearable Art.' Handcrafted and made from natural and sustainably harvested materials, these works of art empowers both the men and the womenfolk of the community. Alongside promoting the authenticity of the Mro culture, the fashion savvy would get to own jewellery that is avant-garde, exclusive and tied to a rich array of culture and heritage belonging to a particular

community.

Cangbuk

When you imagine a typical woman from the hill tracts, you immediately visualise her as wearing *pinon-hadi* and the *cangbuk*. Dazzling on the sun's rays, a typical Mro bride looks like wildflower on her wedding day. The jewellery hugging her neck area and sometimes her midriff, shines from miles away, disclosing the uniqueness of the indigenous peoples and their culture.

The true love by the Mro people for bright colours is seen time and again in their creations, and Aranya Crafts Ltd, keep the authenticity alive by incorporating semi-precious stones and wooden beads along with their original materials of plastic and silver to create jewellery that is simply extraordinary. The fine amalgamation results into an end product that is worth including as object d'art.

Whatever your plans for the weekend, the exclusive jewellery collection demands that you at least feast your eyes when you are nearby!

By Fashion Police

Photo: Sazzadlbne Sayed

Model: Simmi and Arpita

Make-up: MdHossen

Wardrobe: Bibi Productions

Styling: Zabin Iqbal Jahin

Location: Bengal Carpet Mill,

Ford Nagar, Dhamrai

Aatong Jewellery are available at Aranya Crafts Ltd showrooms



Thanks to Mishael Aziz Ahmad, Creative Director Aranya Crafts Ltd and Nawshin Khair, MD Aranya Crafts Ltd for sharing exclusive information regarding Aatong.



Bengal Meat: Country's Safest Meat Solution Since 2006



Safety has always been a concern for our family's well-being. And now more than ever as the world is still fighting against a pandemic. Throughout the pandemic we have realized how important an issue to maintain hygiene and safety is, from food to clothes to what not!

But how would you ensure safe meat for the family? Factors like slaughtering in open and unhygienic places, not following health hygiene protocols, and keeping the meat in an uncontrolled environment! It was never a safe option. Also from where the super shops actually



source, and how they store, and display meat is a point of consideration.

However, the Country's only meat processing plant, Bengal Meat has been working on producing safe meat since 2006. From the very beginning, the aim was to provide halal, safe, hygienic, and international standard meat for all. And to ensure that we introduced an 8 step safety process which turned into a 10 step safety process with time, based on more research. This safety process that starts well ahead of sourcing the animals; does not end till meat reaches our customers' hands.

Only disease-free healthy

animals from our own farm and contract farms are selected strictly according to Bengal Meat's standard. After sourcing, the animals are fed natural feed which is cultivated on 30 acres of our land. The drinking water also comes from our own water treatment plant. These steps help to reduce the E Coli infestation and contamination of the animals and produce good quality cattle. Moreover our



farm and Processing plants are located next to each other, so that there is no travelling for the animal before slaughtering. Most of the animal diseases are caused by stress from long transportation and exposure to cattle haat. That's why we say, we carry the meat, not the animal.

This commitment to microbial-free process continues with ante-mortem which is performed by registered veterinarian before slaughtering. It ensures that the animals are disease-free and they are eligible to slaughter according to Islamic halal slaughtering practices.



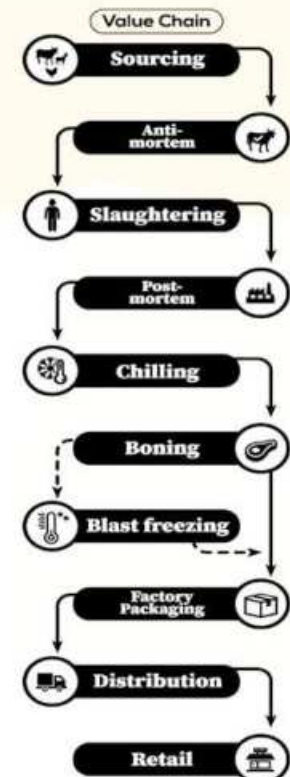
Slaughtering is done in a 100% halal process in the presence of a representative of Islamic Foundation Bangladesh. Then deskinning is done with a semi-automatic system to keep the meat cross-contamination free. After slaughtering,

postmortem by registered veterinarian of visceral organs ensures meat safety once more.

The carcass is then washed with purified water and is sent to a cooling chamber for chilling which prevents any possible spread of germs and preserves the nutritional value. After chilling when the microbial growth has stopped, it comes down to the expert butchers and workers of the plant. They are trained to follow strict health and hygiene practices and to take care of the instruments they use to process the meat. In the controlled temperature of the boning room, they work relentlessly to deliver the safest meat experience for you. Chilled meat is then immediately packed and shipped for sales through our chiller vans.

If the meat is processed for long time storage, generally for export shipment, blast freezing is done to make this meat even safer from microbial growth and fresh for a long time. Blast freezing technology is very helpful to better trap all nutritional elements of meat, which cannot be achieved through a general household freezer.

Now, most of us are used to buying packaged products like salt, spices, snacks, but packaged meat was a new concept in Bangladesh at the very beginning of Bengal Meat. But this is very useful to avoid contamination through touching and to keep the meat fresh and tender. These contamination-free products are distributed across the country using chiller and freezer vans. As the products are perishable, we are very strict in keeping the van's temperature and environment in check. Also while displaying and storing the products in our retail stores the



Only when this Cold Chain is maintained strictly and flawlessly Bengal Meat will deliver the product to you. Because this cold chain and the intriguing farm to fork process ensure that safety and quality have not been compromised anywhere in the process.

The meat people buy from Bengal Meat is crafted with 15 years of experience in ideal farming, safety protocol practices, and expertise. And it's not surprising that we are the only export-oriented company that produces meat and further processed meat.

While unsafe food practices were creating a vicious cycle of disease affecting the families, workers dressed in aprons, safety shoes, masks in the Bengal Meat Processing Plant were crafting the safest solution for all.



THE FEARLESS OLIVE
REEMA ISLAM



Fusion Terminal – Bottling our local heritage



Bilimbi is a fruit unknown to many Bangladeshis; the same goes for jara lebu — a Sylheti citrus. Both these find a new avatar, along with local tomatoes, being transformed into sundried ones, coming together in a unique set of pickles from the house of Fusion Terminal.

Initiated by a food enthusiast and self-taught chef, Pavel Hoq, the line of pickles has been in production since 2017 and now sells nine flavours of pickles and two infused chilli oils created by Pavel, four premium spices and the sundried tomatoes in extra Virgin Olive Oil, depending on seasonality.

Keen on promoting indigenous fruits and vegetables, fusing local tastes and bottling them in an up-market fashion, Pavel landed upon the perfect blend for each product through a series of trials and errors. Sans chemicals, Pavel went for the most basic and traditional method of pickling to ensure a healthy product with about three years of shelf life and a taste very global, yet local.

A development practitioner by profession, Pavel was COO at Grameen Intel, (renamed as Technology for Social Impact — TSI) for over eight years before giving up his job to seriously pursue his ultimate passion — cooking and pickling. With a

side business of running Shanchayita, a vegan restaurant that is perhaps Dhaka's first vegan venture, Pavel also offers curated platters online.

"I have always loved trying out new tastes and got to travel abroad extensively, but at some point, realised that we knew very little about the hidden fruits and vegetables of our own country," shared Pavel.

A chance tasting in Sylhet introduced him to the jara lebu, which is a cousin of the quince, a waxy apple that is very sour, high in vitamin C and can weigh up to 3 Kg each! It is exported to Europe and Bangladeshis or homesick Sylhetis based abroad might be its main consumers, but locally in Sylhet, jara lebu is cooked with fish or made into a chutney or an accompanying dish, much like a salad to add sourness.

"The rind is not bitter but a certain bitterness surfaces once it is cooked, much like in the case of shatkora," explains Pavel.

Sylheti shatkora on the other hand, is a more familiar taste for us and is readily available as pickles, while beef *shatkora* is one of those traditional dishes most of us have tried in the comfort of our dining rooms.

Shatkora has a far more popular fan base as compared to Sylhet's other citruses (there are more than 70 types of citrus in

Sylhet as it comes under the citrus growing region of this part of Asia), but Pavel highlighted the jara lebu as a local fruit worthy of being showcased in all its lemony freshness.

"The idea was to discover some of our lost tastes and therefore, recipes. Many of the fruits and vegetables I use are not cash crops or necessarily in high demand. In fact, some of them are relatively unknown to many, like the bilimbi," explains Pavel.

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Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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Method

To make the dough, slowly add warm water into the flour and gradually mix this to form a dough. Once a ball of dough is formed, drizzle in a tablespoon of olive oil and knead it for a couple of minutes until smooth, elastic, and soft. Cover the dough with a kitchen towel and let this rest in a warm place while you make the filling.

For the filling, peel and slice the potatoes into halves and let them boil in salted boiling water. While the potatoes boil, finely dice the onions and garlic along with slicing the beef bacon into small squares. In a hot pan, add in the clarified butter followed by the onions and garlic. After sautéing them for a couple of minutes, add the beef bacon as well. Cook this until the onions are soft and beef bacon bits are crispy. Once this is cooked and the potatoes are fork tender, remove them from the stove and drain the excess water. Mash the potatoes using a potato masher and then mix the two together. After that, add in the remaining ingredients including little cubes of paneer, cream, and condiments. Mix everything together to get a smooth, fluffy, and creamy mixture.

Next, on a floured surface, roll the prepared dough into a very thin sheet and cut them into circles using a cookie cutter. Take one spoonful of the mixture to place on each circle and close the ends. Seal the edges and crimp them to give your pierogis an appealing look.

To cook the pierogis, drop them into a pot of salted boiling water. Once the pierogis rise to the surface, continue cooking them for another minute. Once the exterior is tender and fully cooked, remove them with a slotted spoon. Serve these warm with a generous helping of chilli oil.

SMOKY BBQ PANEER SKEWERS

For people who do not like meat skewers, this is a vegetable alternative, and a delicious one too! Lined with vegetables that are generously marinated and then infused with a smoky barbeque flavour, this one will leave you craving for more and can be an impressive appetiser or party snack.



Ingredients

- 500g unsalted paneer
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 yellow bell pepper
- 1 green bell pepper
- ¾ cup cherry tomatoes
- ¾ cup small button mushrooms
- For the marinade —*
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika powder
- 1 tsp black pepper powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp salt

For smoke infusion —

- 1 piece of charcoal
- 1 tsp oil

For grilling —

- 2 tbsp barbeque sauce
- 1 tbsp chilli sauce
- 1 tsp oil

Method

The first thing to get done for preparation is to chop up the red, green, and yellow bell peppers in squares of near about the same size. Also, dice the paneer into cubes measuring approximately the same length as the vegetables. Once cut and ready, throw them all together in a large bowl

along with whole cherry tomatoes and small button mushrooms.

Then, add in the ingredients for marinade one by one including garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper powder, smoked paprika powder, cumin powder, and salt. Combine everything together and cover the bowl; let this marinate for a couple of hours.

Once marinated, insert all the vegetables and paneer inside the skewers, aligning them neatly. If you are using wooden skewers, soak them for 30 minutes in water before using them. Mix the barbeque sauce and chilli sauce together and keep them ready for glazing while grilling.

Drizzle oil in a non-stick grill pan and add in the skewers. Grill all the slides properly but flip them continuously, taking care not to leave any one side resting on the hot pan for long as this will melt the cheese. While doing so, glaze the top side with the prepared sauce by applying it with a brush. Each paneer skewer should be cooked by flipping and turning within five minutes or so.

Once done, transfer all the cooked paneer skewers into a large pan. Heat the charcoal directly over the stove's flame until it ignites and changes in colour. Carefully remove it from heat using tongs and place it in a small metal bowl inside the pan. Drop in a few drops of oil directly on the piece of heated charcoal and cover the entire pan with an airtight lid. Let the smoky flavour infuse for a couple of minutes in this manner before serving.

PANEER LOADED BAKED POTATO

Who does not like potatoes? They are one of the most versatile ingredients available, which can be enjoyed in myriad forms to suit your preferences — whether you like them crispy and fried or soft and baked! This loaded baked potato is loaded with the goodness of cheese and potatoes.

Ingredients

- 4 large potatoes
- 200g paneer
- 2 strips beef bacon
- ½ cup shrimp (peeled and deveined)
- ½ cup mushroom
- 4 tbsp cream

- 2 tbsp butter
- 2-3 spring onions
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper powder
- 1 tsp red chilli powder
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried chives
- 1 tsp dried parsley

Method

Firstly, preheat the oven at 180° C and wash the potatoes to clean them thoroughly. Drizzle oil on the potatoes and rub them properly to coat each potato completely with oil. Prick the potatoes with a fork and cover them entirely with aluminium wrap. Let them bake in the oven for 50 minutes to an hour. Meanwhile, mix all the dry herbs and spices together including black pepper powder, red chilli powder, dried oregano, dried chives, dried parsley, and salt.

While the potatoes are baking, finely cut the spring onion bulbs and beef bacon strips. Cut the mushrooms, shrimp, and paneer into very little cubes. Heat oil in a pan and add in the onions first. Cook them until translucent and then add the sliced beef bacon, followed by shrimp and mushrooms. Sprinkle in a third of the mixed spices and stir these together until fully cooked.

Once the potatoes are cooked, take them out of the oven and allow them to cool for ten minutes. Once slightly cooled, slice them in half lengthwise. Scoop out bulk of the baked potatoes, ensuring to leave a cavity inside. Mix the scooped-out potatoes with the cooked mixture, the remaining spice mix, and cubed cheese along with butter and cream.

Mix all these together and fill the cavities inside the potatoes with this mixture so that they are slightly overfilled. Top them with more cheese cubes before returning them inside the oven to broil for ten minutes until the cheese is molten and gooey. Take them out and garnish with sliced spring onion greens before serving.

By Fariha Amber

Food and Photo: Fariha Amber

THE FEARLESS OLIVE
REEMA ISLAM



Fusion Terminal – Bottling our local heritage



Bilimbi is a fruit unknown to many Bangladeshis; the same goes for jara lebu — a Sylheti citrus. Both these find a new avatar, along with local tomatoes, being transformed into sundried ones, coming together in a unique set of pickles from the house of Fusion Terminal.

Initiated by a food enthusiast and self-taught chef, Pavel Hoq, the line of pickles has been in production since 2017 and now sells nine flavours of pickles and two infused chilli oils created by Pavel, four premium spices and the sundried tomatoes in extra Virgin Olive Oil, depending on seasonality.

Keen on promoting indigenous fruits and vegetables, fusing local tastes and bottling them in an up-market fashion, Pavel landed upon the perfect blend for each product through a series of trials and errors. Sans chemicals, Pavel went for the most basic and traditional method of pickling to ensure a healthy product with about three years of shelf life and a taste very global, yet local.

A development practitioner by profession, Pavel was COO at Grameen Intel, (renamed as Technology for Social Impact — TSI) for over eight years before giving up his job to seriously pursue his ultimate passion — cooking and pickling. With a

side business of running Shanchayita, a vegan restaurant that is perhaps Dhaka's first vegan venture, Pavel also offers curated platters online.

"I have always loved trying out new tastes and got to travel abroad extensively, but at some point, realised that we knew very little about the hidden fruits and vegetables of our own country," shared Pavel.

A chance tasting in Sylhet introduced him to the jara lebu, which is a cousin of the quince, a waxy apple that is very sour, high in vitamin C and can weigh up to 3 Kg each! It is exported to Europe and Bangladeshis or homesick Sylhetis based abroad might be its main consumers, but locally in Sylhet, jara lebu is cooked with fish or made into a chutney or an accompanying dish, much like a salad to add sourness.

"The rind is not bitter but a certain bitterness surfaces once it is cooked, much like in the case of shatkora," explains Pavel.

Sylheti shatkora on the other hand, is a more familiar taste for us and is readily available as pickles, while beef *shatkora* is one of those traditional dishes most of us have tried in the comfort of our dining rooms.

Shatkora has a far more popular fan base as compared to Sylhet's other citruses (there are more than 70 types of citrus in

Sylhet as it comes under the citrus growing region of this part of Asia), but Pavel highlighted the jara lebu as a local fruit worthy of being showcased in all its lemony freshness.

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