

satire.

The race for Marvel movie tickets

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

"I saw the ticket. Hallelujah! 'Twas shining. Glowing, it was!" screamed the mad old man.

We stared as the guards pulled him away. "Don't believe a word he said. I've been standing here for six days, nobody saw a ticket," whimpered a man at the front. "But they say when the old man first came, he was only 21. He's been here since the very beginning," said one from the back. We all fell quiet. Was it possible? Had the old man really seen a ticket for *Spiderman: Homeless*?

I've been standing in front of Cine-Flex for four days now. I probably won't get a ticket coming in this late but they cuffed our hands and legs the moment we stepped foot, so the only way out is through. The last time a Marvel movie sailed across the Atlantic, Bangladesh became a meme template on Reddit. But with Marvel running out of ideas to extort the masses and Kevin Feige pulling out the nostalgia card on millennials each year, the stakes are the highest now.

Gone are the days of Bitcoin. My mother's words still hurt, "Your cousin's a millionaire now after mining Marvel movie tickets online! And here you are, writing your worthless PhD thesis paper!"



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

Even outside the theatre, smugglers were selling tickets 50 times the price. Making money off basic rights like education and healthcare – I comply! But Marvel movie tickets? Capitalising on the most animalistic impulses of people, how low can humanity stoop to?

It was the human Bijoy Sarani traffic

jam. After three more days, the gates of Heaven opened and we went inside. Someone lost his family in the crowd, others their friends. But there was no looking back, not even for your loved ones. Someone held their dying friend in his arms, "Have y'all no heart left in you? Can't you spare one single ticket for this

dying soul? Even 2D would do!"

The dying man blurted out with all his strength, "I mean, 3D would be more preferable, though. The colours are more vibrant and with Dolby Atmos..." With one last outcry, his friend shut his mouth forcefully and choked him to death.

"I can't believe we are dumb enough to fall for these money-making baits. Standing in line for weeks for green screen theme park movies as real cinema dies? Pathetic," said a guy while folding up his tent.

Just then, the counter opened. The salesmen stood on the counter and threw tickets into the howling crowd at random. If someone was lucky enough to catch hold of one, others around him would jump at him, scratching, biting and eating his flesh off. As I stood in one corner, I saw a gladiator rise from the pile of bodies with a blood ticket in his hands. Crying in disbelief, his people hugged him tightly.

Suddenly, a ticket came flying in my direction. With it, some bloodthirsty eyes. A scream in the distance, my entire life flashing before my eyes.

Ah Capitalism, thou sadistic witch!

Remind Ifti to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com

Get creative with pithas this winter

AYRA AREEBA ABID

Pithas have always been a Bengali household favourite. This winter, I tried to make creative versions of traditional pithas. The results came out, well, in varying degrees of success.



PHOTO: LS ARCHIVE

CREAM CHEESE PATISHAPTA

Kheersha patishapta has always been a personal favourite. When I switched its filling to cream cheese, it made the pitha less sweet but tasted perfect. I made crêpe and homemade cream cheese which I made a little thinner with a hand mixer.

I think this would pair well with blueberry or strawberry puree as well. This version would definitely be a better alternative for those with diabetes or for those who simply aren't fans of flavours too sweet. I recommend this ten on ten.

CHEESY CHITOI PIZZA

First, the sauce I made was the same I make for homemade pizzas. I mixed chili sauce and chili garlic sauce to a one-on-one ratio and added a bit of sriracha with a pinch of black pepper. The *chittoi* took the most time to make. I spread the sauce on top of one and added mozzarella on top.

To melt the cheese, I heated it for just about 30 seconds. I was honestly a bit sceptical after they came out of the oven. I carefully took a bite and strangely the taste drew me in. But it of course did not top the classic flavour. I would say this rather failed. However, if you have an adventurous palate, I would say try it just for fun.

SAVOURY PATISHAPTA

Giving a twist to the conventional sweet pitha, I excluded the *kheer* and instead added shredded smoked chicken with

julienned veggies. I mixed it with a bit of oyster sauce and soya sauce. If you want a spicy kick, you can add hot sauce.

Till this point, it was just a normal filing. I then rolled up the crêpes with the filling to make a savoury roll. I'll say this is a fail proof recipe given that making this is pretty easy.

CHITOI PITHA WITH DALGONA

Ditching the thick jaggery syrup, *gur*, I went for dalgona. No, not dalgona coffee. I followed the original dalgona recipe except I didn't harden it into the typical circular shape. Melting down sugar to a caramel consistency, I quickly added a bit of baking soda.

The catch here is to not burn the sugar and maintain constant low heat so this turned out harder than I thought it would be as I was a beginner. After letting the dalgona cool down in a bowl, I dipped the *chittoi pitha* into it. The taste was impeccable as it had a slight smoky aftertaste and the consistency was just right.

While making these innovative pithas for a week, I learnt a lot. One, there are no limits when it comes to experimenting with food. Two, there are some things which should maintain the beauty of tradition.

Ayra Areeba Abid's favourite word is 'serendipity' and she's a linguistics geek. Connect with her at areeba.ayra@gmail.com