

People gather at winter makeshift Pitha shops in Khulna

January 14, 2024

Online Desk: At the end of charming and chilly biting winter, Khulna city always takes a festive look centering the seasonal pitha shops. Ignoring the chilly wind, pitha (pie) shops are lined up along the footpaths and roadsides. These shops are getting crowded as soon as the sun sets.

Seasonal pitha sellers sit on the street pavements and footpaths with clay and gas stoves. Chitai, steamed, and oil-fried pitha are available in these shops. The main attraction is the hot smoky chitai pitha which becomes tasty with 'Sharisha', green chili (Jhal) bharta and date 'molasses'. Steamed and oiled pithas locally known as 'Panpitha' made with date molasses and coconut are also available in these makeshift pitha shops.

Innumerable occasional pitha shops are seen at road junctions and footpaths in various areas including Rupsa Ferry ghat, Satraster More, Dolkhola More, Shib Barir More, Sonadanga Bus Stand, New Market, in front of Jatisongho Shishu Park, in front of Pioneer College, Nirala More, Boyra Bazar Crossing, Gallamari Bazar, Khalishpur, Daulatpur and Fulbariget in Khulna city.

While visiting different makeshift Pitha shops in the evening on Saturday (yesterday) this reporter witnessed that occasional pitha shop keepers are very busy for making pitha as common people thronged there.

Shukhi Begum, a 65-year-old woman, an occasional pitha shopkeeper in the Nirala More area told BSS that she is making pitha for the pedestrians to mitigate their need.

"I was sold seasonal pitha in various areas in Khulna for 10 years. This year I am selling pitha together with my younger sister who has recently lost her husband. The two sisters started making pithas and selling it during the winter season to support their families," she said.

Shukhi Begum said, "We came from Morrelganj upazila of Bagerhat district after losing our house due to cyclone Sidr in 2007."

"We are selling pitha every evening from 5:30 pm in the hope of good profit with limited cost. The two sisters earn Taka 900 to Taka 1,200 every day. Making vapa pitha takes less time but is profitable," she added.

They sell all kinds of pithas including Patisapata, Nakshi Pitha, Pakkan pitha etc.

Nuruzzaman, a pitha seller in front of city's Jatisongho Shishu Park, told BSS that although the prices of different commodities are slightly increased this year than last few years. Vapa (Steamed) pitha is made here with new date molasses and new rice powder.

"The price of each vapa (steamed pitha) is Taka 10 and Taka 20 as according to the size and Patisapta Pitha at Tk 20. Pan pitha (oil-fried pitha) is being sold at Taka 10. The cheapest pitha is chitai pitha which is sold at a cost of Tk 5 only," he said regarding the price.

Talking to the BSS, Fazlur Rahman, a private service holder said, "When I was a child, I went to my village along with my parents. At that time, date juice was available at a lower cost. I don't always go to the village house. So, to taste winter pitha, I often come here."

Salma Akter, a primary school teacher, said "It cannot be possible to make pitha at home as I am very busy. So, I came here to buy pitha. It also saves time and gives the taste of winter. Delicious date juice is not so available in the city. These scenes of the new generation are very unfamiliar. Many are deprived of the taste

of date juice.”

“I am pleased as various pitha shops retain the traditional culture of Bangali in Khulna,” she added.