



RAMADAN  
◆ KAREEM ◆



# Sweet smell of Ramadan tempts as South Asia's believers fast

AFP | Karachi

Mosques and market streets teem with evening crowds tempted by the scent of syrupy sweets and hefty rice plates, as more than half a billion believers across southern Asia break the day's Ramadan fast.

The fast is conceived as a spiritual struggle against the seduction of earthly pleasures -- but for the nightly "iftar" meal, festive meals traditionally bring families together and there is intense social activity.

The centuries-old Chawkabazar market in Bangladesh is a traditional centre for evening meet-ups during Ramadan, with hundreds of makeshift food stalls selling traditional grilled meats and delicacies.

Huge crowds returned to the neighbourhood this year for the



first time since the coronavirus pandemic put a pin in large public gatherings.

"I am so happy to see people here," said Ramzan Ali, who has sold barbecued quail at the market for around four decades. "The last two years were painful."

Traditional dishes of pakoras

and lentil soup were on offer alongside more esoteric fare, like kebabs made from the meat of bull genitalia and the ever-popular fried goat brain served to accompany roast meats and vegetables.

"It felt so good to come here again," said businessman Mohammad Ashrafuddin.

"Without Chawkabazar's iftar items, I feel like my Ramadan isn't complete."

Pakistan's believers are also basking in the opportunity to again break fast in company and out from under a Covid crowd, with the government lifting restrictions on public gatherings weeks earlier.

Mosques have been lit up with lanterns and nearby markets are bustling as crowds stop for fried sweet pastries and stock up on meals to distribute to the poor.

In India, crowds flock to stalls which line a street in the shadow of New Delhi's resplendent Jama Masjid, one of the country's largest houses of worship, snacking on wrinkled dates and seasonal sweet buns baked with infusions of coconut or cherries.

More subdued evening gatherings are underway in Afghanistan, where people are still reckoning with an acute humanitarian crisis in the wake of last year's US withdrawal and the Taliban's return to power.

The most popular fast-breaking local dish is Kabuli pulao -- rice sprinkled with saffron and mixed with dry fruits, especially black raisins.

Special spicy pickles and jalebis -- a calorific sphere of deep-fried batter soaked in sugary syrup -- are also relished by families during their evening meals after breaking the dawn-

A vendor selling jalebis waits for customers in Kandahar

to-dusk fast. "I am seeing that food prices have risen so much in Ramadan," Kabul resident Shahbuddin said on the weekend.

"For the first time I'm seeing much in Ramadan," Kabul resident Shahbuddin said on the weekend.



Volunteers distribute food plates in Lahore



People buy food at a market in Dhaka

## SUDOKU

8		6		5				
	9		1	8	7			
4				9				
1	4	5			3			
	3		8					
9			4	5	1			
	8				5			
6	3	1		7				
5		8			9			

Yesterday's solution

9	1	3	5	4	6	8	2	7
8	4	7	1	3	2	5	6	9
2	5	6	9	7	8	4	3	1
3	2	8	7	6	1	9	5	4
5	7	4	2	9	3	1	8	6
6	9	1	8	5	4	3	7	2
1	8	5	6	2	9	7	4	3
4	6	9	3	8	7	2	1	5
7	3	2	4	1	5	6	9	8

How to play

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each 3x3 box square contains all the numbers from one to nine.

## CROSSWORD

### Across

1-Chooses; 5- Sao \_\_; 10-Advocate forcefully; 14-Underlying cause; 15-Goose genus; 16-Friends; 17-Glow; 18-Point in the desired direction; 19-Worry; 20-Playwright; 22-Peace goddess; 23- \_\_ "had it"; 24-Ambient music pioneer; 25-Edible seed parts; 29-Put in the ground for growth; 33-Lend \_\_; 34-Bedouin; 36-Very small; 37-Sprinted; 38- "Don't Cry for Me, Argentina" musical; 39-Agnus \_\_; 40-Future doc's exam; 42-Cravings; 43-Long; 45-Map books; 47-Christmas item; 49-Atlantic food fish; 50-Thrice, in prescriptions; 51-Uses a sieve; 52-Religious; 53-Religious; 54-Like the oblique muscle; 60-Starting; 61-Inexpensive; 62-Prefix with plasm; 63-Andean country; 64-Artist Rousseau; 65-Lacking; 66-Authenticating mark; 67-\_\_ man with seven wives; 68-New Mexico art colony

### Down

1-Toward the mouth; 2-Rain hard; 3-When said three times, a 1970 war movie; 4-Staying power; 5-Soft subdued color; 6-Opposed; 7-Employ; 8-Internet writing system that popularized "pwn3d" and "noob"; 9-Eight-time Norris Trophy winner; 10-Candid; 11-Hard to find; 12-Secluded spot; 13-Ferrara family; 21-Affirm solemnly; 22-Acress Balin; 24-Exile isle; 25-Destiny; 26-Perform or portray; 27-Kidney-related; 28-Rescues; 29-Sucker; 30-Wave-related; 31-Diciembre follower; 32-Like some arts; 35-Oysters \_\_ season; 38-Looked at; 41-Diplomatic; 43-Primordial substance; 44-Most strange; 46-Brillo rival; 48-System of social perfection; 51-Enervates; 52-Words of understanding; 53-\_\_ song (cheaply); 54-Attention getter; 55-Nota \_\_; 56-Tapered seam; 57-Final Four org; 58-\_\_ extra cost; 59-A pitcher may take one; 60-X to Xanthispe;

Yesterday's solution

G	A	I	L	Y	C	A	E	N	H	O	T
A	G	R	E	E	A	N	T	I	D	A	N
S	A	A	B	S	N	E	A	T	E	Y	E
P	I	T	A	L	W	A	L	L	E	S	S
N	E	R	E	I	D	O	R	N	A	T	H
T	O	R	E	E	I	R	N	A	T	E	L
A	G	A	P	T	A	N	C	E	D	I	R
M	U	S	I	C	E	T	C	H	E	R	R
A	M	E	L	I	A	H	E	R	E	S	Y
F	O	R	E	P	A	W	S	T	E	P	Y
A	I	R	E	S	T	A	N	A	S	O	N
A	F	A	R	O	T	I	C	R	E	R	T
A	S	P	N	E	N	E	N	E	I	D	E