

Curry life

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**GOVERNMENT URGED
TO DROP SALARY
THRESHOLD**

GIGANTIC ONION BHAJI

KINGFISHER BOSS mallya wanted by indian government



Curry life

CULINARY WORKSHOP & Networking Dinner

In partnership with **JUST EAT**

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Sunday, 21 JUNE 2020

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- Find out what is Veganism & menu idea
- Why best ingredients matters
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- Tips on Social Media & adopting Technology -EPOS
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Business Name:.....

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Curry Life Magazine

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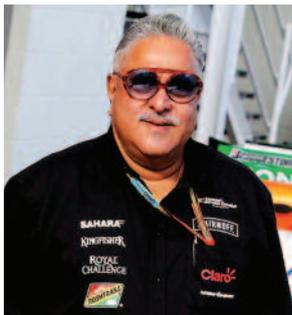
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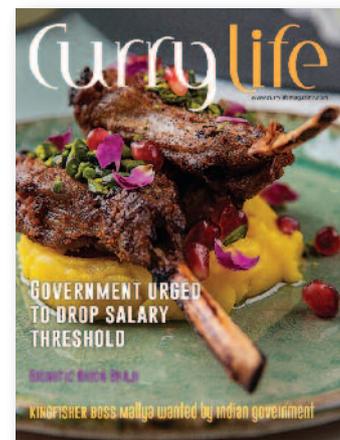


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If you are a foodie, chef, restaurateur and wish to be part of this culinary trip, please get in touch with us and we will be happy to discuss and develop a customised package for you. Only limited places are available and it will be served on a first come first serve basis.



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EDITORIAL

Positive movements for attracting skills migration

There have been some positive movements towards attracting skills migration into the United Kingdom. There are even positive talks of reducing the salary threshold for offering jobs outside the EU.

Although there is still a long way to go to find a proper solution to the shortage of skills in the catering and hospitality industry, there are steps being made in the right direction. Thus, we must be optimistic.

We can also see some positive signs and initiatives being taken by entrepreneurs from this country, trying to set up hospitality training institutes and colleges to help find and develop potential workforces to support curry houses to overcome skill shortages. Although many attempts have been made to recruit people locally and train them to offer them to work within our industry. So, called 'Curry Colleges' have spectacularly failed to attract local talents for our industry. With the 'Curry Colleges scheme', time and money has been wasted.

Since the government is showing sympathy and hopefully putting in

place measures for us to allow employers to work permits to meet the skills shortage for our industry outside of the EU, many entrepreneurs are encouraged to set up proper British Standard training institutes in the Indian Sub-continent, including Bangladesh. This is a good move, but we have to be careful that those 'Institutes' do not end of like many of the 'Bogus Colleges' which once mushroomed up in this country, where the Home Office has no choice but to take tougher measures. The industry needs to constantly scrutinise professionals and credibility of the people behind such initiatives.



Congratulations to Chef Oli Khan for breaking the World Record

We celebrate and congratulate highly acclaimed Bangladeshi chef Oli Khan who has recently made it to the 'Guinness World Book of

Record' for preparing largest ever Onion Bhaji. It is a remarkable achievement and we congratulate Oli Khan. It shows anything is possible if you are focused and determined to create or achieve something. He was determined to do it and the Curry Life team and major media outlets, community members, were there to watch him do it.



We mourn the loss

Finally, we mourn the sad death of a leading caterer Mr M A Alauddin Ahmed. He made enormous contribution as a community activist for catering industry and Greater Sylhet Development Council.

We are also saddened to hear that a great friend of our industry Mr Ishaq Kazal (Journalist & Trade Unionist) who frequently reported about our Curry and Catering industry in Bengali Weekly Janomot has passed away. Our heart felt condolences to former caterer, Mr Ahmed's family and journalist Mr Kazal's Family. May their souls Rest in Peace.



CURRYLIFE AWARDS

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Government urged to drop salary threshold

The Government is being urged to drop the salary threshold for immigrants by more than £4,000. At present, skilled migrants outside the EU need a job offer with a minimum

tier 2 shortage of workers list, which is the most popular entry route used by Indian restaurant staff to apply for a visa to work in the UK. Currently visa applicants need to

Numerous proposals were discussed and one idea by Sajid Javid, former Chancellor of the Exchequer, suggested a regional visa for rural areas. Prevailing salaries from those areas will set the salary threshold for that area. If implemented this could help Indian restaurants outside major cities to attract staff.

The Government commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee to review the salary threshold and make recommendations based on points based system and one rule for all immigrants. Former PM Theresa May ordered the review in 2019.

Following a recent Cabinet meeting, Boris Johnson's official spokesman was asked whether the salary threshold had been discussed, to which he replied: "It wasn't. That is something we asked the MAC to do a separate piece of work on and I would expect that to be published shortly as well. I think it is worth pointing out that that obviously reflects the immigration system set out by the former government. The Prime Minister is looking at an Australian-style points-based system which is something slightly different." It is still not clear what new changes will be introduced but lowering the threshold remains a controversial issue for many leading Tories including Ian Duncan Smith who has advised "caution" by the Government and said: "They will need to have very strong checks in place to ensure that they deliver on their pledge to control immigration."



The Indian restaurant sector has for many years campaigned for changes to tier 2 visa rules and successive ministers have promised a so called vinaloo visa to reduce the endemic staff crisis facing the £4bn Indian restaurant sector.

salary of £30,000 but the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) said it should fall to £25,600 for all workers.

The Government has also released some details of the new Australian style points based immigration system. This was a key pledge on immigration by PM Boris Johnson during the election campaign which he won by a huge majority. The Government will release a white paper in March 2020 outlining its plan and it is possible that a new system will be in place by end of Brexit transitional period in December 2020.

A key plank of the new system will almost certainly see changes to the

meet a salary requirement of £30,000. The new changes will most likely reduce this to £25,600 and will factor in salary and language guidelines. There will also be a point's based system but this will mostly apply to immigrants with high skills and higher job prospects such as in the creative industries or STEM subjects. The government believes this will encourage workers to the UK after Brexit.

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Vijay Mallya wanted by Indian government

Kingfisher Beer tycoon and former member of Indian Parliament, Vijay Mallya has fled India and sought refuge in the UK in last few years.

Mr Mallya who is known as “The King of Good Times” in India due to his extravagant lifestyle, has been mired in financial controversy since 2012, some of it in relation to money laundering and fraud. In 2017 he was accused of contempt of court in India and summoned to appear before a judge. He was arrested by British authorities but was eventually released and remains on bail since his arrest on an extradition warrant in April 2017 involving a bond worth £650,000 and restrictions on his travel while he contests that ruling. Mr Mallya has described the accusations against him as a “witch hunt” and has said he trusts the British legal system more than the courts in India. However, in 2018 his extradition was granted, allowing the Indian government to prosecute him on their own soil. He is currently attempting to appeal against this decision.

In an attempt to sever ties with his native India, Mr Mallya has asked the countries banks, to take his India based assets and leave him be. Saying "I request the banks with folded hands, take 100 per cent of your principal back, immediately," he said outside the Royal Courts of Justice recently. He presently owes an alleged Rs 9,000 crores in unpaid bank loans, according to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He also said, "The Enforcement Directorate attached the assets on the complaint by the banks that I was not paying them. I have not committed any offenses under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act that the Enforcement Directorate should attach my assets." His request could be granted, the only difficulty is it may not be enough to cover what he owes.

Refusing to go back to India Mr Mallya said "I should be where my family is, where my



Vijay Mallya in his hertfordshire home

interests are. If the CBI and the ED are going to be reasonable, it's a different story. What all they are doing to me for the last four years is totally unreasonable."

The decision regarding Mr Mallya's potential extradition is in the hands of Lord Justice Stephen Irwin and Justice Elisabeth Laing, the two-member bench presiding over the appeal. A decision is expected in the very near future, taking the defendants testimony into account.

Vijay Mallya has been the chairman of Kingfisher Beer, Kingfisher Airlines and according to one statistic the United Brewery, who holds a 51% share of the Indian beer market. The Kingfisher Beer Brand has presence in several countries outside India, including Britain.

As the scandal has rolled on, Mr Mallya has had to resign from these positions. Kingfisher Airlines is now considered defunct.

GIGANTIC Onion Bhaji MADE FOR GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS



Chef Oli Khan



Jubilant Oli Khan and his associates are with Guinness official

The largest onion bhaji has broken the Guinness World records title on Tuesday 4th February on an event that took place at the East London Mosque and The London Muslim Centre in Whitechapel, East London. Made by Chef Oli Khan from Surma Take-away in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, The gigantic bhaji weighed a heavy 175.6 kilograms, which broke the previous world record from Colin Burt from Bradford College winning by 73.4 kilograms.

Khan, who regularly participates in charitable act's every year, took part in this year's event for The London Muslim Centre and the homeless whilst being sponsored by Just eat. Last year in 2019 he dedicated his efforts to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for children but this year he was over the moon when the Guinness World of Record book adjudicator Paulina Sapinska proudly announced the amazing news to him, when asked he said "I am so passionate about this project and have been working on it behind the scenes for five years now. I love doing work for charity".

The Statistics

Completed over a long and tedious eight hours, the bhaji used approximately 500 litres of oil to execute. The dedicated Surma take-away team prepped and intensively trained for one week prior to the challenging event, with on the day preparations not finishing from the early morning till evening.

The intense challenge took place during a charity event at the London Muslim Centre, but had to be made

slowly and made layer by layer to make sure that it was thoroughly cooked and edible throughout.

The need for man power

Khan said he needed lot of people to help out, however in this case it certainly wasn't the case of too many chef's spoiling the broth, but the team were so happy this time round as it was incredibly hard work and the team had to be careful and precise as the bhaji had to be placed into the oil using a crane and pulling tool. Khan says "there was no room for any mistakes to happen this time round"

The success happened after a previous attempt that failed because the bhaji was weighing over 300kg being too heavy and unmanageable to control and cook, but this time, practice made it perfect with Khan's measurements being spot on.

However apart from the intensity of the challenge there were also health and safety guidelines in place along-with safety inspectors and surveyors from the council observing the cooking practice and every single move and measurement.

Khan says with delight that " I am so proud and this day wouldn't have been possible without my team, who are all present with me today and we all deserve to share this amazing victory together. Not only that, but this is also a greater win for us as a nation of Great Britain, which I am proud to represent, not just as a team and community."

New Chancellor enjoyed working as waiter in Indian Restaurant

After the shocking resignation of Sajid Javid on Thursday 13th February from the cabinet, the new chancellor Rishi Sunak, 39 seems to be very well acquainted and respected by the owner of the Indian Restaurant; Kuti's Brasserie. Kuti Miah, (owner) told the Daily Echo newspaper that he has known the chancellor since he was a baby and the Sunak family are very good friends who spent regular Christmas Eve's at the restaurant over the last 25 years. Mr Miah also proudly added; "He grew up in front of me and during the time when he was working occasional shifts as a waiter, I always believed and told Rishi that he is going to be a really important person one day because of his clever and likeable attributes, and because he really enjoyed the fun side of

meeting, connecting and socialising with new people during work. Britain's new chancellor's parents also come from a medical background with his father being a GP and mother who ran a pharmacy, both parents working super hard to invest in Sunak. They educated there son to the best of there ability with Sunak graduating from Oxford university with a first class degree in politics, philosophy and economics whilst also acquiring a masters in business administration at Stanford University in California. He then was employed by investment bank Goldman Sachs before forming his own hedge fund company. The words that Sunak wrote on his website were " my parents sacrificed a great deal so I could attend good schools".



The Oxford Cultural Collective has joined forces with Daffodil International University to create a world-class education centre for the hospitality and culinary arts sector, with a vision to create a cutting-edge educational institute that addresses and nurtures the next generation of hospitality professionals whilst also helping those lacking skills in the existing hospitality industry throughout the UK, Bangladesh and all over the globe. The collective institute is dedicated

Innovative educational scheme launched for Hospitality Professionals

to delivering and promoting high quality education in the fields of hospitality, food studies and the culinary arts. The team consists of academics, business leaders, prominent chefs, journalists and broadcasters, share a commitment to achieving positive and lasting social change through formal education and through effective public engagement.

The educational provision will combine academic knowledge with hands-on experience, to equip graduates with the skills and knowledge to pursue successful, exciting careers in one of the world's

most dynamic industries with an emphasis on equipping students with the technical and language abilities needed to travel to the UK to pursue fulfilling careers and to help tackle the shortage of skilled staff, including chefs.

The launch event will be taking place on 1st April 2020 This high-profile event, which will bring together academics, hospitality industry leaders, policy-makers and press, will outline the university's strategic vision and objectives for its new school.

For more information visit: www.oxfordculturalcollective.com



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Surging sales in plant-based food from Veganuary campaign

Throughout 2019 records have showed that over 400,000-plus people globally have converted to veganism and signed up to the Veganuary campaign.

The sales of plant-based food have been proving increasingly popular for regular lunchtime mid-week shoppers, especially the rise of vegan food sales has rocketed according to the supermarkets. It has also been reported that the trend of veganism is going more mainstream with foods such as flavoured humous, dips and sides are gaining becoming popular with the regulars along-with meat-free alternatives. Throughout 2019 records have showed that over 400,000-plus people globally have converted to veganism and signed up to the Veganuary campaign.

Since 2014, people were asked to eat vegan diet throughout the month of January and the latest figures show the comparison of 250,000 participants in 2019 compared to 170,000 in 2018. In the UK alone, 130,000 people signed up compared to 100,000 last year. Meanwhile grocery market analysts report that the huge for boost of sales throughout Veganuary have shown sales in rising meat substitutes such as soya mince and vegetarian burgers has risen by 14% and lentils by 6%, sales of vegan sandwiches and wraps by nearly 75%, which leaves food manufacturers and supermarkets now looking to tap into the flexitarian market of consumers who want to reduce the consumption of meat.

With also eateries and café's like Pret a Manger, jumping on the bandwagon, have launched the first vegan croissant in January and is selling twice as many a day as the non-vegan jam croissant. A company spokesperson said: "Our vegan classics saw record sales, increasing by 17% year on year. In particular, customers have switched to the vegan BLT and Marks & Spencer have also reported that vegan chicken Kiev's have sold at a rate of four every minute since going on sale in early January and the overall fruit and veg sales are up by almost 10% year on year, with mushrooms, a popular meat substitute, up 25%.

Tesco food-to-go's buying manager, Cate May, said: "Thanks to some great recent quality innovation in vegan wraps and sandwiches we are now seeing the emergence of a dedicated lunchtime plant-based shopper.

"Until now most of the noise for vegan food understandably has been for meat-free alternatives to classics like burgers, sausages and steaks. However the rise of veganism and Flexitarian diets will continue to have a major impact on the takeaway lunchtime market and choices available."

I won't serve vegan food, says Michelin star chef



Sat Bains

A Michelin star chef says he will not serve vegan food as it would comprise his menu.

Sat Bains who owns the two star Michelin restaurant Sat Bains in Nottingham said he didn't want to tamper with his critically acclaimed menu

Bains: "We are not specialists in vegan food and I never set out to be a vegan restaurant.

"The customers coming here know what to expect. We're niche - we can be

niche with our menu in terms of ingredients so there are certain dietaries we can't do and won't do. I can't go to a vegan restaurant and ask for steak."

The chef's stand comes despite the growing popularity of vegan food across the UK with a quarter of all new UK food products labeled as vegan Bains added: "You can't go to a heavy metal concert and expect classical music. It's my business and my business model to do what I want. I don't do vegan, halal or kosher."

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Staff cash in on vegan 'cash cow'

Staff at Greggs are in the money after being awarded with a £7m bonus following the phenomenal success of its vegan sausage roll.

The bakery chain 25,000 strong work force will receive up to £300 each after the which attracted widespread media coverage.

The roll became one of the fastest selling Greggs products for years and helped to contribute to what was described as a 'phenomenal year.' Annual sales broke £1bn for the first time, with sales growing 13.5% compared to 7.2% in 2018.

Sales were fuelled by Piers Morgan who mocked the product on TV giving it even wider coverage. Greggs is now adding to its vegan menu with a vegan steak bake and doughnut and, last Christmas, sold a vegan-friendly sweet mince pie.

The business, which expects to open about 100 new shops in the next year and is also experimenting with takeaway diners.

After the recent success it has confirmed Just Eat as its official delivery partner.

Following a successful trial in London, Newcastle and Glasgow, Greggs has opted to work exclusively with Just Eat to provide the nation's leading bakery food-on-the-go

favourites, direct to your door. Andrew Kenny, Just Eat UK Managing Director commented: "We're proud to be the only food delivery app that can bring you the likes of the Greggs Vegan Sausage Roll wherever you are.

"This is an exciting exclusive partnership for Just Eat. Greggs has proved extremely popular with our customers, especially during breakfast, demonstrating that as a nation we love the convenience of getting our favourite food delivered - be it a Greggs bacon baguette and coffee on a Tuesday or your local Thai at the weekend."

Crowning Glory for Nottingham based Fish and Chip Shop

A Midlands based fish and chip shop has been crowned as "The Best Fish and Chip shop in the UK" at the National Fish and Chip Awards 2020, which took place on Thursday 23 January at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London. Cods and Scallops won the crowning glory despite facing stiff competition of being eighty miles away from the coast and from other chippies based in the coastal

region. Branching throughout Nottingham and another in Market Harborough, the chip shop offers a finer selection of more than twenty species of white fish, shellfish, and other seafood such as scallops, mussels which can be fried or baked with garlic, lemon and herbs for the healthier option and was judged with harsh scrutiny on the uniqueness, variety of cooking styles, sustainability, menu innovation and how they catered for customers with special dietary requirements over eight pressured months.

Marcus Coleman, CEO of the awards at Seafish said: "As well as serving up outstanding fish and chips, they demonstrated real passion and enthusiasm for the industry every step of the way. John Molnar, who opened the business almost 30 years ago, said: "We're absolutely thrilled to be crowned the UK's best fish and chip shop and this is a brilliant achievement for the team. We are so proud of everyone and receiving the award has taught us so much about the industry and we would encourage other operators to get involved."

There were also other sub categories of awards, including 'Best Fish and Chip Restaurant' which went to Trenchers Restaurant in Whitley Bay, and Best Newcomer, won by Lewis's Fish and Grill in Maidstone, Kent.



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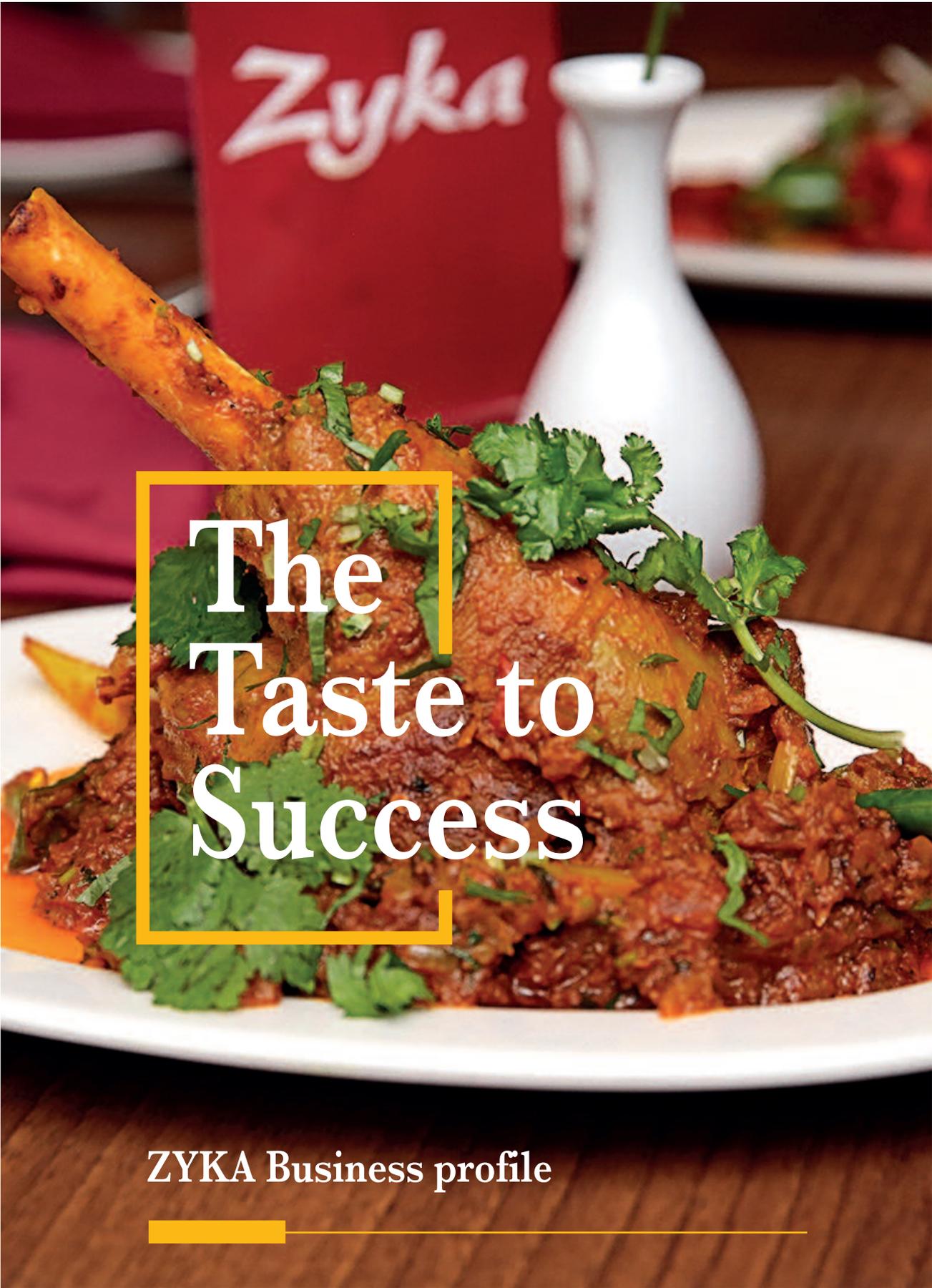
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The Taste to Success

ZYKA Business profile

Business Management Graduate and award winning owner of the best restaurant in Reading, Zak Khan speaks to Curry life about his joint restaurant venture and the importance of establishing a brand identity as well as maintaining good ethics and reputation, he believes it's not about squeezing every penny out from the consumer.

Stepping out from graduation and undertaking a graduate scheme for Tesco over two years was good building base before Zak decided to take the plunge and take over his dad's business. His father was the owner for the property and also a well-known Medical Doctor but eventually he wanted to sell the business, and that was the point when Zak thought to take ownership of the business opportunity and create a new brand, style and identity. He says whilst looking amused "I remember my dad used to open the doors to the building and read his book" however realising that the relaxed approach didn't seem to work in the food trade, so offering the venture to his pro-active son seemed like the best option going forward. Zak's innovative vision and recent academic achievements made his father believe in him and he was keen to take up a new challenge, because he didn't actually start with the intention to do this for making a profit in the first instance, he actually wanted to give his hometown the opportunity it deserved



Zakir Khan

which was to serve the best Indian food in the area, being a passionate foodie, with that being the foundation for Zak he said “the money will come in itself, for me it’s about establishing a name rather than squeezing every penny out of the customer, as that won’t last”.

Taking the Leap

Although still employed at Select Car leasing, he deals with selling and leasing cars, which he takes pride in and enjoys as his daytime job. With that in mind, he barely finds time off to relax and when he does, it’s usually in the evenings to go eat out and try new restaurants with his family and friends. Taking on Zyka was for an

additional passion and a communal cause. This new venture in Tilehurst is now becoming well known for it’s uniqueness amongst the huge number of eateries and curry houses around each corner of the area, but Zak says confidently that he knows his USP and niche amongst the segmented yet stiff competition. It all started to come together at the time of the property being put on the market, that Zak came to know of a really good chef and now business partner whose food he rated very highly. He decided to make a business proposition to him to get involved in the new venture, he says; “At first he was reluctant and said he was happy working at his current job. The process took a

few weeks initially to get him on board and then finally the purchase was made in 2017. I don’t know what got into me but it was almost a split decision. My dad had plenty of offers from outside, but he heard me out and said, “well this is the situation, the rent and costs.” I prefer it that way than the business being handed to me on a plate as I would have not appreciated it or worked for it”. He tells me that the beginning stages were quite difficult as it was really quiet, but he stuck at it with a great team and the great food. Running the business for almost two years, it took a good six months to a year to establish to the ground and get things running. With a

TEAM



seating of 50 and serving up 160 meals and take-aways on Saturdays only Zak tells me that he is now looking to invest into another property within the area. Fridays and Saturdays are completely full, so he wants to keep the new location fairly local “ with a team of 14 now and six staff members kitchen there is hardly space to move, it is heaving and we need to look for another premise.”

Within the mile radius there are seven other competitors and that is the worst part is the competition out there he tells me, “ there is no pricing strategy and they don’t think about margins, they just look at what the other business down the road is doing and then put there own prices

cheaper based on that, and the food isn’t good quality either and cheap products”.

Charitable Acts

Alot of the customers are very loyal to Zyka and they recycle the waste for them, things like takeaway bags. “ Many customers say that we don’t want plastic straws to be served, that’s huge now but we are the only ones doing it around here, not trying to boast. We actually have minimum food waste as we have a system in place to monitor how much waste we produce weekly and we do a lot of things for charity too, like several fundraisers with the local mosques and we have done the food banks too this Christmas as they were

looking to raise a certain amount of money and we decided to participate this year and donate it all, but we regularly do charity events for example we let them have the venue and provide the food and service and we don’t advertise it either maybe we should. We are just happy to cause awareness and even we thought about opening on Christmas day just to serve the homeless people, maybe we could implement it next year. At the end of the day we are feeding the local community and have to give back looking at the amount they spend with us, that’s the minimum we can do”.

Staffing Policies

With regards to the staffing issues being huge in the industry at the ➤



moment, he explains that the business struggled in the beginning for a few months but as it had been quiet, but it didn't matter much then. Thankfully as it's picked up so much all the staffing issue is not an issue for him as "our staff is local and legal and I try to focus and ensure that staff have a good environment to work in and I take them out to eat. Next month we are planning an outing, I have to make sure that it's an enjoyable environment to work in but many people hate going into work, but here they actually enjoy it and they give that five –ten per cent extra because they enjoy it here. Where I have encountered a nine- five work environment, I try to adopt and implement the practices over here so they give them time off when they need it."

New starters get an employee programme; induction policy and they know exactly when the breaks are. They know where they stand and

it's important to implement these policies that many places don't bother with. With regards to food safety and allergy training Zak and his partner have both been trained in this area and it's difficult to send all of the staff in this area but they working on it. He tries to make sure he has a fully compliant allergen list and all the staff are aware which table orders what and the same goes for the kitchen. Clearly stated on the take-away menus, they offer gluten free, lactose free, vegan friendly options. "If someone for instance wants a lactose free korma, we ensure that the Chef prepares the food accordingly. If there is any risk involved then we prefer to stay clear and if they are really specific we ask them to be really clear on the online booking system and submit a special request them to pre-order".

Going Digital

Going forward with the digital side of things he tells me "I have stayed clear

of that actually until now so I can keep control of the orders and to also keep the costs down. But now that's an area we are looking into this year, as the phones are non- stop. The website has just been redeveloped, we are speaking to a developer to launch our own app- based ordering system so we don't have to go through a third party. It's a huge investment but worth it in the future".

The response from winning the 'Best Restaurant' award from Curry life has bought in an amazing response from this area he tells me and as a result the restaurant has pulled in many people from other places whilst his customers have confirmed that it is definitely the best restaurant, "It's given us huge publicity and it's great that the hard work has been acknowledged".

Zyka Restaurant

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The first Nut-free menu launched in Indian restaurant



Bristol based owners of Indian restaurant Dhamaka, have launched the first nut-free based food menu. Vinay Mandadid and Chef Jyotirmoy Patra created the hand-picked menu together first of its kind which has been given thumbs up excellent reviews from existing food critics and regulars. This not just includes food but other items and beverages that include any traces of nuts, including Amaretto, which is derived from almonds and used in desserts and drinks. With the initial opening in December 2018, the new and improved menu was implemented by the owners who have witnessed other restaurants closing within two years of trading due to the allergy crisis. Whilst Mandadid has worked in well reputed restaurants in the Middle East and skilled in serving up Indian street food; he says that this is the a completely new concept

in Bristol after discovering so many rising deaths in Indian restaurants in the UK, this has proven to be a successful USP for the region. With new and improvised menus that originally contained cashew nuts and almonds, these now have been replaced with seed based alternatives, for instance the traditional Chicken Korma has been created from using these alternatives. Both of the owners were relieved to see that people were safely enjoying the new dishes and said “ This means a lot that people with nut allergies can dine there without any worry or stress about reactions or cross contamination.” Another one of Mandadid’s discoveries found that toasting the seeds and this makes it into a perfectly formed nut flavouring, he says. “We discovered that this was the best alternative to nuts without

compromising on flavor and we have been receiving great feedback for our new nut-free korma from customers who have tried it, and many said they couldn't tell the difference”. Whilst the menu consists of a range of pallets and smaller portions of sharing platters, which makes it perfect for sharing yet also leaves the option of larger mains for the customers who require it. The owners have shared a new take for other restaurant owners and want to share ideas Mandadid says “that rather than keeping the restaurant's new nut-free recipes a secret, he wants to share them with other restaurateurs so the cuisine can be enjoyed more freely by people with allergies”. For more information visit the restaurant website on: dhamakadining.co.uk.

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DINE LIKE A ROYAL AT **Le** Raaj

Interview by
Tahira Khan





Rezwaan Ahmed, an inspirational family man shares how his debut destination restaurant hits the mark every time and what makes Le Raaj the most unforgettable dining experience in County Durham.

So what were your career aspirations before you came into the restaurant industry?

To be honest, I always wanted to join the police force but I ended up working in the telecommunications industry for a company called T-Mobile as we previously knew it and for Orange. I also worked in Costa coffee. My background wasn't from the restaurant industry itself, but my family was from the catering background and I used to help out during college. I

didn't study any further and if I didn't go into the restaurant business when I did then I would have gone back into it at a later stage for sure. It was either joining the police or going into the restaurant trade and I decided on joining the restaurant trade.

So what were your circumstances then?

I got married after I joined the restaurant business, but I was still working in the telecommunications sector too. I went with the flow, but it just reached to a point of dead end and I decided, it wasn't for me anymore. I didn't want to move up in the telecommunications 

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industry anymore. I thought I have a family, and kids so I decided to choose one career path. Besides that, I realised that I actually enjoyed working on Saturday nights in a restaurant where I met so many people and thought why not pursue this on a full-time basis. So I left my standard 9-5 job even though it paid me more and went head on into the Indian restaurant trade. It's hard to stay in a job when you don't enjoy it. I actually enjoy my job and some of the staff ask me why I come in everyday? I say well, I actually enjoy coming into work, because it doesn't feel like work to me, I enjoy talking to people and it feels like socialising and working at the same time, you meet so many different people and learn new things everyday from them.

How do you manage your daily operations with your shareholders?

It's me and my younger brother who are the main partners of this venture. We have other sleeping partners that don't get involved on a day-to-day level, but us brothers know each other's strong and weak points and we delegate tasks according to the strengths we have. Communication is really important, either you're a leader or a follower. I know I am the leader and he is the follower.

I heard you are an avid cricket fan and you have lots of sporting events taking place. How do you plan for the influx of customers?

Yes indeed, we had the cricket world cup in the stadium this year so we had lots of cricket fans and supporters coming into eat and using the restaurant as they stayed at the nearby hotel. I forecast the events for the year ahead and look at the traffic conditions, timings etc and plan my workload, stock, staff management according to these events. We are the best Indian restaurant in the area with

4.5 stars on Trip advisor. By having these events it gets us on the map and in the press and it helps us having a great rapport with the cricket fans to strike up a conversation with them.

So apart from meeting different people what's the most rewarding part of working in a restaurant?

There's about 24-25 of us that work here and I almost think of it as the business belongs to everybody, it's feeding 25 families not just me, imagine if this place closed down that would be 25 families losing out, not just me. I am quite pleased that I can do that for other people as well. We have a shelter for the homeless too if they come in here and they need food and can't pay then I just say don't worry about it and feed them for free. It's sometimes just the smaller things that go a long way and count more and it's the thought that matters. The job is rewarding but don't get me wrong it's very hard too, just trying to do the school runs, my wife obviously helps, she doesn't work anymore and my youngest is nearly 3 years old, so that is challenging itself. The restaurant business is very rewarding but very hard work. But also what is rewarding is The Curry Life Award that you get after working really hard all year and then finally someone recognises that, that's awesome and a great feeling to win something like that from Curry life.

On that note what's the challenging part of running this business?

The worst part is the staff crisis. I think it's everywhere at the minute. I understand that some people may have abused the system, and some people say why don't you employ someone from the job centre, but you can't do that. You don't get appropriate staffs. You have to feed 150 people and you can't start measuring up how much spice to put in every jar.

How do the second and third generations see the food and restaurant trade then?

Obviously I am from the second generation and some of them have gone into IT, electricians, the plumbing trade but the third generation is going to get worse, being much more digitally savvy they are doing their own things. This brilliant trade and working with people is dying out as the younger generation want to do multiple things, less physical work and stay on social media. The new generation don't want to do this anymore they go to university and have degrees and then we have the government who are restricting people coming through to the UK from other countries now.

Have you prepared for the impact of Brexit?

With Brexit taking place now things will change making it harder. Last year the prices went up and the smaller things actually mattered. For example you paid £12 for a bag of onions and it went to up to £25 for the same thing, so the bills went up to £180 a week just on veg. But if it's going to happen it will happen and we will just have to deal with it. The smaller businesses obviously will suffer more because of the increasing of taxes and the VAT.

How do you manage with your competitors at present?

We are quite lucky as we are a destination restaurant, we stand alone, if you look at the menu, the prices are quite high, because I like quality in everything. My onion supplier said is it right that you are selling onion bhajis for £6.95? I said yes, he said why? I said how much is a starter in an Italian place about £6 -7 well it's the same thing. It's about moving on with the times. I am about quality I would rather give less but good quality food.



Le Raaj TEAM



So what would be unique about your onion bhaji compared to the one down the road for £2.95?

Everything is made fresh, the chefs come in during lunchtime so the food is prepped on the day, rather than prepped two days before and stored in the fridge. If you have something that's two days old compared to something that's fresh, it looks and tastes completely different. Secondly we use Dutch onions and red onions that are the best. Also the way the food is presented is key, rather than just packing it in a container.

Tell me about your USP and the recent refurbishment you had recently?

People also get too comfortable they wouldn't change the carpet or the decoration from a decade ago. Everything you see in here is new and modern, even I was getting sick of it and it was looking tired. Nothing had to be closed down as it was done in a way that no body even knew. I hired an interior designer who created a mood board and the USP is definitely relaxing, authentic and unique as it was originally a church so it holds its

original building features. I really liked the elephant head that I had to get approved by the council for placing a garden ornament on the main road and also a fact about the elephant is that it never forgets, hopefully the people wont forget the experience of this restaurant.

You mentioned that consistency is tough, so how do you keep hitting the mark everytime ?

Yes, consistency is tough, as the same chef makes not every single curry, so the second chef has to follow the main chef, so they can keep up the standards



and the protocol. There is also one waiter that just stands in the kitchen all the time and overlooks everything apart from his day off. He doesn't taste the food but if it doesn't look right he just slides it across ready to dispose. His job is just to overlook the food and place in the tray that's how we keep it consistent. But Timing is key, we make sure to come in earlier and do the prep work. If the preparation is done correctly then the quality of the food isn't going to be there.

So are your menus clearly labelled of dishes that contain nuts?

Yes there is an (N) next to the dishes

that contain nuts. We have appropriate allergen notice. We also have a vegan menu and gluten free menu too.

How do you give appropriate training to your staff?

They get the health and hygiene training, first day and fire marshal training is scheduled in the next four weeks, which takes place for ten people which are the chefs and waiters.

How do you keep your staff happy?

I give them a bonus, and I don't hide it either from the other members of staff

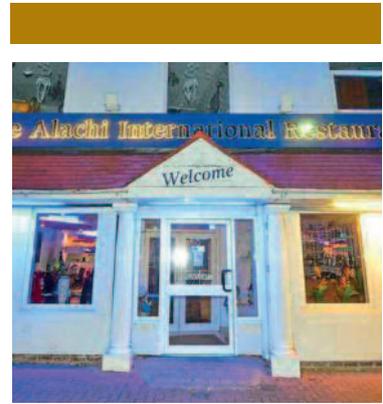
because they will then be motivated to achieve better and work harder. We also take our staff out atleast once a year in January after Christmas and let them pick the venue as its important for team building. Recognition is important for staff and this is important to move on with the times. January is an important time for us.

LE RAAJ
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Suspended prison sentence for Indian Restaurant owners

The owners of The Alachi Restaurant in Cradley Heath, Wolverhampton have got suspended prison sentence for neglect after the Chef was severely burned when the tandoor oven exploded in his face. The chef suffered immense burns to his face, arms and hands that had to be treated in hospital immediately. It had been reported that the tandoor was leaking gas. A fine of £175,000 was fined with an order to pay £4,300 towards costs after appearing at Wolverhampton Crown Court on Monday 16 December. Previous director Khalid Hussain and Manager Mahbubur Rahman Chowdhury were found to have acted

unlawfully by not reporting the potentially fatal incident. Upon a health and safety inspection, the engineer from the council's team confirmed that the tandoor oven was being switched on and off using pliers and a lit up paper. There had been cracks in the pipework too that were being held together by foam and sticky tape, which were also leaking gas. Along with the tandoor, the flame failure devices and gas ignition switches on the other gas cookers and equipment had been ignored and bypassed with the use of unsuitable temporary measures. The ignition button on the large cooker was being held in place with string and a metal wire whilst the smaller range had twisted gas



pipes and safety chains were missing. A spokesperson for Sandwell Council said: "Our checks found very dangerous conditions in the kitchen of this restaurant that resulted in one of the chefs being seriously injured. It's only by luck that he wasn't killed, and that other people were not injured." The defendants pleaded guilty to ten health and safety offences and that Gas Safe regulations had been breached. The restaurant is currently under new management.

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1. STOCK UP

Be properly prepared to succeed

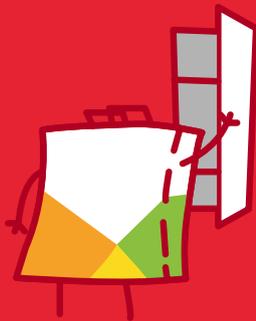
- Have 'British Standard' cleaning products in your cupboards
- Make sure hand sanitiser is readily available
- Use colour coded prep equipment, date labels and storage containers



2. TRAIN UP

Make good habits part of your routine

- Have your own hygiene policy document — and brief staff
- Brief them on personal hygiene, and the need for frequent hand washing
- Make sure they have clean uniforms



3. STORE UP

Get everything in place for inspection

- Make sure stored food is covered correctly, with correct date labels
- Store raw food and read-to-eat food separately
- Ensure you know the correct temperature for fridges



4. WIPE UP

Go over everything again

- Use two stages of cleaning — detergent, then antibacterial
- Clean in line with your schedule — surfaces and utensils after every use, ovens weekly, fridges and freezers monthly



5. WRITE UP

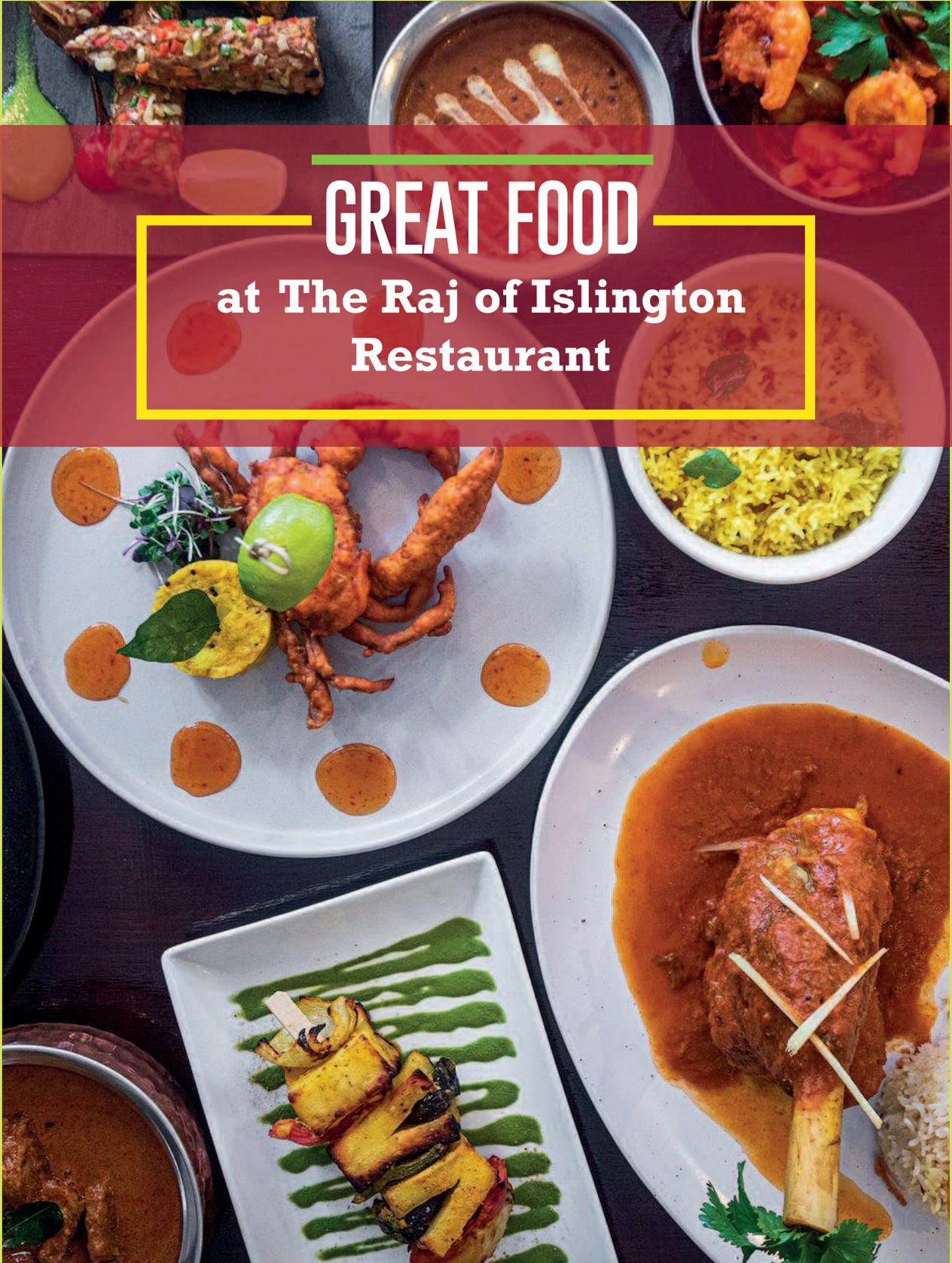
Stick to the plan and write it down

- Record every clean on your cleaning schedule
- Keep daily records of temperatures of fridges, freezers and food
- Record staff training and your hygiene policy documents

For more information and resources on improving or maintaining your food hygiene rating check out the Hygiene Hub on our Partner Blog.

[Partnerblog.just-eat.co.uk/hygiene](https://partnerblog.just-eat.co.uk/hygiene)

JUST EAT



GREAT FOOD
at The Raj of Islington
Restaurant



The Raj of Islington has been opened after the success of the first flagship restaurant in Kensington and the newly launched sister restaurant keeps the same focus of home-cooked authentic food handpicked from the various regions of India. Founded in 2016 by restaurateur Salim Sheikh, who has a background in fine dining, The Raj of Islington fuses together two of his greatest passions being food and history. The restaurant holds a number of 82 seats holding a larger capacity than its Kensington venue. However the concept of the restaurant and the menu has a specific focus upon the British Raj era and each dish inspired from a different region.

As we walked in the restaurant had a distinctive modern feel along with candlelit tables and a subtle fine dining feel, just comfortable enough to feel relaxed with a light airy feel. We settled in and began the journey with the starters taken from the travellers 'Yatra menu', we opted for a sweet potato and goats cheese tikki, sharabi jingha, (meaning drunk prawns) which are tiger prawns soaked in cider sautéed with chopped peppers and tomatoes, then we tried Keralan Kekda (crab from Kerala) which is a crab in spicy batter served with crab meat sautéed with mustard and curry leaves. The selection was bursting

with distinctive flavours and infused with traditional Indian spices. For the main course we chose the Signature dish 'The Railway Lamb Curry', once served on the long train journey from Bombay to Calcutta, Lamb Biryani, Tadka Daal and my favourite was the vegetarian dish 'Sabzi Pachratni' a 100 year old recipe originating from Jaipur, made with baby corn, broccoli, courgette, mange tout, mushrooms and peppers tossed in a wok.

The Dessert menu was nostalgic favourites with an eclectic mix of sweet Indian delights. We tried the Gulabjamun, warm milk dumplings in a golden sweet syrup, sprinkled with crushed roasted pistachio and the Tandoori Ananas, a fresh pineapple glazed with star anise, cream and honey, grilled in the tandoor.

The drinks list spans wine by the glass to spirits, house-made mocktails, and a vast selection of cocktails and gin, but the gin-based libations are the restaurant's crowning glory with names like 'The Lady in the White Saree', a muddle of Jodhpur gin, Cointreau, lemon juice, gomme syrup; Maharaja-tini, Jodhpur gin, Vermouth, green olives or lemon twist, however I tried the Lychee and Rose Martini, a medley of Lychee infused Bombay sapphire

gin, gomme syrup, lemon juice and Rose petal Bindiya which was amazing, sweet with a slight sour kick at the end.

The prawns and the 'Sabzi Pachratni' were my personal highlights and the vegetables were perfectly cooked, not too soft but holding a slight crunch. It was also the best healthier vegetarian alternative choice and not too heavily laden with oil, when tested out. I came out feeling light, especially as I try not to eat heavy meals after 7pm.

The Raj of Kensington already has a loyal and established clientele and this addition won't take long either, The Raj of Islington is the perfect spot for good value, home-spun authentic dishes, in a contemporary ambience full of light-filled space and furnished with plush interiors. It's a perfect balanced setting suited for couples, families, friends and you won't be disappointed with the service either the waiters know all the details behind every dish, we had lengthy conversations with the waiter and very impressed with their historical knowledge, charm and passion, with a behind the scenes fact which is that the Bengal Tiger Prawns are imported fresh into the UK on a daily basis whilst also explaining the process of how they are prepared and cooked. You will feel like you are on a magical travelling journey with the staff in India as you explore all the different tastes from the ancient heritage of the cities, it was quite a nostalgic experience.

The Raj of Islington
359 Holloway Road,
London N7 0RN



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সেজন্যে আমরা একটি পাঁচ দফা পরিকল্পনা তৈরি করেছি।



১. মালপত্র মজুদ রাখুন

সাফল্যের জন্য যথাযথভাবে প্রস্তুত থাকুন

- উন্নত মানের ব্রিটিশ স্ট্যান্ডার্ডের পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সামগ্রী কাবার্ডে রাখুন
- হাত জীবাণুমুক্ত করার স্যানিটাইজার হাতের কাছে রাখুন
- কালার কোডেড অর্থাৎ বিভিন্ন রঙ্গের খাবার তৈরির বাসনপত্র, তারিখ লেবেল, এবং স্টোরেজ কেটেইনার ব্যবহার করুন



২. প্রশিক্ষিত থাকুন

ভাল অভ্যাস আপনার রুটিনে পরিণত করুন

- আপনার নিজস্ব হাইজিন নীতিমালা তৈরী করুন এবং স্টাফদের এ সম্পর্কে জানান
- তাদেরকে ব্যক্তিগত স্বাস্থ্য ও পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্নতা সম্পর্কে বলুন এবং ঘন ঘন হাত ধুতে বলুন
- তারা যাতে পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্ন ইউনিফর্ম বা পোষাক পরে তা নিশ্চিত করুন



৩. জিনিসপত্র ঠিকভাবে রাখুন

যে কোন সময় পরীক্ষার জন্য প্রস্তুত থাকুন

- সঠিক তারিখ লেবেল সহ খাবার দাবার যথাযথভাবে ঢেকে রাখা নিশ্চিত করুন
- কাঁচা খাবার দাবার এবং রেডি অর্থাৎ এখনই খাওয়া যাবে এমন তৈরি খাবার আলাদাভাবে রাখুন
- আপনি ফ্রিজের তাপমাত্রা সঠিক কিনা তা নিশ্চিত করুন



৪. মুছে রাখুন

সবকিছু আবার ধুয়ে মুছে রাখুন

- দুই পর্যায়ে পরিষ্কার করুন - প্রথমে ডিটারজেন্ট (পরিষ্কারক) দিয়ে এবং পরে এ্যান্টিবায়োটেরিয়াল অর্থাৎ ব্যাক্টেরিয়া নাশক দিয়ে।
- আপনার নির্ধারিত সময় অনুযায়ী পরিষ্কার করুন - স্থান এবং বাসনপত্র প্রত্যেকবার ব্যবহারের পরে, ওভেন সাপ্তাহিকভাবে, ফ্রিজ এবং ফ্রিজার প্রতি মাসে।



৫. লিখে রাখুন

পরিকল্পনা মতো কাজ করুন এবং তা লিখে রাখুন

- আপনার নির্ধারিত পরিষ্কারের তালিকায় প্রত্যেকবার পরিষ্কারের সময় লিখে রাখুন
- ফ্রিজ, ফ্রিজার এবং খাবারের তাপমাত্রার প্রত্যেক দিনের রেকর্ড রাখুন
- স্টাফ ট্রেনিং এর রেকর্ড, হাইজিন রেকর্ড ইত্যাদি সযত্নে রাখুন

আরও তথ্য এবং হাইজিন উন্নত করার পরামর্শের জন্য অথবা ফুড হাইজিন রেটিং মেইন্টেন করার জন্যে আপনার পার্টনার ব্লগে হাইজিন হাব ভিজিট করুন।

[Partnerblog.just-eat.co.uk/hygiene](https://partnerblog.just-eat.co.uk/hygiene)

JUST EAT

Non-Alcoholic drink launched for the health conscious



London-based brand Nine Elms is launching its first drink, No.18, into the UK market. Originally conceived in the capital's historic Nine Elms area, this intricately crafted alcohol-free drink has been designed to complement good food and is produced to a carefully considered recipe using an innovative combination of traditional and contemporary drinks-making techniques.

The drink has an intriguingly complex yet balanced taste profile - derived from the marriage between the botanical infusions of 20 different flowers, herbs and spices, and the juice of 4 types of berry that allows it to pair with a broad range of rich, savoury dishes.

Available in a striking 750ml bottle, NINE ELMS No.18 allows restaurants, hotels, caterers and bars to bring guests of all persuasions together, catering to those who choose not to drink alcohol or who are simply reducing their consumption, while also allowing the trade to maintain the type

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of margins demanded of an alcoholic drink. Simon Rucker, Co-founder & Joint CEO of NINE ELMS, says: "We're incredibly proud of NINE ELMS and everything it stands for. We wanted to create a truly exceptional range of alcohol-free drinks that could be enjoyed by anyone who enjoys good food. We believe NINE ELMS successfully bridges the divide between alcoholic and non alcoholic products and for the first time offers a truly inclusive experience that brings people of all backgrounds and beliefs together." Non alcoholic drinks expert, James Morgan, who most recently developed Hakkasan's non-alcoholic drinks menu, and has now joined the NINE ELMS team, adds: "NINE ELMS No.18 has complexity, great acidity, mouth-watering tannins and a good long finish - but most importantly, it's also delicious! Although it's designed to serve as a straight pour and pairs very well with a wide range of foods, it also has enough character to shine in a range of cocktails. There is a huge gap in the market for high quality alcohol-free alternatives to the sorts of alcoholic drinks that are traditionally served with food and we believe that NINE ELMS, starting with No.18, is the first to properly address this." www.nineelmsdrinks.com

HRC Hospitality exhibition 3-5 March



Hotel, Restaurant & catering (HRC) is the UK's largest and most prestigious event for the hospitality and foodservice industry with its next edition set to take place 3-5 March 2020 at London ExCel. The HRC will welcome 650 suppliers showcasing ground-

breaking products from big brands to innovative start-ups in catering equipment, food, drink, technology, interior design and tabletop solutions. To cater to the industries thirst for knowledge, HRC educates 20,000 visitors on the latest trends and issues plus plays host to the UK's most prestigious chef competition – Salon Culinnaire.

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Increasing anaphylactic allergy reactions in kids

An increase by 72 per cent of children with allergic reactions are being taken into hospital as confirmed by the NHS, compared from 2018 a total of 1746 youngsters and 1,015 in 2014 have been taken in suffering from an anaphylactic shock.

London showed the most increase affecting children and the figures show 167 per cent from 180 to 480 whilst the Midlands was second to be affected with a growing 145 per cent increase.

A campaign for tighter laws on labelling was set up by family members of Natasha Ednan-Laperouse, who suffered an allergic reaction from the misleading labelling of the Pret a Manger baguette that contained sesame seeds and died in 2016. The girls mother, Tanya, said to the Metro ‘ the terrifying figures show we are facing an allergy emergency. The number of children with allergies and suffering severe allergic reactions is rising year-on-year at a deeply alarming rate. Scientists don’t yet understand why the numbers of children with allergies are on the rise, which is why it is vital that we invest in large-scale research projects into the causes and potential cures.’

Meanwhile scientists at Stanford University in the US are working on an injection that could protect peanut allergy sufferers. 15 patients were given an antibody treatment called

Etokimab, resulting in 11 of the people were able to eat the equivalent of an entire nut after two weeks. Study author Prof Kari Nadeau said the team were ‘surprised how long the effects lasted’. They are hoping that the results will be successful in delivering a treatment that works with other allergies.



Tribunal backs vegan whistleblower

An employment tribunal has ruled that ethical veganism is a philosophical belief protected by law against discrimination.

It follows a case brought by Jordi Casamitjana who claimed he was unfairly dismissed by the League Against Cruel Sports.

Casamitjana raised concerns that the animal welfare charity’s pension fund invested in companies involved in animal testing.

A tribunal did not agree that he had been unfairly dismissed but said their were grounds for a further hearing .

Ethical vegans eat a plant-based diet and avoid contact with products derived from any form of animal exploitation, such as not wearing clothing made of wool or leather.

Casamitjana said: “Hopefully, from my dismissal, something positive will come by ensuring other ethical vegans are better protected in the future.”

Chinese Take-away owner jailed for running a filthy kitchen

Zhi Zhao, 62 who ran the Grace Chinese takeaway in Cilgerran, Pembrokeshire has been jailed for 4 months along with prosecuting costs worth £1,000, despite being banned from Maidstone Council for running a food business in 2009. Whilst hygiene issues were raised again in 2015 and health inspectors made efforts to conduct routine checks of the business, whilst Zhao was also invited to interviews with the health inspectors but made no effort to attend. He was also jailed in 2010 for a string of hygiene offences at a restaurant in Kent.

A number of issues were found to be collected over the years that have led to the final outcome. Prosecuting officer Martha Smith-Higgins said, “ the officers found grease and dirt in the kitchen, a dirty sink, a broken fridge full of dirty water being used to store ingredients, issues with food storage conditions and labelling”. She concluded with Zhao ran the takeaway "without having a basic understanding" of what was required to run a food business. Judge Geraint Walters stated at Swansea Crown Court "If the public had seen the state of that kitchen then you would not have had a single customer, it’s hard to imagine anything unspeakably so dirty."

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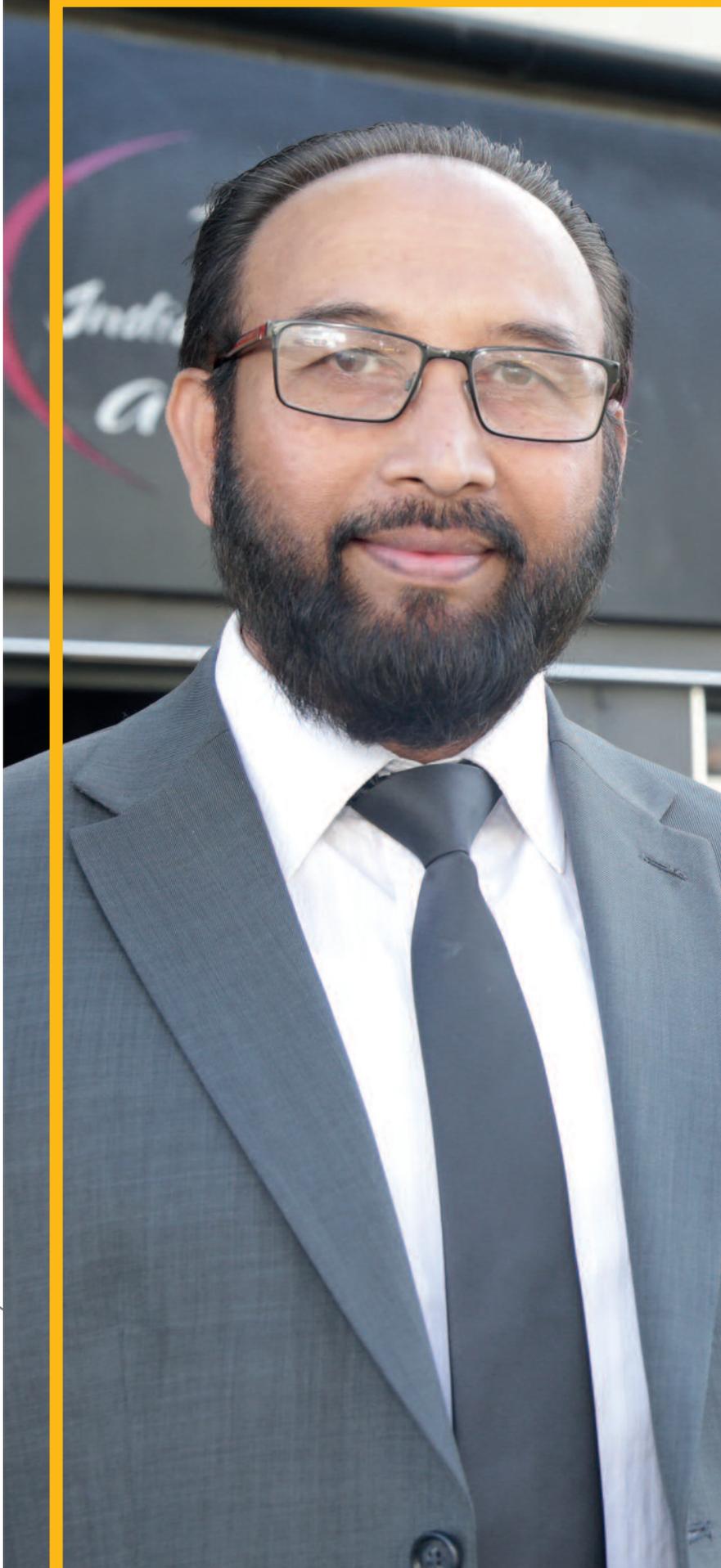
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Connecting Communities

Habibur Rahman and Naim Rahman, The Father and Son duo have been successfully running Indian Brasserie eatery on the curry mile of South Shields. They share how the importance of a supportive community network has been keeping their business empire running successfully through the perils of highs and lows over the decades.

The Indian Brasserie has been trading since 1986, when Mr Rahman's brother in law used to own it, but in 2009, he decided to retire and that's when Mr Habibur Rahman decided to take over the venture. "The competition was huge, you have to be better than anybody else along the strip and that kept us on our toes all the time, from the food, service and the place has to offer a unique USP" comes from a very cheery respectable community leader, restaurateur and an award winning businessman.

Mr Rahman being a respected family man has always resided in South Shields but used to commute to his other businesses from his home. Although he very much loved his hometown he always had a longing to open a restaurant amongst the curry strip even though being a very competitive and fierce environment, he still took the chance, had the confidence and courage to go for it and his reasons were "Because despite everything, I believed that I would do alright".

Currently The Indian Brasserie is the only unique restaurant with distinctive aesthetics and menu choices amongst twenty other Indian restaurants.

The Business USP

The restaurant prides itself on the uniqueness of traditional Indian dishes as we know them, but originally they are Bangladeshi dishes. When we say Indian food it's all mixed Bangladeshi and Indian together. The uniqueness entails of signature dishes and secret recipes that are not available elsewhere that have been created by Mr Habibur Rahman himself for instance the "Shahi Tukra" "Tamarind Lamb". With the allergy awareness on the rise rapidly the restaurant clearly displays nut-related dishes the menus and are very careful about this issue too. "We did a course on this topic and we have regular training as it's very huge at the moment. Our council provides lots of training for the staff and we make sure we participate at all costs". >



Overcoming the challenges Solving the staff crisis was becoming a big issue for the industry. It started personally for Mr Rahman in 2007 when youngsters weren't coming into the curry strip. Mr Rahman struggled to bring them in as they had different career aspirations, especially when they were educated. "You have to find ways to get through any issue, I brought in local lads and trained them over two years. There is a good mix of local communities here and it seems to be working for us. Sometimes Mr Rahman found that the local lads were much better for the business and he would prefer to be pro-active then waiting for people from abroad to arrive from India or Bangladesh. " If I did wait around then the business would have surely closed down".

The villages didn't have many restaurants previously for example Gateshead only had 1 restaurant and now there are 15 restaurants, so the new openings have been challenging for the businessmen.

Mr Rahman also tells me that the restaurant has had customers that have moved to Australia and they always go back to them time again. The recession time was the worst. November is known to be usually a quiet time but there loyal customers kept them going, especially when the weather was terrible pouring down with rain and it was so quiet elsewhere, but the regulars they we knew kept everything going. Even our

neighbours work with us who are the well known Coleman's fish and chip shop, they recommend us to there customers and vice versa.

Keeping it in the family

He wanted his son to get involved at some point and help him out. Naim Rahman being a young sociable lad initially wasn't keen at all in the beginning to get involved as he thought it wasn't for him, he dreaded the unsociable hours, the lifestyle, the responsibility and the commitment. It wasn't easy to begin with



getting him in, but being a wise father he started off slowly by bringing his son in on a part-time basis on the weekends, just to show him what it is like and give him an idea. " When I showed him it's a decent place to work in with decent clientele, that's when he started to see it for himself after coming in for a few hours meeting and socialising with the customers and then he began to enjoy it. Eventually his view changed and it was completely different to what he had thought and gradually he became interested, it wasn't easy".

In 2013 with an awakened interest and passion for the industry, Naim slowly started to take full responsibility and implement things his way with his own zest and charisma. His

friends from college began to come in to try the food and to also visit him. He started to learn and pick up the trade and actually enjoy it. His father say's " I am confident now that even if I don't go in for weeks I know he can manage the business competently".

A change for the better

When asked about what has changed over the years Naim waiting patiently yet eagerly to be addressed, commented about how the quality of the food has been improved aswell as the menus being innovated; "that's how we keep our customers and that's how we survived if we stick with a basic menu then that's available anywhere. We have our personal touch that keeps the new and regular customers coming and this is the only restaurant on the strip that started off as a double building and the rest were all single buildings. We will probably open another venue as part of a chain somewhere with silent partners, keeping it in the family of course.

An Aspiring Fireman

When asked with what Naim's career aspirations were, he replied with an affirmed response "a fireman". I had my heart set on it until I came in and found out the freedom I had of being my own boss, that's when I realised it would suit me as the business hours have changed dramatically over the years. It used to be late nights many years ago but now it's 5pm start with an





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-Aaron Allen

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11pm finish. It's not like a 3am finish anymore. On weekends we open until 12 midnight maximum. In our Whiteley Bay venue, we didn't get home until 5am but now that has totally changed for the better for all of our staff.

The best and worst part of the job

Because I have been bought up around here I know all my friends and cousins and that's important to me to have my network of people around me and my customers I have come to connect with them on a personal level and I know my bookings that on a Saturday I have to reserve a table for 4 or 6. I have a friend of mine that comes in three times a week and he is a Scaffolder. He has bought in new business and recommended other discounted services too. We have met good plumbers, electricians and a man for every job, the networking is really rewarding for both parties". But on the other hand occasionally he comes across very indecisive customers coming in, he tells me "you ask them all throughout how is your meal? they say it's not nice right after they have finished everything, but then you think well you have finished all your food, so it can't be all that bad".

A second- generation restaurateur in a digital era

Naim only started getting involved in social media marketing since last year "I didn't realise all the Facebook groups let alone in South Shields there are 50,000 people posting so had to keep up. But still viral marketing still works and since 1986 there are regular families which always come and sometimes we have mixture of generations sitting in the restaurant and exchanging ideas". Being more of a family restaurant and setting, they do welcome children especially "My dad tells me always to welcome them, as they will be our future customers and they deserve to be looked after too. A lot of places are impatient with children and noise but we are quite accommodating in that respect and they always come back".



NOW



BEFORE

Taking time out

The duo close the business one day in a week, they told me that they sat down and calculated the busiest times and realised they should have closed one day ages ago. "We close on Mondays and that gives us a day off to whatever we want to do. That works good for everyone because of the staff crisis and everyone has a day off and that prevents anyone taking extra sickness".

Brexit and the future
We believe it's going to affect our prices and to maintain this we have to increase our prices too like everyone else. But all our customers have good jobs anyway, in the past no one has complained about the price increase on our drinks.

Achievements

"We did win local awards with the gazette and council but this was our first national major award. It was an amazing sense of achievement and an honour thank you Curry Life". Another point not to forget about the uniqueness of the place is the colour changing LED display horizontal wall ending as you walk to the other end of the restaurant which I was given a tour at the end of my visit with much amusement by both father and son, a very impressive and quirky design feature indeed.

INDIAN BRASSERIE
146 Ocean Road,
South Shields NE33 2JF

Breaking down the Bay Leaf



The Origin

The Bay Leaf comes from the Bay tree originally from Asia and spreading all over the Mediterranean region and other countries with similar warm climates. The other name for the bay leaf is also called Laurel. Many people from the ancient cultures chewed bay leaves, or sniffed the smoke of burning leaves to promote a trance like state. The bay leaf was particularly famed and given its status from ancient Greece and Rome.

The Symbolism

During the middle ages, the Bay leaf or Laurel was also known to provide safety from thunder and

lightning and the Emperor Tiberius wore a laurel wreath during thunderstorms and was believed to induce abortions and have many magical qualities. However in Greek, laurel is derived from the word 'dhafni', and the well known ancient mythology of 'Daphne', who was changed into a laurel tree to help her escape Apollo's attempted rape. Apollo who was the god of poets, made the tree sacred and since then, it became a symbol of honour. The association with honour and glory still continues today. Throughout history the word bacca-laureate means "laurel berries" which means the completion of the bachelor degree as we know it today. Doctors were crowned with

laurel, which was considered a cure-all, as well as champions of ancient Greece who took part in the Olympics were awarded with bay-leaf garlands since 776 BC and still given out today in sporting events.

The many purposes of the Bay Leaf

The popular leaf is widely used throughout the world, especially in Indian dishes such as curries and biryanis'. They are also used as bouquets garni's or used in soups, sauces, stews and also as seasoning for fish, meat and poultry.

The dried leaves are known to be whole and olive green in colour

whilst brown leaves will have lost their flavour. Whole leaves are used in cooking or crushed or ground leaves can be used for extra strength. They are best kept out of light in storage preferably airtight containers that will retain the flavour for over three years.

The Bay leaf has many health and repellent properties which make it useful for treating high blood sugar, headaches, bacterial, fungal infections, and gastric ulcers. The leaf contains eugenol and antioxidant properties that contain compounds called parthenolides, which have anti-inflammatory uses and have been proven useful for treating migraines. The Bay leaves have been used for their astringent, carminative, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emetic and stomachic

properties. Meanwhile in oil form, Bay Oil, (Oleum Lauri) is used for bruising and sprains. This multi-purpose and amazing leaf has also been shown to help the body process insulin more efficiently, which leads to lower blood sugar levels. It has also been used to reduce the effects of stomach ulcers. Bay Leaf has also been used to treat rheumatism, amenorrhea, and colic. It was used to keep moths away due to the acid content which gives its insecticidal properties.

The Side- Effects from the Bay Leaf

Bay leaves in the form of oil applied to the body and consumed as food are safe for most people, but taking the whole leaf intact by mouth is unsafe as the leaf can't be digested, and broken down the digestive

system, meaning it can become stuck in the throat or pierce the lining of the intestines. It also could interfere with blood sugar control, especially with diabetic people who must monitor blood sugar levels whilst consuming the leaf, which could also slow down the central nervous system (CNS). There is a concern that it might slow down the CNS too much when taken with anaesthesia during and after medical surgery, so using the leaf as a medicine should be stopped at least 2 weeks before any type of surgery involving anaesthetic. However people prone to food allergies or respiratory related conditions such as asthma must be aware and get a food intolerance test done as soon as they can if they encounter any unusual reactions.

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Peanut Allergy



Restaurant swallows fine after customer hospitalised

A restaurant was ordered to pay more than £7,000 in fines and costs after serving a dish containing peanuts to a customer with a nut allergy.

The teenager's tongue began to swell after just a few mouthfuls of food which staff at Gulshan in Tynemouth had reassured her contained no nuts. The family were then hampered from getting to hospital by staff insisting they pay for the meal before leaving. Further investigations revealed inadequate food safety procedures were found, including wrongly labeled ingredients, lack of staff training and insufficient separation of food to prevent cross-contamination of allergen ingredients.

Stuart Athey, defending, said the owner couldn't be more sorry for what had happened and improvements had since been made. The solicitor said: 'It still shocks him that this has happened. He even tells me that the family had to pay for their meal. He was shocked staff made them do this. He launched a full enquiry straightaway.' The owners of Gulshan, Sonero Tynemouth Ltd, were fined £3,767 and ordered to pay £2,744 costs and £1,000 compensation after the company pleaded guilty to breaching section 14 (1) of the Food Safety Act 1990.

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OASIS RESTAURANT



RESTAURANT REVIEW

CURRY LIFE

BATLEY, WEST YORKS

A MULTIPLE DEAL

Successful Businessman and Entrepreneur Imran Ahmed is definitely the man with a plan and opens up to Curry life about his multiple business ventures. The Oasis restaurant is known as a destination magnet to satisfy their hunger pangs in West Yorkshire and this has been shaped by the passion of Imran and his two brother in laws which was only made possible by doing everything together he tells Curry Life. The Oasis restaurant was taken over by Imran in 2017 from his previous owner and uncle who announced his retirement that year.



Prior to that, Imran says he started with literally nothing and started at college then university ending up with a Marketing degree. During college days he worked at Showcase cinemas and a call centre, got promoted then his last tenure was working as an Operational Trainer for RBS selling insurance before he made a gradual transition by going part-time. With a plan to dive deep into launching his own business now named beds.net. The well reputed online bed manufacturing and retail factory which promises to deliver the next day with seven vans delivering in London out of 36 vans total delivering nationwide and now a newly launched new bed website called headboards.com that is purely online with a showroom

in place.

So here are the stats he tells me that he sold 6,200 mattresses a day and that earned him a £50 profit by selling just one bed. During that time that was pretty decent, "however we started from scratch by selling through car boot sales on the weekends, whilst still working as a traditional 9-5 job". Along with his brother in laws his sisters still running the office side of things part-time. The business then started off making great online sales also through Amazon, Ebay and its website throughout the millennium period.

The bed sales were making more money in a week compared to the full-time job in a month, Imran made a decision to go part time in

2010 and then gradually go self-employed and leave his stable job. "It was a scary decision at the time and my dad was so worried if I left my job that earned me 25-30k and went into full-time self-employment". His father understandably was apprehensive as he was the only son who had a hefty mortgage on his head and the pressure on him would be immense to make it through.

Worth the risk

The iconic place has been in the running since 1992 that everyone knows about in the town of Batley and the most challenging thing for Imran is maintaining the food quality of OASIS Restaurant, keeping the customers coming back by making sure its right every

TEAM



single time. He tells me that he is used to the on-going staffing issues because of the work he did in the factory. “Staff here are loyal and there are two main chefs who have been here since the place opened. I have to say that Qadir and Maroof are very loyal and also the delivery staff have been here for over twenty years, long enough to see me grow up from a kid. All my staff are amazing actually”.

There is a lot of competition going on but as the restaurant has been established over twenty- eight years, Imran says that “ we always try to support them, for instance if next door run out of cheese we give them some cheese. The people opposite they buy naan breads from us, so we give them a discounted rate.

Working Values

Imran ensures that he does his best to provide health and safety training, for the staff including equipment plus technical training, manual handling. With the staff incentives, he says that three people are sent each year as a reward and they have a yearly ‘milad’ at the restaurant that is a religious gathering that has been taking place since the last four years. He also has a charitable work ethic and works with a charity with the homeless people. On the last Thursday of every month the restaurant prepares fresh food and gives to the charity. First award felt really proud after achieving the award and getting some recognition for the hard. The

best part is the good reviews online and people reordering again, saying the food is really good. The worst experience is the hours on Friday and Saturday nights your totally gone, but my staff work on a shift basis we have a Monday and Tuesday Shift, a Wednesday and Thursday shift and then all the staff work on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Future Vision

Now Imran wants to implement a further revamp of the restaurant, incorporating wider choices of menus, healthy alternatives and the ease of a bigger space and practicality to accommodate families. He describes his future vision to grow the business whilst holding a well- balance mix of ➡➡



eastern-western fusion by keeping the traditions and blending modern aesthetics. Trying to rebrand everything in conjunction with the design company he stated he wanted to install private booths.

He states that his USP is definitely the curries and Desi (Asian) breakfast. However in the new rebrand awaited in 2020, there will be a selection of English and desi breakfast's available. He says "we have different types of clientele and families can have a wider choice. There will be healthy options too as there is a ladies health club nearby so they always come in for coffee or lunch after going to the gym". We don't have any apps and are starting to introduce that now but even now the phone doesn't stop ringing from the Friday to Saturday night.

Imran says that the importance of social media in this era is huge so he has left this task for the man who is able to do this job. Yes his nephew Adam Iqbal who is seventeen he's studying for his 'A Levels' officially we can give him a job title as a 'Social Media Manager' he is great at compiling all the Snap chat stories, Instagram posts and Facebook advertising and we get thousands of customers through this channel.

"Emojies" a concept with a digital edge

Whilst Imran is busy completing the current revamps on existing

“They cant do without me and `I cant do without them. There is massive trust between us and we share everything and not even once a conflict has occurred between us. Everything is clean cut between us”.

ventures, he totally kept this one to come out last. 'Emojies' is a new Angus Gourmet Style Steak Restaurant opening in 2020 and



Sadaqat Saleem, Adam Iqbal and Imran Ahmed

will be based in Dewsbury Town Centre Proposed to be a spacious double storey venue with a rooftop terrace. The feel of the place will be completely state-of-the art and pretty hi-tech with a huge TV.

"It's nothing to do with the face 'emoji' that people know about on the phone. It had to be that something people were familiar with". Different yet memorable he says' he wants the experience to be unique like ordering food on an I-pads and it will be catering for mostly for the Millenials, X and Y generations. " For the younger generation it's all about the technology, steaks and burgers that's why we are introducing a new concept".

The Uncertainties

Imran knows that there will always be uncertainties to everything including the price increases and taxes after leaving the EU. He explains that in his factory it will become a struggle, as a lot of the workers are European. " I put an advert in for a delivery driver vacancy, had fifty responses and only one person was of English

origin, but a lot of them were Polish, however that doesn't deter him. He wants to continue buying properties, future restaurants to sustain and maintain. Sundays is normally the time to relax but he says " I don't think I can really relax and I am abroad quite a lot especially China for the bed business, but

I like being on the go". He say's to people who are already in the business or looking to get in the industry " There will always be risks and uncertainties but keep at it because the customer always comes first".

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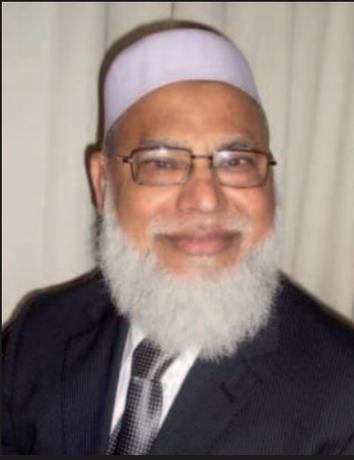
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Obituary

S M Alauddin Ahmed

High profile restaurateur and respected community activist, Alhaj Sheikh Mohammed Alauddin Ahmed passed away at the age of 80 in London. In his final weeks and days, he was transferred from Whittington Hospital in Holloway to a north London hospice where he succumbed to cancer on 15 January 2020.

Born in 1940 in the village of Ekatuna, Moulvi Bazaar, Sylhet his father was a merchant seaman or a 'sharong'. In common with many aspiring young Sylheti men, he decided his future too lay beyond the borders of Bangladesh across the oceans and seas in the United Kingdom.

He arrived in the UK as a teenager in the late 1950s. Mr Ahmed quickly gained employment as a postmaster with the then general post office and attended a technical college in an endeavour to improve his level of education. The former businessperson and dedicated community activist was most successful in Indian restaurant sector and owned three successful restaurants at different times. Some years later and with the passage of time, Mr Ahmed got married in Bangladesh. He would return intermittently to visit his new wife and growing family. His marriage produced seven children;

two sons and five daughters. Six of his children and wife joined him in London to live as a family unit albeit without his oldest daughter - denied entry due to the inequities and red tape of the British immigration system in Dhaka.

Mr Ahmed owned several restaurants throughout parts of London. All his restaurants were hugely successful. Mr Ahmed owned the Raj Tandoori in Enfield Town and a restaurant in Dagenham Heathway. His last restaurant was the very popular Fulham High Street eatery, the India Cottage which he sold in 2001 ending a long association with restaurant ownership but remaining active in the wider catering sector. Outside of business and the catering sectors, Mr Ahmed was a respected community activist who even in his advancing years dedicated himself to social well being of Muslims and embarked on Islamic philanthropy. He got involved in various community issues including campaigning for the Tablighi Markaz in Stratford. One of his greatest achievements was that he established an orphans home and madrasha bearing his name for children in the village of Shabia. Mr Ahmed cherished this venture, as it was very important to him and exemplified his strong belief in helping others. He worked diligently for a number of years to establish this. In 2016, his efforts paid off when the madrasha saw the light of day as a number of orphaned and impoverished children welcomed to the centre. To date this organisation though still in its infancy has improved life and education chances for over 300 children estimated his second son. Mr Shuhel Ahmed vividly recalls his father's deep religious outlook and

an enormously happy occasion when they travelled to the Biswa Ijtima in Dhaka's Tongi area. An accountant by profession he owns an accountancy firm in Hendon and hopes to continue and develop this project in honour of his late father as a lasting legacy and memory.

Mr Ahmed's achievements are numerous and was a founder member and coordinator of the Greater Sylhet Development Council and eventually rose to hold the position of central committee chairman leading the organisation through a successful period. He also established an organisation for greater unity and cooperation amongst Bangladeshis in Europe and with other like-minded individuals demanded improved NRB rights when he made written representations to the Bangladesh government over its Citizenship Bill in 2017.

Mr Ahmed was also active in the community in Barnet, North London where he resided and will be remembered for his contributions for the betterment of the Bangladeshi community. As well an active member of the Green man Community centre in Barnet he was also the founder of the Barnet Bangladeshi Community Association. Barnet Council honoured his contribution when the Mayor presented a civic award in recognition of his community services at a ceremony in 2009. Mr Ahmed leaves behind his wife, 7 children, 18 grandchildren, and 9 great grandchildren. His Namaze Janaza was held at the East London Mosque and his final resting place is the Garden of Peace in Chigwell.



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