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Ice creams in jaggery & paan

Sudeshna Banerjee



Picture by
Debajyoti Das

Nolen gur ice cream has come to Salt Lake. Pabrai's Fresh & Naturelle ice cream has set up a kiosk at City Centre which is serving 32 of its flavours, including nolen gur (jaggery made of date palm sap).

"We have 64 varieties but since space is a constraint here we will alternate among them," says Anuvrat Pabrai, the founder. Park Street regulars would remember him as the one running the ice cream parlour Tulika's on Little Russell Street, which was in business till 2008.

"Our ice creams use no artificial flavours or preservatives," affirms Kunal, his eldest son. The proof of that is in a Natural Vanilla scoop. It has a distinct taste, unlike the vanilla ice creams one is used to, bland in taste and look. "There is an orchid called vanilla, available best in Madagascar. The most flavoured part of it are the seeds inside the pod. We use that. Others use vanilla essence," Anuvrat smiles.

The Pabrais try to get the fruits for their fruit-flavoured varieties from the area it grows best in. "Black berries of Bengal have an astringent taste. So we source it from Maharashtra. Our jackfruits come from Panruti, near Chennai, and our alphonso mangoes from Ratnagiri in Maharashtra." And they stick to the season in which the fruit grows. That is why strawberry is off the shelf now while it's still not time for custard apple.

The only exception is nolen gur. "We source enough nolen gur in winter for use round the year." The other flavours that are doing well are Tender Coconut, Anjeer and Paan, the trickiest to make and which actually leaves an aftertaste of mishti paan.

Customers are offered samples to taste before they take their pick. Ratna Mishra of BD Block chose Anjeer and Nolen Gur. "This is better than the natural ice creams we get in Mumbai," said the lady who divides her time between the two cities. Munmun Bose of BG Block was thrilled to find six options in sugar-free. "Most companies have only vanilla or at best chocolate," she said, packing the Kesaria Rabri Malai flavour for home. "Our sugar-free varieties are not zero calorie but we use pro-biotic fructo-oligo sacharites as sweeteners," Anuvrat explains.

The kiosk stays open till 11pm.

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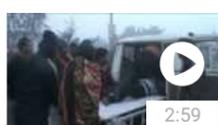
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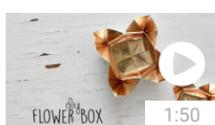
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