

Bengali out of Bangladesh

THE other day I was making my final lap jogging around the mini lake next to my home, a presence of a serene place where pregnant or comfortably fat women take their evening walks, where half bald, middle aged men run in medium pace with their noses high up in the air checking out all that walks-talks and chews gum, and I, the exceedingly tan and toasted Bengali burn off my overly indulged fat. While my lazy soul was in the middle of an intense dialogue with my health-fanatic-self (the contradictions of being a Gemini), I saw, a few steps ahead of me a couple, not hand in hand but walking together, the woman in her loose fitting salwar kameez, hair tied up in a bundle of oil and dandruff, and the man wearing a shirt marking all symptoms of Bongo Bazaar and an old tailored pair of pants (which once belonged with a blazer specially made for an America visit and now too tight to put on). They both had a certain style of walking and carrying themselves that even from the behind I could just tell, they were Bengalis...

Of course my curiosity took over. Even moments ago I was too lethargic to jog and now I was running in full speed, trying to listen to the conversation of the Bengalis in question, tuning my good ears to assure my even better eyes that I was right, I have spotted the Bs. So I crossed them running in full speed, and I picked up a few words which definitely belonged to some part of Bangladesh, and it surely was some sort of "premalap" or sweet talk. I scolded myself for my ignorance of not understanding dialects from different parts of Bangladesh better. It was sufficient enough for me to know I was correct, they were Bengalis.

The corner of my eye got stuck staring at them until I ran out of sight and wondered can't a Bengali run in peace jiggling her fat without other Bengalis around? To avoid the Shongshod Bhobon lake type of atmosphere, I started running on the treadmill in our complex's gymnasium. Things were going pretty well, until one day walking towards the gym totally ready for a power work-out I heard the blasting tunes of an up beat Bangla song, I contemplated walking in, but again the curiosity took over. So I walked in alarmed and guarded, and there it was, a tiny boom box with not such a tiny owner, making a ruckus in the gym, running in the beat of something chakboom-chakboom in total Kareena Kapoor (Onju Gosh?) attire, she gave me a cold stare, and I could read her mind, because I was repeating the same mantra in mine. "Why are you here? Why can't a Bengali be left alone during her/his private moments with total strangers of other shades?"

So giving a steely look I turned around and went straight back to my place and ate most of what my refrigerator offered and fell asleep early, cranky and bloated. The fact of the matter is some Bengalis inherit a spur of the moment high status at any given moment when we bump into another Bengali. We'd rather stay exotic and eccentric to the unknowns and seeing familiarity of past makes some of us uncomfortable. We instantly question our minds "Would we mix with this Bengali stranger if we were back home?" "Would my status and his/her measure up in the mingling circle?" We use our caution to guide us through, which most of the time results in a snubbing act pulled by both parties. Some of us have been badly burnt by letting our doors open to Bangladeshi strangers who we felt close to just because they too shared the same homeland, some of us are so consumed with the ideas of status and superficiality that we don't give a chance to a Bengali who doesn't seem up to our "standards", or looks threatening to our status. Either they are too good or too bad for us; with the old Bengali habit of avoiding eye contacts we also avoid random meetings, to keep complications out of our lives. But what some of us don't realise is a stranger becomes an acquaintance in just a few words, an acquaintance can become a friend in just a few meetings, and I can let go of my non-existent imaginary status's consciousness by smiling and saying "hi" to the next Bengali stranger. But I don't, I still choose to live on with my stern guise geared towards them while in the back of my mind I search for the same mysterious faces with known looks as these Bengali strangers carry the pieces of Bangladesh I have never seen. They carry the gestures and expressions which are so familiarly strange, and like me they carry with them slices of unconquered guarded minds, needed to be explored and loved. So I wait here with my piece of Bangladesh inside of me gathering courage and praying to relate as one of them among "us"...one can take the Bengali out of Bangladesh but cannot take Bangladesh out of a Bengali.

By Iffat Nawaz

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Beauty Talk

Q Dear Sadia

I have oily skin on the t-zone and that is the place on my face where pimples are always visible. What should I do when I see a new brone or pimple to come out? What should I do with the red marks that the pimples have left on my face? Is there anything I can do in order to stop the pimples coming out? Should I try putting Nomark? I have tried putting Uptan on my face but it does not suit my face. I would gladly appreciate it if you could answer my problems.

Anika

Ans Dear Anika

After cleansing your skin every night, use an 'astringent or toner' on your T-zone. Pour it on a cotton swab and rub gently. This removes the excess oil on the skin.

Immediately put a paste of neem leaves haldi as soon as you see a pimple appearing. Never destroy a pimple or else it will leave a mark.

'No-marks' can be used to lighten the marks left behind by the pimples. Don't use uptaan if it does not suit you try a pack made with

Multani mitti-1 tsp
Dali 1tsp
Neem 2 leaves
mint- 2 leaves
Mix in a bowl with little Water. Apply ever day.

Q Hi Sadia

I am desperate for finding my style. I am five feet in height, I weigh 44kg, I

have broad shoulders, my arms are kind of heavy (not very heavy though) and my waist line is 29, because of all these to some I look fat . However, yet I have not become shapeless. Now, I want your help in telling me what kind of clothes I should wear (westerns too) that can make me look slim.

Rubaba

Dear Rubaba,

I am referring your question to Maheen Khan who is handling the 'style File section for life styles.

Q Dear Sadia,

Hi. I'm 25 years old and I'm in big trouble with my oily skin. I have pimples all over my face. I started doing facial, but someone told me that it is bad for my oily pimple prone skin. Now give me a suggestion whether I should do it or not. Another problem is that whenever I go outside, after some time my face becomes so oily and gloomy and I look darker. Help me out. Thank you.

Farhana

Dear Farhana

If your beauty Saloon can give you a facial using products exclusively for oily skin- go ahead and have a facial (without steam) but avoid oily creams and lotions. Use a toner regularly after cleaning your skin.

Try Fair Polish to brighten your skin and remove excess oil.

Q. Dear Madam,

I really need your help. My problem is with my lower lip. I have a bad habit of wetting my lips with my tongue. During the winter season, my lips become dried and cracked. Habitually I bite onto the half (inner part) of my lower lip and thus cut its skin. Then that part becomes red coloured as its original skin is taken off. So it seems if there was a wound/ulcer on my lower lip! But the first half (front part) of my lower lip remains unchanged, as before; but it is black and darken. So, half of my lower lip is red and another half is black, which looks very ugly and ill. I become very shy, can't talk or laugh easily because everyone looks at my lips at first sight and ask whether there was any disease or if I am a smoker! I don't smoke anytime. I have been using vaseline continuously, but it remains unchanged. So how can I get rid of the marks of my lower lip? Is there any treatment/cosmetics to repair my lip? Please, tell me what should I do!

Ans. For starters you've got to get rid of the habit of biting your lower lip. Only you can help your self.

Apply a few drops of Johnsons Baby lotion mixed with a few drops of olive oil twice or thrice a day. At night use a soft cloth to massage the lips.

Keep a chap-stick handy with you at all times and whenever you feel that the lips are becoming dry, apply it.



Style Files

Q. Dear Maheen Khan,

I am thinking of making a golden blouse which I can wear with different saris suggest material for it also some styles for a trendy blouse.

Jamine

A. Hello Jamine

A golden blouse sounds very tacky. I hope you are not serious. Please if you must have one, focus more matte golds in shades of yellow but in matte finish. The gold color is reflected from metallic threads (zari) the fabrics with zari threads do come in a wide range of patterns. Jacquard designs in geometric or floral are popular or you may opt for a stripe, plain or ornamental. But I would always suggest you consider small motifs for a sari blouse.

Q. Hello Ms Khan

I am fourteen years old. I love trendy clothes but don't like to wear stuff that is over the top. Could you suggest a sensible style?

A. This summer you can look chic in a printed poncho top. It should be boat neck with butter fly sleeves. The fabric could be either silk or georgette. Pair it with drain-pipe trousers or fitted jeans.

Q. Hi

What is the defining style for work, relaxing coffee brake with friends and an evening out with some one special?

A. At work one needs to be taken seriously. I believe one must dress powerfully to reflect their confidence. One needs to move freely around the office and at the same time look a little differ-

ent from the rest of the group. Try a gray wide boot cut trouser in linen with an ivory or black shirt collar blouse, use a scarf printed in accent colours to bring interest. This concept could equally be applied to salwer suits.

For a relaxing coffee brake with friends, try a bias cut long navy skirt with a long sky blue kurta blouse. Tie a scarf belt and match it with your flat slippers. You will feel cool and laid back. When you are just trying to take it easy and you don't need to impress any one, go with a soft look.

An evening out with some one special calls for a more attentive style. One must look she has put an effort but not trying too hard to look good. In other words one should look effort less. A white long blouse with just a little engineered embroidery paired with black capri pants. As an accessory take a crochet scarf with a black open or closed shoes.

Go easy on the head

IN can happen to anybody. Sudden concussion while doing household job, playing your favourite sport, or any other minor accidents. If it ever happens to you always take it easy for at least two week, even if the symptoms are gone. Experts say that sustaining second injury while recovering a previous one may prove fatal. It can cause swelling of the brain or even death.