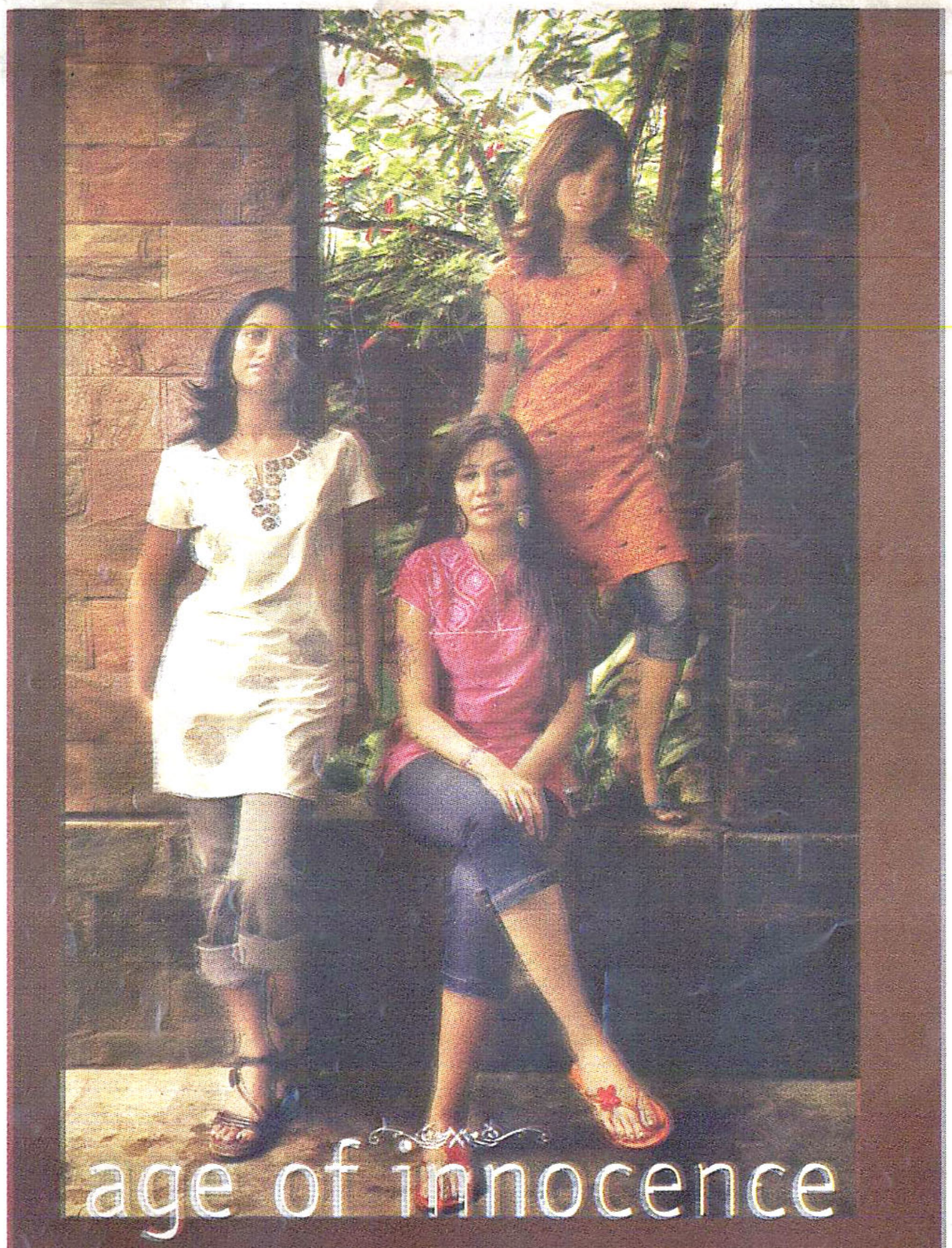

age of innocence

CHILDHOOD is an evanescent magic. Cliched as it may sound, it comes only once and with it the innocence, the safety, the lightness and all just once. And as is the norm with all ages, one doesn't realise what one is leaving behind with each birthday until it's too late. You can never be that naive ten or all-knowing eleven or that over-inquisitive twelve once you are 20. Carefree is how life should be at this beautiful juncture, soundtracking it at this point is nothing short of an offence.

Yet today's children both male and female between the age of eleven and fifteen truism hard to look like high heels, make-up, streaks of highlights on the hair, cell phones, boyfriends, making out and breaking up; they have seen it all and done it all. It's absurd and almost sad.

There is no reason to fast forward to eighteen and fall in love at thirteen. You would have plenty of time to wear make-up, get into relationships and move, but for now at fourteen, celebrate your youth by acting your age.

A fifteen year-old boy with black nail polish and black eye-liner and studs is as frightful as an eight year-old girl with mahogany highlights in her hair.

Teen years start from thirteen, but what most people don't realise is that the self-expression is a gradual process. Upon entering into view by age eleven, children always want to act all grown up and fast-forward to adulthood, completely unaware that each teen year has its own flavour and that one should enjoy it as it evolves by.

Meet Tahlia and her friends, Anisa and Priya. At ages eleven and twelve, they are a group of smart pre-teens whose world revolves around books (especially Harry Potter), anime and fashion. Theirs is a carefree existence where homework is just about the lowest rung on the hierarchy of life. It would be fascinating to watch the young women barely years older emerging practically overnight, and looking, talking, thinking, acting far more like adults.

Grooming for teens

Grooming is definitely important for all ages. But facials at thirteen or long manicured nails is literally dermatological suicide. Why would you want to damage youthfully healthy skin with chemicals, bleaches and colours is simply incomprehensible. Makeup is essentially meant to hide flaws and signs of aging and to accentuate one's assets; why would a teen who is as close to perfection as s/he will ever be, need it?

There is the right time for everything. Just like 'Ugly pastyle' braces and unshaped eyebrows look scary at 22, similarly contoured and shaped eyebrow look horrible at eleven. At this age everything should be simple and smart.

It's after you elegantly sweet sixteen and complete school finals, that the self-expression comes to play. Within reason, this is when you experiment with kohl and gloss and cuts and colours, and boys can try piercing and go for the metro-sexual look.

Role of parents

Many young adults and forward-thinking parents might have different opinions and point out that this is not a politically correct write-up. Children should be allowed freedom and total independence but there is no harm in doing so from a conservative angle and parents should be allowed to guide them. In fact, right or wrong, can only be adjudged after the mistake is made.

There is time enough for children to experiment and test their boundaries, and it takes a responsible parent to let loose the reins at times when the timing is right and not before.

We believe good parenting is the key to the making of a good adult out of a child. There should always be a check and balance system where parents can monitor their children's mental, emotional, physical and social growth. Let your children be children; this sweetest of phases will never come again.

By Raffat Binte Rashid

teen glam

EVER wonder why there are so many foreign fashion magazines targeted towards teens? Why cell-phone companies, record labels, etc are constantly coming up with packages for the teen consumer?

That's because the teen years is the time for self-discovery. There is this tenderly intense need to stand apart and be noticed, and then again to belong. As an adolescent, you are defined by what you wear, and how you wear it. Your clothes and accessories speak volumes about your lifestyle, your personality, your taste in music, and even your political views. And it is this need for definition and self-expression that has made teens around the world such a lucrative market.

Although Bangladesh has been a little slow on the uptake, cable media and the Internet has been instrumental in waking the teens here up to a wealth of style possibilities, and these days, teens are more conscious about what's hot and what's trendy, and especially, what they want to wear. Having said that, let's move on to our glam mantra for teens this Eid. Please note that by 'teen' we mean between ages 16-20.

Skintessentials

The teen years are halcyonic for more reasons than one. As you go about life, know that your skin will never be as radiant and elastic as it is during your teen years. Your youth is your biggest asset, so celebrate it by treating it right. As tempting as it might be, don't go overboard with the makeup; if you're blessed with flawless skin, it'd be a shame to hide it under war paint, and if you do have an acne problem, slopping on the pancake would just make it worse. So stick to the basics; and wow them all with your teen spirit.

To have your skin looking all dewy fresh for Eid, don't forget to pamper it the way it deserves. Drink plenty of water between iftar and sehri, and avoid oily food. Use a suitable hypoallergenic facewash and scrub to keep it clean, and use a good sun block when you hit the road. Hit the salons at least a week ahead of the big day, and get those eyebrows plucked, and mani/pedicure for your hands and feet. This attention to detail is what could make or break your look; clean and well-groomed skin and nails also make a clean canvas for what embellishments you choose to sport.

The red lips of the 40's are making a strong comeback. Dab on some gloss or lip-stains (brick red is a hot colour this fall). Smoky eyes are still in, but making the transition from black to dark charcoal and navy. Alternately, you could skip the liner and use a thin brush and eye shadow for some colourful, powdery definition, topped off by a swipe of mascara. Keep the look as natural as possible. Eyebrows are getting stronger and fuller, so go easy on the tweezers.

Crop chronicles

Guys: After a season of baldness and close crops, the men are growing their manes again. This season, however, go for slim as opposed to bushy. Think Orlando Bloom's casual messy, or Matthew MacConaughey's sweptback curls. The hair this season skims the shoulders and is worn back, not falling onto the face. One hot look for shorter hair involves cutting the hair with longer layers on top and shorter layers at the sides and back of the head. As with clothing, hairstyles are leaning towards the retro, and those with straight hair can safely go back to middle partings with boyish side-sweeps.

Gals: As with men, the hairstyles are also getting longer for women. Opt for long and soft layers at full volume. Ponytails are also in, but skip the teenybopper ponytails and go for a low ponytails and casual up-do's. Highlights are also losing popularity; instead, go for broader splashes of colour, or an overall job in rich, warm colours.

Wardrobe Wiz

The key words when clothes-shopping for teens are 'trendy' and 'affordable', but since we're talking about Eid, we decided to indulge a little splurging within reason.

Doza Market (opposite Dhaka College) is still the Mecca for trendy teens seeking fashionable casual wear at an affordable price. Of course, you have to have the bargaining skills to come out with a good deal. Soul Dance, Ecstasy, Trendz and Yellow also have good collections of casual wear, albeit they're a lot pricier than what you can get from Bongo Bazaar or Doza.

The niftiest new trend this season for guys is the British-inspired plaid; take a break from boring monochrome plants and invest in a pair of funky plaid pants in dark colors. The preppy look is going very strong, so a button-down shirt is a must-have, teamed with a tie.

For girls, the gypsy skirts are getting shorter, and the long skirts are getting more streamlined. Jeans and trousers are on two ends of the spectrum: skinny jeans and mannish trousers are both in vogue. With the winter approaching, the layered look is also very hot, with crop tops and fitted jackets being all the rage.

Teens in Bangladesh have the unique advantange of having a wide range of fusion wear available. From kurtis to sarongs to stoles, the options for mixing and matching are almost endless. Stores like Jatra, Deshal and Piraan have just the stuff you want to fill your wardrobes with; Aarong's Taaga line is also worth a look-see. For slightly less expensive options, you could try exploring the clothing stores at the Aziz Supermarket. Certainly, the themed tees at Nittyo Upohar merit a trial.

Now, since Eid generally calls for more formal wear, Kumudini, Aarong and Kay Kraft have an excellent collection of panjabi. Those slightly more adventurous could buy fabric from Arannya or Prabartana and have them tailor made into custom punjabis. The same outlets have a range of options for the young ladies. They can also buy the fabric at Chandni Chowk and New Market (where a variety of embellishments are widely available) and have them tailor-made into attractive kameez sets. The stores at Bashundhara City are also gaining popularity amongst the young and the stylish.

Playtime

Finally, it's time to complete the outfit with the right accessories. This is where your creativity and individuality comes into play.

Chowrongi market in Elephant Road is THE shoe-shopping haven for people of all ages. From converse shoes, fake and real, which are a runaway hit with students, to nagras and sandals of every style, shape and colour are all available at prices that vary with bargaining skills. Hot on the runways around the world are animal prints and extra-high heels.

Belts are getting crazier too. From studs and shells to beads and sequins, wide and skinny, dressy is in for belts. An option open to the ladies includes buying a longish scarf and wearing it as a belt.

Bags are going to two ends of the spectrum as well; on the one hand, you have tiny purses and totes, on the other you have enormous Boho bags and coach purses.

As for jewellery, there's no fixed formula. Beads and hoops are going strong in the international circuit, but we've seen some interesting DIY jewellery on some cool young people; everything from brooches to lace chokers.

In the end, it's all about finding what works for you. One word of advice, though: dare to experiment, but try to keep it simple and you won't go wrong.

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