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For That Perfect Dress

NAZIBA BASHER

Eid shopping is something that always puts people in a dilemma- which places to visit, when to make time, how to do it without hassle, and much more. Even when you go to your favourite stores, picking out the perfect Eid dress can take a toll on you. To make matters much easier, many young entrepreneurs and designers have opened up online stores to make shopping much easier for everyone. There are five such young entrepreneurs who have taken this initiative a notch further and opened up a showroom for their online stores.

Three well known online store brands- Suvastra, Viola and Sparkling Emotions- have merged together and opened up a store in House 66, Block D, Banani, called ERA House. Run by the owners of the online stores- Nadira Haque (owner of Suvastra), Fariha Tashmeen (owner of Viola) and Trishita Nowroz Farhan, Nowroz Farhan Noor and Maruf Ahmed (owners of Sparkling emotions), ERA House has displays everything you can find on the stores' Facebook pages.

"One of the main reasons we opened the showroom is because a lot of the customers want to see the products upfront before making a purchase," says Trishita. While you can surf the web and pick out the outfit you desire for Eid, you can go to the showroom and check it out upfront before you make a concrete decision.

"I opened up an online store because I used see all these Indian online shops and a lot of



Bangladeshi people's comments on their photographs asking for the price. It used to upset me that they are not getting what they desire in their own country," says Nadira. Her shop, Suvastra, is offering new designs for casual wear for this Eid-Ul-Fitr. "Since it's summer and getting hotter everyday, I think people will be more comfortable in some casual clothes. I used light soothing colours, such as pink and blue, to give off a more

cooling effect," she says.

On the other hand, Viola, run by Fariha Tashmeen, has more dressy and gorgeous clothes appropriate for parties and other big occasions. "I've always designed my own clothes and when I started getting compliments from my friends, family and even others, it really motivated me and inspired me to make these clothes for others too. So far the responses to my designs have been very

welcoming and it has gotten even better after opening ERA House," says Fariha.

Sparkling Emotions have been overtly famous for their jewellery in the past but have recently been known and loved even more for the spunky outfits they have started bringing in. "My partners, Nowroz Farhan Ahmed and Maruf Ahmed, and I had only opened a Facebook account at first named Sparkling Emotions to see what kind of responses we get with the selling of jewellery," says Trishita. She continues, "When our name became well known amongst our target audience, which mainly consists of young girls, we made Sparkling Emotions bigger with more things to offer. Our western wears have become very popular along with our accessories like bags, sunglasses and more. Soon, we will start selling shoes too."

Five young entrepreneurs, five young creative hopefuls, and the need of making a name for themselves, added with the urge to help young shoppers around the city, have resulted in ERA House. While making a name for themselves, they are also assisting others with the same goal and passion. "We held an exhibition last weekend where 30 stores had participated. If I do say so myself, the exhibition went great and the turnout was excellent. We didn't even expect it to go as well as it did," says Nadira. With Eid only weeks away, ERA House has another exhibition going on this weekend. So if you haven't picked out your perfect outfit for Eid, pop into the ERA House exhibition, held at EFES restaurant, 13 South Avenue, Gulshan 1, today and get bedazzled.

Bottoms Up!



Mohammad Emran, manager and sharbat maker of Beauty Lassi and Kacchi.

ANIKHA HOSSAIN

Every year the month of Ramadan brings with it the revival of age old traditions. While countless new restaurants have attracted customers with their own unique Iftar menus, the people of Dhaka still find time to visit the one place that holds memories from almost everyone's childhoods. The Kaleidoscopic colours, vibrant community and delicious smells of Old Dhaka remain unavoidable during this month.

One of the most unique aspects of iftar here are the refreshing and original drink recipes the Old Town vendors have mastered. For the past 79 years, Beauty Lassi and Kacchi has been serving lemonade that will quench the deepest of thirsts and leave the drinker craving for more. Complete with fresh lime juice, lemon syrup, sugar and almost half a lime floating in the glass, this drink attracts hundreds every evening when the Azaan sounds. The beet lobon lassi at Beauty is a close second competitor. Made for diabetic patients, this lassi has put a smile on many non-diabetics as well with its perfect balance of creamy saltiness. "We use rock salt and bitter yoghurt in this drink," says Md. Emran, the proprietor of the shop, "It is definitely one of our best sellers."

A walk down Chawkbazaar will also bring one across many eye-catching stalls selling vari-

ous exotic looking delicious drinks. Take for example the Lemon Ruh afzah Sharbat-- a glass full of beautiful blood red liquid, a mouth watering smell wafting from its direction. "I have learned to make this drink from my father and grandfather, who also had drink carts," says Mizanur Alam, "I sell them all year round for ten Taka a glass and they are very popular, but Ramzan is when business booms for me," he comments.

A few feet away, one can spot another cart, this one serving an orange coloured drink with slices of fruit peeking out from the thick liquid. "This is what we call the Pakistani Fruit Punch," says vendor Mohammad Shahjahan, "We make it with apple, pomegranate, malta, isubguler Bhushy (flax seeds), tang, tasty-saline and sugar. It is a traditional Pakistani drink served during iftar which we have sort of re-invented and made our own. We serve it all year round and the youngsters love it."

Next stop, Lalbagh where the famous Royal Restaurant is located. Royal, for decades has been serving a badaam sharbat (Almond drink) made with whole milk, saffron, almonds and sugar. This is possibly the best dairy based iftar drink in the country. Traditionally, it is also served at weddings and other special occasions such as the celebrations of the birth of a child.

There are countless other roadside shops and



stalls across Old Dhaka where unique iftar drinks are now available. Those who haven't had a chance should definitely make a trip there soon, if not to eat and drink, to just enjoy the atmosphere and feel the anticipation and excitement of the upcoming Eid.

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

