

LS PICK

## Not a dull season

**T**HE alarm clock on my phone demanded that I wake up. But the warm and cosy blanket insisted otherwise. Rubbing my eyes, I checked the clock: 7am. In any other season of the year, sunlight would have poured into my bedroom, which was enough to throw off the blanket and start the day. But not in winter.

The weather application on my smart phone informed that it was 15 degrees. 'Foggy', it read, describing the current condition. I visualised what the app was trying to say.

The lake overlooking my house must be covered with dense mist. The alleys must have men, women, children, dogs and cats - all equally stray and neglected -- sleeping. One would find, here and there on the roads, heaps of ash with smoke snaking up, proving that some families had set up fire for warmth the previous night. Cars, buses and trucks on the highways were moving cautiously, with their headlights still on and their honks beeping frequently.

Indeed, life seems very gloomy in winter. It is a 'dead' season. But it is up to you to find inspiration, and if you are looking for it, you are bound to find it.

That morning, inspiration first came to me in the form of 'bhapa pitha'. Munching away the sweet and steaming winter delicacy, my eyes caught the beautiful set of marigolds that adorned the terrace. The



bunch of them, providing a mesmerising golden hue, fills one's heart with joy.

There are numerous flowers that become ubiquitous during this so-called dull season. Roses, which we see all year round, become incredibly abundant during winter. So do hollyhocks, dahlias and cosmos.

My heart calls for cosmos. The flowers

come in a wide plethora of colours: red, white, pink, purple, yellow, etc. An individual cosmos flower is a small, circular one, with petals spreading from a golden centre of florets. The leaves of the plant are thin and narrow. You would want several cosmos plants together, preferably of different colours. The green, bushy bed of cosmos plants will give a gala of colours. Flowers,

delicate and pretty, are one of the finest gifts of nature. And winter is a favourite time for many flowers.

There is life everywhere. My mind escaped the urban landscape and took a trip to my village-home. I knew, that the farmers were already outdoors, working on the mustard fields. Mustard plants produce small, bright yellow flowers. Imagine thousands -- no, millions of them -- together. The never-ending yellow fields go on and on, stretching towards the horizon.

Winter is the season of vegetables too. Cabbages. Cauliflowers. Broad beans. The violet flowers of broad beans are, by their own right, a delight.

I wondered how the tomato plants in the backyard of my ancestral home were doing. My chacha (paternal uncle), a man fed up of the unsafe foods in the market, set up the little orchard with his own hands. "A fresh supply of tomatoes from now on," he had said. Winter provides the appropriate weather for tomatoes. By now, ripe and red tomatoes must have filled the orchard, making my uncle proud.

With all the beautiful flowers and vegetables in winter, how can we say that this season is dull? Indeed, we may feel gloomy because of the fog and the low temperatures. But nature has compensated that with its ravishing beauty that is all around us this season. Winter is actually bursting with colours. It is full of life. It is not a dead and dull time as many might think.

All one needs is an eager pair of eyes, looking into the nature for inspiration.

By M H Haider

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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