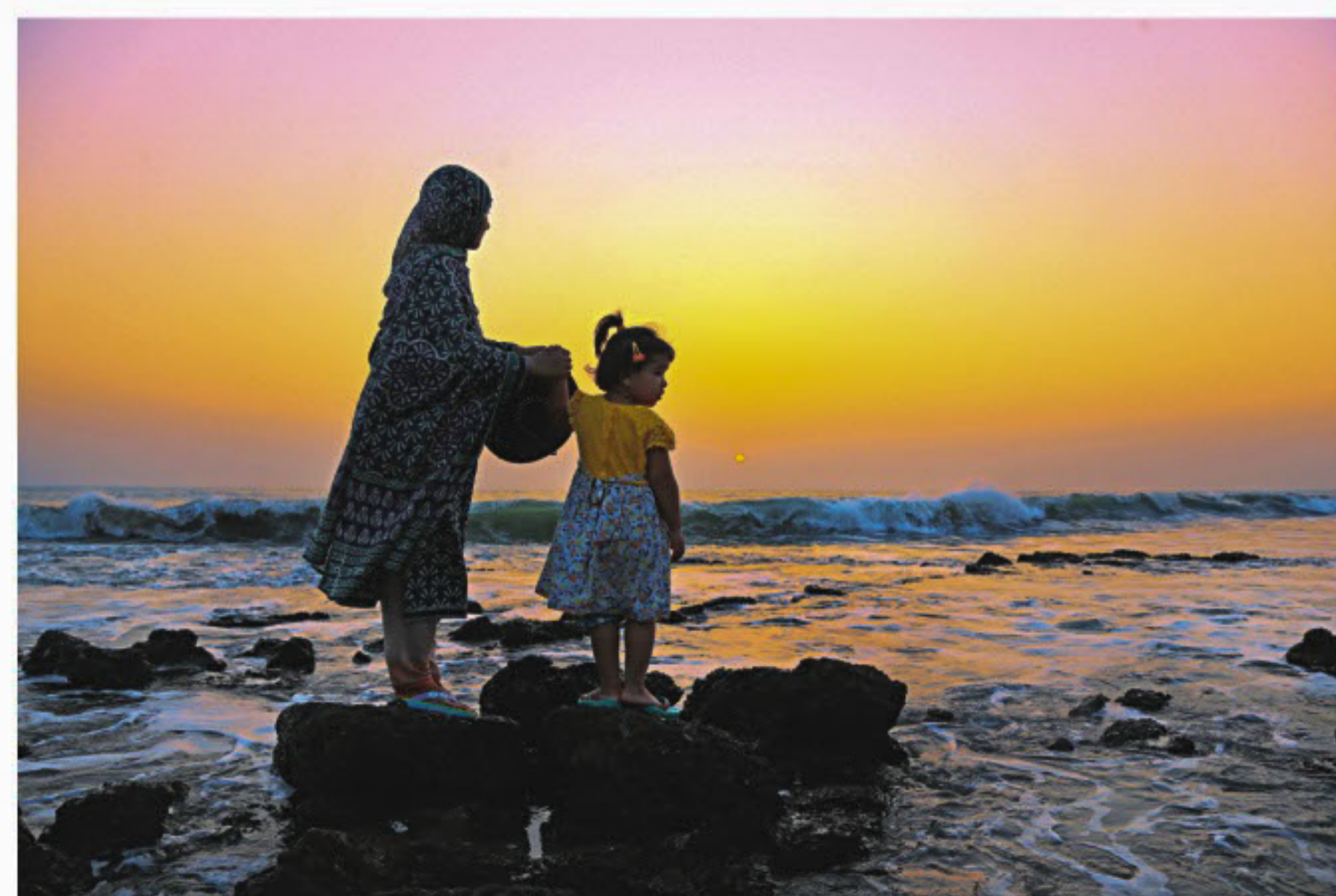


| SHUTTERSTORIES |



THE WONDERS OF THE SEA

PHOTOS: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED

TEXT: NAZIBA BASHER

In the north-eastern part of the Bay of Bengal, about 9 km south of the tip of the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf peninsula, lays an island, an area that is only 8km square large. While the size may be comparatively small, the wonders are paramount. On Saint Martin's Island, you can watch the fishermen fish out our favourites, or you can sit by the seashore during sunset with a cool drink and catch a football scurrying around little feet. Or, the best of all, you can lie on the warm sand under the sun, let the water tickle your feet every once in a while, and read a good book—yes, Saint Martin's Island has proven to be an absolute haven before, and will every time you visit.



| STRIKING A CHORD |

The other day I was watching an ad-film on a nutritional malt milk drink, created especially for women. The film portrayed an attractive young woman in the perfect shape, draped in a beautiful sari, hurrying towards home from office. She is smiling (in fact she can never stop smiling. The world is a bed of roses for her.) Her demeanour speaks of leadership; clearly, she occupies one of the boss-chairs. As soon as she reaches home, she changes into another sari, looking thin and proper as ever with all her accessories. She rushes out again to join her husband for a night out, probably to a Thursday night party. This is the woman of today, or rather the superwoman that every man yearns to be related to and which every woman should become -- according to the ad-film message.

The lives of women today are far more challenging than they were during my mother's or grandmother's. Yes, they were educated and probably even encouraged to go out and work. However, most women had one focus in life – their children and their homes. Today however, a modern woman needs to balance a career, a home, cook, look after children, get promotions at home, go to the gym, look beautiful and fresh and always be happy – quite a difficult feat.

"I was a top student at the Sylhet Medical College back in the late 70s. Yes I did have a very promising career ahead of me," says Arafah Khatun, homemaker, mother to two adult children and grandmother to two little babies. "On the day of my last examination, my now husband's family members had come to see me. Within a month I was married off. Within 6 months I had to move to Dubai with my husband who was working there at the time. I could have been a good doctor but at the end of the day I would not have been able to manage both my home and work. And no matter how modern you are, you cannot let go of your responsibilities at home. At the end of the day, the home is a woman's responsibility, not the man's." Today, Arafah's daughter is a doctor in Canada, married and a mother to a baby son. "She says that she is going to live in Germany for 6 months on a fellowship! Even move to another country if necessary leaving her husband and child to fend for themselves. I don't know how that is possible, but her husband seems to be supportive."

Let the woman be her own person, for once! Stop putting her under a microscope. Let her try things for the first time, take risks, be a failure, lose herself in the world and then return with a blast. Stop showing her path C, if not paths A and B. She does not need to be a superwoman to survive. She can be anything she wants to and live anywhere that suits her. And once and for all, let's make a film where the real woman is portrayed, with all her flaws and mood swings. ■

THE PERFECT WOMAN?

ELITA KARIM

PHOTO: PRABIR DAS



ABOUT TOWN



BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH LEADERSHIP TRAINING 14
 March 10, 3 pm, Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre Baridhara
 Hosted by Bangladesh Youth Leadership Centre (BYLC)
 For tickets and more information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1040868965936369/>



FRESH PRESENTS ARIJIT SINGH WITH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
 March 10, 6.30 pm, Bangladesh Army Stadium
 Hosted by Dhanshiri Communication Limited
 For Query, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/events/989121817835867/>



The Masculinity Project: Photo/narrative Exhibition and Dialogue
 DHAKA ROUND
 February 27 to March 10, EMK Center, Dhanmondi