

HOROSCOPE

**ARIES**
(MAR. 21-APRIL 20)

Lack of attention could cause problems. Your ability to come up with solutions will bring recognition from superiors. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

**TAURUS**
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

You have a lot to offer. Refuse to get involved in gossip. Cutbacks at work will be a cause for worry. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

**GEMINI**
(MAY 22-JUNE 21)

Don't jump into investments too quickly. Do your research before committing to anything. Daydreaming will be your downfall. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**CANCER**
(JUNE 22-JULY 22)

Spend time with loved ones. Your partner will need some attention. Difficulties relating to children will be stressful. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**LEO**
(JULY 23-AUG 22)

Take care in interacting with colleagues. Minor accidents may occur if you are not careful. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

**VIRGO**
(AUG. 23-SEPT. 23)

Avoid getting involved in idle chatter. Be prepared for an active but rewarding week. Spend time with friends. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**LIBRA**
(SEPT. 24-OCT. 23)

Problems at home can be disconcerting. Take care of yourself. Business trips will yield the best results. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**SCORPIO**
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Difficulties with your partner may arise. Avoid any petty ego confrontations. Try not to be insensitive to someone's needs. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**SAGITTARIUS**
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Seminars will provide you with knowledge. Your personal life will have some trouble. Don't be too shy to promote your own interests. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

**CAPRICORN**
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't blow situations out of proportion. Feel good about yourself. Try to avoid financial burdens. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

**AQUARIUS**
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

You may be overreacting to personal problems. Friends may not understand your situation. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

**PISCES**
(FEB. 20-MARCH. 20)

Try not to take unnecessary risks. Your peers could start problems. Your original ideas will bring recognition. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

LS EDITOR'S NOTE

The other side of being a girl

International Day of the Girl Child (Day of the Girl) is celebrated annually on 11 October to highlight issues concerning gender inequality facing young girls. This year's theme is 'The Power of the Adolescent Girl: Vision for 2030'.

It is a regular evening at the bazaar in Duaripara Mirpur slum area. A few light bulbs flicker and stale vegetables are kept fresh with sprinkles of water. The women have just gotten off from work — the garment factories, or other work places, and are cheerily heading home.

Their only time for relaxation happens when they stop by Parul's grocery store for a sweet betel leaf while purchasing a few kilograms of rice and potatoes, onions or garlic, and a handful of chillies to cook the fish or the chicken skin they bought at a discounted price from the kitchen market.

Parul is in her mid-teen years, her face shows intelligence with keen eyes and sharp mind, but she is a school dropout. She is the sole earner of her big family of five siblings and ailing parents.

It is Parul's busy time of the day. Her bamboo and cane top store is buzzing with activity and it is becoming quite hard to keep up the pace. Yet she attends to all her customers with a smile, as if they were godsend angels.

I came across Parul, and many like her, during my many reporting stints at the urban slums. And all their stories are similar. School dropouts, married, divorced, working; you would almost say that it is the slum scenario, but if you looked quite closely, you would be able to discover that most girls in our country were in the same condition, even beyond the boundaries of the shantytown!

There are nearly 600 million girls aged 10 to 19 in the world today, each with limitless individual potential, however they are disappearing from public awareness and the international development agenda. Between inequities in secondary education to protection issues, adolescent girls are uniquely impacted and should benefit from targeted investments and programmes that address their individual needs. Investing in adolescent girls can have a formidable ripple effect to create a better world by 2030.

[Source: Awareness Day UK. www.awarenessdays.com]

Despite making strides in economic and social indices, women or a girl child in Bangladesh still suffer from discrimination and abuse from their family and society

across Bangladesh. It is an age-old social value that the 'ijjat' — dignity, or the family status of the house — will be ruined if the women cannot protect themselves from physical or sexual threat.

When a girl is born, the first thought that possibly crosses minds of all new parents is about security and how to protect her from



the obvious sexual threats she might face growing up. Thus, begins the drill of instilling family values, social, cultural and religious principles into her that she is the custodian of her family's collective respect, status and dignity.

"Another religious feeling that is practiced in Bangladesh is that a woman's body becomes unholy if someone touches her before her husband. And the constant hammering of this need to protect herself ruins her self-dignity and respect; she feels burdened by the need to protect her body.

"Consequently, her boundary becomes limited for which her actions get restricted, since there is no one to protect her, so she moves in her own boundary," says U M Habibun Nessa, Advocate, Supreme Court, Bangladesh and former President of

Naripokkho.

"The threat women and adolescent girls face is in their sexuality. They are objectified, for which the insecurity. When you talk about women's security issues it can be explained at four levels — her personal domain, family space, in the public or society, and in the state machine or workplace. Similarly, violence against women also has defined aspects to it such as sexual, physical, mental and economic insecurity at family or work place. And these two are intertwined. The violence done against her makes her vulnerable and insecure as a human being and as a citizen of her country," says Banasree Mitra Neogi, Senior Coordinator —Rights, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), an NGO working for the underprivileged.

Over the years as a journalist, I have had opportunities to talk to several women's rights activists like Habibun Nessa and Banasree Mitra, and people who work at the field level. The facts and figures that are revealed in various reports are indeed a reality, and as it seems the state of security for a girl child, or a woman is, at an abhorrently low point in our country. Rape and murder, and getting away with it, is as common in the capital as it is in our urban slums and remote villages.

Come every UN Girl Child Day we renew our pledge to improve their stance and talk about their plight but nothing more than that is done for the rest 364 days. Think about it and change your attitude towards your girl child.

This week Star Lifestyle has few interesting reads on orthopaedic disorders, something every sedentary Bangladeshi would benefit from reading I am sure. The article on investing in your car music system is also a mighty helpful read, especially when you consider those grueling hours stranded on Dhaka roads; you do need music to keep you going.

Please enjoy reading Star Lifestyle and don't forget to go through our Facebook page for throwback Thursday treats.

— RBR

The article contains excerpts from previous articles penned by the author. Parul's name has been changed at the request of the interviewee.

CORRIGENDUM

On Tuesday, October 3, 2017, Volume 17, Issue 16, Star Lifestyle ran a feature titled, "Finally! A Pilates Studio". The write-up had erroneously stated that local instructors were to be trained by Yasmin Karachiwala of 'Yasmin's Body Image for Fitness Studio', while she will actually be training international instructors. We regret the error and sincerely apologise for any inconvenience caused.