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Life

Style

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Contemplating SUMMER

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED
MODEL: MANOSHI
STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
MAKEUP: FARZANA SHAKIL
WARDROBE: SAREE CLUB BY
SHAHRUK AMIN

GETTING READY FOR RAMADAN
PLAN IT TO PERFECTION P3
BEATING THE BLUES
FOOD FOR COMFORT P10
STAY FIT WORKING FROM HOME
REFRESHING SALADS P11

আতঙ্কে নয়
সচেতন থাকুন, ঘরে থাকুন
নিরাপদে থাকুন

অজস্র গল্পে সাজানো আপনার পরিবার, যার সুরক্ষার দায়িত্ব আপনারই। ঘরে থাকুন আর
নিরাপদ রাখুন আপনার সম্পর্কের রঙিন গল্পগুলো। ব্যক্তি সচেতনতাই সুস্থ-সুন্দর
রাখতে পারে দেশ ও দেশের সবাইকে।


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The story of social media communities

The recent pandemic has taken its toll on our minds and bodies. We are constantly obsessing about when and where it's going to rear its ugly head, and as a result, also getting unwarranted anxiety attacks.

While it's very normal for a sane person to 'want' to be updated on the state of affairs, it can also get hectic and unhealthy for the psyche.

In such circumstances, we let a few benevolent individuals enter our lives with good news. These people try to curb the complexities and make regular living as close to normal as possible by creating social media groups or communities that keep us as busy, interested and away from unnecessary tension.

One such group, Let the Music Play!, was created on 4 April, and it already has 2000 plus members in the community. This again proves how much people love listening to music and how it's the one thing in the world that helps communities connect, conferred Sabera Anwar, initiator of the mentioned social media group.

Anwar can be credited for few other groups on social media such as Phone-ography, where people share pictures taken by their personal mobile phones, Giggles and Tickles, a light-hearted group for sharing jokes and memes all in the hope of sharing some fun. Anwar can also be



credited for She for She, a well-thought-out platform to connect the urban female folk of our country.

According to Anwar, the long-term plan with the group is to build a non-profit organisation to assist the urban woman in need, helping them grow and sustain in the ever-changing socio-economic landscape.

Anwar also informed us that the groups she had initiated were established in the hope of creating a meaningful community,



one where like-minded people connected. And during the days of Covid-19, these groups added the benefit of relieving tension and normalise life as much as possible.

Upon inquiry whether these groups were all short-term or had the potential to become something bigger, Anwar nodded towards a brighter future.

"Of course, it's long term! These communities are hard to build, as they comprise of very special and reputable

people. With the 'Let the Music Play' community, I have learned that there is a pre-existing appeal towards music, especially Bangladeshi music.

"With this group, I hope to re-introduce maestros to the new generation so that they are able to assess the missing link — how it would have never been possible to appreciate contemporary music without its lineage. On a more serious note, without Azam Khan, it would have been impossible



to appreciate the young rock singers of today," said the enthusiastic deshi music lover.

Anwar added that she had plans on providing a platform for young musicians of Bangladesh through her community, which was ever-growing and also initiate a radio station someday.

Another popular group that has been doing the rounds is 'No Diet Today by Esha Rushdi'. Created during the days of Covid-19, this group provides home chefs a platform to showcase their food, culinary skills, food décor and also market home cooked food, if need be.

"It's an awesome group. I have had nothing much to do during the lockdown. So, I cooked during the better half of the day and let everyone else see my cooking. Their appreciations certainly helped boost my esteem and calmed my nerves during the pandemic," said an anonymous member of the group.

With a cult following of 58,000 followers, almost everyone on Bangladeshi social media already know about THOA or The House of Art. The most interesting fact about this group is that it only began a few weeks ago and already rose up the ranks in the shortest possible time.

Equally interesting is Art a Day by Sriya Sharbojaya, and the only reason she helped build the community was to stay positive and happy by sharing art in any form — from painting to photography to even cooking. Anything to keep calm, connected and less stressed during Covid -19.

The mentioned groups may sound light, but they help maintain mental harmony, while there are a few other groups that actually work towards keeping us safe during the pandemic. One such credible and notable group is PPE Distribution Network by Taslima Miji, Faiza Rahman, and few others.

"During the beginning of Covid-19 when there was a serious shortage in PPE, I was extremely worried for my fellow workers, doctors and other frontline warriors. I wanted to personally do something for them. Today, the group has become big and a credible place to order PPE. We make sure that no one in this group sells sub-par items or anything with exorbitant prices. We only allow a legitimate price range and products with materials approved by the health ministry. This group is my own personal way of contributing to the welfare of the society," said Miji.

There are so many other similar communities, from pet owners' groups to health groups, the rise of which, especially during Covid-19, only echoes one truth; they are not diversions but a stronghold to keep us united during these difficult days.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo: Collected

us on f /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

স্যান্ডালিনা
সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...

KOHINOOR
CHEMICAL

Maintaining grace

For the last few weeks, I have been thinking about certain things. Stuff that we tend to do as a society; some good, some not so good. Things that we say without judging its consequences on others — blatant lies, exorbitant showing-off, some know-it-all like comments.

Because of the lockdown, I have nothing better to do than don my thinking cap, and I realised that whenever we are in a crisis or at a downhearted point in our life, we come to show our true faces.

I mean jealousy is a sin that we knowingly or unknowingly encourage within our psyche. If ever we get any accolades, it must only be bestowed upon me or else it's not worth a praise.

It's always me and myself. We take the liberty of imposing our rules and regulations, our principles on people we barely know. Giving everyone a piece of our mind is sort of our deed of the day.

Take for instance, the accomplishment of a certain celebrity when she got published in a certain prestigious magazine. The poor thing, instead of being appreciated, was writing replies and posts to genuinely prove her worth to people who doubted her feat.

When someone from your country gets into a selected list, whatever her craft, whether you may or may not like, s/he deserves some kudos for it. We should have kept these opinions to ourselves, as she was not asking for them; no wonder she nit-picks on aunties like us.

I was thinking about the case of a recently married actress and a director from overseas; the amount of prejudicial wishes the couple got was mind-blowing.

Why was it so important to let them know our opinions? Why was it important



for us to pass sermons on someone who, wanted to settle for marital bliss a second time around? Do we really need to pester them with our outrageous opinions?

In times of Covid-19, I get to see another kind of bigheads. If we want to help the needy, let's do it discreetly so that our left hand does not know what our right hand does. Calling in TV crews to do a story on how we are handing out a few sacks of rice grains to the slum dwellers is downright shameful; when that same us also force rickshaw pullers to pay for damages done when they accidentally dent our precious cars.

Posting our entire prayers as Facebook statuses or how much we spent on charity, or how your loved ones, who never went

to the slums before, has gone there to provide relief is not necessary. Flaunting it on social media and craving for likes and credits are not savvy, especially when there are other responsibilities and duties left undone.

I was approached by three guards from my vicinity to help them because their employers locked the house and went away without arranging for their monthly payment.

Our guards and service help are our charges, and while preparing relief package for the downtrodden, we must remember to clear such dues; these people have families to feed as well.

Bigheadedness, opinionated, narcissistic, self-absorption are words to best describe

our society and us. We get to see these traits more when we face any calamity.

It's easy to fall from grace but hard to maintain grace. Live and let live, please. The need to let our two-cents' worth or our very trivial handouts known to the world is kind of a display of our pathetic need to brag about and feed our big inflated ego that has grown out of proportion.

In this time and era of social media revolution, everything needs a consolidation that it has been registered and liked, even the trash we say or do.

Think about it.

This week, Star lifestyle has some fine recipes about salad dressings and vinaigrettes. Why not try them out for upcoming iftars and take your mind off things. Stay home and stay safe.

— RBR

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Relatives will want to meet. Plan a trip for later. Romantic encounters are likely. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Take time for yourself. Don't make any financial deals. Spend time with children. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Promote your ambitions. Offers of joint ventures are likely. Sort out your personal issues. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Make changes to yourself. Love will find its way to you. Avoid people with bad habits. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Find competitive activities to do. Take care of your family. Brace yourself for disturbing matters. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Avoid idle chatter. Pick up additional skills. Expect some broken promises. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Get involved in fun activities. Channel your energy into professional endeavours. Don't let yourself feel guilty. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Use your creative ideas. Your boss may be dissatisfied with your work. Loved ones could disappoint. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Take advantage of moneymaking ventures. Various uncertainties are likely. Your partner may not respond to you. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Your talents will be noticed. Find ways to earn extra money. Try not to hurt loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Things aren't as they appear. Put your plans into motion. Investments will be profitable. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Settle matters promptly. Children could make things hectic. Don't fall for damaging rumours. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

COVER STORY

The deshi *way*

With summer having arrived, be ready to take on the heat — the deshi way. Kurtis are the traditional casuals; easy to wear, comfortable, and fashionable. Starting from your day-to-day lives to even parties, the right kurti or sari will always keep you looking chic with the least effort. So, let's talk about these kurtis and saris — because there's nothing more comfortable while discussing deshi.

Photo : Kaushik Iqbal
Model : Tabinda
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe : Rose by Nizhu





Summer is here. While you may be thinking of dipping in a swimming pool for hours and sipping iced coffee latte in gallons, our current situation might be slightly aversive to our wilfulness. But that and many other reasons should not dampen our spirits, as we are not made of spun glass, but of steel.

Spelling COMFORT the deshi way

Setting aside figurative expressions, we can boldly say that whatever the situation, a 'comfy' attire can always lift the mood, fight illness and make sure our mental and physical wellbeing is set straight.

Saris are the traditional casuals; easy to wear, comfortable, and fashionable. Starting from your day-to-day lives to even parties, the right sari will always keep you looking chic with the least effort and the same ideology goes for a kurti.

FABRIC

Comfort is of the utmost priority when it comes to finding the right sari or kurti. Cotton and linen are your best bet. These are affordable and can easily be tailored. As for the sari, remember to pair it with a comfortable blouse especially made of cool shades like pastels, corals, or even the widely reputable 'ivory white.' As for something fancier — silks, crepes and georgettes are popular. With designer houses offering a wide range of stunning kurtis and saris, you can never go wrong.

CUT

Kurtis come in a number of cuts, all catered to each woman's personal style. While the six-yard saris may 'all be the same,' the blouse makes 'all the difference.'

A regular tunic cut is a classic and it never goes out of style for the kurti. On the other hand, some more uncommon cuts like the asymmetric, with tails or slits, can look very stylish and yet very comfortable. For the average blouse, a basic design could be the round necked, three quarter sleeves and for the kurti, it is the knee-length, straight cut.

COLOURS

Colours matter and its basic science! During days when you are overloaded with heat, exhaustion and humidity — you will feel drowned, especially if you have clothes in darker shades on. In the tropics, the temptation is to always put on a shade that's soothing to the eyes and also feels extremely comfortable.

The whole tone of kurtis and cotton saris present a casual mood, even amidst the fanciest of occasions. Soft, subtle shades are perfect in every form. For offices and classes, muted shades look just right.

Jewel tones are best for fancier events. Pastels and its different combinations are usually a popular choice too. Lately, multi-colours within a subtle shade of white/beige are trending.



PATTERNS

Patterns in more muted casuals are quite common; from stripes to floral prints, most patterns are perfect as an everyday 'go-to' wear. Thread embroidery are adored, looks gorgeous, and are great for both casual and fancy occasions. For parties and special celebrations, intricate gold, pearl, and sequins look astonishingly well.

THE COMPLEMENTARY

Casual days demand simple leggings, jeans or shalwar, along with delicate accessories to set the right tone for a kurti. To dress-up, pair it with a fancier pair of pants with embroideries; tulip/flared pants are also doing the rounds at the moment. Lastly, pair your kurti with the right shoes and accessories and you can never go wrong.

The same can be said about saris, casual days demand that you wear a plain and matched blouse in subtle hues. You may accessorise the look with small trinkets and flat sandals. A fancier look demands that you play with the cuts of the blouse, wear bolder colours and yet less jewellery, as it's summer. With stilettos, clutches and nude makeup, you should definitely be able to turn a few heads around.

By Zohaina Amreen

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Shila, Manoshi
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Makeup: Farzana Shakil
Wardrobe: Saree Club by Shahruk Amin

Hair goals 2020



Gone are the days when one had to overload their hair with products to look glammed up! In fact, 2020 hair goals are all about that messy, effortlessly flawless, just-woke-up kind of hair.

Whether you opt for multiple layers or shaggy curtain bangs, you are well on your way to rock some of the season's fiercest looks.

THE MODERN SHAG

Featuring the 1970's curtain bangs, long razored ends, and multiple layers framing your face, the shaggy haircut is the ultimate 2020 look. From Selena Gomez to Elizabeth Olsen, the modern shaggy look is all the rage.

The cut is a great way to look effortlessly edgy, giving lots of scope to add texture and dimension to your hair. In fact, there is a shaggy look for every hair texture and in every hair length. Those with silky straight hair can opt for choppy layered ends. For the curly beauties, make sure you ask for ultra-long layers to accentuate your curls and finish your



look with side-swept bangs.

BEACH WAVES

With 2020 hair talk being all about texture, the beach waves are still in season! In fact, nothing says naturally gorgeous as much as those loose glossy curls. Instead of over styling your hair, accentuate your natural texture with heating tools and a bit of shine spray. If you do not want to use heat, fret not. You could also flat-twist your hair and wrap it into a bun with a scrunchie to get the messy look overnight. To add a bit of dimension to your waves, opt for gradual highlights to finish your look.

HAIR UPDOS

As the year highlights messy natural textures, buns and braids are the ultimate go-to look! No matter what your hair texture is, there is always an updo for you. Updos can give the illusion of more volumised hair and therefore, are ideal for those with thin hair.

From sophisticated braided buns to funky casual updos, there are plenty of options for you to choose from. Opt for



a swirly bun or create a plait and tuck the ends of your hair with a bobby pin.

Those with curly hair, remember to leave a few strands out at the front.

BOB (OR LOB) IT UP!

The short bob cut is still the go-to for a sophisticated look. From the sleek blunt one-length cuts to the fun short and choppy look, there's definitely one to suit your personality!

For a bold edgy finish, opt for slightly uneven layers. This year's bobs are highly focused on creating gorgeous angles at your jawline. Collarbone, chin-length or cropped styles are perfect ways to add volume to your hair. If you are too scared to go all out, opt for a long bob or a lob. Finally, finish your glam look with an ombre or a soft balayage to give your locks some extra movement.

By Adiba Mahbub Proma

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

INTERVIEW

Aspirations and towering responsibilities

Some time ago, the Bangladeshi news portals were shaken up by amazing news even amidst the severe global crisis. Two young ladies of Bangladesh made it to the Forbes' 30 under 30 Asia class of 2020 list. Everybody knows their names by now, but here, we tell you their stories.



AMAL FOUNDATION & ESRAT

Esrat Karim Eve, founder of the Amal Foundation, used to be a meek youngster back in the day. She claims to have been an introvert with social anxiety.

"I only discovered my full potential after joining Dhaka University and staying away from my parents. Before that, I remember not being able to fill a glass of water from the jar. I had to be helped," claimed the Forbes acknowledged social worker.

During the interview, Karim also shed light on the name 'Amal' — an Arabic term meaning 'hope' and was the base of the establishment initiated by her.

"Amal Foundation works in four sectors, namely education, health, emergency response, and women's empowerment. We work in remote riverine islands of the north, with displaced communities and numerous slums of the capital, dealing with everyday issues like sexual harassment to providing mental health support," disclosed Karim.

This journey was not easy at all. Being shy, she did not know how to express her feelings, but here she is now, helping so many people through an organisation she initiated from scratch.

So, how did it all come into being?

After D.U., Karim went on to study abroad for her master's degree and there, she acquired a huge amount of mentorship and courage from her teachers.

"The best thing I ever did to build on my aspirations was an internship at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and this very opportunity showed me the light at the end of the tunnel! I knew what I wanted to

do with my life... I just knew," said Karim.

After that, it was a long road for her since she decided to return to Bangladesh and contribute to the welfare of the country — one that she was particularly fond of.

"The road wasn't easy at all! I returned in 2014, with little clue as to how to begin work with the foundation. With no support system back here, I struggled with depression. Then, things worked out slowly, as a few junior friends began to help me with my objective and I started working on small projects. And since those preliminary days, I never had to look back again" Karim said.

Inquired about her recent stint with Forbes Magazine, Esrat Karim shied a little, but was clear-cut in portraying that the accomplishment was a team effort rather than her own.

"Forbes recognised me because of Amal Foundation, but this social organisation would have been nowhere without the hard work of the members, beneficiaries and even my family's support," recalled Karim.

She added that success or recognition is never easy; and that it only comes after a whole lot of hard work.

JHAKANAKA & RABA KHAN

Another name that pops up while discussing the 30 under 30 Asia class of 2020 list with Forbes Magazine is Raba Khan, the famous female satire artist of Dhaka.

We spoke to Raba Khan about her recent recognition and the unprecedented

backlash she received; and she surely had a lot on her mind.

"Back in 2014, there was a boom in online based YouTubers, my favourite being Lilly Singh. Getting inspired by her satires, I wanted to do something similar in Bangladesh. My antics began with a tripod, a camera and my brothers' video editing skills," reminisced Khan.

From then, till now, Khan has taken part in myriad videos, mostly socially relevant satires. She boasts about her fans being able to relate to the content because they deal with topics ranging from body shaming to modern relationships.

"Dealing with negative attitude in a positive light is what I do best. My methods may be light and funny, but they actually bear a subtle hint to the prevalent cynicism and how it's time we changed and became

When we wanted to know what Raba Khan stood for, she promptly replied, "Raba Khan is a brand, she is also a hard-working individual who has been able to set precedence to the satire world of Bangladesh, that women can also be funny and equally successful."

There's a whole lot of misinformation doing the rounds recently that Raba Khan only managed to be on the cover of Forbes because of her PR agency.

"I'd just like to tell them that I am my own PR, and completely self-made. While you have the chance to criticise as much as you want, I won't pay any heed to it, if it's not constructive. Tell me how I can better myself, I will listen, and try to become something bigger and better," said the superbly confident lady.

To end on an optimistic note, both



better human beings," she added.

Khan's online contents are famously termed as the Jhakanaka Project, which she claims has been influenced by her childhood friends, who used to call her by that name since she was always a bit 'blingy with an over-the-top sense of style.'

"I was borderline tacky – I will admit that," said Khan unabashedly.

The Jhakanaka Project inspired her to ultimately initiate the JKNK merchandise and fashion line.

"I always wanted to have my own fashion line. It's very simple actually; I do my own styling and when people like it, I suggest where and how to get it. If they still want my help on this, then I suggest that they place an order at JKNK and then we make it for them," said the trendsetting satire artist.

Karim and Khan suggested that young Bangladeshis trying to make a difference in the world apply for international and global recognition in order to boost self-esteem and make our country renowned in the worldwide arena.

While recognitions may help to strengthen one's ground, it is also the process to make aspirations bigger and responsibilities higher. Today, Bangladeshis expect more from these two talented individuals and others who were acknowledged before them.

It is for them and future personalities that we expect a prosperous tomorrow.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo Courtesy: Esrat Karim Eve and Raba Khan

A cat's guide to social distancing

Before social distancing became the lifesaving trend it is today, cats everywhere have been practicing this age-old social decorum since before the beginning of time. Over the years, like all cats, my cat Sushi has also perfected this art, and here is what I learned from her successful distancing endeavours.

STAYING ALOOF

Sushi has a reputation for being slightly reserved and at times, unsociable. She withdraws from her surroundings and remains engrossed in herself. If someone were to interrupt her trance, she would remain unresponsive, keep her cool, and walk away. Now, no one bothers her or forces her to interact with them but leaves her to her own mysterious imaginations and meditation.

It may be difficult for us to master the art of aloofness in such a short time, but behaving socially reluctant and being consumed by our own thoughts is a start.

SELF-APPRECIATION

We often crave attention from others to feel like we belong, to feel appreciated. This need for validation and approval pushes us to interact with others. However, Sushi



is not like that. She knows her worth and loves herself dearly. She does not need to constantly hear how adorable and pretty she is from us, she already knows it. She enjoys her own company and enjoys learning about herself in her own fortress of solitude, teaching us the value of spending time with ourselves.

SELF-ENTERTAINMENT

During social distancing, keeping ourselves occupied is challenging. When I look at Sushi, I see how she finds joy in the littlest of things. Chasing bugs, climbing the curtains, playing with paper balls, staring into the abyss — are some of the activities Sushi enjoys on her own. Such activities might be mundane to us, but reading books, painting, playing video games,

learning to cook or a new craft, watching cartoons and sitcoms are good ways to keep ourselves entertained.

When she does want some attention, she simply knocks something over. Not for validation or physical contact, but to entertain herself in her destructive ways and to show her human how moronic it is to seek joy among others.

KNOWING WHEN TO SURFACE

One might lock themselves in their rooms to socially distance themselves. At some point, they must come out of hiding. But which moment is the right moment to show yourself?

Sushi tends to go missing, hiding in corners and tiny spaces for hours. It remains a mystery what this cat does and where she

goes, but she always reappears at the most crucial times, lunch and dinner!

Yes, Sushi only surfaces when she knows she is going to be fed and when no one will bother her. Years of observation has given her a profound idea of her human's daily routine.

What we can take away from this is getting out of the house or interacting with others should be done based on necessity. Getting groceries and medical supplies. Leaving one's room only to eat, like Sushi, is a little extreme, but nevertheless a good way to socially distance yourself.

DISTANCING TACTICS

Sometimes, even if we are socially distancing ourselves, people around us behave like human magnets. It becomes difficult to avoid interactions at close proximity. Sushi has effective ways to avert any kind of interaction, which can easily be adopted by us in variations.

Sushi hisses, scratches and bites every time someone gets too close. Indeed, if we as humans did so, it would make social distancing a lot easier, but there are subtler ways. Saying "no" to social events and being 'the cousin that never shows up,' telling your friends "my mum said no" when they insist on coming over or going out to catch-up.

Sushi's social distancing principle is to find comfort within herself and in her solitude. The thought of being left to her own devices does not frighten her but rather, makes her more adventurous.

We human beings are social creatures, but for now, when social distancing is a necessity, we ought to look at these innocent furry animals and take away some things from their way of living. Maybe they have always been the superior ones, while deceiving us with their helpless act. No wonder there are statues of them littered all over Egypt.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo: Sania Aiman

Children, distance-learning, and COVID-19

"When can I go back to school?" asked my daughter.

I find it difficult to tell her that there will not be any school for her for the rest of this school year. She misses riding the yellow bus to and from her school. She misses her teachers and friends, like hundreds of millions of children across the world who are at home because they are under some kind of lockdown. My daughter's daily routine is in disarray.

The White House announced that Americans would have to stay at home until at least April 30. In our state, the governor has ordered a shelter-in-place until May 15. From what I am hearing, watching, and reading, I can safely say that there will most likely be no more school for our children this school year. They will lose a chunk of their normal childhood in the process, but then again, this is not exactly a normal time from any perspective. As

a matter of fact, closing down schools is having an immensely positive impact on our effort to 'flatten the curve.'

My daughter's school moved to online instruction from March 31. I am still trying to get the hang of the virtual learning platform, Schoology, that is making distance-learning possible for our children. We are lucky that in the USA, there are ways by which students can continue to learn things, even when they are at home.

In the last one year, I came to know about digital learning tools and websites like DreamBox, BrainPOP, SpellingCity, and Reflex, which help children practice and hone their math or reading skills from anywhere in the world. Epic! on the other hand, is a digital library for children with over 40,000 books in its collection.

My daughter's assignments now arrive on Schoology, where her class teacher

gives her math problems and writing activities; she instructs her to practice math on Reflex or DreamBox, draw, do small hands-on projects, or read certain books on Epic!

The teacher can remotely monitor all these activities, and track the progress of every single student. She can even grade the assignments, which parents upload to Schoology once their children complete them. Not only that, my daughter's class teacher also arranges virtual meetings with her students via Zoom, a remote conferencing service.

On weekday mornings, my daughter and I sit together to work on her daily assignments. Yes, it is not the same as face-to-face learning in a classroom setting where you can achieve a lot more, but in this time of crisis, this is the best we can do to keep our children from unlearning what they have learned.

Online learning has, however, made one thing clear; not every family can afford this method of learning. The problem of digital divide is very real.

Even here, in the world's wealthiest nation, there are so many low-income families with no access to computers and broadband internet. Public school districts are trying their best to provide these families with laptops, tablets, and free internet service. However, even this will not be enough, because not all adults are equipped with the education or technological knowledge to continuously teach their children from home. And last but not least, parents who still have to go to work in this pandemic, people whose jobs are essential in nature, do not have the luxury of staying at home to home-school their children.

By Wara Karim

RECIPE

6 life-changing salad dressing recipes

Most would agree that salads by itself is a boring food. What's interesting about munching plain vegetables anyway? Well, we should thank the creators of salad dressings to concoct an elixir that levels up all salad recipes. These six salad dressing recipes will jazz up your salad, surprisingly leaving you craving for more.

CREAMY ITALIAN DRESSING

Ingredients

½ cup extra virgin olive oil
3 tbsp white vinegar
¼ cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 tbsp mayonnaise
1 tsp sugar
1 garlic clove
½ tsp dried oregano
½ tsp dried parsley
½ tsp dried basil
½ tsp black pepper
Pinch of salt

Method

In a mason jar, combine all the ingredients. Start by adding the liquids first, followed by finely grated Parmesan cheese and minced garlic, and finally, the seasonings and condiments. Tightly close the lid and give this a good shake for two minutes so that all the ingredients meld together to create a creamy, homogenous mixture. This creamy Italian dressing accompanies Italian salads such as pasta salad or Caprese salad well.

CAESAR DRESSING

If your Caesar salad tastes bland, this dressing will give it the perfect boost and turn it into something utterly delectable.

Ingredients

2 tbsp mayonnaise
2 tsp mustard
2 garlic cloves
½ tsp salt
½ tsp lemon pepper
¾ cup light olive oil
¼ cup lime juice



¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese

Method

In a blender or food processor, combine mayonnaise, mustard, grated garlic, salt, lemon pepper, and the juice of a lime and give it a whiz. Once combined, remove the vapour cover of the blender lid and gradually pour in olive oil while it is still on. Finally, add in the grated Parmesan cheese and give it one last blitz.

JALAPENO RANCH DRESSING



This salad is light yet creamy with a fresh note of lime singing at the background.

Ingredients

Handful of coriander leaves
1 cup sour cream
1 jalapeno
2 tsp lime juice
1 tsp lime zest
1 tsp salt

1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp lemon pepper

Method

Chop the coriander to get 4 tablespoons, deseed the jalapeno and chop it, and zest one lime to get a teaspoon of lime zest. Add all the ingredients in a mixer and blitz until you achieve a mixture that has a lush, creamy texture. This can be used as a dip to dunk your chips and wedges, or you can drizzle generously over tacos and fajitas.



HONEY MUSTARD DRESSING

This salad dressing possesses the ability to turn inedible raw vegetables into lip-smacking meals. A word of caution: this is addictive!

Ingredients

¼ cup mustard
¼ cup honey
¼ cup apple cider vinegar
¼ cup vegetable
1 tbsp salt
1 tbsp lemon pepper

Method

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk them until you get a runny and smooth liquid. You can drizzle this generously to liven up your Cobb salad or vegetable bowls and wraps.

BALSAMIC VINAIGRETTE DRESSING

If you are already satisfied with the taste of your vinaigrette dressing, think again!

Because this salad dressing recipe will take your basic vinaigrette dressing and turn it into a magical potion of goodness.

Ingredients

3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp mustard
1 garlic clove (minced)
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
Pinch of salt and black pepper

Method

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk until all the ingredients come together, concocting a uniform mixture. This versatile salad dressing pairs harmoniously with anything — be it Greek salad or Panzanella salad.

CHIMICHURRI DRESSING

Fretting over the fact that Chimichurri sauce or dressing is hardly available at our local grocery stores is not doing anyone good. Thus, here is an easy homemade Chimichurri dressing made with ingredients that are at the ready.

Ingredients


½ cup olive oil
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar
½ cup chopped coriander
2 cloves garlic
2 red chillies
1 tsp oregano
1 tsp salt
½ tsp pepper

Method

Start by pressing chopped red chillies, garlic, and coriander with salt in a pestle and mortar to bring out the natural oils and flavours. Shift this to a bowl and add the rest of the ingredients. Mix them well to attain a coarse dressing that sits well atop proteins like grilled salmon, chicken, and steak.

By Fariha Amber


Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed




করোনা ভাইরাস-এ


আতঙ্কিত না হয়ে প্রতিরোধ গড়ে তুলি!

প্রতিবার সাবান অথবা হ্যান্ড ওয়াশ
দিয়ে অন্তত ২০ সেকেন্ড* হাত ধুয়ে নেই



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* Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

REAL FAMILY HEALTH PROTECTOR

UNDER A DIFFERENT SKY

BY IFFAT NAWAZ



Three speaking Mynas

It was an overcast late spring day and two mynas were sitting on a cashew tree not too far from the sea. The branches were swaying as the waves touched the shore and sent out a gentle hello to all who resided close by. The earth vibrated with the rhythm of the wind's play of multiplying ripples.

The older Myna commented to the younger, "Windy day!"

The younger asked, "You think a storm is coming?"

"Not yet," said the older one, "the sky will clear in a few days, maybe a few minutes of rain and then we will be back to golden sunshine and blue skies."

"I wish it rained more here," the little Myna started singing a rain-drop song.

"But it is not the time nor the place of rain.

One must know the time one is passing and the space one is holding in that time." The older Myna was suddenly thoughtful.

The younger Myna sensed that there was a story behind this contemplative voice of the elder, she stopped singing and turned. "Tell me more," she said, spreading her claws to secure her spot on the branch.

The older one too spread out his wings and then closed them in, as if to capture enough of the moist-cool-breeze to make for a good self-hug and preservation, then he reminisced.

It was a long time ago, but not a long, long time ago, that one of our ancestors who used to live in this tree had come across a young man on a windy day like this. The young man was a goat-herder, a poor fellow. Both the Myna and the herder were swaying with the whim of the wind when the King's men came, making a loud grand announcement.

"Hear ye, hear ye, our King had a dream and he is seeking a dream-interpreter. The person who can explain the dream correctly to the King will receive 10,000 gold coins." And then, the announcer explained the dream and moved forward.

The young man wistfully exclaimed, "Alas I wish I was an interpreter of dreams."

"Easy," sang a voice from the tree, it was our ancestor Myna of course. "I know the meaning of that dream. It's easy."

"You do?!" The young man jumped close. "Please tell me O handsome Myna, I can really use that 10,000 gold pieces. Look how poor I am, the only clothes I have are the ones I am wearing and just one meal a day is all I get to eat."

"Well," said the Myna, "I can tell you the meaning but you have to give me 5,000 gold coins, half the winning."

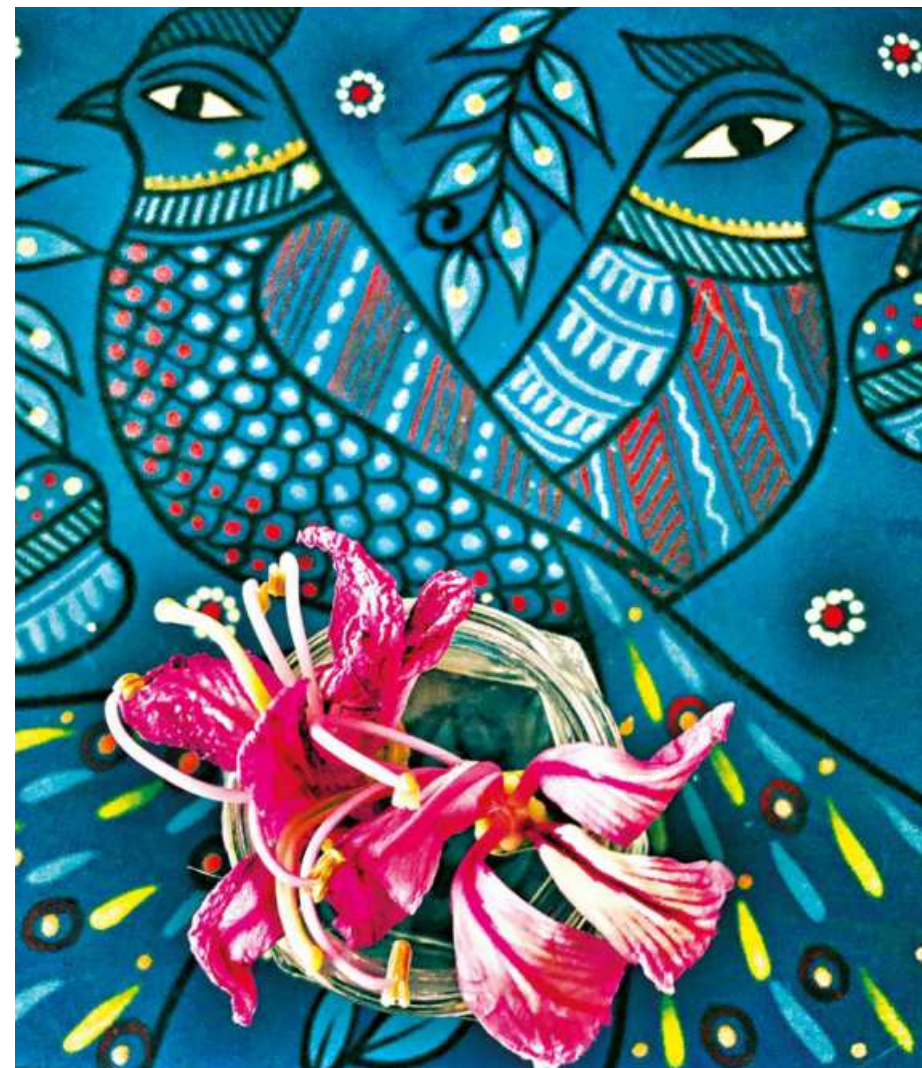
The young man didn't hesitate a moment. He said, "Deal!"

The Myna looked meditative and then he spoke, "Well as the King's men mentioned, in the dream, the king was sitting on his throne when a jackal jumped onto his lap. No matter what the king did the jackal would not get off him. Now everyone knows, a jackal stands for betrayal. The interpretation of the dream is that the King should be careful, there are traitors who are lurking around, and they could backstab him in a second." The ancestor Myna told the young man to run to the palace and tell the King the meaning immediately.

After hearing the interpretation of the dream, the King was very pleased. It sounded just right to him and he thanked the young man for his wisdom and gave him 10,000 gold coins.

As the young man was giddily returning with his beautiful turn of luck, he thought to himself, "What will a bird do with gold coins. I am not going back there, let me keep the whole amount to myself." And so, he did. And with it, he became rich and had his own establishment, he bought land, cattle and employed people to work for him. He no longer had to go near the tree where the ancestor Myna lived.

Five years went by, and one bright morning, the King's men knocked on the young man's door. The King's men said to him,



"Our king has had another dream. Come on, let's go, you have to interpret the dream for him."

The young man became very afraid. He had no talent for dream interpretation, as we know. He told the King's men, "I no longer do dream interpretations, please pardon me from this service."

"Oh yea? Either you do the interpretation, or we are putting you in prison for life. Which do you prefer?" The King's men cornered the young man who begged them to give him 24 hours-time. They left him to return the next day as the young man ran to the tree where ancestor Myna lived. All the while, worried that the Myna may not be there or even if he was, he may not help him.

The ancestor Myna was there, swinging on the branches. He saw the young man approach the tree. "You have brought my 5,000 gold coins after five years?" the ancestor Myna asked.

"No actually, I have spent it all, but the King had another dream and I am desperate for an interpretation or it may cost my life. Please dear Myna, help me! I will come and give you all the coins tomorrow after this ordeal ends."

"Okay, tell me the dream," said the reasonable Myna.

This time, in the King's dream, the king saw that he was walking through a part of the palace which was dark, and he was running from someone. There were loud and muffled cries and he saw a big mad elephant rushing his way, that's when the King woke up

the stone at our ancestor Myna, who flew away just in time to save his life. The young man went home with 20,000 gold coins.

Five years later, the King's men came again. With the same request, the King...a dream... needs interpretation. The young man again borrowed 24 hours and made it back to the cashew tree.

The Myna was about to fly away seeing the young man approach, but the young man started begging and apologising profusely. The kind Myna gave him one last chance.

This time, the dream was that, there were birds singing, and lush green trees were everywhere, the King was having heavenly desserts and honey was pouring out of fountains. The Myna said "Tell the King, it is time of harmony, peace and prosperity. Any project he starts now will be a success, he should enjoy this time along with his pupils."

Hearing the interpretation, the King gave the young man 50,000 gold coins. This time, the young man ran straight to the cashew tree, he offered it all to the Myna, "Kind Myna," the man who was not as young anymore said, "Please take the entire amount, I have wronged you in the past, please forgive me, I do not want to take any part of this prize."

The ancestor Myna exclaimed "I am a bird, what am I going to do with this money? Silly man! You take it, enjoy and help others."

The man was filled with gratitude, and asked the Myna why he was being so generous to him. "If it was anyone else, they would have really hated me by now," said the not-so-young-man.

The Myna told him, "Well see, it was not your fault that you acted the way you did. It was the time we were living in. The first time, there was betrayal in the air, so you betrayed me. The next time there was violence in the air, so you tried to kill me. And now, there is harmony and love in the air, so you are full of gratitude and goodwill. Rarely do we act out of our true nature but rather the nature that wind is spreading around, it is a collective environmental consciousness." The wise Myna smiled at the very thankful not-so-young-man, who had learnt his life's biggest lesson that day.

"So you see, little Myna," said the elder Myna, "before one acts out of character, or makes an impulsive decision, or a half-baked conclusion, they should think about the time and space they are in and judge if their actions and thoughts are triggered by the environment they are in, influenced by the messages carried in the wind, or is it coming from their true spirit, soul and heart."

The little Myna was taken by the story of her wise ancestor, and the new knowledge she acquired. She could almost hear a faint sound of an old song from the higher branch. She imagined it to be the echoing voice of the ancestor Myna, whose imprints had become a part of the cashew tree. The little Myna balanced her swaying between the rhythm of the wind and the beats of her heart as she watched a young man pass by whistling a breezy tune, and a full moon rose over the sea.

* Just like the little Myna, this story was passed down to me from elders.

Photo: Iffat Nawaz