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Star

LIFE

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Gardening HACKS

FORCED STAYCATION AND PAJAMA LOVE
FIX THE MESSED SLEEP CYCLES **P2**
GUILTY PLEASURE DONE RIGHT
PAIR THE CORRECT CHEESE **P3**
KEEP KITCHEN CLUTTER AT BAY
ORGANISING FOR A SMOOTH OPERATIONS **P9**

MODEL: NIKI



জীবাণু ধ্বংসে এক্সপার্ট

BERGER
MR. EXPERT
ADVANCED HAND SANITIZER

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জীবাণু ধ্বংসে কার্যকরী
পানির ব্যবহার ছাড়াই

World Health Organization (WHO) এর প্রস্তাবিত ফর্মুলা অনুযায়ী উৎপাদিত।

Getting your sleep schedule back to normal

The general holiday or lockdown has wreaked havoc on our sleep cycles; many are struggling to fall asleep and wake up on time.

Dr Ashique Selim, Lead Psychiatrist and Managing Director of Psychological Health and Wellness Clinic (PHWC), says that the solution lies in shifting the time of sleep by one or two hours every few days.

In an interview with The Daily Star, Dr Selim offered solutions on how to go about achieving that from busting myths to enlightening on sleep hygiene.

PULLING AN ALL-NIGHTER WON'T HELP

A myth for bringing sleep schedule back to the usual involves skipping one whole session of sleep and staying awake the following day, so that a person can easily fall asleep at a desirable time the following night.

"This is harmful as it results in sleep deprivation. You would be causing a net negative to the body. You should fix it gradually," the psychiatrist warns. "And even if you make this detrimental attempt, it is likely that you will eventually again go back to the undesired sleep schedule."

SLEEPING TABLETS WON'T HELP EITHER!

Dr Selim points out the hugely prevalent use of sleeping pills in our country, and stresses the importance of avoiding it (unless prescribed by a doctor in limited amounts, if necessary).

And popping sleeping tablets to fix your sleep routine cannot be a solution. "It will not be a naturally induced sleep, and the quality of sleep won't be the same," he informs.

CAN'T 'TURN YOUR BRAIN OFF'

For those who have trouble falling asleep, a common complaint is, "I simply can't turn my brain off."

Here, the focus should be on the 16 hours during which we are awake, particularly the last four before sleep. "If I play video games



at 11:30 PM, or read news on how many people died today due to COVID-19 just ten minutes before going to bed, how can I turn off my brain?" Dr Selim explains. "The key is the 16 hours. So, have I exercised, have I eaten healthy? Have I limited, or even better, avoided caffeine intake? If we do such things right, we can slowly wind down."

If you find yourself tossing and turning endlessly, he suggests getting out of bed and engaging in a relaxing activity — like reading a book or making a hot non-caffeinated drink — and then, when we start feeling a little sleepy, we can go back to bed.

WHAT KEEPS YOU UP AT NIGHT?

The smart phone negatively affects sleep in

more ways than you think!

Screens emit blue light, which mimics daylight.

And exposure to light, generally speaking, has an influence on sleep. The hormone called melatonin gets released in the absence of light (and hence, it is sometimes referred to as the 'Dracula hormone'); and its secretion is one of the factors which induce sleep. Therefore, Dr Selim suggests limiting various lights (including the light from our screens) well before bedtime.

Turning on night mode in the mobile device helps to an extent, but he suggests avoiding screens altogether, because it is not just about the blue light, but also the kind of content one consumes — something very relevant in times of COVID-19!

Ideally, the phone should be switched off and put away. Dr Selim explains, "We are tuned in to certain sounds. So, even whilst asleep, if someone calls out our name, it may awaken us. And the same goes for the sounds of notifications our phone makes. But if you switch off your phone and keep it in a separate room, your brain will not be waiting for those sounds anymore."

He strongly advises maintaining sleep hygiene; adhering to the basic healthy habits and practices surrounding sleep. "The bed should not be for using laptops, reading news, etc. When you lie down, your brain should know that it is time to sleep," he explains.

With proper sleep hygiene and the gradual process of shifting the time of sleep by up to two hours every few days, we can eventually get back to our normal sleep schedule — and hence, to our normal lives, if you think of it!

By M H Haider

Model: Niki

us on f /Sandalina

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ঠিক যেমন ঝপচাঁয় আড়িজাত্য মানেই

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ঝপচাঁয় আড়িজাত্য...

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

LS SUGGESTS

In cheese we trust!

The block of dairy goodness known as cheese is a delight in every way for the foodie. Sliced, shredded, melted or just nibbled on its own; there is no end to the possible combinations of enjoying cheese. However, there comes a time when you just need to take the guesswork out of the equation for a no-fail, well-rounded dish of cheesy comfort. And at times, it's easier to go with the flow of tastes, smells, and textures.

CHEESE PLATTERS FOR ALL

One of the easiest ways to enjoy a variety of cheese with an equal variety of accompaniments is the cheese platter. However, the best platters take textures and flavours into account to create a unique experience. Nuts, savoury crackers, seasonal fresh fruits and berries (or their dried versions) are all easy pickings, but it's the cheese that matters the most. Locally made Dhaka poneer can easily be given a place on the cheese board, right alongside imported Swiss cheese and gouda. Grilled vegetables, grapes, apple slices are fail-safe pairings for any cheese — from strong flavourful Camembert to crumbly feta.

TEXTURE MEETS TASTE

It may seem like the best choice based on intuition that hard cheese pairs well with soft accompaniments like pesto, chutney or jams, and soft cheese is complemented by crunchy things like nuts, crackers and grilled vegetables and the likes. At the



same time, acidic elements like tomatoes, lemons, and olives can balance out the overpowering smells of cheeses like Camembert.

It may come as a surprise, but hard cheeses go equally well with hard textures that crunch, such as a nut brittle or caramel toasted corn. At the same time, soft textures like fruit purees and pesto can also complement soft cheese variants.

BEYOND BREAD, CRACKERS AND NUTS Chocolate, often aptly termed the food of the Gods, also happens to be a winning combination with cheese. Of course, not all

chocolates will go with all type of cheese.

Firm cheese, mainly hailing from the Gruyère family are best accompanied by dark chocolate, preferably with cacao content of 70 percent and above. For an added crunch, a handful of cashews is a definite win! If you happen to get your hand on blue cheese, dark chocolate with orange is just the right pick. As for cheese



like Parmesan, mozzarella, manchego, American cheddar, they can all benefit from a hazelnut infused dark chocolate — either as solid chocolate or poured



over the cheese in its melted form. Even available chocolate hazelnut spreads can work out well.

THE RULE OF NO RULES

The true beauty of enjoying cheese lies in its ability to not being bound to any particular 'rule' of pairing and consuming. There are tons of accompaniment suggestions that contradict each other and it is easy to get overwhelmed. Taste palates vary widely and can change without any visible signs. Some shudder at the thought of having sliced pickled okra with blue cheese, or having honey roasted baby potatoes with a hard cheese might seem a bit much, but ultimately, it's all about balancing the taste. Before giving any cheese and food pairing a try, the first step begins with accepting the fact that no one knows if a combination will work unless it's tried out!

By Iris Farina
Photo: Ls Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

IN SEARCH OF COMFORT FOOD

BY SOBIA AMEEN



Simple pleasures of Monsoon

This season is one of the most fruitful when it comes to delicious local produce. And here are some quick and simple recipes to take full advantage of the produce and make something utterly delicious.

MANGO, ROSE AND CARDAMOM LIMEADE

This is a simple syrup that can be made and stored in the refrigerator and is perfect for humid days.

Ingredients

- ½ cup water
- ½ cup fresh lime juice
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 cup ripe mango
- 1½ tbsp dried rose petals
- 1 tsp cardamom powder

Method

In a small pot, add the water, sugar, mango, dried rose petals and cardamom powder over medium heat. Bring to a boil and keep stirring until the consistency is of a syrup. Add the ½ cup of fresh lime juice, this changes the colour of the syrup to a beautiful pink. Strain using a strainer in to a glass jar and let the syrup cool. Serve with chilled water or carbonated water.

THAI PRAWN AND LYCHEE/MANGO SALAD

This salad is perfect for the season as it is light,



fresh and cooling. Lychees can be replaced with ripe mangos, or both of the seasonal fruits can be used for this salad.

Ingredients

- 4 cups water
- 500g prawns (deshelled and cleaned)
- 20 lychees (peeled, halved and destoned) or 1 large ripe mango (peeled and cut into cubes)

- 2 cups arugula or a salad leaf of your choice
 - 1 cup fresh mint (chopped)
 - 1 cup fresh coriander (chopped)
 - 2 tbsp spring onions (chopped)
 - Salt and pepper, to taste
- For the dressing —*
- Juice from half a lime
 - 1 red chilli
 - 1 tbsp jaggery

- 2 tsp fish sauce

For the toppings —

- Large handful roasted peanuts (roughly chopped)
- Small handful crispy fried onions or garlic (optional)

Method

In a medium saucepan, bring the water to a boil, reduce the flame to medium and add salt (about ½ to 1 teaspoon). Poach the prawns for 4-5 minutes until they turn opaque pink. If they start curling into C's, they have been overcooked. The prawns can be transferred to an ice bath or simply kept in the fridge to cool.

In a large mixing bowl, add the lychees/mangos, arugula, fresh mint leaves, fresh coriander leaves and spring onions. Lightly season with salt and pepper before adding the poached prawns.

In a mortar and pestle or an electric grinder, add the juice from half a lime, red chilli, jaggery and fish sauce and turn into a dressing. Pour this over the salad and mix well.

Plate the salad and serve with roasted peanuts and crispy fried onions or garlic.

Food and Photo: Sobia Ameen



Monsoon gardening tips

Monsoon is the season of beauty in Bangladesh. Everything around you is fresh, rain soaked, and green; even the polluted Dhaka air feels fresh. Our streets, our cityscape, rooftop gardens, the plants in the balconies — all beaming at their brightest.

While there is no need to water your plants regularly during monsoon, heavy rainfall does take its toll on gardens. And you still need to do your bit; the gardener has to be twice as hardworking simply to keep the greens healthy, preserve the beauty of the garden, stop the plants from water stagnation and a lot more. Let me point out a few gardening hacks that might help during the heavy monsoon.

Avoid standing water

The accumulation of the rainwater in your garden or pots is a major issue. It causes soil nutrients to wash away, depriving your plants of all the nourishment. Moreover, water stagnation for a lengthy period can make the roots rot. You must make sure that the tubs have holes in order to drain out the excess water, and if the soil is all black and muddy, then re-potting is a must to save the plant.

One of my personal hacks is to make provision for drainage in big drums by drilling holes on the sides, allowing extra water to flow out. This prevents water stagnation in drums for big trees.

Make pathways in your garden by lowering the height at places for the water to drain properly. Make sure all your drainage systems are working properly. Many times, dry leaves or dirt block the drain tracks causing water stagnation.

Make way for new growth

This is the right time for new shoots to grow but they will need some space for that. If you don't, your garden will look like a mini jungle within a few days. Thus, pruning your plants in a timely manner is a must. Also, make sure to use proper pruning and cutting tools for the task. Weeding is also an essential part of monsoon garden maintenance. Weeds can grow rapidly during monsoon rains and thus soak up the nourishment intended for your



plants. Keep trimming your garden at timely intervals to avoid unnecessary undergrowth.

Make way for light

The cloudy skies of monsoon evidently create an issue when it comes to light, especially if you have plants that are dependent on sunlight. And the thick foliage of your big plants shades the garden top. Make sure to place pots facing the sun and properly trim foliage at regular intervals. Use garden lights.

Things to consider

Another little detail is to avoid walking on wet soil, especially where you intend to plant new saplings. This packs

the soil particles together and squeezes out the necessary oxygen.

Also, earthworms are a gardener's best friend; they keep the soil aerated. Utilise earthworms and fertilisers to ensure that your soil never loses its fertility.

Perforated sheets, allow the plants to keep their moisture and protect them from excess rain water, so these are gaining popularity as an essential during the monsoon.

Checking for any slimy algae that

begins to grow with the onset of monsoon, is a must because they can make the ground surface slippery.

On a happier note, Star Lifestyle is turning 20 today, and we wish all our readers, advertisers and patrons on this occasion, and thank them for staying with LS — your favourite lifestyle magazine, through thick or thin. We hope to make your Tuesday mornings merrier for the next 20 years and beyond.

Happy gardening!

— RBR

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

A STAR LIFESTYLE RECIPE COMPETITION 2020

The year 2020 is taking its heavy toll on us and yet we do not tire. We fight back in myriad ways, to emerge as winners against the ominous pandemic.

In order to keep the spirit alive, Star Lifestyle has planned to organise a cooking competition for all our home chefs (young and old), to generate a scrumptious platter for Qurbani Eid and showcase their talents to the rest of the world.

The competition requires interested individuals to send ONE complete menu of breakfast, lunch, or dinner by 17 JULY 2020. Participants are required to send ONE recipe from that menu that will highlight the contestant's culinary prowess.

The recipe needs to be attached with high-resolution pictures of the food from the menu, so that it helps us select the best of the chefs and ensure authenticity of the items.

Winners to secure the first, second, and third positions will be given the opportunity to become recipe columnists for Star Lifestyle, the prestigious supplement of The Daily Star.

The champion will get the opportunity to collaborate with The Daily Star, to produce an exclusive recipe video, which will be shared and viewed by our readers and patrons.

So gear up and send us the menu, recipe, and images ASAP to lifestyleds@yahoo.com, and mark 'Living in my Kitchen' in your mail as subject.

Check out #starlifestyleds in Instagram and Facebook for details.

***CONDITIONS APPLY:

- To take part in the competition applicants must be 21 years and above by July 1, 2020.

- Recipe MUST be attached with pictures of the food – final decision will be based on the plating alongside the content.

- Any recipes received after the deadline will not be considered eligible for the competition.

- Decisions regarding the competition lie solely at the discretion of Star Lifestyle, The Daily Star.

HOROSCOPE



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Discuss your intentions. Make creative changes at home. Family members will rely on you. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Make money off your ideas. Changes around you will be drastic. Find ways to relieve stress. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Make changes to your appearance. Empty promises will be upsetting. Partnerships could prove to be lucrative. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Ask for help if needed. Don't be too eager to spend. Don't expect any favours. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Your partner can cause you grief. Spend time getting acquainted. Get involved in groups. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Find likeminded friends in group activities. Don't spend unnecessarily on friends. Don't shy away from potential romances. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Your determination will pay off. Don't pursue anything unrealistic. Travel will promote new romantic encounters. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Business and pleasure can mix together. Someone will let you down. Join a club of like-minded people. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Use your creativity for new directions. Use your head wisely. Don't let jealousy overpower you. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Be true to yourself. Problems with in-laws can cause grief. Don't come on too strongly. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Make plans for travel. Discrimination will be in order. Control your temper with your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Multitasking will prove to be difficult. Accept defeat gracefully. Health problems can arise. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



HOME STYLING
BELLA ROBINSON
Architect



HOW TO PROPERLY WATER YOUR indoor plants

There are so many reasons why we need houseplants. They can purify indoor air, they beautify our living spaces, and they help alleviate stress and anxiety. That is why it is every houseplant keeper's responsibility to take good care of their plants and treat them well. However, many people end up killing their plants despite loving them. Why?

Well, plants die or have poor health for three main reasons: Poor watering habits, insufficient nutrients, and poor lighting. Watering problems are the most notorious of all three. Most people overwater their houseplants thinking that it is a plant's "thing" to love a lot of water, while others underwater the plants out of negligence. Both are wrong.

To develop a workable watering routine for your plants, you need to first understand that each plant species has different watering needs. The need is also dependent on where you keep the plant within the house, the growing medium, outdoor weather, and the plant's pot.

To help you master the art of watering, here are eight tips to consider —

KNOW WHEN TO WATER

Water your plants more during spring and summer and less during winter. However, even during the warm months, you must be careful not to get the compost soggy or waterlogged. Too much water in the growing pot brings diseases, which then kill the plant. Create drainage holes at the bottom of your growing pot to allow excess water to drain out in case you overwater.



WATER FROM BELOW

Watering from underneath works better than the traditional way of watering from above — for many reasons! When you use a saucer placed below the compost for example, the chances of overwatering are minimal. Underneath watering is also a good way of getting water to the roots, it is less prone to draining nutrients out, and is good at maintaining humidity.

INVEST IN SELF-WATERING POTS

Self-watering pots eliminate the problem of over-watering or under-watering and saves you time because the plant literally waters itself. Your job is just to refill the water reservoir, say on a weekly or monthly basis, and then leave the plant to do the rest.

Avoid overheating

Fluorescent and HID lights emit a lot more heat than light, so they tend to dry out your plant's compost extremely fast and end up interrupting your watering schedule. Invest in quality LED grow lights so that your plants need less frequent watering.

SOAK YOUR PLANTS IN A TRAY

If you don't have the time to water your plants regularly, you can achieve your watering goals by soaking your plant pots in a large container filled with fresh water. You can also soak them in the sink or in the

bathtub, but ensure that the water level is only a few centimetres high. After allowing them to absorb water for about an hour, remove them and let them dry for about an hour before placing them back. This way, you manage to water all the plants in one go.

HELP THEM RETAIN MOISTURE

Adding clay pebbles on the surface of the growing pot helps the compost to retain moisture. If you don't have clay pebbles, gravel or regular pebbles will do. The pebbles work by slowing down evaporation, so you don't need to water the plants too often.

USE THE RIGHT TYPE OF WATER

Avoid using water that you got from the faucet to water your plants. The water needs to be at room temperature. If you are using tap water, ensure that it doesn't have too much dissolved chlorine. Chlorine is a highly toxic substance. Rainwater is great, but you need to ensure that it isn't polluted, especially if you live in a highly industrialised area. If you use water from the well, ensure that it is not too alkaline.

AERATE THE SOIL

Outdoor soil is aerated by worms and other crawlers. Indoors, you have to aerate the soil by poking holes in the soil in order to enhance water movement in the soil. Large, dry pockets of soil hinder water movement, causing uneven moisture distribution.

Water is an important vessel that transports minerals to all the right places within a growing container, and that cools down the plants. If your plant looks wilted, you need to water it as soon as possible, lest it dies. Don't allow that to happen under your watch. However, be careful not to invite pests through overwatering.

By Bella Robinson
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed





STYLE COUNCIL

Nothing screams summer more than a scarf worn as a tube top, a pair of shorts, and a perfect blunt haircut. Yes! Those were certainly better days when we could sport such a fun look and fly to exotic destinations during the summer vacations. Things are certainly different today, when all we can do is go up to our apartment rooftops and enjoy a breath of fresh air, at best.



MIXING UP *with* Scarves

But this article is not about despondency; fashion and styling can never be about anything but excitement! We need to learn to enjoy our time, wherever it may be. So, we say, let's not stop keeping ourselves from being trendy and hip, even if we are staying at home and staying safe.

And so, ladies, the scarves as tube top concept still remains, especially with their pretty prints and breezy fabric luring us all the time.

And there are plenty of exciting ways to turn a simple commodity, such as a scarf, to something of true beauty. Here are just some of them.

THE BELTED DRAPE: Let the scarf fall evenly around your neck and let it hang. Then, fasten a belt over the scarf at the waist. You may choose to wear a solid colour t-shirt beneath the scarf that you have chosen.

THE NECKLACE DRAPE: This is where you take the help of a trendy necklace, preferably a beaded one because it will blend in with the entire look. First, you need to make the scarf go halfway through the necklace. The ends that stick out from both the sides need to be pulled straight and wrapped

around your back and made into a simple knot. This will definitely give you a tube top effect in the end.

AFRICAN HEAD SCARF: There are many ways to wear scarves as head coverings, but the African style tops them all. Even better than the Parisian one, we tell you! This is where you cover your entire hair with the scarf, and twist it around a mini bun. This style can be carried off with everything from kurtis to jeans and t-shirts.

These are just a few tried and true suggestions you can play around with scarves at home. There are hundreds of other ways to style them and you can experiment easily at home — to be able to charm your way around the next summer beach party your friends organise, whenever that be.

Enjoy!

By Fashion Police
Model: Antora



Your little sous chef

Cooking is a life skill everyone must learn. The only question is: at what point in life should that learning start? And the answer is: early! Why not introduce your children to the kitchen from right now?

STARTERS

Cooking with your little one can give you a lot of opportunities for teaching. For a relatively younger child, you can bring basic math alive! Let your little one count slices of apples, divide a pie into X number of sections, or fetch you Y number of potatoes from the household pantry.

Meanwhile, it is a chance to make your child well-versed in names of vegetables and other food items, all done as part of the fun and games. Introduce various spices and other ingredients, and talk about where they come from and the hardworking farmers who produce them.

The more you chat with your child throughout the process, the more s/he will learn. So, get your child involved as much as possible, such as plucking herbs from your herb garden and showing him/her the various parts of a fruit or plant.

Moreover, try to instill healthy dietary ideas in your child's mind. Talk about healthy eating choices, such as the value of eating greens.

And apart from all that, cooking can also become a lifelong hobby for your children. Introduce them to it, and after they have grown up, they'll thank you for it!

HELL'S KITCHEN

Don't get any fancy ideas, though. Cooking with children can be very stressful!

The little brat will make a mess. And if you think your child will quickly become a helping hand, think again! Your child will cook up ways of getting on your nerves, and surely, you will get slightly paranoid about safety issues:

"Is he maintaining a safe distance from fire? Oh wait, he just turned up the heat and now the curry has overflowed. Where did he get that knife and what's he doing with it? How did he break a dozen eggs so fast!" And won't bother to clean up, either.



These are just some of the thoughts that will constantly race in your mind.

It's a good idea to set out some ground rules — 'wash your hands first,' 'don't get too close to the fire,' 'ask before you taste' and so on. And then, police him (read supervise). Even relatively older children need supervision in the kitchen.

SEASONED ENOUGH?

There isn't a magic number as to the 'right' age to start out in the kitchen, but you can get your child involved fairly early. Even a 5-year old can help in making dough, fetching small vegetables from the pantry, or sprinkling sugar — but under supervision, obviously, and with knives and other potentially hazardous objects out of reach.

On the other hand, a 10-year old can follow simple and easy recipes — again, with your help and supervision.

At the end of the day, it is you as a parent who can be the best judge of what to allow and where to draw the line, based on your

child's learning ability, maturity, etc.

TASKS FOR YOUR SOUS CHEF

And so, set tasks accordingly. Assign them with whisking eggs. Or give them the duty of spreading jam and butter on bread. Let them slice bananas or other soft food — first with a strong plastic knife, then with a butter knife, and then, when you feel they are ready, with a small kitchen knife. Teach them how to peel boiled eggs or potatoes with a peeler; and eventually how to mix stuff and use salad dressings to make a salad.

And gradually, start with cooking, only for much older children (a lot depends on maturity, which varies from person to person) — after you are sure s/he is aware about handling stoves and small knives.

Go for recipes of foods they love eating. Simple baking, different kinds of omelette (they'll still break and destroy a few eggs in the process), mac and cheese, and the simple pasta or noodles are just few examples of the things your children will enjoy making.

It's important to give your child a true sense of participation, and one way of doing it — if they are relatively older — is allowing to take full responsibility of a particular item in the menu; something which requires minimum supervision from your side.

One good example of such a task is making lemonade or milkshake. The children (and adults) love them, and older children can pull it off more or less independently, after you have showed them the simple recipe and how to use the blender.

Welcome your sous chef to the kitchen with gusto! Celebrate the little one's first day at the kitchen with the whole family, where everyone participates, from cutting vegetables to setting up the table.

After all, there are not many things like cooking and eating together that bring a family close!

By M H Haider

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

NEWS FLASH

A call for solidarity by Bibi Russell

The COVID-19 pandemic has brutally shaken the world. None are being spared from the cruel grip of this global phenomenon, which is severely causing negative impact on the lives of people worldwide. The impact is being felt beyond the health sector, with prolonged lockdown and isolation, which are disrupting the global economy and creating economic downturn. This global crisis has a brutally local impact, hitting the poor and the vulnerable of the country the hardest.

Bibi Russell, one of the country's most prominent designers, in a call for solidarity, put forth the plight of the artisans of the country.

"Over the past decades, I have been working very closely with craftspeople in Bangladesh and beyond. I am marvelled by their knowledge of traditional arts, by their fine skills and expertise which allows us to preserve human heritage. I am also deeply saddened to see their struggle for making a living, meeting their household needs, as they strive to offer decent livelihood opportunities to their children. With my training and knowledge in design and fashion, and with my modest means, I have been standing by the craftspeople in different parts of the world, to support them wherever my expertise was required.

"The focus of my work in Bangladesh has been to ensure the sustenance of fine handwoven fabrics and cultural crafts. In these uncertain and extremely difficult times, it is our collective responsibility to support the vulnerable people and also to protect our exceptional heritage," said Russell.

Russell, a UNSECO Artist for Peace, further added, "I call upon you to join me in this solidarity venture. Each of us can, in big or small ways, help the craftspeople to rebuild a COVID-19 safe future, in a viable socio-economic environment. If each of us, for example, buy a locally woven *gamcha*, together, we may save many households.

Let us join forces and as our first step, support the weaver's community to save our age-old handloom industries."

While governments, and international organisations try to address this unforeseen emergency with recovery provisions, the time has come for all countries to resolutely review their policies and programmes, to make development more inclusive and sustainable. For building the resilience of all segments of population, developing countries must make adequate investment in public health, ensure economic stability, provide social safety and safeguard the natural environment for those who are out of reach of public policies.



TIPS

Organising the kitchen properly in 3 simple steps

With a significant decrease in the number of deliveries ordered and less dining happening outside in the current situation, many of us now find ourselves spending longer periods of time with children and other family members at home, 24/7. This means that having meals made at home has become the overriding norm. This has resulted in the kitchen becoming the to-go place for the family, and with it, being worked overtime, leading to a messy and cluttered environment, making it at times difficult to cook and serve, and disrupting the peace of mind needed.



The kitchen is perhaps the most important part of one's house that is in need of organisation, and here are a few steps for a simple and efficient kitchen.

DEFINE ZONES PROPERLY

Rather than having all the spices, dry goods, biscuit containers, utensils-cutlery, and other essentials clumped together in one or two cupboards in a haphazard manner, it is better to compartmentalise them. This helps in efficient management and organising.

This tends to be especially helpful when planning a dish that is time-consuming as well as requiring a proper train of thought. Instead of losing track of where the right ingredients are, it is better to have different compartments catering to their required counterparts of spices, fruits, cereals, cleaning supplies, and pantry with labels put on them if necessary. Organising the entire kitchen with proper grouping of cabinets

and drawers into zones helps in mediation of thought as well as relaxation when working in the kitchen, especially whenever a family meal is being attempted to be made.

SAVE SPACE

A kitchen constantly overflows with groceries, leftovers of food packets, and dishes. To balance the avalanche of materials that constantly come and



go out of the kitchen, it is important to save as much space as possible, ensuring movement and decluttering of the kitchen materials.

One such way is to quickly get rid of gadgets and packets from the kitchen space and throw it in a bin kept within the confines of the kitchen itself. One must stock and work out on how to make spaces for the accumulated crockery over the years. An important medium is through the usage of plastic square containers, stasher bags, and utensil racks to arrange the wide variety of products in unison helping in making room for the kitchen in terms of easy storage, malleability, and accessibility.

SORTING THE FRIDGE AND FREEZER

It is of utmost importance to sort out the materials inside the fridge and freezer to have an organised kitchen structure. The fridge is an integral part of the kitchen and needs to be managed as such. One such



way is to keep essentials like fruits and vegetables at eye level for easier noticing.

Healthy items must always be stored at the front of the freezer. Expired items must be thrown away periodically. Labelling products in the fridge and freezer helps in greater balancing and recognising the items quickly, whenever needed.

By Israr Hasan
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



The Pandemic: A Bangladeshi perspective

The COVID-19 catastrophe has plunged Bangladesh into a public health crisis, not to mention the social and economic turmoil. Since early March, the government has been cautioning the public against gathering in large numbers, advising people to remain indoors.

Bangladesh's capacity to test for coronavirus infection and to isolate and treat patients confirmed to have COVID-19 is restricted by its fragile public health infrastructure. And as unfortunate as it was, like its counterparts in other countries, the Bangladesh government was slow to respond to the pandemic in the initial stages.

It has since set up more testing facilities and quarantine centres and is procuring testing kits and medical equipment from abroad. The government has sought to enforce social distancing through a lockdown, but has not been too successful in this regard.

Several factors make this a near-impossible task in Bangladesh. For one, social distancing is an anathema to Bangladeshi society and culture. Even if people want to follow the guidelines, as in other nations, social distancing is a privilege of the rich and middle class in Bangladesh. Most Bangladeshis live in close proximity to each other. Families are large and live in small and cramped tenements, with several families sharing a single tap and toilet.

Many Bangladeshis, like rickshaw pullers, earn their living through jobs that require them to go out to work. For them, there is no work-from-home option. Consequently, convincing people to stay indoors or socially distance, even if it is to protect them from a deadly virus, is difficult.

Violence Against Women (VAW)

One of the most significant issues during this time of the pandemic was that there has been a tremendous increase in cases of violence against women. It has been the most pervasive form of violation of human rights for a very long time. Many organisations wanted to examine the condition of women during this crisis and they all mentioned that violence against women, specifically 'domestic violence,' is on tremendous rise during this period.

A rapid survey conducted by Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), a Human Rights Organisation, stated in April 2020, that nearly 43 million women have been victims of violence during January to April, 2020 and among 3 women on an average 1 woman is prone to domestic violence. During this pandemic, it has been found that most of these women are victims of domestic violence by their partners.

Another important point to mention here is that, as noted by the Manusher Jonno Foundation study, it has been found that during this pandemic many women have experienced domestic violence for the first time in their lives. This amounted to 1600 women.

Reasons for domestic violence was identified as cases related to loss of jobs by the male, giving rise to frustration. Also, many men sometimes got very aggressive and arrogant when their wives denied their choice for any sexual activities. This is usually an issue of 'marital rape,' which is very common in all societies, but there is a

difference in the sense that cases of marital rape are easily talked about and sometimes cases filed in western countries. But for the women in South Asia, this is considered a very private affair and hardly discussed with anyone. However, during one of the sessions, an example was cited by a woman who have been a victim of marital rape by her husband.

Inadequate Public Health Measures

We cannot deny the praiseworthy, dedicated roles provided by our doctors, nurses, police, army, front line service providers, local administration, that is mayors, councillors, MPs of respected areas, students, volunteers who have all been sincerely involved in fighting the issue in dealing with corona patients. Whatever limited supplies they had they made the best use of these in serving the patients.

It is essential to state that one of the serious issues regarding the inadequate and improper health care system during the COVID pandemic was attending to the needs of pregnant women. There were hardly any facilities to attend to the problems of expectant mothers and there has been a high rise in both maternal and natal mortality.

Pregnant women are associated with various problems like the need for abortion, mis-carriage, unwanted pregnancies, postnatal problems etc. These problems are extremely severe and requires proper treatment in both pre-natal and post-natal birth care. The hospitals and other medical / private clinics both in urban and rural areas do not possess sufficient amenities to look into these problems or they are not getting any importance due to patients needing care from coronavirus are given priority attention.

Not only for expecting mothers, but the problems also arise with other cases. The problems become serious with young girls and their monthly menstruation problems. If this is not properly taken care of, they ultimately suffer from various kinds of reproductive ailments, which may remain throughout their lives.

Human Security: A Challenging Issue

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we find that women are very hard hit. Many of the domestic helps working in different houses in the urban areas are not allowed to come to work, and so, they are without any jobs and thus, any earnings. There is no security of their livelihoods, and as a result, we find a definite increase in the poverty situation of the country, and no security of maintaining their daily lives.

Consequently, without steady food supply, these women, together with their children, suffer from malnutrition, disease, sometimes leading to loss of lives. Under such circumstances, it is essentially important that food security be ensured for these jobless population. It is worth mentioning about the commendable declaration by our Honourable Prime Minister when she proclaimed during her video conference with the field level government officials that all attention must be given to the agriculture sector of the country.

The RMG Sector: A Matter of Controversy and Contradiction

Bangladesh's readymade garment (RMG) sector and remittances from Bangladeshi workers abroad are major pillars of the

country's economy. Manufacture and export of RMG accounts for 13 percent of its GDP and employs nearly 4 million people. The sector was already showing negative growth in the first half of the last fiscal year, and now, with several companies in the United States, U.K., and Europe cancelling orders that were placed before the COVID-19 outbreak, its future is not looking good.

A confusion started when the government declared a complete lockdown and maintaining of social distance at all institutions in the country from March 26 to May 31, 2020.

Many people in the rural areas did not understand the actual meaning of these terminologies and were not absolutely bothered. On the other hand, quite a number of garment factories managers declared their factories to be open and if the workers did not join, they will not receive any payment during the days of their absence from work.

Getting these directives, many garment workers started their journey towards Dhaka city to join their work. This created an alarming situation in the country where we found that the question of maintaining social distance were in vain as crowds of people were seen returning to the city.

The garment workers started work in their respective factories, without any social distance and within one day, at least 64 workers contracted the coronavirus in two factories in Narayanganj. When the number of workers being attacked by the corona virus began to increase tremendously, there was no announcement by any of the factories for their closure.

Actually, as many of the buyers were withdrawing their orders, managers of many factories became very concerned as to their payment, and so, decided to keep their factories open despite government instructions on lockdown or social distancing. The lack of understanding, coordination, cooperation, mismanagement between factory owners and employees, negotiation and mediation between the government and BGMEA resulted in a chaotic situation among the factory workers. This caused great agony and fear among the workers when the president of BGMEA declared that as orders were cut down by the buyers, many workers will suffer from layoffs.

COVID-19 and The Proposed Budget 2020-2021
Regarding the 2020-2021 budget, there were two most important webinar sessions: proposed Budget 2020 -2021; and post budget 2020-2021.

The post budget webinar was arranged with eminent personalities from the country, and they pointed out the gaps, as the proposed budget 2019 -2020 declared by the Finance Minister, seems to be not at all according to the different aspects suggested by the different sectors of our national economy.

The government has failed to prioritise the issues as per the needs of the country. The budgetary allocations for health, agriculture, social protection and education, have not been sufficient and visionary.

Next, the budget did not pay sufficient attention to revive the education sector of the country, where we find hundreds and

thousands of children, boys and girls being deprived of a continuing education system to develop their knowledge, experience, and expertise in their area of choice. Their future lies uncertain and unpredictable.

Conclusion

The above discussions on the different issues have been based on the various webinar sessions I have attended during the lockdown period. The main conclusion, which may be made, is that all the sessions has been very useful for an academician like me and researchers, students, professionals, teaching staff at schools, colleges and universities.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will be felt not just on the national economy, but on the household economy of millions of Bangladeshis. Its devastating impact is already unfolding in Bangladesh. Daily wage earners have been badly hit; many have nothing to live on now, and are unable to buy food for their families. Hunger, malnutrition, and other problems that have always plagued Bangladesh are poised to intensify as a result of the lockdown.

Such problems will increase as Bangladeshi migrant workers return home. Already, around half a million have returned on account of the COVID-19 outbreak. They will be joined by many millions more. Most Bangladeshi migrants work in West Asia, where economies have been hit by declining oil prices. Many will be forced out of their jobs and will have to return home to unemployment.

Unlike in several of its neighbours, in Bangladesh, most migrants are from poor rural families. Their remittances support entire families and have played a major role in poverty alleviation in Bangladesh. That is now in serious jeopardy.

For nearly three months, I have been very active in attending the different webinar sessions both at the national and international levels.

At the national level, sessions were organised by the BRAC Centre for Governance and Development, James P Grant School of Public Health, BRAC University, The Faculty of Social Sciences and Micro-Enterprise Research Initiative, Dhaka University, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The World Bank, Incepta Pharmaceuticals, Department of Public Administration, Chittagong University, Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF), North South University, Centre for Governance Studies, Dhaka University, Center for Budget Policy (CBP) and few others.

At the international level, sessions were organised by the University of Hyderabad, India, SANGAT (A Feminist Organisation, India), Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

The names of few outstanding personalities who had designed, arranged and organised the webinar sessions deserve special mention. They are — Professor Mazharul of Anthropolpubic, Shahjalal University, Sylhet, Dr Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir, Department of Development Studies, Dhaka University, and Dr Sadeka Halim, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, Dhaka University.

By Dr Nazmunnessa Mahtab

Kay Kraft this monsoon

A hypnotising aura of rains, blooming flowers and the occasional breeze is the core of monsoon. The culmination of all these mesmerising elements of the season is the highlight of Kay Kraft's latest line-up. The fashion house has included sari, shalwar kameez, kurta, tops, panjabis and shirts in their latest collection celebrating all that is monsoon. Screen print, digital print, machine embroidery and hand embroidery have been used extensively to bring out the seasonal blossoms adorning the clothes. Kay Kraft is all about a touch of tradition matched with modern cuts this season.

To shop the collection online, visit <http://kaykraft.com>

For more information, check out <https://web.facebook.com/kaykraft.com.bd>



CHECK IT OUT

Berger Paints Bangladesh launches Mr. Expert Advanced Hand Sanitizer

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, frequent hand washing has become a mandatory practice. However, it is not always possible to have water and soap around. Alcohol based hand sanitizers in this case are the best solution. However, not all hand sanitizers are made according to the formulation recommended by the WHO. Berger Paints Bangladesh, stepping up in this situation, has introduced Berger Mr. Expert Advanced Hand



Sanitizer which follows the formulation provided by the WHO.

Regarding this business expansion, AKM Sadeque Nawaj, General Manager, Marketing, Berger Paints Bangladesh, said, "COVID-19 is causing upheaval in our lives and every organisation, including the government, is trying its bests to tackle the outbreak. Hand sanitizers, as part of personal hygiene, have been playing an important role in preventing the spread of the infection. And being one of the oldest and renowned companies of the

country, we believe it is our responsibility to contribute as much as possible during such situation. The introduction of Berger Mr. Expert Advanced Hand Sanitizer is part of that endeavour."

Additionally, the company has distributed hand sanitizers among its dealers and painters to boost personal hygiene and safety. Berger Mr. Expert Advanced Hand Sanitizer is liquid-based, with a pack size of 250ml, and costs Tk 180.

For more information, please visit www.facebook.com/bergerbd

Kurry Accent's takeaway biriyani meals

More than just a brilliant rice preparation, biriyani is a royal treat! Indeed, what other dish gives you such magnificent flavours and richness?

Also, what's better than enjoying all of that goodness at home in the comfort of your couch, perhaps whilst binge-watching Netflix — especially given the current situation where most of us strive to confine ourselves indoors?

And that's why, Kurry Accent has introduced excellent takeaway 'Biriyani Meals,' starting from a reasonable price of Tk 250.

The menu takes into mind Dhakaiites' versatile tastes and preferences and hence, caters to a plethora of biriyani lovers, comprising of Lucknowi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, and Paneer Subz Biriyani. And hence, whether you love rice infused with meat or prefer a vegetarian delight, Kurry Accent won't let you down.

The eatery uses the highest quality ingredients. Kurry Accent is the only certified HACCP restaurant in Dhaka. It follows very strict hygiene standards to ensure its patrons' and personnel's safety.

For more information, call 01713434075 or visit facebook.com/KurryAccent



Normalising the mental health concept in Bangladesh with Mindly

A recently initiated platform in Bangladesh, Mindly, is working for mental health and well-being and focusing on creating mass awareness through an intensive online campaign. The platform is also offering free online counselling sessions during this COVID-19 lockdown to the people who are in need through a pool of mental health experts. Mindly dreams of a world where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.

As part of its awareness campaign, Mindly is arranging an online programme called "Moner Bari." Prominent figures such as Sara Zaker, Dr Mehtab Khanam, Meher Afroz Shaon, Rafiyath Rashid Mithila, Iresh Zaker, Dr Abdun Nur Tushar, Azmeri Haq Badhon, Dr Farah Deebea, Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed, and some other leaders from different sectors were kind enough to participate so far and share their experiences and perceptions about mental health. This show has been able to grab the attention of the masses. People are showing the intention to come out from their comfort zone and talk about mental health issues they face in their daily lives.

Nazmus Saleh Sakib, Co-Founder and CEO of Mindly, mentioned, "Our perceptions of physical and mental health are surprisingly different! Mindly aspires to solve the lack of mental health awareness and insufficient support for mental discomforts at an individual, organisational and policy level to create an inclusive society where there will be a fine harmony between physical, mental and social well-being and, people will have access to mental health care whenever they want to and wherever they are from."

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/mindly.life

THOUGHT CRAFT

BY NASRIN SOBHAN
 Freelance Writer



Season of fruitfulness and fortune

My room looks out in three directions. If I ignore the buildings around us, I can see trees stretch out as far as the eye can see, under a sky which changes from pearl blue at dawn to the soft grey of monsoon mornings. Coconuts bunch in the palms, there are Gaab fruit on other trees, and neem leaves sway near my window.

I see a flash of yellow, then a glimpse of parrot wings, sometimes even a baby parrot perched on a terrace railing, or crows arguing on a distant ledge. Butterflies flutter past, tiny messengers of births and marriages, there is much to enjoy in the constant activity of nature.

Isolating at home, enjoying the idleness, my newspapers and books forgotten, my bills laid aside, I watch the different seasons flow past, dreamlike.



The fruits and vegetables too change along with the seasons. It seems like just the other day we were relishing fresh broccoli, tender spinach, fresh peas, jade green grapes and other delicacies of winter and spring.

Now the rains are upon us, and the air is rich with the promise of tropical bounty.

I know the market stalls are filled with the jewels of summer. Bunches of

lychees, modest red fruit on dusty stalks, and under the peel, white opals which burst upon the palate in flavours of damask rose, orange blossom and lime.

Everywhere, there are pyramids of mangoes, dark green or light, or golden as the sun; in flavours to please every taste; great cartloads of jackfruit with their creamy custard pods, pink hearted guavas, rose apples, pineapples rich as topaz, and a variety of other delights to

beguile the heart.

There is so much abundance in our tropical paradise, enough to cheer us even in these worrisome times. We can still enjoy fish fresh out of the river and sea, home grown eggs and chickens, meat fresh off the block, and the choicest of produce brought in from the countryside every day, before dawn, by local growers.

I for one, always feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude for all that nature has gifted to us. Most of us, at one time or another have been through bad times. Human memory being short, we move on quickly when those times pass, our problems solved, our concerns gone.

In the hectic business of life, we pass unseeing through the beauty and blessings of our world, taking what we have for granted.

Among us though, there are many who have not been as lucky. They have suffered illness, grief and the loss of loved ones, hardship and poverty. In our times of contentment, we need to take the time to remember those who have gone, those who still suffer, and those who are still with us and who form such an important part of our lives.

Our friends are like gold, our relatives are our mainstay and support, and our children and grandchildren are the jewels of our lives; the very foundations upon which our happiness is built.

Let us always remember to be humble, aware and appreciative, and give thanks for the blessings we have received.

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

MUSING

A small step to self-sufficiency

This COVID-19 lockdown has seen so many firsts. It has seen the birth of many gardeners, chefs, bakers, painters, singers, dancers, comedians, and even, hairdressers. The Covid-19 lockdown has also seen me evolve — from a gardener who only grew flowers, to a first-time vegetable grower. I do not know if we would have ventured into vegetable gardening had the coronavirus not shut the doors of the Indian grocery stores here where I live.

With COVID-19 spread across the world and supply chains disrupted, the Indian grocery stores from where we used to get our “deshi” vegetables had to close down their stores. This meant no okra, bitter, bottle and snake gourds, green chillies, red and Malabar spinach, flat beans, etc. for us anymore. Cauliflower, cabbage, eggplant, and spinach were still available at American grocery stores, although not all the time like the pre-pandemic days.

A month into the lockdown, this “deshi”

soul began to crave a little variety in her daily vegetable servings. After all, rice are Bengalis’ staple food no matter where they choose to live. And when you eat rice, you need some fried veggies or veggies cooked in a light gravy to go with it.

One day, on a trip to Home Depot, an American home improvement retailer that never closed its doors during this pandemic, we bought spinach, tomato, and habanero pepper seedlings from its nursery. That was the beginning! Once we saw that these seedlings were growing well under our care, we purchased packets of “deshi” vegetable seeds that the only Bangladeshi grocery store in the area was selling.

We purchased seeds of okra, flat beans, eggplants, spinach, red spinach, and bottle gourd. We bought soil mix and pots to germinate the seeds. Once the seeds germinated, we sowed them in our backyard. It’s July now — our vegetable plants are growing taller every day, some

have started to bear flowers, and the tomato plant has little green fruits hanging from its branches. We have harvested our two spinach varieties and cooked them. You may not believe me, but there is a world of difference in taste between store-bought and homegrown vegetables. Literally!

According to *The Economist*, the coronavirus lockdown has inspired a surge in gardening not seen since World War II. In times of uncertainty, people’s natural instinct is to prepare for the dark days that might befall them. Here in America, vegetable gardening has taken off during the pandemic, so much so that the seed farms have struggled to keep up with a kind of demand never seen before.

During difficult times, people want to make sure that they are self-sufficient, at least to some degree. Having your own vegetable garden also means less trips to the grocery store and hence, less exposure

to the deadly virus. For us, growing our own vegetables has meant teaching ourselves and our child the value of food. Now, I appreciate the food I eat more than ever.

Every cloud has a silver lining. Even though this pandemic is snatching lives every day, it is also teaching us, who are still alive, to be patient and resilient, to be more adaptable to changing situations, to rediscover ourselves and our creative sides, and to place less importance on material objects, and more on family ties and relationships. As for me, this pandemic has taught me that being self-sufficient will never go out-of-date.

When an emergency occurs and resources quickly become strained, those of us who know how to live with less, or can make best use of the resources available to them, are the ones likely to fare better.

By Wara Karim