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A Velvet affair

THE BEST WAY TO KEEP WARM
BELLYFUL OF TASTY DELIGHTS **PC**
NEW TREND IN TOWN
ON THE TRAIL OF TANDOORI CHAI **P8-9**
MEAT LOVERS REJOICE
TRYING OUT NAWAB CHATGA **P12**

PHOTO: KAUSHIK IQBAL ◆ MODEL: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA ◆ WARDROBE: HOUSE OF AHMED ◆ STYLING: TROYEE CHOWDHURY ◆ LOCATION: HOTEL AMARI, DHAKA

**সুরক্ষিত দেয়াল
নিরাপদ পরিবার**

এলো বার্জার ব্রিন ইজি ভাইরাকোর। এর সিলভার আয়ন টেকনোলজি তৈরি করে অ্যান্টি-ভাইরাস কোটিং, যা দেয়ালে আসা ভাইরাস ও ব্যাকটেরিয়া সাথে সাথেই ধ্বংস করে। পরিবারের সুরক্ষায় কোনো আপোস নয়। বার্জার ব্রিন ইজি ভাইরাকোর যখন দেয়ালে, আমরা নিশ্চিন্তে সবসময়।

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Basic aquarium decoration ideas

Aquariums are a great addition to decor. They bring colour, promise and they are aesthetically pleasing to the eyes. They are known to be soothing and have a relaxing effect on both human as well as pets. If decorated properly, a fish tank can really become the focal point of your room.

Background

The background is very important for your fish tank. If you have a fish bowl, there's really not much scope to use a backdrop. A tank however, with its bigger space needs one. Different shades of blue or images with coral and reefs are most common, but you can use different ones as long as they match your theme.

Sand

There are a number of options with sand. You can choose coloured variants if you want a brighter look for your fish tank. But remember, coloured sands demand that the rest of the tank is colourful too, otherwise they look very out of place. There's also the option of black sand or white sand. Or you could go with the tried and trusted natural coloured sand.

Pebbles and Stones

Pebbles are not absolute necessary but it's a good idea to keep them for the betterment



of the fish. In smaller tanks and fish bowls, where space is an issue, pebbles can really provide a natural look.

Stones that are a little bigger in size can bring a different touch with their unique shapes and colours. Avoid putting random stones in your fish bowl. They might upset the chemical balance of the water or worse — dissolve!

Plants

The decision about plants is a crucial one and must be considered seriously.

Artificial plants are easier to maintain and are not at threat of being eaten by the fish. Live plants on the other hand can provide a more appealing look, but they are difficult to maintain.

You will need to consider the size,

growth, light requirement of the live plants as they really become a part of the tank ecology. Either way, you should put the taller plants in the back so they don't obstruct the view.

Carpet plants like java moss are a good choice for the front as they have limited growth. Use low to moderately high plants for the middle as this will be the focal point of the tank.

Driftwood and Ornaments

Driftwoods can really bring an abstract vibe to your fish tank. They can be set up along with ornaments to represent a visual story. You could go with the good old ship-wreck

or plane-wreck beside your driftwood or you could go exotic with castles and sphinxes. As long as the ornament suits the background and does not congest the tank, you are good to go.

Remember, lights can also be a decorative choice and needs to be controlled if you use live plants. Coral and reefs are also good for decoration but only for saltwater fish tanks. Never put random rocks, sand or objects in the tank unless they are specifically made for aquariums.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Collected

us on /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

স্যান্ডালিনা

সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...



#FASHION

The Shiny Velvet by House of Ahmed

House of Ahmed recently launched their winter ethnic wear collection - A Velvet Affair, designed to add sophistication and a splash of colour to our monotonous lives.

The fashion conscious population of the city already know for a fact that using 'velvet' as base material to any styling arrangement enhances the look instantaneously. In addition to that if there's added zardozi work, then things become more sophisticated and regal.

Based on this understanding, the supreme velvet collection had been designed by the renowned fashion brand. The new collection is not only chockfull of impeccable motifs and unique zardozi craftsmanship but also exhibit vibrant colours that are hard to find elsewhere.

The entire range is consistent of darker colours such as black, royal navy blue, emerald green, maroon and then shifts to lighter, more playful tones like bright red, mauve, yellow, mint green. The muslin dupattas with light zardozi craftsmanship elevates the velvet attires for the wedding and winter event season, and even more.

The whiz designer Ahmed, proprietor of the fashion brand House of Ahmed discusses the reason behind a separate velvet line.

"Every winter we are faced with a range of wedding parties to attend, and every time we dress, we look for heavy clothes to shield us from the chill of winter. That's not the end of it all; we get to layer these very clothes with more drapery such as capes and shawls to complete the winter look. But in this case, we don't need to do so much, the silk velvet will easily look gorgeous as party wear and also keep us warm when necessary," revealed the designer.

The head designer also informed us that the velvet has been sourced from abroad and gives a unique sheen that is uncontested.

"You can notice the shine from faraway; it's simply a dazzling collection that requires no other embellishment to further accentuate. Each design is 'regal' as a



standalone piece," added Ahmed.

So why did House of Ahmed particularly dazzle us with this wonderful velveteen collection?

Because it is their niche line-up of festive winter wear attires designed to help one get ready for winter appropriate events.

This bit we get, but what about the upcoming springtime or the summertime?

To be more precise we wonder whether we have to shelve the clothes for an entire season and bring it out only in the short span of the Bangladeshi winter.

Ahmed assured us immediately that the velvet material is so soft that it can be worn in any season, especially with air



conditioning facilities present.

So, in short what we can say about this beautiful collection is that it's certainly a 'must-have' compilation, which can be included in our wardrobe -- for every season.

By Fashion Police

Photo: Kaushik Iqbal

Model: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Wardrobe: House of Ahmed

Styling: Troyee Chowdhury

Location: Hotel Amari, Dhaka



#PRESS RELEASE

'You know you need it' campaign by ISHO

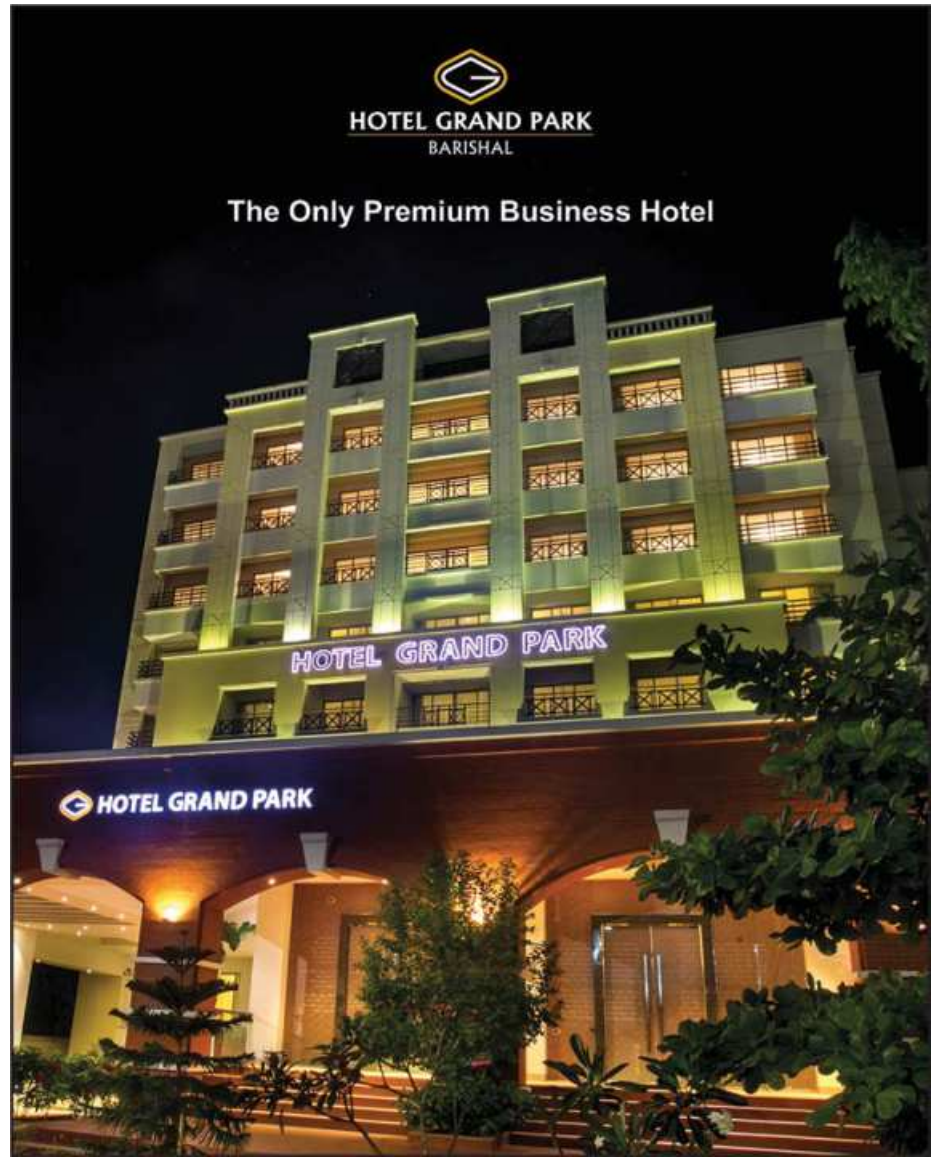
Bringing ISHO's furniture right to people's doorsteps, this ground-breaking campaign will feature a decked out and customised ISHO van that will be seen across various locations in the city.

Each week, a different room set up will be showcased – a living room, office, dining room, and bedroom — where on-lookers and bystanders will be able to come and see a selection of ISHO's global designs up close and in person.

The promotion will also see surprise

celebrity guest appearances and a whole heap of exciting discount giveaways and the chance for people to enter a grand raffle draw.

Rohan Srinivasan, Head of Marketing and Communications, ISHO, says "Our tagline — 'You know you need it' — says it all and has been thought out on purpose. This is all about showcasing our global designs to the wider public and giving them a first-hand opportunity to see our products and know about ISHO. We've



planned a number of exciting activities during the campaign and hopefully people will be eager to share our van's journey!"

All in all, the ISHO van will cover over 30 localities between North and South Dhaka on a daily basis and will

be making regular stops for customers to enter the van. Furthermore, knowing that COVID-19 precautions need to be taken, the van will be regularly sanitised and both facemasks and hand-sanitisers will be given to people who enter the van.

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Accomplishments can exceed expectations. Look into any educational activities. Stand up for yourself. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Do the best you can. Take on more challenging positions. Don't overspend on loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Partnerships will run smoothly. Entertainment should include physical activities. Don't allow colleagues to put pressure on you. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Don't be too emotional. Don't make any rash decisions. Direct your energy into productive goals. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Focus on clients this week. New romantic ventures are likely. Investments will be costly. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Do things you enjoy. Don't overindulge. Don't let your partner put you down. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Sidestep those who are unpredictable. Look into property investments. Go out shopping this week. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Things are finally looking up. Group functions can be tiring. Spend time with loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Don't let anything interfere with your professional performance. Get a little extra rest. You need an intellectual outlet. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't let the past interfere. Make time for colleagues. You're in need of love. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Don't talk about your personal life. Focus on home renovations. Talk openly with your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Include family in your activities. Jealous colleagues may hamper your progress. Spoil yourself. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



#FOOD

Filling snack for every break

It's the middle of the night; a hint of chilly wind and the legendary tone of the Champions League anthem is on the TV as you wait for the UCL match to kick off. You feel like you should probably sleep, but the fixture is just too gripping to ignore. Or, picture this scenario — you have an assignment due the next morning. You always thought you'd get time to finish it in comfort, yet here you are. Burning the midnight oil to wrap up your work as your fingers click on the keyboard relentlessly. As if this wasn't enough, you feel the gut-wrenching punch of lingering hunger growing.

You can't just go back to sleep and you can't just ignore the hunger either. It's too late to cook anyway and let's face it, who wants to cook at 1AM? What if we had a solution for times just like this?

The Bisk Club Potata biscuit is ready to dance this tango with you. The appealing red pack says — "Spicy flavoured biscuit" — and you'll have no doubt about it as soon as you bite into one of the biscuits. The thin layered pieces resemble the potato chips that we've come to love. The seasoning is blended well with spices and wonderfully savoury.

It just might be that you are in a hurry and you need a quick and filling breakfast. Or, you just want to keep munching on something while you discuss exactly what happened at the end of 'Tenet' (it was a Christopher Nolan movie after all). Either



way, Potata biscuit will handle that issue with the cracker-like pieces and its potato-based morsels. The spicy flavour is a zigzag ride on the sway of potato with a punch of herbs.

While potato chips were strictly made for your tastebuds, you can absorb that same flavour in Potata biscuit. Only this time, it's actually helpful for your hunger.

The dry pieces are perfect for midnight

munchies or in the afternoon. The pieces are well seasoned and crispy; with a lingering taste of biscuit and it does the job of a filling snack surprisingly well. Since it's a dry food and easy to handle, you can eat while you write or type so you don't need to waste any time in search of food while you work on your assignment.

The packs are stacked with enough pieces to ensure that your immediate hunger is well satisfied. Enough for two people without any doubt. While chips run out quickly and leaves you wanting more, this 100g pack will not run out so easily with 50 biscuits stacked in two chambers.

Whether it's for office, a road trip or just a snack in your backyard, you can rely on Potata biscuits. It's the first of its kind in Bangladesh. You've tried all sorts of cookies and crisps. Why not give this unique flavour

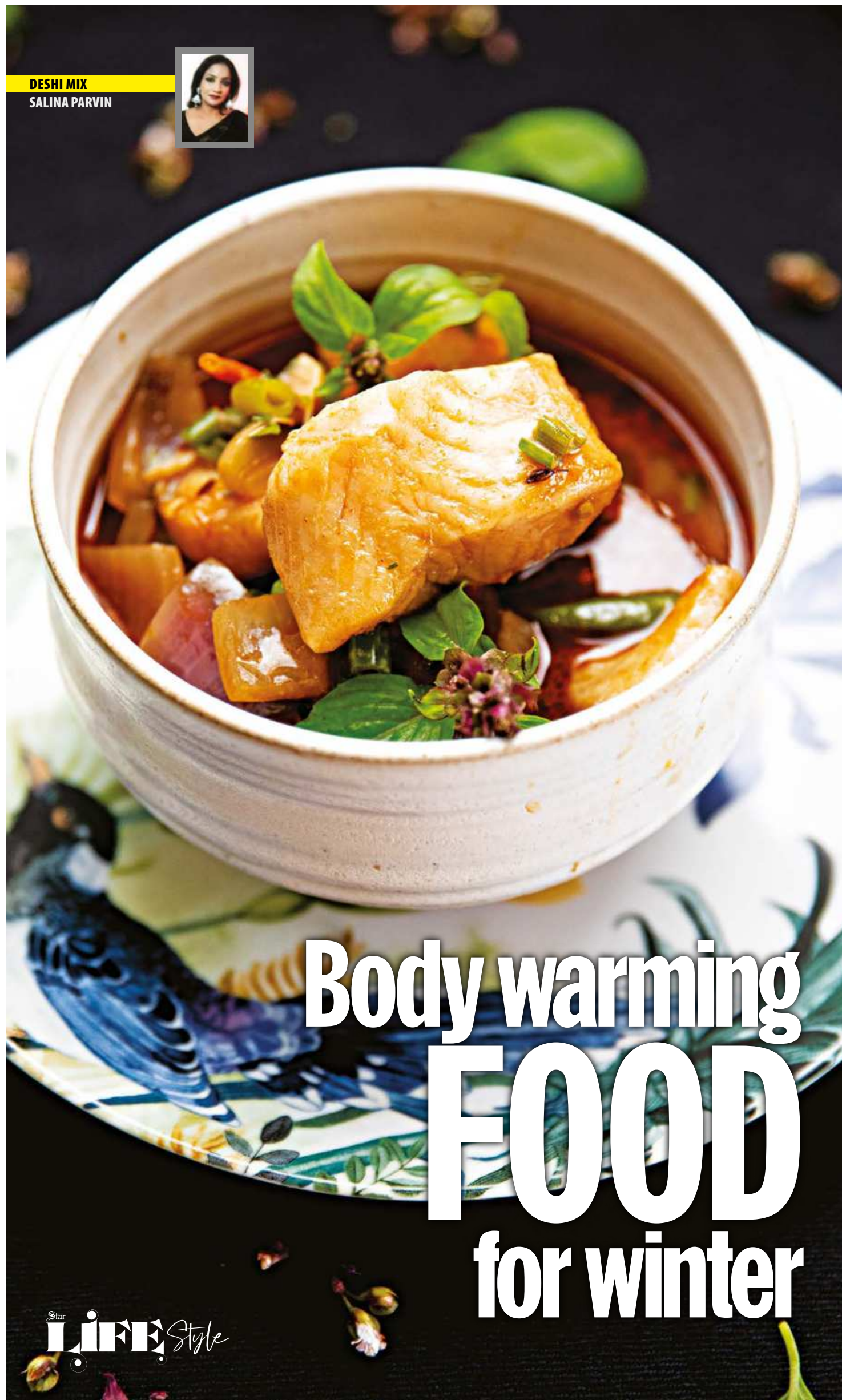
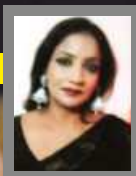
a try?

If you are not much of a sweet tooth and not overly interested in biscuits because of their sweet taste, you should definitely try Potata of Bisk Club. The spicy flavour in a biscuit is an imaginative taste in a biscuit that can rival even that of cookies. And it's so convenient to carry and handle that it's well suited for any snack situation that you can think of.

Group Studies, weekly meetings of your local chess club or are you sitting with your monopoly board? Are you busy playing the good old Age of Empire? Or are you waiting for the BBQ to be done? Whatever your situation is, if you are hungry and in the mood for a snack, this is your pick.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

DESHI MIX
SALINA PARVIN



Body warming FOOD for winter

Winter is here and while we all enjoy the chilly breeze after months of hot summer, it is important to adjust to the needs of the cold weather and keep yourself warm. When the temperature falls, your metabolism tends to slow down in order to conserve energy and keep your body warm. This is probably why you feel lethargic and lazy during winters.

Some foods help in regulating your metabolism and keeping you active and energised through the day by warming your belly and providing comfort. Food that generally contains fat, protein and carbs takes time to digest and so produces heat in the body, which can keep you warm in winter.

Here are a few food ideas that not only keep you warm but will also make you feel good and healthy.

DESHI GHEE

Don't worry, ghee is not your enemy. Studies show that ghee is a healthy fat that cuts the bad fat in your body to stay in shape. This, however, does not mean that you end up hogging on it. Having 1 tablespoon (15 gm) everyday can help you achieve its many benefits like good skin, lean body and warmth during winter.

Deshi ghee is one of the most easily digestible fats used for cooking and provided the much-needed warmth. Ghee is a natural remedy for balancing the heat element of the body. It aids in digestion and helps in the excretion of toxins. It not only keeps you warm but also increases your immunity and protects against cold and flu.

INGREDIENTS

1 litre malai (cream from milk) chilled

METHOD

Make sure the cream is cold when you start to make ghee.

foaming and the milk solids at the bottom turn brown, your ghee is ready! Let it cool for a few minutes before straining it on a cheesecloth. Store it in an airtight jar.

Storing ghee —

Ghee is very shelf stable and can be stored at room temperature for 3-4 months, or in the fridge for up to a year. Ghee will automatically solidify slightly at room temperature or can solidify completely if you stay in a cool climate.

Using ghee —

Use ghee like any other cooking fat for stir-frying, sautéing and even deep frying. It also tastes great if spread on toast or drizzled on soups, stews, dals, sweet dish, rice etc.

DRY FRUITS AND NUTS BALL

Dry fruits and nuts like almonds, cashews and raisins generate heat in the body, and they can also help if you have an iron deficiency. Just don't eat too many — all things in moderation. You can sprinkle these over oatmeal or porridge as well, or just snack on them throughout the day so you can avoid those unhealthy chocolate bars. Dry fruits are known to be a powerhouse of various nutrients, with a great shelf life.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup finely chopped figs
1 cup finely chopped dates
¼ cup crushed walnuts

extremely simple procedure, you get a delectable roti that can surprise you with its exciting crispness and lingering flavour. Cook this roti over a slow flame to ensure that the insides are well cooked too.

INGREDIENTS

1½ cups whole wheat flour
2 tbsp ghee
6 tbsp grated jaggery
1 tbsp sesame seeds
A pinch of salt

OTHER INGREDIENTS

Whole wheat flour for rolling
Ghee for cooking

METHOD

Combine the jaggery and 3 tablespoons of water in a broad non-stick pan, mix well and cook on a slow flame for 2-3 minutes or till the jaggery melts completely. Keep aside and allow it to cool completely.

Combine all the ingredients including the melted jaggery in a deep bowl and knead into a firm dough using enough water. Divide the dough into 6 equal portions and roll each portion into a 5-inch diameter circle using a little whole wheat flour for rolling. Heat a non-stick griddle and cook each roti on a slow flame, using little ghee till golden brown spots appear both the sides. Serve immediately.

TOM YUM SOUP

A bowl of hot soup is delicious for your taste buds as well as soothing for your

add the lemongrass, garlic-ginger minced and cook for 1 minute, until fragrant. Add the red chilli paste and cook for another 1 minute.

Add shrimps into the pan and fry for few seconds. Add water, lemon leaves, soy sauce, sugar, tomatoes and stir to combine. Bring to a boil. Cover, then reduce the heat. Cook until broth has reduced slightly. Add the coconut milk and red chilli slices. Add the lemon juice and season with salt to taste. Remove from heat and enjoy!

TURMERIC LATTE

INGREDIENTS

1 cup coconut milk
1 cup almond milk
½ tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp honey
1 tsp ground turmeric
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
Pinch of ground nutmeg
Pinch of cardamom powder

METHOD

In a small pan, add coconut, almond milk, vanilla, honey, ground turmeric, cinnamon, nutmeg and cardamom. Whisk together and bring ingredients to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 3-5 minutes to reduce mixture a bit, stirring occasionally. Pour into 2 small mugs, then sprinkle with a little ground cinnamon on top, or add a cinnamon stick. Enjoy!



Place the cream in a large bowl and churn it with a hand blender. After a few minutes, you will see the cream start to separate into butter and liquid. At this stage, keep churning for 2-3 minutes more till all the cream has separated.

Place a sieve over another bowl and cover the sieve with a cheesecloth. Drain the butter in the cheesecloth and collect the remaining liquid or buttermilk in the bowl.

Butter milk can be drunk as is, or can be used for baking and cooking later.

Collect the edges of the cheesecloth and squeeze out any extra liquid from the butter. At this stage, you can either store the butter in the fridge or use it to make ghee.

To make ghee, place the butter in a saucepan over the stove and warm it up. Once the butter melts completely, let it simmer. As the butter simmers, it will start foaming and splutter. Continue cooking the ghee on low heat for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally to make sure the milk solids don't burn at the bottom. As it cooks, it will start to change colour from bright yellow to a light golden brown.

Once the ghee becomes clear, stops

¼ cup chopped pistachios
¼ cup chopped almonds
¼ cup chopped raisins
2 tbsp honey
2 tbsp powdered palm sugar
1 cup powdered coconut

METHOD

For making this easy dessert recipe, combine all the dry fruits and nuts in a bowl. Add honey and palm sugar, mix well and make small balls of the mixture. Spread the coconut powder on a plate. Roll the balls on the coconut powder and allow them to dry. Healthy and delicious ball is ready to serve.

TIL GUR ER RUTI

Jaggery commonly known as 'gur' in our country contains iron. It helps in improving your digestion and also keeps you warm during the cold winters. It can be consumed in a small amount after having food.

Whole wheat flour and sesame seeds are also great for keeping your body warm in winter. They are also consumed in different forms like halwa, ladoos.

Sometimes the contrast between the simplicity of a dish and its complex flavour is striking! Til gur er ruti is a perfect example of this. With minimal ingredients and an

body. You can prepare a tasty bowl of hot soup on a chilli winter evening by taking a vegetable of your choice. It will provide you with quick relaxation and warmth on a cold day.

INGREDIENTS

250g shrimp (raw, deveined and peeled)
2 stalks of lemongrass
2 lemon leaves
2 red chillies (dry or fresh; sliced)
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 tbsp ginger, minced
1 large tomato, diced
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tbsp red chilli paste
2 tbsp lemon juice
½ cup coconut milk
1 tsp butter
1 tsp sugar
Salt to taste

METHOD

Trim off the top third and very bottom of the lemongrass stalks. Using the side of a knife, press down across the stalks to bruise the lemongrass and release the oils. Chop each stalk into 4 pieces and set aside.

Melt the butter in a pan over medium heat. Once the butter begins to shimmer,

SPICY FISH STEW

INGREDIENTS

250g fish fillet, white
250g shrimp
1 large onion, chopped
2 clove garlic, chopped
1 tsp chilli powder
3 cups fish broth
1 tsp green chilli peppers, chopped
½ tsp ground cumin
1 cup peeled and diced tomatoes
8-10 basil leaves
1 tbsp oil
Salt to taste

METHOD

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and garlic sauté for few minutes. Add chilli powder and mix well. Then add the fish broth, green chilli peppers and cumin, stirring well. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Next add the tomatoes, shrimp, and fish. Return to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Add salt if needed. Add basil leaves and remove from heat. Serve hot.

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Food and Styling: RBR



#FOOD

Understanding tandoori chai

You know what's trending now — tandoori chai! Now, don't even make the mistake of thinking that its tea made with tandoori masala, like my son cleverly tried to describe and argue. It's very much an Instagram-able item, and the first-time I saw it was in my cousin Mishaal Aziz's post. Crazy about tea in general and picking up only accolades for this dessert tea, I instantly asked him to join me on the trail of tandoori chai in Dhaka.

Tandoori Tea or Malai Tea
no matter the variety

TEA MEANS
ISPAHANI
MIRZAPORE



Each cup has got
Ispahani Mirzapore Tea



It's certainly an impressive trick! Small terracotta pots preheated in big tandoor like stoves; milk boiled at a high heat until it becomes all creamy and thick, and tea liquor brewed with sticks of cinnamon.

Then begins the interesting bit — with a steel tong, you pick up the hot terracotta pot and place it inside a big brass cup, decant the boiling milk in to the clay pot, and finally pour the simmering tea liquor on top of it.

An instant sizzling takes place and a whiff of burnt terracotta mixes finely with the frothy tea, and you have your warm earthen cup of tandoori masala chai! Take the cinnamon out, and you have just a cup of tandoori chai. Add cashew, almonds, pistachio, caramel, and strawberry syrup, and you have a different variant of tandoori chai; mix everything together, and you have a special concoction of tandoori chai, as served at Kolkata Tandoori Matir Hari Chai, Aga Sadek Road in Old Dhaka.

It is doing the rounds now as dessert tea.

"We are selling 300 to 400 cups daily to customers, and around 500 cups in weddings and other functions," said Emdad Hossain owner of Kolkata Tandoori Matir Hari Chai.

This tea shop in old Dhaka has its own rustic charm; soot laden kettles of tea and milk are being steamed at high heat; a regular buzz of customers has kept the servers on their toes. Everyone is peeping at the big stove where the terracotta cups are kept warm, and ordering for this new fancy tea.

I met Emdad in this store, and he briefed me that his uncle came across the tea at his friend's store in Kolkata. Around eight months ago, that friend came to Dhaka to train them and now, Emdad and his uncle both have tandoori tea stalls in different locations in Old Dhaka.

Mr. Tea, at Sector 7, Uttara, is a small, cosy, upscale tea stall that attracts locals and outsiders equally for their new innovation the tandoori chai.

"I had to frequent Chennai for personal reasons and came across this special tea. After a lot of coaxing I learnt the making of the beverage from Chennai tea makers. I perfected the art after many trials and now, my year-old shop draws a fine crowd, for which I am happy," said Delwar Hossain of Mr. Tea.

His is a thick malai (fat cream) mixed milk that is added to the tea liquor over a burnt terracotta cup. The scorched clay smell lingers on to the tea and is a crowd favourite, especially in chilly afternoons.

Next stop was Gulshan Cha Chaii, a cosy tea store specialising in another type of tandoori tea. Theirs had a faint hint of cinnamon, the tea was light and frothy, and had struck a chord to my black tea only palate. For people who drink black tea only, enjoying any latte is difficult, but the tandoori chai served at Cha Chaii was the perfect cup for me.

"People queue for our tea and the demand increases as night draws in. Weekends also see huge crowd when we sell close to 700 cups of all kinds of tea," said the teamaker at Cha Chaii.

Next tea tasting stop was a surprise; my dining room — aren't you perplexed? Well, my cousin ordered the special brew of tandoori cha from Gram Cha, an online portal for tea, where you place an order and they deliver your order of tea at your doorstep in a flask. Their delightful blend was what Mishael liked because he can carbon copy it when he is brewing his own milk tea. And the surprise factor added fodder to my tea adventure that day.

All in all, we loved our tea hoping and had seven to eight different variations of tandoori chai, which landed on our shores from Kolkata and Chennai. And we can safely say that we have somewhat gained expertise on the subject and can recommend two cups of tandoori chai at one go, in any chilly, wintry evening.

Happy brewing and experimenting.

ISPAHANI
MIRZAPORE

— RBR

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Special thanks to Mr. Tea, Uttara



History of tea

Having tea has always enmeshed with our favourite past times, be it sitting in the garden reading a book, having a family discussion, or even sharing a cup of tea with strangers in a nearby 'tong,' striking up interesting conversations and new friendships. Since ancient times to the current age, tea has become one of the world's ubiquitous drinks, changing its numerous traditions and tastes as its popularity encompasses borders, traditions, nations, and rituals.

The origin of world's second most popular beverage is multi-layered and infused with spiritual and philosophical connections remaining one of the East's greatest treasures.

According to legend(s), the discovery of tea was a happy accident when some leaves blown by the wind had ended up in the water boiled by Chinese emperor Shen Nong (2737 – 2697 BC). Tasting the heated water with leaves, he was delighted and stimulated by the strong flavour. The leaves were reportedly said to be from the plant *Camellia sinensis* and the beguiling flavours compelled the emperor to tell his subjects to go for extensive planting of tea.

According to Helen Saberi's brilliant book on tea, "Tea: A Global Study," he had solemnly declared to his subjects: 'Tea gives vigour to the body, contentment to the mind and determination of purpose.'

The Japanese origin of tea dates back to the Buddhist sage named Bodhidharma



who travelled from India to China.

In dedicating seven years of devotion in meditation, he noticed that he was falling asleep, for which he cut off his eyelids. He threw away his eyelids, from which, legend has it, a tea plant grew.

Another interesting source, which is much closer to home, is that an ancient

Buddhist scholar, Wu Li Zhen had brought seven tea plants from Assam and planted them in the Meng mountain in Sichuan, earning tea grown there the name of Gan Lu meaning "sweet dew."

Despite its innumerable origins, tea remains firmly rooted in the histories of modern-day China and India. Tea had reached its initial zenith of popularity in the 6th century multi-ethnic Tang Dynasty in China as it frequently cross-pollinated between different cultures and brought into a new vogue of better-quality taste.

Tea culture developed with numerous treatises, poems, and pamphlets penned on the refreshing characteristics on tea. Monks, priests, administrators, and scholars all relied on tea for concentration and nourishment. In many ways, it was seen as a stress reliever. Tea also became a homely beverage, drunk daily and served to guests.

Tea cultivation spread to other parts of China creating a change in flavour and ritual. Just like the coffee houses of the Ottoman empires, teahouses flourished through the centuries becoming centres of high artistic culture, where mainly the wealthy classes came to drink tea, socialise and debate about the burning issues of the days.

Despite tea grown and drunk in India, it was mainly relegated to parts of North-eastern India including Assam. The popularity of tea in the subcontinent ran parallel to the subsequent colonisation

of the whole area. A Scottish major called Robert Bruce had come across tea very similar to the Chinese variety in Assam, which he was compelled to report to the imperial authorities who themselves took a liking to its taste.

Tea had ventured into modern-day Britain through the Dutch, who themselves derived tea from the East Indies, which is today's Indonesia.

Concerned about losing the monopoly of tea production to China, the empire vigorously promoted tea culture in India, prompting new tea cultivation sites and estates, which oversaw their plantations and growth.

Tea had entered the battle of colonisation. This marked the beginning of a new, flourishing tea industry in India and an end to reliance on Chinese-grown tea.

Tea slowly crept up into the minds of Indians with the establishment of the famous Irani cafes being set up in the bustling cities of Mumbai by Zoroastrians from Iran.

Irani cafes brought in new and exciting flavours of tea from both within India, as well as China and the Far East due to strong trading routes set up at that time. The significance of tea while being intact has always been accommodating in line with taste, geography, and tradition.

By Israr Hasan
Photo: Collected

Newspapers and the new normal

Seeing the paper lying on the table every morning pepped me up and it was always something I looked forward to every morning. It has now been what feels like ages, ten months to be precise, since I held a newspaper in my hands.

In this new normal, we see a dramatic change in our lifestyle. It took us all by surprise and upended lots of things which we carried on without even thinking they would ever change. We took them for granted.

When we were growing up, we were used to seeing newspapers and magazines strewn on the table and stacked on the shelf. We were accustomed to starting the day by browsing through the newspaper and quickly rifling through the pages to the comic section, devouring the Rip Kirby and Tarzan comics, which came out in instalments.

Thinking about the newspapers makes me nostalgic. The texture and smell of the paper and prints are still fresh in my mind. In the good old days when I was a school-going child, we had many newspapers every day, and I remember Observer and Morning News. There was never a day without the papers and even when we moved to new places, we never missed to inform the vendor of our new address lest

we should miss any copies.

The mind keeps going back to the Auld Lang Syne and down the memory lane of sweet and beautiful memories. Even during the liberation war, in the chaotic, unstable and horrifying days that followed, newspaper was a regular feature and part of our lives.

This pandemic has had a colossal effect on the world and lockdowns have sent everything from economy to social life into tailspin; fear has gripped everyone and disrupted life and economy.

Consequently, the newspaper industry has been hard hit by this crisis. We still yearn and pine for the newspapers, to sit back and binge read, and enjoy the editorial and op-ed sections as well.

To me, sitting down undisturbed with a newspaper is a pleasure and a privilege I greatly relish and savour. In this pandemic, it has a huge role to play and is of course, playing commendably by educating, informing, and updating the readers. There is a lot of competition for newspapers from social media, TV, the Internet, but the aura that it still commands and holds is unbeatable and without a doubt, irreplaceable.

By Ali Hamid Khan

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#FOOD

Eating out at The Red Window

It burns red — a jewel tucked away in an otherwise ordinary lane in Gulshan 1 — The Red Window may be dubbed as a patisserie-cum-café on the surface, but underneath a magnifying glass, you will discover it is much more precious than that.

From the hypnotising neon of the red sign at the entrance to the restaurant's signature push-through, double doors — simply walking into The Red Window is enchanting enough. That is, before you realise what a group of passionate and empowered women can achieve when they have set their hearts on something.

Shababa Ishmam and Sabrina Hasib are crowned as the founding duo of The Red Window and what started this rare journey was just an insatiable love for anything sweet!

"Shababa and I are both dessert lovers. It's incredible how just a bite of something



sweet can bring people together. So, the both of us hatched the idea of introducing a place where you can enjoy whatever dessert you want and can have a cup of coffee to go with it," recalls Sabrina.

And with that simple vision, in 2016, Dhanmondi was graced with the ultimate dessert shop in town with the very first opening of The Red Window. By the end

of 2020, a thriving restaurant chain was born with the café safely securing a second outlet under its belt. The Red Window now hopes to conquer Gulshan 1.

Revamped as the chicest patisserie you are likely to walk into, Gulshan's The Red Window strikes a vintage vibe that patrons of the first branch will find familiar. Its vibrant red doors and plush sofas will invite you to sit down and browse through their menu for luscious mousses, tarts, eclairs, and pastries. Every treat is a sight for sore eyes and will taste heavenly.

Besides their desserts, the café also prides itself on a delectable assortment of a la carte nibbles such as buffalo wings, soups, chicken, and sandwiches. Safe to call it versatile, the menu is an expert curation by Tilka Farzana and Tamzida Karim, both members of The Red Window's core team.

Synonymous with 'baking,' the pastry shop's cakes are the prized creations of Afroza Hossain, the brains behind The

Red Window's designer cakes. That's right, 'designer!'

Fit to be housed in any edible museum, this patisserie's cakes are a bake above the rest! From delicate peonies and roses to elegant pearl details, from tangy lemon glazes to decadent chocolate slathers — The Red Window does not do anything catalogue.

The bakehouse is the one-stop answer for any and all sorts of cakes, let it be, tiered wedding cakes, stunning geode creations, gluttonous drip goodness or even themed cakes made out of fondant and cream. Whatever flavour you want will be concocted into the cake and whatever artifacts you would like to be worked into the design will be done exactly so, taking the definition of 'customisable cakes' to a whole new level!

If you have ever been guilty of salivating over the creations by The Red Window via ubiquitous Instagram and Facebook posts,

you effectively have Dhaka's food blogger Shababa Suzana to blame. Responsible for the dessert shop's food promotions and styling, Shababa is the sixth addition to the Gulshan's The Red Window, with only Ismat Nazneen awaiting introduction with you.

Ensuring smooth sailing and calm waters, Ismat is responsible for navigating through the hefty job of managing the café. She rounds up the glorious team of The Red Window, easily making this all-girls group of creative masterminds the ultimate posterchild of #womenempowerment!

Coming back to management, what scores brownie points for The Red Window are their dedication to service and every first-time customer who returns for more pieces of the café.

"Service is very important to us and we want people to want to come back here. This is why our staff has been meticulously trained to cater to every one of a customer's needs; we also routinely take feedback from them and try to improve upon any suggestions," states Sabrina humbly.

She goes on to conclude, "We, at The Red Window, see the café as simply a lounge spot. If you are ever feeling low, or want to catch up with old friends, make new ones or just sit by yourself riveted by a book, we got you!

"You can lean back and just let the serenity of a steaming cup of coffee coupled with a mouth-watering dessert wash over you and leave behind a happy and satisfied soul."

Red with real love — this is exactly what makes The Red Window precious.

By Ramisa Haque
Photo courtesy: The Red Window Essentials

The Red Window is located at House# 16/B, Road# 112, Gulshan-2, Dhaka; # 01887-344444



**ব্যাকট্রল লড়বে,
করোনা মরবে**

করোনা প্রতিরোধে প্রতিবার
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REAL FAMILY HEALTH PROTECTOR

Nawab Chatga

Taste the glory of rich Chittagonian legacy every time you walk into Nawab Chatga, an isolated diner tucked away in the shadows of a commercial lane in Gulshan 1. Customers here are prey to an infectious spread of word-of-mouth publicity raving about their exceptionally authentic cuisine. And if you have been found here once, you are sure to come back for seconds, even thirds!



Nawab Chatga vibes different than the fancy, fine-dining restaurants popping up all over Dhaka city. This diner stands humbly unwashed amid the wave of luxury interiors that inspire aestheticism in the era of Instagram. But what more than makes up for this materialism is an honest nod to the Port City of Bangladesh and the epic feast every blue-blooded Chittagonian relishes by heart.

"Nawab Chatga was born five years ago. Despite being a Chittagonian, I don't visit my hometown often. But Chittagong is a culture I was born into. I often find myself homesick, just craving the food," recalls Shahidul Islam, owner of Nawab Chatga, "After ending my corporate career, the idea of opening a Bengali restaurant in Dhaka manifested itself and I thought no one could possibly do a better job of serving the authentic cuisine of my own home than me," enlightens he.

And this is exactly what the diner prides itself on, with zero compromises in quality. Every morning is a new day at Nawab Chatga that begins with vegetables bought in bulk, fresh off the trucks from Karwan Bazaar. Cows meeting a list of

criteria are dedicatedly sacrificed every day for the butchered meat to cater to the mass demands of meat consumed here. No refrigerated meat is ever offered to hungry diners and all leftovers at the end of each day is given away to famished souls around the neighbourhood.

Raw ingredients amount to just that without the touch of a master chef running the kitchen. And it's the chef specialising in cooking Chittagonian cuisine, who Shahidul



Islam credits in upholding consistent quality throughout the diner's run. The show-stoppers selling like hot cakes on the menu that never miss to please any customer are the acclaimed mezbani gosh

and kala bhuna (braised beef in curry and spicy beef with red chilies).

If you are a tough nut to crack and the universal crowd-pleasers have not won you over, there's more on the menu that's sure to make you salivate. So much in demand it always stocks out, the akhini biryani at Nawab Chatga is a feast all on its own. Their split chickpea lentils or, chana dal, chicken rezala, the Bombay duck fried fish, locally known as *loitta mach*— all sing flavours native to the region the recipes are derived from. And their jhuna or pulled beef is an absolute must-have!

Push through the doors on the last Thursday of any month and you will be treated to the most reasonable buffet in town with chafing dishes brimming with 15 plus of Nawab Chatga's specialties. One banquet here will only set you back a paltry Tk 799.

Walk into the diner any other day anytime between 12PM and 4PM and Nawab Chatga's Quick Lunch offer will take care of you.

By Quick Lunch, the restaurant means, "Suppose a walk-in customer orders one plate of rice, one serving of kala bhuna and chana dal with some mixed vegetables and a glass of water with some dessert. After noting it down, a hand gesture signalling 'five minutes' will be shown to the customer. Within moments, the busboy will scurry to the kitchen to fetch his order and the diner's food will be served hot on the table in less than five minutes."

"Nawab Chatga is unbeatable in its Quick Lunch. Since everything is cooked in masses every morning before the doors open, our

food is always ready to go; no one can feed hungry customers faster than us," explains Shahidul Islam.

With such massive quantities in question, the restaurant pays special attention to cleanliness and hygiene. And this commitment is exactly what has kept the place afloat amid a devastating pandemic that continues to plague the world at large.

Shahidul Islam's initiative to rent the upstairs apartment sitting atop the restaurant means no employee is allowed to interact with outsiders. From the cooks to the waiters, all are nestled and sheltered in-house. Masks are dutifully worn by everyone in staff during working hours. Every table is sanitised before and after a customer sits down to eat. And, at the end of every busy day, the kitchen is hosed down clean even if that means working hours extending till 1AM. The result is zero contraction of the virus since the pandemic started among the staff at Nawab Chatga.

Good food that feeds the soul — Nawab Chatga is a hubbub bustling with laughter from throngs of people and ethnic meals so hearty, you will feel like you are home. If that's what you are missing, dash to Nawab Chatga; you won't regret it!

By Ramisa Haque
Essentials

Address: Nawab Chatga, House 29, Road 19, (behind Navana Tower), Gulshan-1, 1212 Dhaka

For reservations or mass orders: 01873-667766

Photo Courtesy: Nawab Chatga