

VOLUME 20, ISSUE 43, TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2021

BAISHAKH 14, 1428 BS

Star

# LIFE

Style

E-mail: [lifestyleds@yahoo.com](mailto:lifestyleds@yahoo.com)

64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. A publication of The Daily Star



# Crush!

SHOP SPECIAL  
RETAIL REMEDY LTD P5  
SHIMMERING GLAM  
SATIN FLAIR C  
NOURISHING DRINKS  
MILK SHAKES AND MORE P9

MODEL: PREJUAL CHAKMA  
PHOTO COURTESY: RETAIL REMEDY  
WARDROBE: RETAIL REMEDY BY RABITA  
RASHID MAJUMDER

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# Story of a REDdot

You are used to seeing the models and actors on TV. You are used to the impressive and colourful visuals and the perfectly synchronised song, but ever wondered about those who work behind the scene to create something like this?

Gazi Shubhro is such a presence.

"Tumi Banglar Dhrubo Tara, Tumi Hridoyer Batighor — There's one person who fits that description and thus it was the perfect pick as the theme song of Mujib Borsho. The song itself was sang by all the giants of the music industry in Bangladesh and the visuals were something to bask in.

If you pay attention, you will notice that the video features people of all cast and creed in Bangladesh — something that speaks for itself.

Written by Kamal Chowdhury and music by Naquib Khan, the song itself is very fitting for the occasion.

"The prime minister himself took part in the video. It's a visual that gives you a glimpse of the whole Bangladesh in a sense," said Gazi Shubhro, MD of REDdot, who was behind the scenes of this particular piece.

The name REDdot is cleverly inspired by the recording REC sign on a camera. And ever since their inception, REDdot has worked on a large number of commercials and

music videos, but they really pulled off something amazing last month when they worked with Bangladesh Air Force on two separate videos — one for the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh; the other as a tribute to the father of our nation in



a celebration of his birthday.

"It's one thing to set up the camera and shoot from the ground but it's an entirely different proposition to shoot from the air and when you are working with the air force, you need to do a lot of shooting from the air" said Gazi Shubhro as he pointed out that the spectacular formations created with aircrafts in the shapes of 50 and 100 (and 101) were truly eye catching and it was a



herculean task to catch them in the lenses.

One only gets a few seconds worth of shot while filming aircrafts so the REDdot team had to co-ordinate with the air force and set up their cameras in various locations all over the country.

"We had 22 teams with about 5 or 6 members in each team. And we had to finish the production in less than a week. It was a really big challenge. But at the same time, it was really exciting to shoot from the air as well. A very rare chance," he added.

Another one of his projects was with Shah Cement as he worked on a music video for the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh. Given his interest and expertise in music videos, it's no wonder that he managed to create something bewitching and this music video truly spoke about his vision and calibre.

Over a thousand people were featured in this video. That fact

alone makes you wonder about the management. The cinematography in the video is picturesque; truly complementing the locations and sets.

"There were actually thousands of props, costumes and. For the concluding shots, we wanted to try something visually staggering and eventually we came up with the idea of the Red and Green umbrellas. The shots in the swamp land were another challenge because of the location itself but we managed" smiled Gazi Shubhro about how pleased he was being able to pull off a big project like this.

"Pre-production is very crucial for projects like this and I think because of that we were able to make it work," he said.

We are used to watching his work on the screen because Gazi Shubhro is one of those artists who prefer to stay behind the scene and lay down the foundations as they watch their art bloom.

Fingers crossed for whatever new project he amazes us with.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro  
Photo: Gazi Shubhro



us on /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা  
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য মানেই

**স্যান্ডালিনা**  
সোপ



রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...

**KOHINOOR**  
CHEMICAL



#DECOR

# This Eid, find your style at ISHO

In the span of just over a year, we have witnessed the world come to a standstill. We have had to adapt and accommodate to several new practices and habits. Despite all these drawbacks, a silver lining of the coronavirus pandemic is that we have been able to spend more time with our families and work from the comfort of our homes.

As we embrace this new normal and go about our daily tasks, this time has also allowed us to change or enhance the interiors and décor of our surroundings — given the fact that we're in the confines of our houses!

Speaking of great interiors, décor and furniture, ISHO has quickly established itself as the go-to furniture and lifestyle brand to meet all your needs. Thus, you don't have to look any further as ISHO provides modern living solutions and affordable and quality global furniture designs and accessories for all your rooms whether it's at home or in your office.

As we know, working from a not so "work friendly" environment can be challenging but in the same breath you have to ensure to remain focused and productive. By creating a designated work corner, you

could end up concentrating better and thus become more efficient and productive.

ISHO's Noblitt Light Workstation — is just one furniture piece from a big range of work from home designs — sits perfectly in your study or home office. The combination of its metal legs and light wood colour gives it a minimalistic appearance and also a unique piece of furniture.

Pair this up with their Bushwick Light Grey Work Chair to add a modish look



to your workstation. This chair with its adjustable height and built-in lumbar support will give you sufficient back support so that you may find a comfortable seating posture even during elongated hours of work.

There always needs to be a cosy corner at home so that at the end of a hectic day we have a spot to relax and relieve our stresses. There is no denying that a lot of planning and thought often goes into setting up this stress and clutter-free sanctuary as it's very personal.

Add a touch of elegance to your cosy



spot with ISHO's Pompeii Blue Dark Arm Chair which is both functional and comfortable. This striking and chic furniture will undoubtedly be the main attraction of your cosy corner. To create a relaxing atmosphere, surround it with greenery and plants and they shall contrast pleasingly with this statement piece.

The meals shared during iftar is a beautiful blessing in this holy month that is unmatched with any other. Enjoy the essence of Ramadan with ISHO by setting up your dining area using their Jorasanko Light Dining Table, and Jorasanko Black Chairs. The two pair together beautifully to offer minimalistic luxury in a stylish manner.

The sturdy design and comfortable seating arrangement create an overall modest outlook, reflecting the humbleness of Ramadan.

By Fariha Amber  
Photo: ISHO


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## Mother's Day gift guide

Although mothers deserve to be showered with immense love every other day, having a day in the calendar entitled towards celebrating them makes our guardian angels feel even more special. And with Mother's Day right around the corner, you better start planning now what to get the most important woman in your life!

Here's our list of top 5 gifts for Mother's Day. Use this occasion to satisfy your mother's obsession with crockery and kitchen products by including ISHO's Kruze Jugs and Biyo or Sloik Jars in your gift package. If you are planning to prepare a meal, why not place them on new plates as well? Your mother will surely love the Nakshikantha platters and Pavlova cake stand! For a complete gift package, make sure to throw in Florero vases as a home décor element.






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# Therapeutic effects of music ON OUR BODY AND MIND

The therapeutic benefits of music are abundant. It is the music that stirs our emotions, enriches our life with melody, and often times aids us to overcome our melancholia.

And the rhythm, melody, and harmony of music equally help us fight numerous mental health disorders through the process of complex psychological intervention. The melodious rhythm and intonation of music have been used in different medical treatments over the past couple of decades and several research studies have demonstrated the countless benefits of listening to music including its effects on our blood pressure, heart rate, and even oxygen level in the blood. Hence, many therapies nowadays count on the beneficial rhythmic effects of music as a complement to these therapies due to its direct benefits.

The role of music dates back to the beginning of human civilization, and music has been considered a gift from mother nature itself. The ancient Greek defined music as the 'art of the muses' and the venerable Philosopher Plato cited that 'music is for the soul what exercise

is for the body.' The hieroglyphic signs representing the word 'music' are similar to the signs representing the states of 'joy' and 'wellbeing.' Thus, more than a thousand years ago it was recognized that music has certain healing properties that influence our emotional and spiritual dimensions. In recent times, according to the American Music Therapy Association (AMTA), "the usage of music as a therapy can be designed to enhance wellness, reduce or manage stress, express feelings, enhance memory, improve



communication, and facilitate physical rehabilitation." And we certainly cannot deny how listening to our favourite music helps us feel more relaxed and blesses us with many restorative effects on our body and mind.

Moreover, AMTA states that music therapy vitally contributes to improving the quality of life of healthy people and meets the needs of children and adults who are suffering from numerous diseases and disabilities. Therefore, if we are to consider a disease as some kind of disruption or imbalance, music therapy can be used as the bridge necessary for the communication that is blocked in order to flow. Today, music therapy has been applied to a wide range of conditions and the most common applications are in education (autism, hyperactivity), medicine (oncology, pain), and geriatrics (dementia). Moreover, music therapy can be an effective way to develop new coping strategies and shed light on our unconscious thoughts or emotions that usually stay hidden in the background of our mind, especially while meditating.

The very renowned neurologist Oliver Sacks had discussed the intricate relationship between music and the brain in his book, *Musophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. In his book, he showed us how music can awaken the damaged part of the brain, and in the book, we come across the case of Martin, a person with a profound mental disability who knew more than two thousand complete

operas by heart. Just as music produces feelings of joy, sadness, or melancholy, it can also activate both hemispheres of our brain (left and right) and can create new connections between them. Our right hemisphere is associated with intuitive and imaginative functions while our left hemisphere is responsible for logic, reason, and language. Our left hemisphere is largely influenced by listening to music, and skills that are developed by listening to music include fine motor skills, rhythm, and coordination. Furthermore, certain melodies can activate or foster emotions such as empathy in the human brain. This is how music extraordinarily helps us to maintain a healthy social life, and develop humane qualities like compassion, and understanding.

Music has the power to summon forgotten memories and through it, we frequently project our personalities and tastes. I, time and again, use music as the time capsule to visit the sad or happy days of my past; as a remedy to overcome my heartaches or let myself become oblivious while listening to the songs of Tagore. To sum up, music can greatly modify our emotional state, and it has the ability to change the mindsets of people—just as our national anthem unites us all collectively. Thus, we should utilise the melody of music as the harbinger to bring peace and harmony to our spirit.

By Ayman Anika  
Illustration by Hamida Akter Mira

## ◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



**ARIES**  
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)  
You'll find involvement in small groups gratifying. Try to be honest when dealing with your spouse. Be creative in your efforts. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



**TAURUS**  
(APR. 21-MAY 21)  
Discord may arise with someone you're close to. You must use discretion when talking to others. Taking chances should not be an option. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



**GEMINI**  
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)  
You need to take a good look at all sides of an issue. Don't take sides. Plan your social events carefully. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



**CANCER**  
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)  
Be careful how you deal with colleagues. The knowledge you have will enhance your reputation. You can make sound financial investments. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



**LEO**  
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)  
Too much work and no play will only result in frustration. Coworkers may not be on your side. Your personal life will be disrupted. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



**VIRGO**  
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)  
Your ambitious mood may not go over well with loved ones. Someone you care about may let you down. Secret affairs may only cause complications. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



**LIBRA**  
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)  
You will find that social activities enjoyable. Your lover may not understand your needs. Home improvement projects will bring the family closer. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



**SCORPIO**  
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)  
You may want to try your hand at creative writing. Don't let your boss get the better of you. You're in the mood to spend money. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



**SAGITTARIUS**  
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)  
You are ahead of your time. Tempers will mount if you are too pushy at work. Don't point your finger unjustly at others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



**CAPRICORN**  
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)  
Don't be too quick to respond to a plea for help. Empty promises are evident. You may not be too pleased with the actions of others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



**AQUARIUS**  
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)  
Unreliable people will be negative. You won't be well received by superiors. Try not to allow your partner to lead you astray. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



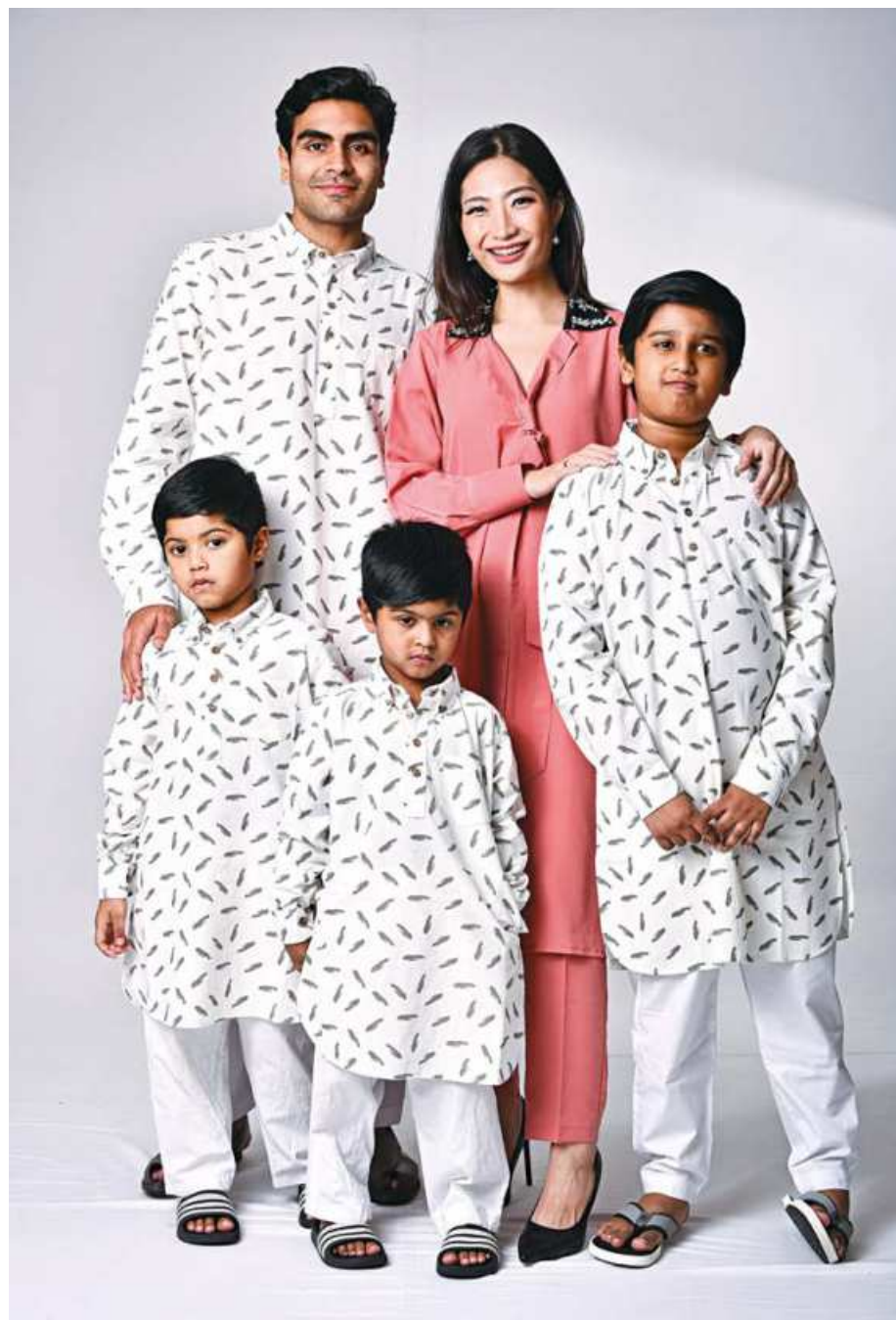
**PISCES**  
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)  
You can make excellent investments. Don't get tangled a debate that could lead to estrangement. If the job gets done, let it pass. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



#FASHION

# Retail Remedy Therapy

Last week, we walked into one of RR's (Retail Remedy Ltd) workstations in Dhaka, amidst a sea of sample clothes dangling in the hangers and associated props including throngs of nude stilettoes lying about in clusters. Fresh faces, apparently employees of the brand, led us through the corridor and into a larger room where two young ladies and long-time friends, namely Rabita Rashid Majumder, Managing Director at RR, and Benazir Alam Aunon, Director at the same company, were enjoying a conversation between themselves, seemingly discussing their next photo shoot idea.



the label are Sobia Ameen, social media influencer, Prejul Chakma, indigenous celebrity model, Nazia Hassan, fitness guru etc., the result was not only a celebration of RR's beautiful collection but also a tribute to women's individuality and uniqueness.

If you thought that was it, RR reminded you again, that they had an enormous collection for the men and the children.

"Actually we are quite popular with men's formal wear. People have come to us time and again for a complete wardrobe solution, especially as office wear," said Benazir.

Having seen it all, one question that repeatedly popped on our minds was how much 'deshi' was RR? "Thanks for asking the question, I have been wanting to talk about this from the beginning," said an eager Rabita.

She went on to say, "Our idea from the foundation, was to become a sustainable brand that was completely local. We take pride in the quality of our fabrics and particularly our tailoring style. Our team at RR Ltd has travelled to peripheries of the country to source authentic yarns and fabric. As individuals we are proud to be born a Bangladeshi and the same reflection can be seen in our clothes. Someday, we hope to go global, and by this we mean highlight our 'very much deshi products' in the international runways," said the hopeful entrepreneur.

Finally having seen everything from upfront, right where it was made, it seemed all the collections were made to perfection, from the swirling satins to the dresses in soft pastels, every design was customisable, a final jewel to the crown of the RR customer.

"We make clothes in all sizes, from extra small to extra-large; we don't want our customers to fret over sizes when they like a design. For us at RR, fashion is for everyone and not only for a certain body type."

Thank you RR for being so positive and thoughtful.

**By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury**  
**Photo Courtesy: Retail Remedy**  
**Models: Prejul Chakma, Firat Etem,**  
**Azaan Azim Zaman, Ayaaz Azim Zaman**



Rabita asked us to join in and view their latest collection.

"You will be surprised at how much work we do at RR's on a daily basis. We have almost everything from sleepwear to traditionals, to party wear and even office wear, and that's a lot of work," admitted Rabita.

She continued to show all her collections including ones which she initiated just months after completing her MFA in Fashion Merchandising, to the ones they have been planning together, for the upcoming Eid celebrations in 2021.

"We started very small, just like any boutique store would, but then shifted to a larger scale production. Personally, I always wanted to go big and become a renowned clothing retailer brand in Bangladesh. My idea with RR is to make it the 'one-stop shop' for every household in town. From children's clothing items to lounge wear, if anyone is looking for something to wear, they can simply come to RR and we'd have something for them," claimed Rabita.

With such ambitious ideation, one would

naturally imagine the brand to have plenty of brick-and-mortar stores in and around the metropolis. But the duo had different plans for their brand.

"We believe that, in this day and age of modern technology, people are more inclined towards an online platform. So we have stressed more on building an efficient website and rock-solid online presence, where our customers can easily 'log-in' and take as much time as they want, to select and order their desired items. Also through the online existence, we can make sure our products can reach all throughout Bangladesh and even abroad," revealed Benazir.

From their latest collection, the Spring-Summer Collection 2021, the duo showed an enthralling blend of smart silhouettes including a layered satin kurti in ivory white, which we still can't get over. A sneak peek into their Instagram page, which the duo claimed to be quite popular with the clients, and we saw an exclusive array of clothes and also RR's unique models.

Amongst those who modelled for







# SATIN and shimmer

Glamorous! That's the right word to describe all the images that conjure on one's mind at the mention of the word, satin. An elegant material that perfectly blends the heavenly sheen of silk and luxurious softness of Muslin, satin is every fashionista's fabric of choice.



A favourite of royalty as well as celebrities for decades, who can forget Grace Kelly's iconic robin's egg blue dress, or Princess Diana's fabulously famous one-shouldered electric blue number. It gained a bit of a bad rep during the minimalistic '90s when it was considered tacky, but satin is back with a bang and here to stay.

For any fabric to be considered timeless it must possess the quality of versatility. Satin's soft nature makes it a tailor's dream. Whether it is draped, sharply tailored or gathered in billowing puffs, it can be shaped however one likes. It has a subtle, elegant gleam that makes it perfect for delightful days as well as velvety nights.

Silk can sometimes be stuffy and uncomfortable, but satin will never be so. Organza is too sheer for some and taffeta is too stiff, which makes satin a clear winner when it comes to eveningwear. That it is wonderfully romantic and makes it wearer feel and look instantly glamorous is of course, the icing on the cake!

We are blessed with another Eid ahead of us. Which means taking up the glam quotient a few notches. A satin kaftan in a statement colour will surely make you the belle of the ball this festive season; think of pastel shades like blush, periwinkle, primrose yellow or moss. Shades like ivory, pearl and Devonshire cream look elegant

and will make your days resplendent.

*Ghararas* are every traditional fashionista's must have. Satin is the ideal fabric for it. Think of a soft peach satin kurta that has stunning stonework along the neck and sleeves, paired with a light turquoise *gharara*. For those who prefer jewel tones can get creative and pair ruby with emerald satin to bring a wow factor to their Eid attire.

Satin saris look extremely stylish and chic. Colours like maroon, forest green, navy, and mauve look incredibly chic when worn with a sparkling, sleeveless blouse. Solid-coloured saris can be paired with an interesting blouse with a different cut such

as off-shoulder or ruffle, which makes them perfect for glamorous Eid evenings.

Coming back to its versatility satin makes any outfit look fabulous. A well-tailored, one-shouldered jumpsuit in teal or oxblood will look amazing for all those evening soirees and parties for Eid. A mid-length tunic in navy with an oversized bow on the neck will look fabulous when worn with gold heels and is perfect for outings. A one-shouldered satin kaftan in a rich colour will make you the belle of any ball you grace your presence with this Eid!

**By Sabrina N Bhuiyan**  
**Photo Courtesy: Retail Remedy**



# Understanding the power of SMALL BUSINESSES

I wanted to order some food from a local café, so I Googled to find their phone number. The search result took me by shock, it said that the café was “permanently closed.”

Scrumptious was a favourite local café, where I often went to relish a hearty breakfast over veggie omelette, toast, and coffee. My daughter loved their froyo (frozen yoghurt). Scrumptious is one of the thousands of small businesses that have closed down during this pandemic. Small businesses around the world have taken a hit during these challenging times.

As citizens and consumers, it is our responsibility to support small businesses wherever we live because they are the backbone of an economy! Nowadays when I go grocery shopping, I try to buy locally produced fruits and vegetables. When I order food online for delivery or takeout, I opt for a local restaurant instead of a nationwide chain. No, I do not exclusively order from local restaurants, because the national chains are just everywhere!

Sometimes, it is a matter of convenience. At other times, it is a matter of price, to be honest. A cup of coffee at a local restaurant costs more than it does at a national coffee chain for obvious reasons. Having said that, I personally think that a cappuccino at a local café tastes so much better. I think it is because these independent businesses are so passionate about what they do that they go the extra mile to ensure customer satisfaction. Not just coffee, the menu at a local restaurant is unique to it, you will not find the exact same menu or taste anywhere else.

Small businesses contribute to the growth of local communities. Unlike big corporations, they are not driven by the profit maximisation mantra. I increasingly

feel the need to spend my money at independent businesses, especially after what I have witnessed during this pandemic.

No matter where you live, you have small businesses in your area, which are using locally sourced materials, ingredients, and craftsmanship to make a difference.

How many times do you consider buying an outfit from an independent dress boutique in lieu of dress or dress materials imported from neighbouring countries? On my last trip to Dhaka, I went to Banani Super Market and found out to my dismay

employments we create directly change lives,” said Haniem Maria Chowdhury, owner of Tahoor, a Bangladeshi clothing brand that aims to meet the fashion needs of modern Muslim women through their modest-elegant apparel.

“If people knew small entrepreneurs’ stories, the countless hours they put into their businesses, and how these businesses directly impact the economy, they would appreciate us,” she added. “Thankfully, some people do understand and appreciate us, which is why I stand where I am today.”



that in some stores, they only sold imported dress materials. “No, no, we only sell Indian and Pakistani 3-piece sets,” one shopkeeper said to me in a tone of pride, as if selling locally-made 3-piece sets would hurt the status of his business. I felt that a change in this sort of mind-set was more than necessary. However, to see this change, we must first give the local entrepreneurs a chance.

“Those of us who are in manufacturing, we use local resources, from raw materials to human resources, to make our products. Through our work, we touch lives. The

Haniem feels that Bangladeshis need to be educated on the importance of purchasing Bangladeshi-made products.

A country’s overall economy is benefited when it has thriving small businesses, especially businesses that use local resources. When you spend your money on the products and services produced by a small business, that money goes right back into the economy, generating GDP (gross domestic product). Here in the US, the world’s largest economy, around 50 percent of the nation’s GDP is generated by small businesses.



Small businesses hire local people to work for them. These businesses create jobs for locals. For instance, Haniem M Chowdhury, who started her business from her drawing room in Dhaka, now gives pay checks to nearly 75 people.

Small businesses also often know their customers by name, there is a personal relationship, a trust factor between the two parties.

Azhar Uddin, 67, who lives in Uttara, prefers local bazaars over air-conditioned superstores. “I have been buying fish from the same fish trader for the last 15 years. There are times when I do not have enough cash on me to pay him right away, but he sells me the fish anyway.

“I return home with the fish and later on, go back to the bazaar to pay him. Sometimes, I place order for certain types of fish, which he would personally obtain for me from the wholesale market,” he added. Asked why he feels it important to choose a small fish trader over a chain superstore, he said, “When I purchase fish from a small fishmonger, I know that the money directly benefits him, his family, and his business.”

Independent businesses need our support because these businesses directly feed families, help people move out of poverty and financial hardship, and help create a strong middle class. A small business is also the reflection of a person’s entrepreneurial spirit, which we consumers need to fuel through our support.

I knew the owner of Scrumptious by her first name, Maduri, an Indian-American woman, who immigrated to the US when she was a child. I will miss Scrumptious, its ambience, its shabby chic décor, its savoury omelette, and cappuccino. I never want to see another successful small business close its doors like this!

We the consumers can help small businesses in our respective communities to thrive and survive. We should consider it our responsibility to fuel the entrepreneurial spirit of the local people, for these are the dreamers who are willing to push themselves to the limits to achieve big goals and bring changes.

**By Wara Karim**  
**Photo: Tahoor**





**THE MILLENNIAL COOK**  
FARIHA AMBER



# Drinks to quench your thirst

## SUNNY ROUGE

This bright orange mocktail with a dash of scarlet seeping in from the bottom screams summer in the most delectable way possible. Filled with the goodness of summer fruits and berries such as mango, strawberry, and raspberry, this mocktail will make your taste buds go wild. It is easy to put together, tastes absolutely incredible, and looks great too.

### Ingredients

#### For the berry layer —

- 1 cup crushed ice
- ¾ cup strawberries
- ¾ cup raspberries
- 1 tbsp lime juice

#### For the mango layer —

- ¾ cup mango puree
- 1½ cups orange juice
- 1 tsp orange essence

#### For the berry simple syrup —

- 1 cup white sugar



### Method

Start by making the berry simple syrup. In a saucepan, add sugar and water in equal amounts and allow it to heat on medium-high. Wait for it to come to a simmer before adding the berries, and continue to cook this until the berries start to bubble and burst. Once in that stage, remove from heat and strain the mixture to get a clear, crimson syrup. You can also store this in the refrigerator for later use.

To make the berry layer, blend the strawberries and raspberries along with freshly squeezed lime juice to attain a

smooth purée. Add a tablespoon of the prepared berry simple syrup to this so that you are left with a thick and gloopy berry mixture.

Next, in a blender, blend together the stated amounts of mango puree and orange juice along with orange essence and a teaspoon of the berry simple syrup. This should have the consistency of a diluted, but thick orange juice.

In a tall serving glass, add crushed ice followed by the berry mixture. On top of that, slowly pour in the orange and mango mixture with the help of the back of a spoon, so that the layers are not distorted. For an appealing presentation, attach lemon wedges to the rim of your glass and drop in a twisted straw for a fun look.

## PINEAPPLE COCONUT MINT JUICE

This refreshing pineapple coconut mint juice recipe is the ideal summer drink to chill with. Made with only a handful of ingredients that are easily available, especially during this season, it brings out the best results with minimal effort. The combination of coconut, pineapple, and mint gives this a juice a refreshing and dewy flavour that has a fruity aftertaste.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup chunks of fresh pineapple
- 2 cups coconut water
- 1 tbsp palm sugar
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp lime zest
- 2 tbsp chopped mint leaves

### Method

Start by preparing the pineapple — remove the bottom and leaves from atop and then cautiously cut the thick skin. Carefully remove the pineapple eyes and core so that you are left with a hollow cylinder of fresh and cored pineapple.

Slice this into four large quarters and then cut them into bite-size chunks. Using freshly cut pineapple is very crucial in this recipe in order to attain that dewy flavour. Take out 1 cup of pineapple chunks from here for the juice. To prepare the mint leaves, wash them properly and chop a handful of mint leaves to attain 2 tablespoons of chopped mint leaves.

In a blender, add the freshly cut pineapple chunks along with palm sugar and a splash of water just to get the blender whizzing. Once the pineapple is blended into a smooth paste, pour in freshly squeezed lime juice along with lime zest and mint leaves. Churn these to combine well. Finally, add in the coconut water and get the blender moving for the last time, whizzing it for about a minute.

Once ready, strain the juice through a fine mesh sieve to catch any leftover pineapple bits and to retrieve a clear pineapple juice. Once poured, the finished product should be a bilayer juice with a sunshine yellow translucent bottom layer and a frothy surface. Serve cold and garnish with mint leaves on top.

**Photo and Food: Fariha Amber**



- 1 cup water
- ½ cup strawberries
- ½ cup raspberries

# Delicious milkshakes for summer

Ramadan coinciding with the peak summer season this year is a situation we do not quite like. While the summer heat is enough to dehydrate us on its own, the added lack of fluid intake for prolonged hours shall further deprive us of energy.

During such times, it is of paramount importance that we carefully select our choice of fluids to include the most energy packed ones, while of course not compromising with taste! Thus, here are four fulfilling and delicious milkshake recipes for you to try that will keep you energised while you fast under the blazing sun this summer.

## COTTON CANDY MILKSHAKE

This funky milkshake has a unique taste and will become your children's favourite in no time! With a slight twist on the traditional milkshake, this requires only four ingredients to make.

### Ingredients

- 1 stick cotton candy
- 2 scoops strawberry ice cream
- 2 tbsp molten white chocolate
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 tbsp sprinkles (for garnish)

### Method

First of all, prepare your serving glass for a fun and colourful look — dip the rim in molten white chocolate and then immediately put this into a layer of sprinkles to attain an attractive rim. In your blender, drop in a couple of scoops of strawberry ice cream along with the milk

and leftover molten white chocolate.

Separate the cotton candy of your choice from its stick and add this to the blender as well. Blend everything together to get a homogenous mixture and serve chilled in your prepared glass. You can also add cotton candy fluff as garnish atop.

## CHOCOLATE COFFEE MILKSHAKE

Combining the taste of coffee and chocolate, this milkshake is the jazzed up version of your ordinary cold coffee. With the perfect hit of caffeine, it will also meet your caffeine cravings during Ramadan in a cool way!

### Ingredients

- 2 scoops chocolate ice cream
- 2 tbsp molten chocolate
- 1 cup milk
- 1 tsp instant espresso powder
- 1 tsp sugar

### Method

Pour the milk in a blender along with the instant espresso powder and sugar to cut out the bitterness of coffee. Blend this in high speed until completely combined. Next, drop in two scoops of chocolate ice cream and give this a final whiz.

To serve, take a spoonful of molten chocolate of thick consistency and pour it inside the top of your serving glass. Swirl this around to get thick streaks of molten chocolate inside your glass. Finally, pour the prepared milkshake in it and enjoy!

## COCONUT PISTACHIO MILKSHAKE

This milkshake is the perfect balance of



being indulgent and nutritious at the same time. Reap the goodness of coconuts while meeting your sugar cravings during iftar with this one!

### Ingredients

- 1 cup coconut water
- 1/2 cup tender coconut meat
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp ground pistachio nuts
- 2 scoops coconut ice cream

### Method

From one coconut, drain its water and also scoop out the flesh, which should yield the stated amount of coconut meat and water. Add these to your blender along with sugar, ground pistachios and two scoops of coconut ice cream. You can adjust the amount of sugar to your liking or leave it

out completely and may also substitute coconut ice cream for a vanilla variation.

Blend everything together until you get a silky and creamy mixture. Top the frothy milkshake with chopped pistachios for garnish and serve this concoction chilled for the best experience.

## DATE MILKSHAKE

For time immemorial, dates have been synonymous to Ramadan and iftar. While dates are delicious on their own, this milkshake further enhances their sweet and delectable flavour.

### Ingredients

- 10 – 12 ripe dates
- 1 cup whole milk
- ½ tsp cardamom powder
- 2 scoops vanilla ice cream
- ¼ cup almonds

### Method

Remove the date pits and soak the flesh in half cup of milk along with the almonds for at least four hours. After that, chop the soaked almonds and add them in a blender along with the dates, milk, cardamom powder and two scoops of vanilla ice cream.

You can also substitute the vanilla flavour for our traditional ones such as kheer or yoghurt ice cream for better taste. Blend everything together until you get a thick and smooth milkshake. Serve this cold and garnish with slithered almonds on top.

**By Fariha Amber**  
**Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed/ Ajo**



# Where do I belong?

The aroma of coal-caressed sheesh kabab wafting through the air is an allure or a promise. It's hard to believe just how this power can blur the boundaries between imagination and the real indulgence. Right, I am talking about following that aroma to savour the delicacy. Being in the thick of it all triumphs all — I get it — but anticipation can also deeply titillate one's senses.

Many of us grope into the depths of our minds to examine our true selves, more so in times of crisis. But often a question of where we really belong might arise with it. How is this self-examination predicated on the definition of our identity?

Does our country have the first dibs on us, or do we identify with a certain ethnic group, community, or a religion to firm up an identity? That is easier because then a certain set of attributes associated with that assumed root is inherited automatically, sparing one the need to painstakingly explore or explain.

I wish it were that simple, especially when one has constantly moved, evolved, and experienced an array of cultures, peoples, and tastes.

Back in my childhood, I thought of myself as belonging to mostly what surrounded me, and delineate myself by what I was taught to believe. I could just name a few core identities whose attributes I readily accepted. Surroundings and our communities do shape us and leave a lasting impression.

What's wrong with proudly exhibiting traits representing those roots? Absolutely nothing. But that approach only could confine us to a sense of collective identity that can restrict us from discovering our uniqueness.

I isolate myself from pre-defined attributes to discover the real me. This venture of stripping myself of this readily borrowed identity lies in my lovely experiences. I look to people I have met, range of voices I have heard, and cultures I have dabbled in, because these have had a deeper impact on me, helping me understand who I am as an individual. Where I have lived and lost myself in moments may lead me to some sort of an answer. How I have received and interpreted those moments says a lot about me.

The rhythm of the train hitting the rails at intervals has transported me to many unrelated moments in time. That intermittent noise of union slowly segues me from one cherished moment to the next with the slowly passing scenery, as if it were a moving slide of my life. Moments of epiphany, small gestures of compassion, snippets of happiness and sorrow pop out against a perfect musical backdrop.

People hustle through the stations to hop on the trains, excited about their destination, but to me, watching the trains for hours, trundling into a terminus, is no less of a thrill. As a child, I'd often go to the Kamalapur station, not to ride the trains to any place, but to just watch their movements.

I have gleefully reprised that role in St Pancras lately to relive those memories.



Same goes for the airplanes when I drop friends off at the airport, as if my purpose is no less consequential. I feel I am a part of their plans of flying somewhere.

Maybe I go back in time to reminisce a similar moment when I got away, or perhaps I weave a plan for my own imminent getaway. My friends laugh at my irrational exuberance for pretending. But little do they know how the roar of an airplane engine flies me to the skies faster than they check in.

Then there's this urge to befriend folks that don't look like me. They don't speak the language I do, nor do they belong to the ethnic group or religion that I do. I feel drawn to them to hear what I often don't, and to see with them what I don't on my own.

Fascinating is the chasm between the view from outside, looking in, and the one from within, being among them, and with them. Perspective takes on a whole new meaning that leads me to question my own prior short-sightedness and judgment.

I appreciate - to my enlightenment- their different thought patterns. Where have I been all these years?

Having lost a car to an accident, I was scrambling to find a new one quickly. When a friend from Haiti offered her car with alacrity for a month while I looked for one, I realised she was a friend closer than many other relatives.

Her skin tone, religion, and culture weren't the same as mine, but as our friendship deepened in the following years, I could discover the common thread that ties us all together through laughter and sorrow, hope and despair. She got to know me over her beloved soup Joumou that she treated me to. Soup Joumou told me her native story the way Panta-Ilish does mine.

I crave a visit to Brazil with my Brazilian friend - his hometown is not touristy - to have Coxinha the way he relishes. In Istanbul, when a lone German man appeared unfriendly, sitting on my Bosphorus tour bus, I ruled out talking to him. But as luck would have it, it was he who stuck around to show me the way to my hotel after the tour when I got lost in a maze.

At a lunch with him, I found, to my amazement, that kabab appealed to his palate the same way it does mine. The entire meeting was as eye-opening as it was rewarding, being able to see someone on a different light. The confluence of two cultures over a common passion made my lunch immensely special. Our friendship

still thrives to this day across the Atlantic. He fondly brings up lunch, adorned with kabab, somewhere at a London tête-à-tête. We share a profound interest in soccer and travel, but it is kabab that never gets lost.

Matteo, the hotel owner, in Cinque Terre, still tells me what the weather is like. I hear from him - not from my gadgets - because I feel the breeze, the way he does. That's my way to relish an anecdote. When a stranger ahead in a drive-through queue pays for my Latte, I can't help but wonder



why I couldn't do the same for someone apparently separated by the barriers of our own making.

What attracts me the most about a place is her way of life, the appeal of her alleys lined with local art or specialty food shops.

A town is her people, culture, and stories. Relishing an authentic dish local-style, or listening to a hang played by a struggling local artist, or having Churros the way the Madrilenians do, is my way to know myself. La's du Fallafel, a famous falafel joint tucked in a small Jewish corner in Paris, delicious trout in an unknown mountainous hideout in Switzerland, and freshly cooked fish by Meghna tell me stories in their own ways.

Many amass wealth to show off their social status and trappings. But my work every day leads me to the thought of my early liberation from a humdrum existence to pursue my passion. Working harder could get me faster to deliverance, to being able to wander around and see what I haven't had time to see. It is a liberation from my own inhibitions.

Tying myself just to a certain religion, ethnicity, or a community is limiting because that keeps me in a fish bowl year after year. My trek has been to dismantle these barriers to expand my horizon, living in the promise of something to come - yes, that aroma - not yet seen and felt, because every moment leading up to it is worth living for. I belong to the personal story of one, the way one wants to tell me.

By Arif Shajahan  
Photo: Arif Shajahan

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# FOOD

# UMAI, authentic Japanese cuisine

Looking for authentic Japanese dining experience and that too at an affordable rate? There's one place in town that surely lives up to the expectations — UMAI in Gulshan 2.

So what makes UMAI so spectacular? Certainly the ambience is one reason. Once you have entered the restaurant you are greeted by hospitable faces, a warm welcome drink, and a calm soothing interior décor that transports you directly to a tranquil city somewhere in Japan. And of course, there's the food!

The restaurant serves delectable Japanese cuisine like sumptuous prawn fritters, spicy edamame, beef negimaki, a platter of sashimi and sushi, chicken teriyaki, unagi rolls, maki rolls, prawn fritters, avocado salad, mango tartar, and so much more.

"We import our salmon directly from Norway," said Nayeem Ashraf, Head Chef at UMAI, adding on to include, "To maintain authenticity, we cannot procure most of our items from the local market. They are instead flown in from various parts of the world. And that's not all, to preserve the freshness of the food, especially the salmon, we need to keep it in a special freezer set at -70 degree Celsius. The sushis are chilled at this temperature, inside the special freezer and not frozen — it's a big difference. And this is why our food stays fresh, flavourful, and authentic."

Inquired about the selection of menu, Khan Faisal Islam, Owner and Managing Director at UMAI Ltd. chipped in.

"We have regular food tasting sessions by the directors, who are also seasoned foodies; unless and until a menu fulfils all the requirements and our taste buds, we do not finalise it for the menu chart," he said.

Shoji Morita, a renowned Japanese chef, who honed his skills at the popular Sushimasa Restaurant in Kudanshita, Japan, had been the Executive Chef at UMAI, since its opening in 2015.

Morita is famous worldwide for his veteran culinary skills and his presentation style. UMAI has been blessed to have him as a guide, for the longest time. During his tenure at the restaurant, Morita personally trained all the employees including the kitchen staff.

"His teachings were a blessing for me," said Nayeem Ashraf, the current Head Chef at the restaurant.

We spoke to the Operations Manager, Aminul Islam, to find out explicitly why UMAI was popular. Aminul gladly replied, "Anybody who understands authentic sushi dishes will definitely come to our restaurant. I don't think I need to say anything else. Plus, the value for money, which they get for each item, is excellent and it's a direct review from our customers."

And the claims must be true because business has not subsided even during the pandemic, as UMAI is consistently providing home delivery for online orders. On any given weekend without the pandemic, the bustling restaurant

brims with customers.

"Even the two private rooms that we have at the restaurant for family get-togethers or corporate events are full," said the Managing Director, Khan Faisal Islam.

While we wait for the pandemic to get over and the sun to shine beyond the clouds, we can order online and order

some authentic Japanese cuisine this Ramadan from the much coveted restaurant.

Bon appétit!

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury  
Photo Courtesy: Umai Ltd



#FASHION

# EXPLORING your personal style

Fashion is ever-changing, but style is not. Being tied to the world of fashion teaches you a thing or two on modifying your own, just as it taught me. If I look at my own style from years back and compare it to what it is now, it's obvious that a lot has changed.

Keeping up with trends is fun, but knowing what works for you every time, makes you look and feel great, is another. Your style is something that is close to your heart; it's what you picture yourself flaunting, and you're absolutely confident with. It can leave a statement, or even be absolutely basic. Whatever it is, it's personal!

This week, I'm about to explore my own style through this very special article. I will be sharing everything I've learned and loved that has shaped my style to what it is today. And I encourage you to explore your own, define it and let it evolve as you beautifully grow each moment.

Over the course of time, I realised that I like to keep it simple. I enjoy trying out trends. But most often, I stick to what I feel the most 'me' in, and that is — the basics.

Plains are my best friends as they complement almost every other piece. Love embroideries; I barely opt for prints and when I do, it's usually florals and in rare instances, stripes. I love muted and neutrals tones, but I do have a soft corner for colours. So, my typical style is to pair something colourful with something neutral, getting the best of both.

Going back to basics for a bit, a tip for myself is to invest on good quality. It's definitely a hard one to follow as it gets tempting to rather buy more trendy or eccentric pieces. At the same time, we all get the most wears out of our basics. Tank tops, plain tees, denim — we all need them every day. So, it's a good idea to spend on better quality, durability, and comfort.

Coming to my body-type, which is basically a pear-shape I'm careful in choosing pieces that make me feel confident and does not highlight my insecurities; let's be real, we all have them.

When it comes to western fashion, I prefer a cute top with a pair of pants that fit really well. A tip that I religiously follow is to pair 'a loose with a fit'. The balance between baggy and fitted is what looks the most flattering on me.

So, I pair loose apparel with form-fitting ones to achieve an overall chic. Often, I like to wear dresses and jumpsuits given they have a nice form and fitting. For traditional

wears, I love salwar kameez and sari equally. Once again, I go for simple pieces that fit well; I love a touch of intricate embroidery or zardosi work on them.

What defines my personal style has to be how I try to style each piece in a number of ways. I think of as many ways to fashionably style and wear it on different occasions to get the most wear and look!

I have a cropped top that I've worn like a hundred times, styling it as a top, innerwear, dress and even a blouse with my sari. The goal is to not be overwhelmed with the need to constantly buy new clothes, but to maximise the potential of your existing wardrobe through your own sense of style.

Speaking of which, what works best for me is to think of my outfits and how I would style them ahead of time. It's super helpful to plan a few days prior to going somewhere. This saves me the time and panic of having to figure it on the last minute. By planning ahead, I make sure my outfit pairs and fits well and is suitable for the place. Whether or not I feel comfortable and assured in it is



crucial.

Accessorising plays a big role to me. It gives life to my simplest of wears. For anything casual, I prefer dainty jewellery. I gravitate towards rhinestones and pearls. I love earrings and can never leave the house without wearing them.

For anything extra, I go for big studs or drop-earrings. I prefer contemporary designs; exception being traditional occasions when *deshi*-designs and *jhumkas* have my heart! For shoes, my preference is simple and specific; a comfortable pair of heels in a neutral shade and medium height is my usual.

To end, I have to add that I am a huge believer in taking inspiration. I am inspired every day to love and play with fashion, try out trends and incorporate new elements. My style evolves continually as I take inspiration to further explore its depths. And it ultimately makes me passionate to style, excited to feel my best and love my own self in this little journey of life.

**By Zohaina Amreen**  
**Photo: Zohaina Amreen**

