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Contours and HIGH LIGHTS

AT THE FOREFRONT OF CLEANLINESS
EVERYTHING NEEDED FOR PERFECT HYGIENE **P2**
BREAKING FREE FROM THE STIGMA
UNDERSTANDING CONTRACEPTION **P8**
OUT OF THE CANVAS AND ONTO THE SKIN
TATTOOS AND BODY ART **PC**

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED
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STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA



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Personal hygiene must-haves

Daily skincare routines, oral health practices and all the things we do to maintain our health are included in personal hygiene. Maintaining these practices not only keeps us physically healthy and strong but also makes us more confident, positively impacts our personal relationships, and caters to our mental well-being as well.

Here are some personal hygiene products one should have —

Disinfectant

A liquid sanitiser or a sanitising spray is a must-have for anyone. Not only does this get rid of germs, which might affect one's immune system, it also brings in a sense of security.

A disinfectant soap or antiseptic liquids for bathing is always good to have due to its germ-killing properties.

Wet wipes

We often forget how dust contributes to skin problems and allergies, and has an overall effect on our physical and mental well-being.

So, a weekly clean-up should be scheduled. Although cleaning one's room might be a tedious task, it comes with maintaining personal hygiene. To make the entire work process more time efficient and effective, wet wipes can be used to clean any and all surfaces to remove dirt and dust.

Dry shampoo

Washing hair every day is never recommended. Daily washes and shampooing strips hair of natural oils and makes hair prone to breakage, and increases hair fall. To reduce the oiliness and greasiness from hair without damage, dry shampoo is a must-have. It is usually applied on areas where the hair is particularly oilier and does not need to be

washed off after applying.

Facewash and moisturiser

Everyone has a skincare routine unique to their skin type which keeps their faces clean and radiant. Even if one's routine is not a 10-step ritual, there are some essential and basic products which one should have.

A facewash that caters to a specific skin type is an effective way to remove dirt and residual makeup from the face. Facewash is gentler and exfoliating, whereas soap is harsher and causes breakouts more frequently.

Additionally, a good lotion or moisturiser to follow the facewash should always be kept in hand.

Dental floss and mouthwash

Oral health is a crucial part of personal hygiene. It helps to speak boldly and smile more confidently. Other than brushing our teeth twice a day and changing toothbrushes every three to six months, using mouthwash and flossing after meals are necessary.

Ideally, one would floss after every meal. This removes food particles and sugar which bacteria tends to feed off. Flossing also prevents gums from bleeding. Mouthwash also has a range of benefits. It prevents gum disease by killing bacteria, preventing plaque build-up, tooth decay etc.

Personal hygiene ensures one's overall health. These practices promote self-care and reduce stress and anxiety. Not only are personal hygiene practices a good way to keep oneself on track and on top of day-to-day activities, but essential to keeping one's spirits high.

By Puja Sarkar

Two Bangladeshis invited at publication launching ceremony at PEER gallery London

British Bangladeshi poets, Farah Naz and Milton Rahman have been invited to read their poetries in the launching ceremony of Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds (SOW) publication at PEER gallery, London on Saturday, 5 June 2021 from 12:30PM to 1:30PM.

They are among the 17 selected poets whose works have been included in SOW poetry publication in the original language and in its English translation. The eminent poet Stephen Watts has gathered together the collection of poems included in Swirl of Words / Swirl of Worlds, consisting of over 96 languages, each representing a language spoken in the Hackney borough. Bengali being one of the prominent languages spoken in the borough made its way in that prestigious poetry publication.

Swirl of Worlds (SOW) is a multi-media art project supported by Arts Council England, launching at PEER and Shoreditch Library that celebrates

Hackney's diversity and explores how language shapes and informs cultural and individual identities. The project consists of a group exhibition at both the venues, a 10-week programme of in-person and online events and a poetry publication. 3,000 copies of this publication will be made available to Hackney Library members for free.

During the event, the poems of Alemu Tebeje, Chris Beckett, Milton Rahman, Farah Naz, Giorgio Orelli, Loren Bianconi Leader, Amarjit Chandan, Branko Miljković, S. D. Curtis, Lakshmi Prasad Devkota, Michael Hutt, Ziba Karbassi, Stephen Watts, Kristina Kuneva, Federico García Lorca, Jane Duran, Gloria García Lorca, Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, Caoimhin Mac Giolla Léith and Anna Gréki, Cristina Viti and Souheila Haïmiche will be read from the SOW poetry publication.



us on /Sandalina

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ঠিক যেমন ঝপচাঁয় আভিজাত্য মানেই

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#PETS

Controlling your fear of dogs

Dogs — loveable and furry four-legged bundles of joys we all adore. Despite their playful nature, some of us might not be comfortable around them. Be it due to past experiences or for unknown reasons, being afraid to approach dogs or to cross their path is nothing out of the ordinary.



unfriendly dog or being barked at by street dogs could be such sources. Perhaps, assessing what happened that day in terms of external factors could provide some insight and help rationalise the fear.

Taking 'puppy' steps

If you are looking to overcome this fear, confrontation is not the first step. Throwing oneself amongst a pack of dogs while they jump and want to play will only make one more nervous. Instead of forcefully trying

to interact with dogs, it is better to focus on just walking past them on the street.

Confrontation with an already existing fear is likely to increase nervousness and anxiety.

Keeping distance

Avoiding areas with a high number of dogs will essentially set one up for success. Not all interactions will be positive and keeping distance from dogs prevents negative experiences from piling up and contributing to the fear.

Do not force interaction

Sometimes, others around us take this fear lightly and make one wonder if they are just being silly. However, even with puppies or with the friendliest dogs, unless one is truly comfortable with petting them, there is no reason to force interaction and set oneself up for failure or bad experiences.

Learning dog body language

Familiarising oneself with how dogs travel in packs and what intimidates them will provide an initial guideline as to what not to do. Knowing their behavioural traits will point to what to look out for.

When dogs feel threatened, they tend

to turn their heads and back away while growling. So, recognising and interpreting these signs and picking up on their body language could make one more confident in interacting with dogs when they have to.

No running

A street dog or an unfamiliar dog might be scarier than a pet. Rule number one is never to run if an unfamiliar dog approaches you. Rather, it is important to calmly withdraw oneself from the situation. Standing up tall with your head up, not making direct eye contact and even making a fisted hand to prevent the dog from sniffing your hand shows the dog that you are not interested in interacting with them and accordingly, demotivates the dog to follow you.

Learning relaxation techniques

Relaxation techniques like taking deep breaths or counting backwards can help overcome the initial anxiety upon unexpected encounters. This helps our minds to calm down and think and make decisions rationally.

Positive thinking

We often forget the power of positivity. In situations which overwhelm us with nervous energy and anxiety, our minds naturally go to the worst possible outcome. However, reconditioning our minds to remind ourselves that dogs do not attack without reason, and in most cases of energetic outbursts, they do not mean any harm, would help in crossing their paths calmly. Unless provoked, dogs are unlikely to get in the way.

Hence, keeping a positive mindset when approaching dogs or having to face them is a good way to keep oneself collected and in control of the situation.

At the end of the day, even if dogs are man's best friend, they do not have to be everyone's. Despite their fluffy exterior, it is quite common to be afraid of dogs. It is important to remind oneself that in situations, panicking and trying to get out of the situation is not always a wise decision but rather proactive thinking and calm decisions are.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo: LS Archive/Shahreer Kabir Heemel



Here are some things to consider doing if you happen to be afraid of dogs —

Understanding the fear

Analysing what one is afraid of is necessary to understand any fear. Is it actually the fear of dogs or is it a fear of all animals or a particular situation?

Is it for a particular breed of dog or when they are doing a specific activity? It might be beneficial to address the source of this fear; when and how did this fear originate?

Narrowing down to what one is actually afraid of will make the process of overcoming this fear or removing oneself from situations more effective and easier.

Childhood experiences with an

#GUIDES

Getting rid of debt

One of the most dreaded feelings in this world is the feeling of being in debt, and when things take a turn for the worse, the confrontations with your lender can be rather awkward to say the least.

The secret to escaping such situations is of course, to never get in debt in the first place. But life can be quite challenging and sometimes, borrowing is the only option you have left.

Now, understanding why you have gotten into such a mess, let's focus on a strategic way to get yourself out of it.

The first thing you ought to do is stop borrowing more money from here and there. It ruins friendships, and in the long run, does not help you financially (not to mention the mental pressure). If you want to get rid of your debts, first, you need to stop borrowing money randomly.

Next, you need to start calculating and keeping notes of your finances. Sure, it seems like you have everything in your memory, you know how much you owe and to whom, but the wise decision is to start keeping a book or journal or a notepad in your smart device where you can calculate and list all the debts you have. It really becomes useful in financial tracking.

You must also track your money. Identify where you are spending the most and why. How badly do you need it? If you can confirm these variables then you can prioritise, minimise and decide on the necessity of all your spending and cut out or reduce the ones that you can do without. Holding off on the spending is a big step towards debt management.

Start off with the bigger debts. Work your way down the list one by one by starting off with the minimum payment. Remember, even the smallest payment is

greater than no payment and you will never be rid of debt if you do not start paying them.

If you have too many debts and all of them have become difficult to handle, you might want to consider debt consolidation, but it should be your last resort only.

Paying one debt by borrowing money from another source is never a good idea. It's like digging one hole and filling it up with the dirt from another hole — no progress whatsoever.

Set aside a specific amount each month to pay off your debts. Making a monthly budget by calculating your spending will surely make it easier.

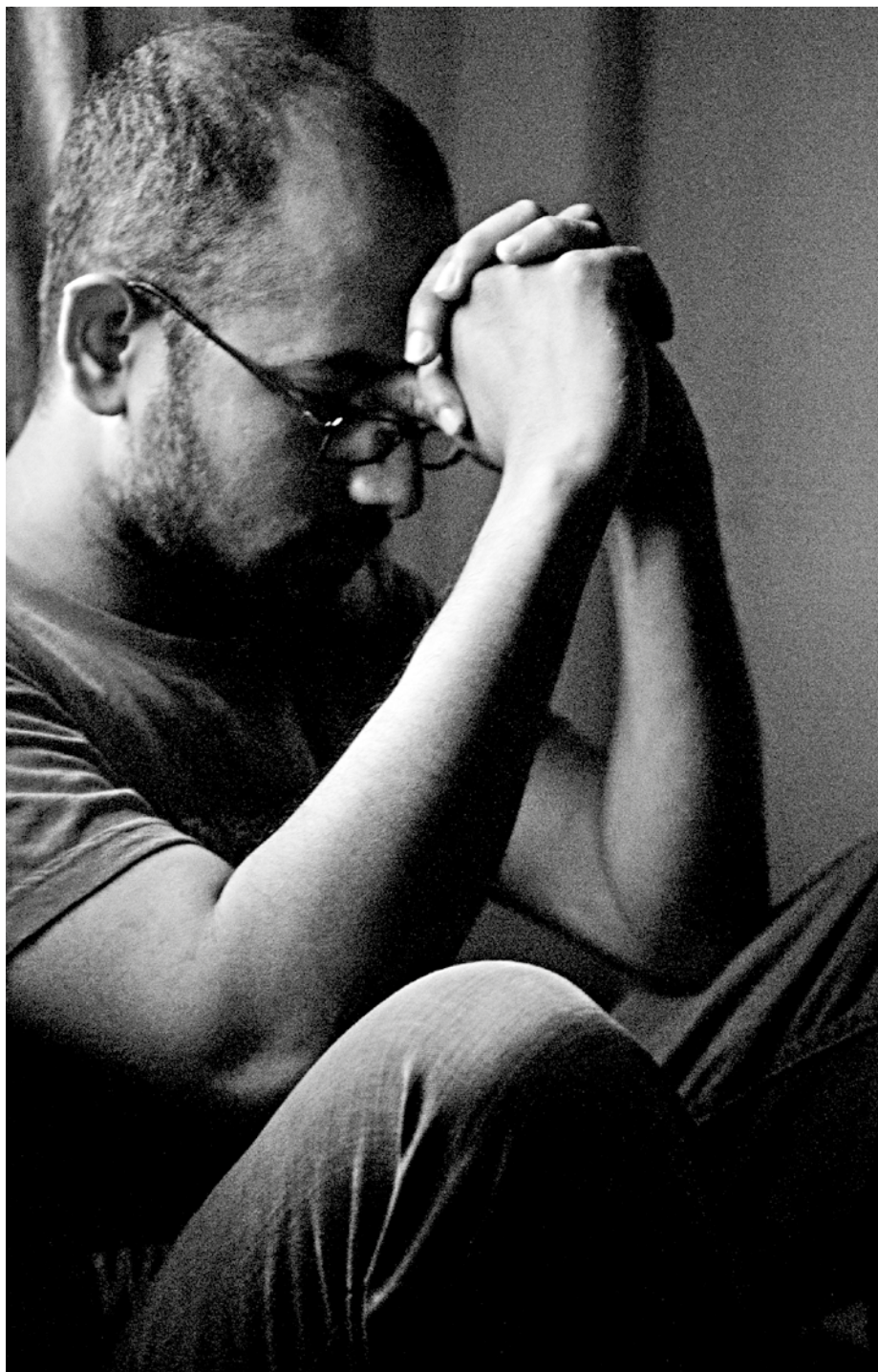
Consider all the small habits that are costing you on a daily basis but you could do without them — like window shopping or using your credit card for shopping on a whim.

A credit card is an instrument of debt, if not used or managed correctly.

Remember that the next time you want to buy those expensive red cowboy boots for no obvious reasons at all.

Avoid getting in debt just to spend big on celebrations such as weddings. Sure, you have been dreaming about this day for a long time, but consider this — is taking a loan a good idea just to have a big and extravagant wedding? Think about how long you will have to bear that payment.

You will need to reconsider your lifestyle. Expensive habits need to be abandoned. Become thrifty and spend wisely. And more importantly, communicate with your lender. As always, communication is key.



HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Avoid get-rich-quick schemes. Short trips will be educational. Your partner will be frustrated with you. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Family matters can get emotional. Financial limitations are likely. You will attract potential lovers this week. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Pleasure trips will be better than anticipated. Lovers will be demanding. Be mindful of your behaviour. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Get the whole household involved. Look into property deals. Don't be too available for everyone. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Loved ones can be difficult. Avoid any verbal abuse. Make special plans just for your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Make aesthetic enhancements at home. Avoid friction with your partner. Empty promises will cause upset. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Finish projects early to gain praise from superiors. Don't ignore any emotional issues. Find ways to stay. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Curb the mood to spend money. Don't let your health suffer. Think hard before making your final decision. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Make plans to travel. Your creative talent will be recognised. Don't let anyone come between your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Make changes this week. Business trips will be productive. Don't spend too much on entertainment. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

You will find competition this week. Get involved in physical activities. Don't evade important issues. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Trust will be difficult this week. Things at home will be hectic. Get together with close friends. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

#FASHION

Back to the future WITH HOOPS

The popularity of hoop earrings continued from the '60s through the '90s, and till today, remains a classic for women of all ages. As one of the oldest fashioned pieces recorded in history, hoop earrings trace back to ancient Egypt all the way to modern times and have become an ultimate statement piece.

With its circular shape, hoops represent unity, wholeness, and infinity. With different meaning in different cultures and communities, the hoop earring is more than just an accessory.

Hoop earrings were embraced by societies everywhere including the Greeks, Romans and Asians. The first hoops originated around 2500 B.C.E in the African civilisation of Nubia.

In 1500 B.C.E, hoops were worn by Egyptian men and women who believed that the hoops enhanced their beauty. Royal Egyptians wore hoops as signifiers of their social status. It was also an accessory used to identify tribal members, which later turned into religious symbols and then power.

The earrings found its way to American in the 1980s within working-class Latina and African American women. Till today, hoop earrings are more than just an accessory for these women but a symbol of their pride and empowerment as women of colour.

Hoops are a statement of confidence and boldness. With this timeless simplicity and symbolic weight, the hoop earring has adapted. Still engulfing strength and international fashion, hoops are now back in trend with its numerous unique sizes, various colours other than the classic gold and silver which can be matched with any outfit for any occasion. However, the way these earrings were worn in the past, is not necessarily the way it is worn today.

Hoops were usually worn for a night out or parties and not necessarily to formal or casual events. Hoops now come in variations of embellished styles with pearls, stones, dangling gemstones, and other ornaments adding dimension to the basic earring and making the it suitable for any kind of event. However, the key to adapting hoops in any setting is picking out the right size such that it stands out but also brings the entire attire together with elegance and boldness.

Considering the occasion and the dress code, the size for the hoops can be small, medium or large. Smaller hoops are discreet and are a fresh alternative to studs. It highlights the face without screaming for attention. Depending on the look, thicker or skinnier hoops can upgrade the classic rings. Larger hoops can vary in sizes; medium hoops dangling a few centimetres from the ear to ones, which graze the shoulder. An additional factor to consider when it comes to larger hoops is how easy

it is to manoeuvre in them. These hoops call for attention to the face with oversized rings. Depending on the setting, the size of the hoops can be picked.

Previously, hoop earrings used to come in only gold or silver. Now, hoops come in a range of colours like crystal, pastel shades, emerald green or blue and many more in varying thicknesses. This allows the accessory to be flexible which can be worn to work or a party.

Hoops most commonly come in plain and simple textures. Today, hoops come in textures including ridges and charms



too. Additionally, earrings featuring multiple hoops in one is a classy yet fun look. Creating an effect of a hoop within a hoop, it stands out in a gathering. These earrings are fun to play around with when one has multiple piercings alternating between sizes and designs. It creates a chic and graceful ripple effect.

The multidimensional earrings go well with almost any attire. Hoops bring youthfulness and playfulness to the most boring of clothes. For instance, it can transform a boring turtleneck sweater by adding a voguish element. It can be matched with simple everyday T-shirts for a contemporary and comfortable look. Replacing forgettable studs or tiny unnoticeable earrings with a tasteful pair of hoops can exude confidence and power, especially in the workspace.

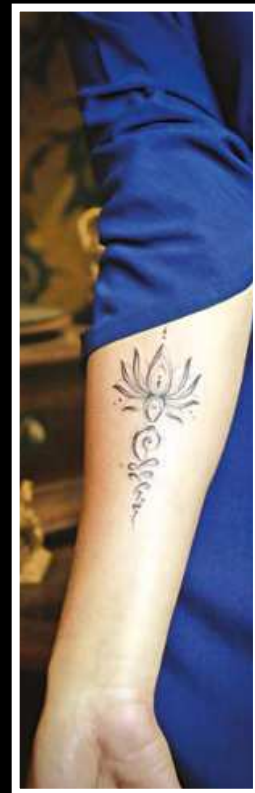
In today's fashion world, hoop earrings transcend any other accessory in terms of both meaning and trendiness.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Linda
Makeup: Orko
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

#PERSPECTIVE



Star **LINE** Style



TATTOOS *and* ART

The artist's perspective

Tattoos are one of the oldest art forms, tracing back to 3400 BCE, found on the mummified remains of Otztai, an Ice-age man. Many, like the Maori and Samoan cultures, embrace tattoos as a part of their traditions. In mainstream society, many dream of getting tattooed because of its trendiness or aesthetic value. However, there is more to consider.



As an illustrative form of self-expression, tattoos make one's body their own personalised art gallery marked with creativity.

InkPark Tattoo Studio's Avijit Saha says, "Just as an artist paints on white paper, the human body is like a canvas to a tattoo artist."

As such, tattoos become a permanent part of oneself.

Nyeem Mahmud from Exotic Piercing BD says, "Tattoos boost one's spirituality, inner beauty, and make one feel more confident."

As tattoos have this unique empowering quality, it is crucial that getting a tattoo today does not result in regret tomorrow.

Saha, being creatively fuelled, says, "I ink tattoos to express the hidden feelings, expressions and personalities. Tattoos become art with an artist's touch. When you get tattooed, your body mirrors your expression."

Although it may look vehement, getting inked is a decision requiring careful thought. Saha wishes that people would not choose their designs randomly.

Olin from Olins tattoo Studio, an experimental and self-taught tattoo artist who has been tattooing for over a decade, wholeheartedly believes that tattoos are not for everyone. If one cannot connect to the art form and the story behind the tattoo, getting tattooed is not worth the investment.

The idea of trends and trendiness cannot be applied to tattoos. Olin stresses that tattoos cannot be a trend. With it being a permanent mark on the body, there needs to be a personal connection, something relatable.

Recently, Olin has noticed an increase of Bengali

calligraphy tattoos. While more people begin embracing tattoos parallel to their culture, the Bengali phrases and words hold individual and special meaning. Other than that, Saha has seen an increase of smaller tattoos and name tattoos and being style conscious, people are beginning to show interest in larger tattoos.

Tattoos have a wide range of styles. Starting from minimalism and detailed to realism and glitch, traditional and symbols, each style has its own unique flare.

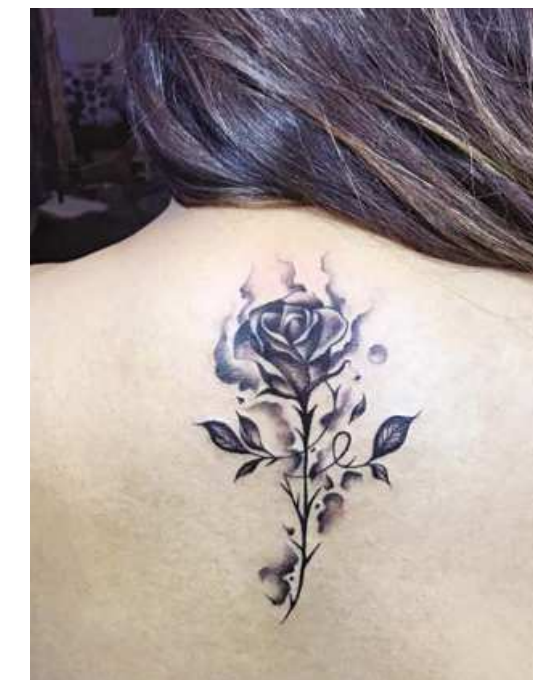
"Tattoos are a commitment," says Nyeem. Oftentimes, Olin advises his clients to come back to him a month or so later. If they still want a tattoo, only then would he go through with it. Artists emphasise repeatedly how important it is to be absolutely positive about getting a tattoo with no hints of regret or doubt, especially since tattoo removal could be harmful and cover-ups are not always easy.

First timers are advised to look past the social dogma but not go all out with their tattoo design. Olin and Saha both advise going for smaller and minimalist tattoos. Moreover, Olin and Nyeem both argue that the stigma surrounding tattoos will always exist and people will always have something negative to say.

It remains imperative that we do not allow someone else's prejudice to cloud our decision. In this regard, Saha is hopeful that things are changing, saying, "People are trying to respect the art and the artist more than before."

Once decided on a tattoo, there are some things which need to be kept in mind.

Tattoo artists are like other professionals. They have turned their passion into their career. Asking them



to copy another artist's work is disrespectful and represses their creativity. Additionally, tattoo artists, like all other professionals, pay their bills with their work. Hence, bargaining will not do any favours. The bigger the tattoo and more detailed it is, the more the price.

Trust the artist. To establish this trust, Olin does not do walk-ins. Appointments allow him to get to know his client, have a one-on-one conversation and understand their story so that he can reproduce it creatively.

Allowing for a detailed creative collaboration between you and the artist is what will make a tattoo unique to oneself. For a perfect tattoo, Saha says, "There needs equal contribution from both sides." With that being said, asking for someone to speak for your design or influence it is something Nyeem strongly opposes. The design itself needs to resonate with your story and take shape through the artist's visualisation. However, bringing along a friend for company is preferred.

Being prepared mentally plays a significant role. Consulting the tattoo artist to know what to expect is wise. Not only does one need to sit still while enduring a certain level of pain, but there is a possibility that the tattoo could take multiple sessions to complete, especially bigger tattoos.

Most importantly, listen to the tattoo artist's instructions on how to take care of the tattoo

afterwards.

It is established that tattoos require a lot of thought. However, there are instances where, despite being determined to get tattooed, you probably should not.

While going through hard times, such as a breakup, when your judgment is clouded, is definitely when you should not be getting tattooed. Olin and Saha both insist that getting a tattoo before 18 years of age is not a good idea. Although Olin's studio caters to clients above 18 years old, he argues that one should get a tattoo around 26-27 years of age as by then, people usually have the maturity and also the life experiences to decide on a tattoo and its design.

What if you still regret your tattoo? If the tattoo can be safely removed or covered up, then the problem is solved. If not, then fixating upon it will not eliminate the regret. Olin advises these regretful souls to make it into a funny story.

Tattoos are a combination of art and philosophy. With its permanency, tattoos tell a timeless and life long story. Getting tattooed is a beautiful way to mark one's body with creativity, stories and expression.

Final words of advice— Think. Think. Think. You can never be too sure.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo courtesy: InkPark Tattoo Studio and Olins tattoo Studio



Hypocrisy behind the scenes of a Sexual And Reproductive Health Clinic in Bangladesh

Despite impressive strides in Bangladesh's record, contraceptives and family planning options are still inaccessible to women across classes—and the problem starts at the doctor's mindset.

A few weeks ago, I advised a close friend, who recently got married, to pay a visit to a well-known international organisation that specialises in providing contraception and family planning services across Bangladesh and other countries they operate in. Let's call this organization by the name Women's SRHR Aid. My friend—let's call her Majeda—is in her mid-twenties and doesn't want to have kids just yet. This is a taboo itself, right? It sounds familiar to all the women as well as men reading this.

Now imagine you are young, inexperienced and seeking a safe, medical space to get access to safe birth control options, and you return home feeling humiliated, embarrassed, and shocked. The doctor at the branch she went to, a female one, had made fun of her, insinuated she was an unmarried girl who was there with her young boyfriend to have free sex, and asserted that birth control options were illegal for Bangladeshi women who are unmarried. In fact, she mentioned that the IUD was only available to married women after they have had their first-born child.

My natural question was why is it even relevant what marital status is in a country that is cracking under the weight of overpopulation? The Women's SRHR Aid webpage indicates that "Women's SRHR Aid International is obligated by WHO to provide contraception to everyone irrespective of age, marital status, economic status, parity or any other factor." Then, is there any rule specifically in Bangladesh that denies contraceptive methods to unmarried women?

I looked it up—turns out that despite birth control being widely subsidised by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) of Bangladesh, and services are available in all divisions of Bangladesh. The MoHFW also works with national and international partners to help bring contraceptive services to as many Bangladeshis as possible. This makes contraception cheap and easy to access in Bangladesh—an encouraging realisation. There are also options for women who have been exposed to unprotected sex.

Oral contraception pills i.e., "birth control pills" and "emergency contraceptive pills" are available over the counter to avoid unplanned pregnancies, but for options like IUD and Implants, the services must be availed from medical practitioners. And they ask for your marital status and can decline from providing consultation and service for contraception and family planning based on the above-mentioned. It's a circular problem once more—and it increases the chances of higher aggregate abortion rates in a country where abortion is illegal.

I posted the story on a Bangladeshi women self-empowerment's Facebook group



I am a member of—called Thrive Women—and the public outcry was unbelievable. Swarms of women commented and privately messaged me sharing their stories, some positive and many negative. And negative experiences with a sexual and reproductive health (SRHR) practitioner was not limited to just Women's SRHR Aid, but at *most* places, across various levels of class-privilege, socio-economic and educational backgrounds. It is thus not an issue of availability of medical services, but rather of a doctor's whim and attitude towards client-provider ethics.

Some of these women on the Facebook group published alternative recommendations, name-dropping other doctors, only to have other women contest that with negative experiences they have had. One woman wrote to me, "I have become so discouraged after a couple of visits to gynaecologists that I went to Thailand for a good doctor when I could. I was sexually active before marriage and the doctors here shamed me for reasons that didn't seem medically relevant. Now I don't know what I would do because I can't fly out," she said, adding, "I'm married, and have a child!"

This indicates the underlying conservative mindset issue that is intrinsic to the South Asian cultural fabric. It is no secret that any talk of sex, sexual, and reproductive health and contraception is largely still a taboo topic in Bangladesh. But when this obstructs a medical practitioner from providing a medical consultation assuring

ethics, sensitivity, and confidentiality, then it indicates a larger problem—that the behaviour of doctors discourages and discomforts patients from seeking out sexual and reproductive health services that could potentially affect their lives, fertility and social security.

Bangladesh boasts an inspiring sevenfold increase in its contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) in less than forty years. Yet, the rate of unintended pregnancy declined only gradually during the period of 1993-2007 alone, and there is still a significant unmet need for family planning (FP).

A key concern in Family Planning programmes in Bangladesh, according to a study conducted by UKAID, is the high rates of discontinuation and switching to less-safe or less-effective contraceptive methods. Risks of abortion-related morbidity and mortality increase as a result of unintended pregnancies, particularly in countries like Bangladesh where abortion is against the law. For social security alone, women—married or unmarried—across economic classes may seek contraceptive options and be declined from it because of archaic cultural norms filtering the doctor's behaviour.

In an interview with the broadcaster Deutschlandfunk in November 2019, German Development Minister Gerd Müller praised Bangladesh's record on this front, saying that the Muslim-majority country — home to over 160 million people — made remarkable strides in reducing its fertility rate over the

past five decades.

"Bangladesh has brought down the fertility rate from about seven births per woman to 2.1 births per woman, which is almost the European average, over the past 50 years," Müller said, underscoring the importance of female empowerment in achieving this decline. "Self-determination and equal rights for women, as well as ensuring full access to education and healthcare can make a huge difference."

I'd like to conclude by sharing a story a senior medical advisor from a reputed international SRHR organisation relayed to me; "I used to work in Iran at an SRHR centre and I refused an abortion to a young girl once. She said she was married, and in an abusive household. I told her to rethink her abortion, and she had agreed. An hour later, she committed suicide."

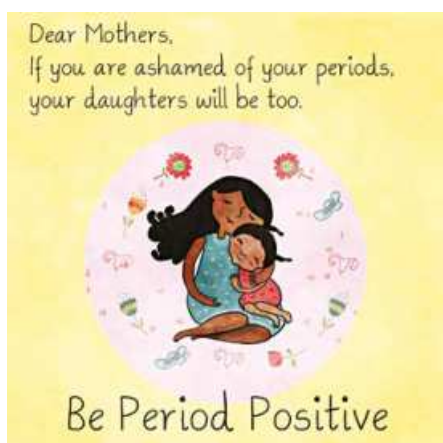
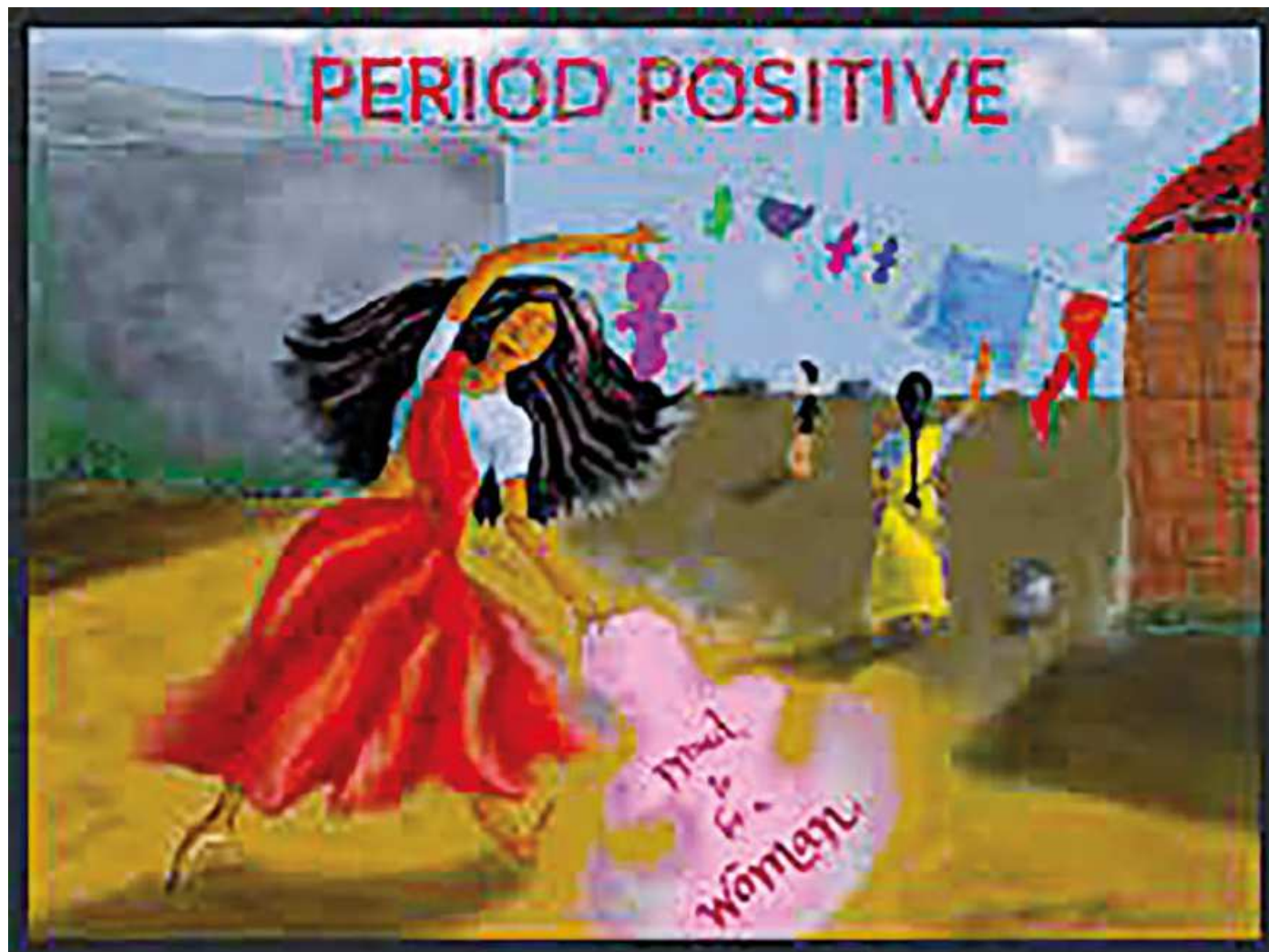
This shows that a doctor's insensitive handling can cost a patient's life—especially when social security is at stake. The doctor should not have spoken to Majeda like that—what if she got pregnant and felt unable to get an abortion and ended up in a suicidal state. You never know.

Post-Script: By the way, I called Women's SRHR Aid Bangladesh's media number listed on their website after all this to double-check whether they only work with married women for contraception—and the customer care agent said yes.

By Dibarah Mahboob
Photo: Collected

Normalising menstruation

“It’s time for action” — Sparking a bubbling revolution, the 2021 theme of Menstrual Hygiene (MH) Day is shattering taboos and reversing generations of misogyny surrounding menstruation in young girls and women all around the world. MH Day, at large, is a global observance reserved for May 28 which dedicates its efforts to dissolve period shame and destigmatize it to raise awareness of menstrual hygiene for people who menstruate.



If coming across the word “menstruation” above has made you recoil with shock and disgust, the modern world stirring with change is not for you. This is the era of social movements like #happytobleed, a 2015 Facebook protest of women unapologetically standing up to claims that women would only be allowed to enter a shrine in India after a machine detected if they were pure (not menstruating). Welcome to the world where such sexist comments are crushed; where people are passed the mic to share their real-life stories about menstruation on platforms like Instagram via hashtags like #TheWholeBodyTruth.

Get used to a society that sees stains to be sacred and is ready to work on reforms to sensitize itself to the stigma, myths and concerns of menstruation. This is the time when groundbreaking adverts like Always’ 2014 #LikeAGirl campaign glorifies, rather than belittles, being a girl. Make yourself comfortable to a place that doesn’t accept

watery blue, Windex-like liquid on TV ads to show absorption of period blood anymore; we’re okay with it being red on TV channels and social media.

Scratch that last one; apparently, we’re not quite there yet.

Just last year, Facebook banned a realistic ad by Modibodi, an Australian brand marketing period-proof underwear for depicting period blood as red. The ad, reportedly, violated the platform’s guidelines. This tells you that much work is still needed to change the way we see menstruation and a woman who menstruates.

What plagues humankind is a disease that is rooted in ancient perception and sexism: women who bleed are seen as impure and dirty. If you are on your period, you are expected to evade every religious practice, sit out an event, skip school, stay confined to your homes and just hide the fact that you are, in fact, on your period. You are made to feel as if getting your period is an unforgivable crime and the dark cloud of shame continues to loom over you for 5-7 days.

Usaila Alam, an extraordinary woman, a proud mother of two daughters and a teacher, remarks on the irony of such taboos, “Yes, some practices are excused during menstruation but reciting religious scripture is perfectly fine; after all, your mouth is clean. Touching the Qur’an is alright, your hands can’t be impure.”

“Menstruation is the shedding of the uterine wall. Your uterus is your womb; it’s the place where a child is borne and nurtured for 9 months. This is the place where the soul of your child is sent; another human being is born out of your womb. How much more

wonderful can this phenomenon be? If the womb is such a sacred place, how can the blood shed from that organ be impure in any which way? It can’t,” Alam emotionalizes.

Conversations like these need to make it to the fore. 2021 is no place for illogical taboos and laughing at someone experiencing their periods. Rather, let’s normalize it.

A girl’s confidence takes a big hit during puberty. The fear, anxiety and surprise associated with the first period can well be avoided if parents simply sit their daughter down and tell her what to expect. Be gentle and respectful, positive and enthusiastic. Take a cue from Alam who teared up when her daughter entered womanhood.

If you’re a father, 32-year-old Faisal Bin Ashraf working as a high school Physics instructor may know what to do, “If I’m married, I’d look forward to the day of having that conversation with my daughter. I’d prefer both my partner and I to talk to her about menstruation and boys as a team to make sure she feels safe to come to either one of us when in need.”

For talking points, proper menstrual hygiene must be the focus. The idea is to empower women to manage menstruation with safety and dignity. Choices amongst sanitary napkins, tampons and menstrual cups need to be laid out, outlining pros, cons, absorption, comfort, application/insertion and, finally, disposal and cleanliness are all things we need to know about. Informed decisions to best suit personal needs can only be made after that.

Not just parents, schools can also make an impact. Teachers need to learn how to empathize with students experiencing

cramps or discomfort during class and excuse them amid lectures, no questions asked. Here, Ashraf’s approach is simple. Alongside a marker and class materials, you’ll find a pack of sanitary napkins in his classroom ready to be offered to anyone who may need it. He believes in establishing an open communication channel with his students about menstruation, dating and other issues, trying his best to normalize them to an impressionable crowd.

Alam, however, believes in a more holistic effort, calling upon schools and the government to take action. “Schools with progressive values should also take menstrual hygiene seriously and educate both adolescent girls and boys the same way. Nation-wide drives should be initiated to eradicate period poverty. Messages preaching the importance of menstrual hygiene should be taken to rural areas where it’s needed the most,” she opines.

Other action plans that deserve attention are menstrual leave policies and sanitary napkin/tampon dispensers being made available in restrooms of schools, restaurants, malls and other public places. The pink tax levied on female goods, including menstrual hygiene products making them more expensive, should be abolished. The government should make sanitary napkins dirt-cheap and easily accessible to all so no one has to resort to using old rags, cut-up cotton, tissues or papers as bad alternatives.

Eat, sleep and repeat: the red spot on a white skirt is not obscene. Break the taboo and talk about a period. If not now, then when?

By Ramisa Haque

Chocolate!



“Do it yourself” or DIY is the modifying prevalent method amongst the social media community, with ideas being shared about clothing to food without the direct aid of experts or professionals. DIY fun food ideas are always quick, easy to make and associated with one’s own creativity.

Making your own chocolate bark and decorating with your own hands according to one’s taste buds and preferences always gives us the joy as well as to our children to have fun. Also, this is a wonderful way of transforming your chocolates into something really special that can be shared with your loved ones, rather than eating a plain and ordinary one.

More interestingly, there’s no such recipe or even no need to measure any ingredients to make customised chocolate bark, cute little round disk French mendiants at home. It’s all about getting creative and using your favourite flavours and textures and toppings. Only if you can melt chocolate, you can make all these pretty, and easy customised chocolate as a sweet treat to yourself, and to your loved ones.

CHOCOLATE BARK

Chocolate bark is actually a sheet of chocolate that is usually covered with nuts, dry fruits, candies, cookie chunks, or even additional pieces of chocolates. Use whatever you have, be it dark, milk or white.

Marbling dark chocolate with white creates beautiful patterns. To do this, melt dark and white chocolate separately and pour any one colour on a tray underlying with parchment paper. Spread it smoothly and then put small dots of the other colour using a spoon over the chocolate tray.

Gently swirl the two together using a cocktail stick or thin skewer to get the marble pattern. Add any toppings on it and to set quickly, put the tray in the fridge.

MENDIANT

Mendiants are French confections, bite-sized puddles of melted chocolate, typically studded with dried fruit and nuts. Modern-day mendiants can be sprinkled with any number of tasty ingredients, and in countless combinations.

Pistachios, walnuts, chia seeds, edible rose petals, coconut flakes, orange peel, freshly grated cinnamon — the possibilities are endless. To shape the mendiants, you can either use a spoon to drop tablespoonfuls onto your prepared sheet, or you can transfer the melted chocolate to a resealable plastic

bag, snip off the corner and pipe out round discs on the parchment. From there, feel free to top your heart’s desire. Then let set.

NO-BAKE CHOCOLATE ENERGY BALLS

Ingredients

½ cup dark chocolate
1 cup peanut butter
3 tbsp Dutch process cocoa powder
½ cup honey
1½ cup oats
1 tsp vanilla extract
A pinch of salt

Method

Chop the dark chocolate into small pieces or use dark chocolate chips. In a mixing bowl, place all the ingredients along with the chopped chocolate and mix well with a hand beater. Let the mixture rest for a while, allowing the oats to soak up the moisture.

Once the mixture has firmed up a bit, use a cookie scoop or spoon to take even portion of the dough in to the palm of your

extra for dusting)

1 can (400g) sweetened condensed milk

Method

Pour the condensed milk in a pot and while stirring, heat it up. Condensed milk heats quickly so be careful. When you see light bubbles forming, take the pot off the stove. Pour the heated condensed milk into a bowl to make it easier to work with or you can leave it in the pot.

Sift the cocoa powder directly onto the condensed milk in 3 batches, instead of sifting the entire quantity in at once, mixing the two ingredients well together as you go. Line a square or rectangular dish with enough cling wrap to cover the bottom, sides and top of the dish. Pour the truffle mixture into the dish and using a spatula, spread it out evenly, making the top nice and flat. Cover the top with cling wrap and refrigerate for 2-3 hours.

After 2-3 hours, dust a chopping board

½ cup powdered sugar

¼ cup Dutch process cocoa powder

¼ tsp vanilla essence

2 tbsp gelatine

¼ cup cold water

Method

Place a glass or metal mixing bowl in the fridge and chill for 30 minutes. In a separate bowl, sift the cocoa powder and set aside. If you want a stronger taste of chocolate, then use ¾ cups of cocoa powder.

Add gelatine to the quarter cup of cold water and let it bloom for 2-3 minutes. Microwave it for 30-45 seconds to completely dissolve the gelatine.

In the chilled mixing bowl, whip the cream till it’s frothy and slightly thickened. Add the powdered sugar and cocoa powder and whip until the cream forms soft peaks. Add the dissolved gelatine and whip to get stable peaks.



hands and roll them into balls. One by one, place the balls onto a tray lined with baking paper and freeze for 15 minutes. When the chocolate balls have hardened, put them in an airtight container and store in the freezer. These can be stored in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Take the chocolate balls out of the freezer and let them thaw for a few minutes before serving.

TWO INGREDIENT CHOCOLATE TRUFFLES

Ingredients

200g Dutch process cocoa powder (plus

with cocoa powder and flip out the firm dough onto the board. Dust some more cocoa powder on top of the slab of truffle dough. Using a sharp knife, cut the slab into squares. One by one, pick up the squares and using your fingers, shape the squares to give them slightly rounded edges and corners. Place the shaped truffles onto a serving dish and dust some more cocoa powder on top to make it look nice and pretty.

EASY CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

Ingredients

1½ cup of heavy whipping cream

Pour the mixture into a piping bag and using a large nozzle, pipe out the mousse into individual dessert glasses or cups. You can also pour or pipe the mixture into one large serving bowl. Serve immediately or refrigerate until ready to serve. You can garnish the top of the chocolate mousse with chocolate shavings, whipped cream, sliced or quartered strawberries, almond flakes or mini marshmallows to give it a gourmet finish.

Photo: Collected

#GARDENING

Bringing home your first succulent

While some individuals are born with a green thumb, others spend months navigating turbulent relationships with houseplants only to achieve a pale tint of green. If you are a gardening rookie, or have failed perpetually thirsty plants like fittonias before, a succulent might be perfect for you.



Succulents can add a lot of personality to any living space while requiring minimal care and maintenance. They can act as eye-catching centerpieces for living room tables or be calming additions to your desk. Additionally, if you are a DIY skin care enthusiast, succulents such as aloe and agave will be a valuable inclusion to your plant collection.

From rock-like lithops to spiky haworthias, the number of succulent genera to choose from can be overwhelming. However, it is best to pick especially low maintenance succulents which can adapt to the levels of sunlight your windows provide when you are easing into your plant journey. Although most succulents love the sun, beginner

level succulents which thrive in front of windows receiving low or indirect light include sedum, haworthia, crassula, and kalanchoe. Unlike most other succulents, they are more forgiving towards overwatering.

Overwatering is most often the main threat for these desert-dwellers and this should be taken into account when you first welcome your succulent home. Make sure the succulent pot includes drainage holes for excess water to freely flow through and that the soil is a well-draining cactus mix. Repotting and other adjustments should be made as early as possible.

The usual rule of thumb for watering succulents is to wait till the soil is bone dry. Depending on the placement of the

succulent and its soil type, this usually takes around a week or two. To ensure robust roots, use watering cans instead of spray bottles and thoroughly soak the soil each time it dries out. Wrinkled or droopy leaves are the succulent's way of letting you know it needs water, so remember to attune your senses as well.

As long as you steer clear of overwatering, your succulents will be happy and content. You can buy succulents online from Facebook pages such as The Garden Corner or Chitra Brikkho Haat, and at BRAC Nurseries.

By Tasfia Ahmed
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Location: Brac Nursery

এখন
ফাস্ট ওয়াশ
ডিটারজেন্ট পাউডার
১ কেজির সাথে
১ টি **৫৭০** লব্ধীসোপ **ফ্রী!**

১ টি **৫৭০** লব্ধী সাবান **ফ্রী!**

Fast wash
DETERGENT
POWDER

১ টি ৫৭০ লব্ধী সাবান ফ্রী!

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

#FASHION



Faux crease
 With an extended smudge of kohl to the outer-third of your crease, create a half-wing that's bold yet wearable. Turn up the glam with shimmery eyes.

By Zohaina Amreen
 Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
 Model: Arnira and Ansha
 Makeup: Orko
 Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Summer eye looks we're obsessing over!
 The 'natural' makeup look featuring a dewy skin-finish, light-coverage base but with a hint of drama on the lid is all the hype this year. That's why, we're sharing 5 eye-makeup trends to look absolutely mesmerising!



A snatched wing
 A sharp, precise winged liner can never fail! Pair it with subtle eyeshadow and a sheer lipstick to look snatched.

Smoked and sultry
 The golden, bronzy skin is emphasised with a soft smoked-out black shadow. Complemented with a nude lip, your eyes will do all the talking.



Glossy lids
 Glossy lids elevate the dewy-trend and take it to another dimension. The eyes, paired with playful tones, creates the ultimate look.

Colour blast!
 Have fun with the blend of bright shadows, glitter-liner and a sheen of orange on the lips which completes our summer-ritual!

