

VOLUME 21, ISSUE 8, TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021
BHADRA 2, 1428 BS

Star

LIFE

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64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka



TEXTURED, GREY AND COOL

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#TECH

Surviving the pandemic with modern technology

Technological advancements have become a blessing during COVID-19. This boon is a global phenomenon, perhaps because our lives are dependent on it— from communication to gaming to music to shopping, and now, even schooling! Things that were hard to imagine a few years ago have now become commonplace. Technology's transformation and utility have only become more prominent during the pandemic.

Remember those days when we used to pick a random date and plan for a movie hangout with friends? Today, Netflix has brought plenty of options to choose from at our fingertips.

Instead of sitting at a movie theatre and staring at a screen for 2-3 hours accompanied by a box of popcorn, we can now lie down in our cosy rooms and binge watch favourite series or movies, of course with a bowl of chips, drinks, etcetera. The added comfort of just pausing for



whatever urgent thing comes up to just come back when free is an unparalleled joy. Thousands of hours of entertainment and relaxation.

Keeping up with the happenings of the lives of our near and dear ones

has become easier thanks to Facebook creating a huge platform for us to stay connected globally.

Food and groceries at our door steps have been made possible with tech too, especially in this pandemic ordering food is now faster than ever. We have various



food delivery services available in our pockets, just a click away, via a variety of food delivery apps like FoodPanda, HungryNaki, PathaoFood, ShohozFood, Cookups, Kludio Asia Limited, and Munchies. Even groceries can be delivered at the same time. We do not have to visit a grocery store; all we need to do is just make a phone call and products are delivered.

Just a year or two ago, we never imagined doing schooling on our devices right? In bygone days, we were not allowed to use phones at our classrooms and now entire schools, even university classes, corporate meetings and

conferences are continuing at Zoom, Meet and other platforms.

During COVID, one of the emergency services that we all need is doctor's services. Years ago, calling a doctor and seeking immediate advice or help was unimaginable. But our smart devices help

us with that at all hours, conveniently, by dialling 16263.

YouTube videos and other health apps not only teach us about good dietary habits, but can also provide a way to remain fit, and learn new things.

I know these technology advancements are nothing new. But during the pandemic, this has been a blessing. When almost the entire nation came to a standstill, these technological benefits have given us a way to respond and fight this coronavirus outbreak.

By Fatema Tuz Zohra
Photo: Collected



#CHECK IT OUT

Bishworang arranges online reality show on Durga Puja

For the sixth time, Bishworang is arranging an online reality show, where Bangladeshi nationals — both male and female, irrespective of religion, can showcase their Puja looks. Over the years, their 'Sharod Saje Bishwo Rang er Did' competition has generated quite a hype. For the first time, they are including a separate competition for men, 'Sharod Sree'.

Interested participants can send their biodata, photographs and a small video dressed in Puja garbs. Entry to the competition closes on 30 September, 2021.

Male entrants are requested to send their entries to bishworangsharadsree@gmail.com; and females are requested to send their submissions to bishworangdidievent@gmail.com.

For details, call 01819257768.

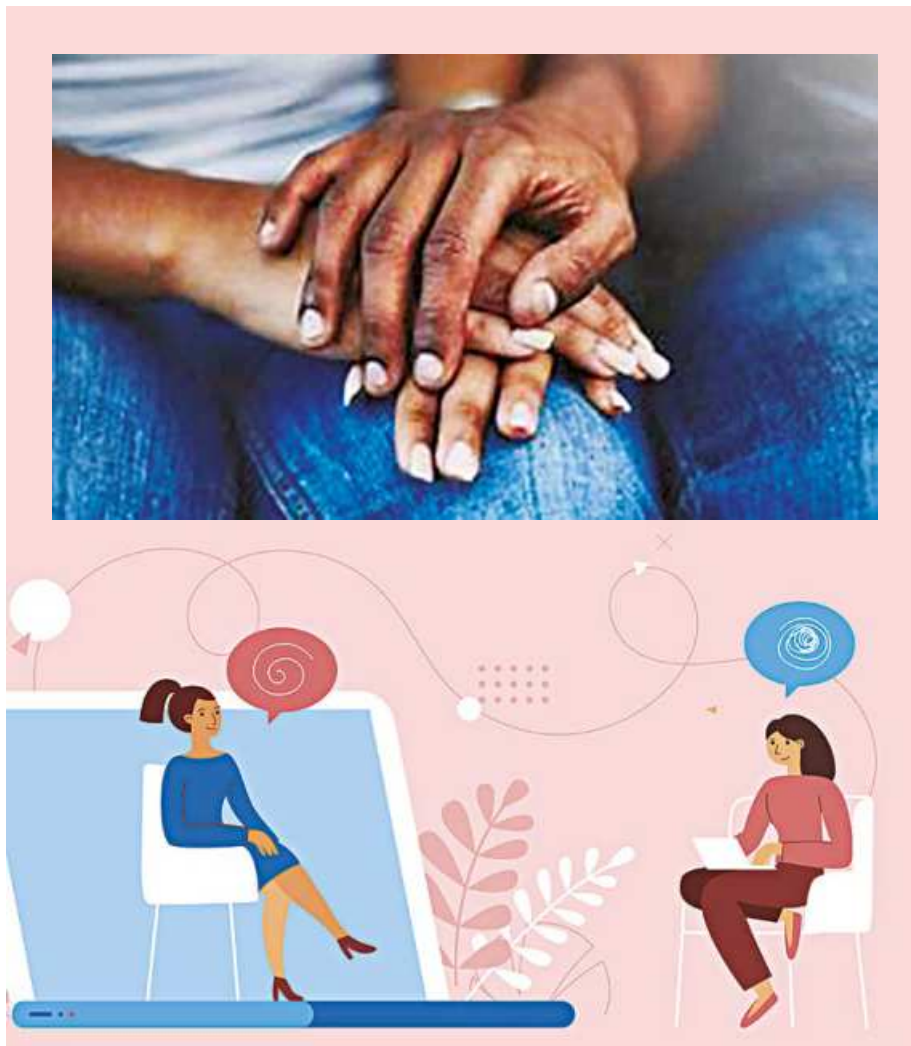
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COUNSELLING 101

There seems to be quite a lot of myths, assumptions and confusion regarding “counselling.” We interviewed Saiara Subah, Coordinator of Dr Anisur Rahman Clinical Psychology Centre for Counselling and Psychotherapy who is also working as Deputy Manager (Counselling) at BRAC Migration Programme, to get some better insights into the entire notion of counselling and get answers to some of the most common questions surrounding it.



How would you define the concept of counselling?

To put it simply, counselling is the science of talking out our emotions and feelings, and learning the mechanism of dealing with them. To be more precise, it is the process of taking professional help or support to solve or minimise any kind of emotional or psychological issue.

There can be many ways in which we may be in internal turmoil with ourselves, like a mental health condition such as depression or an upsetting physical condition like infertility or cancer. Counselling enables you to share your thoughts without having to bottle them up.

A psychologist/counsellor will listen patiently and empathetically to what

you are saying, without any criticism or judgement, keeping everything absolutely confidential. Instead of just telling or imposing the dos and don'ts like any other treatment, your counsellor and you together, will come up with possibilities and ways to address the issue at hand.

What is the difference between counselling and psychotherapy?

Although these two terms are often confused as one, there are some significant differences between the two. These are two different treatment procedure, used according to a person's problem severity and duration. Counselling is somewhat short-term in comparison with psychotherapy.

Counselling focuses on issues like interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict resolve, uplifting depressive moods, enhancing personal and professional performances at hand whereas psychotherapy digs deeper. Psychotherapy, works with intensive and extensive assessments of a person's past and present psychological distress or disorder, and design treatment plan accordingly.

What are the different types of counselling/psychotherapy?

Counselling/Psychotherapy can be required anywhere if there is a need for psychological development for an individual or for a group of people. This is not only for someone who has any

mental health issue but also for those who want to enhance their emotional growth and performance in daily life. Some of the most common types of counselling include Family, Marriage, Educational, Rehabilitation, Sports, Substance abuse, Mental health, Bereavement and Career Counselling.

When should a person consult a counsellor/at which stage do you think someone should definitely seek help from a counsellor?

The answer is pretty simple — before it is too late or before the damage has been too much. The minute you realise that you are not feeling okay mentally or there is something that has been bothering you lately, you should immediately talk to someone you trust.

Keeping thoughts to yourself can slowly eat you alive from the inside and even be detrimental. If you feel that you are not comfortable talking about it to anyone or if that the talking is doing you no good, that is when a counsellor steps in.

Remember one thing — seeking professional help is ABSOLUTELY NORMAL. No one is at fault here and thus there is nothing to be ashamed of. There were lots of stigma regarding consulting a counsellor in our society which is decreasing day by day. The longer we let this fear of 'being judged' control us, the longer this 'negative tag' will stay in society. So instead, loosen

up and go visit a professional just like you would visit a doctor if you have a fever or stomach-ache.

Just like visiting a doctor too late after experiencing sign and symptoms is dangerous, delay in seeking professional help for your mental health is just as threatening.

In our country, there seems to be a lot of stigma regarding consulting a counsellor. What are your thoughts regarding this matter?

Yes, unfortunately there are lots of stigma regarding this matter and visiting a mental health expert often tags you as a 'madman'. The importance of mental health is gaining its recognition and is being accepted by Bangladeshi society slowly but surely.

What people are failing to see is that mental health is just as crucial as physical health. We often forget that mental health affects physical health as well. This is also one of the most circulated messages during COVID-19 pandemic.

Thus, the only way this matter can be made more normal is to raise awareness on this topic, normalise this issue by giving platform to share thoughts with family and friends. There is absolutely no other alternative. Besides, people need to be educated on mental health — what it is, why it is so important, what are some of the direct consequences of neglecting it, when to visit professionals etc.

It is high time people are enlightened about this topic.

What are some of the concerns people may have regarding their very first counselling session?

As it is the very first session in someone's life, it is normal to be nervous. This is one kind of meeting never experienced before, so being a bit hesitant is understandable. You may feel anxious of being judged or criticised by the counsellor. You may be sceptical about disclosing some very secret emotions and thoughts to a complete stranger.

But you need not worry. A therapeutic relationship between you and your counsellor is entirely professional. Whatever you tell your counsellor, it stays between the two of you. Everything is kept absolutely confidential within the corners of that room. No one else will ever have access to any of the information you shared.

In this therapy journey, you will find a non-judgmental environment where you can ventilate your emotions. Your counsellor will not tell you if you are right or wrong. They will simply try to understand your views empathetically without imposing unlimited suggestions. You do not need to 'filter' any answers and can speak your mind completely. Your counsellor and you will plan an achievable goal to deal with your issues in a more manageable way.

By Faiza Khondokar
Photo: Collected

Catching up with your health check-up

Without a shred of doubt, healthcare has always been of paramount importance in our daily lives, but the viral pandemic has propelled it to the forefront of all our priorities. If anything, these challenging times have enabled us to strengthen our healthcare facility and realise its potential.

As most products and many services took the digital route with their availability online, health check-ups are also a part of this transition. Hospitals and healthcare providers being at the forefront to combat the pandemic continue to make our lives easier by offering home services.

Owing to this facility, with just a few clicks and calls, we can now avail basic health services at our doorstep. This saves time by cutting down travel time and is very helpful for people who are ailed or old, and face difficulty travelling. Furthermore, it may even curb the spread of the coronavirus through asymptomatic cases.

Most obviously, apart from getting



tested for the virus, there is now a host of other tests that can be availed within the comfort of our homes, such as general blood tests. Testing a sample of blood can act as a peephole to one's overall health condition by revealing any discrepancies in the specimen, giving us a general idea about our overall health status.

In the battle against coronavirus where there are unprecedented instances of crests and troughs in the number of cases, visiting hospitals that house several victims of the lethal virus may possibly be very risky. Thus, by availing home service for medical tests, you can book a time to get your tests done

and expect to receive this facility right at your home.

Renowned hospitals such as United Hospital Limited, Square Hospitals Limited, Evercare Hospital, and Labaid Specialized Hospital among others are providing such facilities. However, if the situation is such that you cannot avoid paying a visit to the hospital, make sure to take extra hygiene measures. Wearing masks, carrying sanitizers, and maintaining strict social distancing are just to name a few.

Furthermore, apart from medical tests, several hospitals are providing additional health services in an effort to digitise the

process and make it easy for us to attain superior healthcare. Some advancements include booking appointments via apps or website, live video consultation from doctors, and options for online pharmacy.

The ongoing pandemic has compelled us to improve our healthcare system and go digital. In fact, to some extent, it has altered how we perceive the healthcare scenario of Bangladesh and enabled it to rise to its potential.

Stay well, stay safe!

By Fariha Amber
Photo: Collected

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Be transparent with your boss. Get involved in creative groups. Don't get involved in uncertain financial deals. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Find ways to advance financially. Be clear with your partner about your motives. Avoid disputes with family. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Rely on your own ideas. Opportunities to make advancements are evident. Loved ones won't be pleased with unfulfilled promises. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Avoid being overbearing. Don't expect everyone to be honest. Avoid individuals who are already committed to others. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Don't let anyone bully you. Avoid being frivolous. Exercise discipline regarding bad habits. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Secret affairs will come back to haunt you. Don't make rash decisions. Avoid getting involved in other people's problems. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Use your innovative mind to surprise youngsters. Keep things in moderation. Relationships will go through a rough patch. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Pleasure trips will bring about new friends. Think before you leap. Insincere gestures are likely this week. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Find time to rediscover each other. Make gains by working together. Don't be rushed into anything. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

One-sided relationships are likely. Make improvements to enhance your appearance. Travel will be on your mind. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Your attitudes are changing rapidly. You will have problems keeping secrets. Put your cash into long-term investments. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Don't forget to pamper yourself. Don't go looking for trouble. You may find that you're being used. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

#FASHION

The Russian folk story: The Malachite Casket gets a deshi twist

Scrolling down our favourite online e-commerce platform, Go Deshi, in search of local entrepreneurs making headlines in the community, we came across two sisters with magical painting abilities. Both of them armed with the knowledge of sketching and painting professionally, knew they had to do something different to be recognised for their talent.

"I have always wanted to paint on a sari; this was a dream since childhood. Both of us sisters have drooled over hand-painted pieces since our teen days, and yet only a few



top-notch designers carried designs we liked. Rest of them kept inferior copies or a very rough sketch not up to our liking at all. That's when we discovered our niche and started painting for ourselves, which thankfully earned rave reviews from friends and family, and ultimately encouraged us to build our very own signature brand," said Auntora Mehrukh Azad, co-owner and designer at The Malachite Casket.

When inquired about the story behind the interesting brand name, the younger sister, Anannya Mehpar Azad, also co-owner and designer at the Malachite Casket, eagerly shared—"When we were children our parents used to read us this Russian Folk story with a jewellery box made out of Malachite, this was a very special box and its powers engrossed our imaginations. So here we are decades later, taking inspiration from that legendary story and naming our brand after it."

Speaking to Star Lifestyle, they also



revealed that florals were their primary choice for experimentation, alongside special art-recreations by famous names.

"We try our hands at the humble recreation of world famous paintings such as Van Gogh's Irises, Monet's Water Lilies etc., and art enthusiast like ourselves appreciate our efforts and keep these special paintings in their collection," informed Auntora.

Discussing the future of the brand, the eldest sister Auntora said she would love to keep it small to maintain exclusivity and precision. "You see people love our saris, only because we paint it by ourselves and because of the details we maintain. Hand paint is something you cannot expect everyone to be an expert at, and hence we cannot let anybody else do the painting for us.

"Each of our saris takes a minimum of fourteen days to recreate and customisation is only possible with the change in colours. The base fabrics that we use are almost always muslin-silk or Balaka silk from Rajshahi and



we have decided to keep the fabric local to highlight the hard work of the fabric artisans of our country," said the whizz designer.

And true they were, each of the designs created by the sisters were unique and did not carry a similar copy as is the magnificence of handcrafted items. With superior painting and designing skills, these ladies are only looking towards a brighter future.

Here's to wishing the girls, a future full of creativity and exploration.

Essentials:

Go Deshi is an online, e-commerce platform highlighting local creativity and entrepreneurship to the masses. To enrol into the active site please contact Go-Deshi at its Facebook platform.

By Fashion Police
Photo: The Malachite Casket
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/themalachitecasketdhaka/>



#PERSPECTIVE

AGEING GRACEFULLY is a thing

On a certain birthday morning, you wake up only to realise, by looking at the mirror and scrutinising your wrinkles and creases, spots and grey hair, that you have aged. Do you panic or do you accept age and play along with it? Well, I think ageing gracefully is the hottest trend now. As the popular saying goes 'grey hair, don't care,' many of us are embracing our salt and pepper locks and even our ageing skin.



Salt and pepper is a successful mix of grey, silver streaks or natural highlights and black hair, more like a light-reflecting grey that lends you a very suave and flattering profile. There is something about the look we love so much in older men and women equally.

There is a certain charismatic, magnetic pull that draws these men towards you; and a flair of elegance in women, that make you think 'when I grow up I want to be as elegant as her.' This look is the most modern fashion trend in 2021. Grey shades are no longer stereotyped as ageing, instead a clean-looking grey is considered stunning.

There was a time when we wanted to hide our grey strands by applying jet black hair colour and or a cranky shade of orange with mehndi, but that's long gone now. In fact, we are ready to show off our sign of maturity even if it's just a strand of grey.

From what haircut and colour you pick, your hairstyle can have a big impact on the age you look. In men, slightly longish layers look great, a decent crew looks clean, short layers give you an aura of handsomeness. In women, the long or short bob complements the salt and pepper look. Even long hair in a plain bun looks agreeable.

With age you are aware that a new hairstyle will not suddenly make you look like a dashing 30-year-old, but a new colour

and cut would certainly give you a fresh and contemporary look, taking you away from your dull and frumpy former self.

You must be mindful of the ageing mistakes you do, and instead focus on what amps up your salt and pepper crowning glory. One important tip is to take care of grey hair, which tends to be coarse and rough naturally. So using hair conditioners, hydrating creams and masks, scalp nourishment and other softening products will make the grey full of bounce and fluff, that you need so much.

Few dressing tricks that go best with salt and pepper look are to go for clear vibrant shades like black, navy blue, pure white, emerald, and fuchsia. These neutral colours will help your grey hair pop, no matter what shade it is. Move away from pastels like ivory or creamy shades or earthy tones like rust. Yellow gold and bronze, tan and earth tones do not complement the salt and pepper silvery look. Wear a bold eye glass frame and avoid rimless or pastel frames.

Let's face it, the texture looks gorgeous and there are so many ways in which you can style your greying tresses. Simply, rock that salt and pepper look!

— RBR
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Dr Lutful Aziz
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha



Grooming salt and pepper hair

Ok so you have drooled over Milind Soman and George Clooney for years now, especially for that gorgeous grey hair! But did you also know that it takes effort to show off the ever-popular style statement?

Of course you didn't and that's why we are here for you.

A GOOD CUT

They say every hair styling begins with a good cut and we agree as well. For salt and pepper hair, the saying stands on a firmer ground.



If you really want people to notice your greys, your hair must be cut in a style that really suits your face. Our personal favourite is the short haired style where the greys really gleam through.

PRODUCTS FOR GREY HAIR

You might have natural greys or you might have put them up at the salon, it doesn't matter. In both the cases you have gorgeous grey's that need to be taken care of. The routine of hair care for greys usually begins with a treatment of anti-yellow shampoo. To simplify you need to wash and condition your hair with products that have purple and blue pigments, which will help to cancel out the tacky yellow tone and make the whites and greys shine brighter.

Expert tip: Always use a thin comb to style your hair or even while you are slathering on gels: it helps create the gorgeous strand effect on silver hair

OVERALL MAINTENANCE

The mantra is same like any other hair type: lead a healthy life, eat good food, oil your hair regularly, shampoo, condition, and apply a hair mask at least once a month.

Finally, all we can say is that for men and women should start experimenting with the salt and pepper look because once you go grey there's just no turning back!

By Fashion Police



HISTORY & HERITAGE
BY ALI HAMID KHAN



Iconic imambaras: The holy shrines of shia muslims

History reveals the development of civilisations and societies; the progress and changes in different aspects of man's life. It helps us to discover how languages developed and how cultures evolved and countries changed and different milestones achieved in political, social, scientific spheres; and about war and peace and different forms of governments. The development of imambara is a part of history of the sub-continent and beyond, the Middle Eastern countries.

Many, though not everyone, is acquainted with the word imambara. It is an Urdu/Persian word associated with a building hosting the programmes and rituals of Moharram. It is a place where people congregate and observe the programmes and commemorate the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Hussain and his kith and kin.

Apart from the month of Moharram, people also assemble here on special dates throughout the year and programmes are held where religious scholars and Moulanas speak and narrate the tragedy of Karbala and the battles which were fought on its plains by the bank of the river, Euphrates. They also give lectures on the Quran, the life of the Holy Prophet of Islam and the history of Islam since its inception. They explain the tenets of Islam and how to practice and follow its teachings.



Imambara is pivotal in the daily life of the shias, especially during dates pertaining to events that are part of Islamic history. Imambara is decorated with *alams*, which are banners and Islamic standards reminiscent of the forces of Imam Hussain when they confronted the soldiers of the junta. There are *tazias* displayed which are replicas of Imam's mausoleum at Karbala. Food and other edible items are distributed

after majlises (religious deliberations and discourses) to the attendees.

On special dates, the congregation are treated to full meals inside the imambara when they sit and eat together, all attendees sitting shoulder to shoulder. Programmes go on late into the nights as processions are also held on some special occasions.

Imambaras are spread across the globe. In Iran and Iraq, imambara is



called Hussainya, while in Pakistan, it is sometimes called imambargah. The history of imambara dates back to the time when the Imam's remaining members after the massacre at Karbala were released from prison in Damascus and wanted to hold a meeting to mourn their deads.

They took a house and invited their followers and sympathisers and narrated in detail the event of Karbala. As time passed, it developed and took more elaborate and majestic shape, size, and form. It peaked during the time of Safavids in Iran and during the time of Ali Verdi Khan, Nawab Sirajudowla, the later Najifi dynasty of Bengal, and the Nawab of Awadh — Nawab Asifuddowla, Nawab Wajid Ali Shah and his other predecessors Nawab Muhammad Ali Shah and Nawab Amjad Ali Shah; Nawab of Rampur, Nawab of Patna, and Salarjung of Hyderabad.



In Bangladesh, the historical imambaras are Hussaini Dalan built by Mir Murad during the Mughals' Shah Shuja in the seventeenth century, and the Prithimpassa Nawab Bari, Sylhet. Prithimpassa imambara, which was built during the time of the Sultans by the Zamindar of Prithimpassa and changes were brought during different times, especially after the 1897 earthquake by Nawab Ali Amjad Khan and also during the time of Nawab Ali Haider Khan and Nawab Ali Asghar Khan in the early twentieth century.

Today, the imambara is the centre of Moharram programmes and also during different Islamic dates. It may be mentioned here that it can be considered the oldest in the region. During the erstwhile East Pakistan, people from all over Pakistan and India attended the Moharram programmes in Prithimpassa. Among them were renowned religious scholars and marsia (elegiac poem) khans (reciters). Even the Shah of Iran, Reza Shah Pahlvi visited the place in 1950. In the '90s Ayatullah Shah Rukhi of Iran regularly visited and participated in the programmes at the imambara.

The Murshidabad Nizamat Imambara was built by Nawab Nazim Mansur Ali Meerza. It is considered the largest in the subcontinent. The Nizamat Imambara was built in 1847 AD by Nawab Nazim of Bengal, Bihar, Orissa — Nawab Mansur Ali Khan. It was built after the old imambara built by Nawab Siraj ud-Daulah was destroyed by



the fires of 1842 and 1846. This imambara is the largest in India. It was built under the supervision and direction of Sadeq Ali Khan just opposite the Hazarduari Palace at a cost of more than six lac rupees. It took only 11 months to finish construction.

The Asfi Imambara at Lucknow was built by Nawab Asifuddowla of Awadh. The construction of this imambara, which is also called Bara Imambara, started in 1780 during a year of a devastating famine. One of Asaf-ud-Daula's objectives in embarking on this grandiose project was to employ people in the region while the famine lasted. Construction was completed in 1794.

The estimated cost of building the imambara ranges between five to ten lakh rupees. Even after completion, the Nawab used to spend between four and five hundred thousand rupees on its decoration annually to generate employment to alleviate the sufferings of the people in the



raging famine.

The building also has the famous Bhool Bulaya, meaning the labyrinth. These two buildings are architectural marvels, unique for the size and the architectural ingenuity which are wondrous, a testimony to the genius and skill of the people of the time. They can be considered as one of the wonders of the world and have been declared world heritage sites. They represent the Islamic architectural development and the beauty and creativity of the Islamic era, which continue to dazzle and amaze the visitors. The renowned architect Kifayatullah was the designer and builder of this magnificent building.

The Sibtainabad Imambara by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of Awadh, was built during his exile at Matiaburj, Garden Reach, West Bengal. It is also a tour de force and speaks volumes about that period.

The other famous imambara is the Hooghly Imambara and mosque in Hooghly, West Bengal, India. The construction of the building was started by Muhammad Mohsin in 1841 and completed in 1861. The building is a two-storied structure, with a tall clock tower over the entrance gate. The mosque has intricate designs and texts from Quran engraved on the wall. The interior of the mosque is decorated with marbles, candles, and hanging lanterns.

Photo: Ali Hamid Khan



Top tips for making the perfect fries



French fries — a classic crowd pleaser and one of the most popular items made with potatoes worldwide. As basic and humble as it is, sometimes it's the simple dishes that take most effort to master, and French fry is one such example.

Biting into the perfect fries, you should first hear a crunch and then be greeted with soft potatoes inside. Unfortunately, homemade fries fail to live up to the expectation and often, we are left with limp and soggy fries, which nobody wants!

To avoid this kitchen failure, here are some important tips to nail the classic French fries at home, followed by a delicious seasoning mix and dips that complement them really well.

SELECTING THE RIGHT POTATO

To make the perfect fries, you have to start by selecting the right potatoes for the job, and old harvest will yield the best results in this case. Choose large potatoes with skins peeling off, as this is a symbol of low moisture and starch content — two things that you want to avoid.

PREPPING THE POTATOES

Once you select the right kind of potatoes, peel and square them off for an even cut and cooking. Cut them into thin batons, keeping them as uniform as possible. Then, soak them in cold water for 10-15 minutes to draw out excess starch.



THE TRIPLE-COOK METHOD

The triple-cook method is the ultimate fool-proof manner to make perfectly crispy fries. It takes a little bit more time and patience, but the results are unlike any other method. Bring a pot of salted water to boil and drop in the potato batons and let them boil for a couple of minutes. After that, strain them out and pat them completely dry with a kitchen towel.

FRY, AND FRY AGAIN

Even if you skip the previous step, do not skip this one, as it is crucial to fry the potatoes twice. To deep fry the potatoes, bring sufficient amount of oil up to temperature on medium-high heat. Drop them into the pan and par-cook them for only a minute or so.

Take them off the heat and drain them on a kitchen towel. Lay the half-cooked potatoes into one single sheet and freeze them for 30 minutes. You can freeze the potatoes for up to six months in this state.

MODERATE THE TEMPERATURE

After that, before frying the potatoes again, lightly coat them with corn flour for an extra crisp exterior. Heat oil on high this time and fry the potatoes in batches to avoid overcrowding, as this will drop the temperature.

To ensure the oil is hot enough, drop one strip of potato and you should hear a sizzle instantly. Move them around in the pan for even cooking, and fry them until they are golden brown, which should take about 2-3 minutes.



SEASON AND SERVE!

Drain the potatoes on a sieve, which will enable them to retain crispiness and season them while they are still hot. For well-seasoned French fries, you can make a quick chilli salt using salt, pepper, paprika, garlic powder, and onion powder. Sprinkle this seasoning mix over the fried potatoes and toss them to coat well.

DIPS ON DIPS

What are fries without delicious dips to

accompany them? Ketchup is okay, but to really level up your game, try out these two game-changing dips.

HONEY MUSTARD SAUCE

Ingredients

¼ cup mayonnaise
1 tbsp mustard
1 tbsp honey
1 tsp apple cider vinegar
½ tsp hot sauce
Pinch of salt
Drizzle of oil (optional)

Method

Mix mayonnaise, mustard, honey, apple cider vinegar and hot sauce together with a sprinkle of salt to balance all the flavours. Finally, finish it off with a drizzle of oil for a glossy texture.

GARLIC MAYO

Ingredients

½ cup oil
¼ cup milk
1 tsp salt
1 tsp pepper
1 tbsp garlic powder
1 tbsp chopped garlic
2 tsp lemon juice
1 tsp white vinegar

Method

Mix all the ingredients together using a whisk or blender on high speed, until it becomes a thick and creamy homogenous mixture. For thicker consistency, you may squeeze in more lemon juice.

Food & Photo: Fariha Amber

LIFE AS IT IS

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Why you should plant flowers

Every morning during summer when I pull the dining room curtains back to let light into the house, the sights of the roses, lilies, peonies, pansies, marigolds, and hydrangeas in the backyard lift my mood instantaneously.



or heavy rain. When I bring fresh flowers indoors, they change at once the ambiance of the house.

I cut the stems at an angle, remove any leaves that would be submerged under the waterline of the vase, and change the water daily or every other day. A combination of sugar and white vinegar, if added to the water in the vase, help make cut flowers last longer.

To grow flowers, you do not need a plot of ground. You can grow flowers on your balcony or rooftop. A bit of careful planning, choosing the right plants, and a mind-set to invest time and love in them are what you need.

My mother has a not-so-big balcony in Dhaka where she grows ixora, bougainvillea, zinnia, orchid, hibiscus, crown of thorns, dahlia, a variety of roses and jasmynes, and more!

Gardening can be anyone's pastime, if you are ready to love nature and help the planet.

Because plants need care just like babies do, if you do not love them, they will try to communicate their struggle with you; their leaves will wilt, droop, and yellow.

One may think that we nurture our plants but the truth is that it is our plants that nurture us. Not only do they increase our happiness and cut our stress and anxiety, but also taking care of plants is good exercise.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), gardening qualifies as an exercise, a moderate level of physical activity that works all of the major muscle groups, including legs, arms, back, abdomen, buttocks, neck, and shoulders.

The benefits of having and nurturing a flower garden are more than what we see with our eyes, so don't think twice and get your hands dirty!

Photo: Wara Karim

is still dedicated to "ornamental" plants, because flowers not only brighten up our little backyard, but also make us h-a-p-p-y. Just think how happy it makes you when someone gifts you a bouquet. Flowers fill us instantly with positive feelings!

In a 10-month study conducted by Rutgers University, one of the leading public research universities in the US, to explore the link between flowers and emotional health, it was seen that flowers have an immediate impact on happiness; flowers have a long-term effect on moods, reducing stress, anxiety, agitation, and depression; and

flowers make intimate connections, meaning that giving and receiving flowers create closeness between friends and families.

To me, watching my roses, peonies, lilies, and hydrangeas coming back in spring is something I wait and look forward to throughout winter. In late spring and summer, when they bear flowers and give a splash of colours to my backyard, their sights and smells rejuvenate me. I feel that I have more energy than ever!

Flowers in your garden attract pollinators. My backyard guests in summer include, but are not limited to, pollinators like bumble and honey bees, butterflies, beetles, ants, moths, and hummingbirds. For us to live and survive in this world, the pollinators must survive as well, because pollination is an ecological function without which our planet's ecosystems will collapse.

Did you know that over 80 percent of the world's flowering plants need a pollinator to reproduce? Most vegetables and fruits that we consume come from flowering plants.

Although I do not cut the flowers that I grow, I do sometimes bring some home when the weather forecast predicts heat



"A beautiful beginning to a brand-new day," I say to myself.

In addition to adding visual interest to a landscape, flowers have heaps of other benefits, which range from reducing stress to helping pollinators. I have a little garden of my own, most of which is dedicated to flowers, and some to edibles.

People have asked us as to why we do not grow more fruits and vegetables instead of flowers. We grew vegetables for the first time last year. We are doing the same this year. However, most of our backyard space



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

Fast wash
DETERGENT POWDER
১ টি ৫৭০ লক্ষী সাবান ফ্রী!

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

#PETS

Understanding a dog's body language

Dogs are among the most adorable, loving creatures whose company can cheer us in an instant. They know when we need a cuddle, when we are not feeling our best, or when exactly to become extra cute and distract us from work! But how well do we understand our canine friends?

Communication with pets can be tricky. Unlike us, they rely almost entirely on nonverbal signs to convey their feelings. So here are some important points to help you understand your dog better.

Tail wagging

Dogs use their tails to project a wide variety of emotions, both positive and negative. The direction of wagging itself will tell you a lot.

A relaxed dog will hold their tail at a neutral position or move it slowly from side to side in a sweeping manner. When they are feeling happy, they usually do the helicopter where their tails move in quick circular motions. Dog owners often receive greetings this way.

The tail also lets you know when your dog is feeling distressed. A raised tail above the spine indicates that something has caught the dog's attention and it is now alert. A stiff tail with bared teeth and growling could definitely mean trouble.

Dogs try to make themselves appear small by tucking their tails between their legs when they are feeling scared. You may



also see their tails pointed low towards the ground in a submissive manner when they are stressed.

Yawning

Much like humans, dogs yawn when they are tired or sleepy. However, excessive yawning hints at something else; your dog is feeling threatened.

When dogs feel anxious by a person or even other animals, they will yawn and look away. Also known as the calming signal, it is a dog's way of saying that they feel threatened but are not going to attack.

Eye contact

We've all heard of 'puppy dog eyes,' right? Well it's more than a metaphor for dogs.

Dogs will look at you with soft, affectionate eyes to tell you that they need some love. According to experts, practicing eye contact with pups helps strengthen your bond with them considerably. Remember to do it right though.

Have you ever seen two dogs locked in a

stare-down? Dogs are not a fan of long eye contacts. They are found staring hard when they are trying to establish dominance over something.

On the contrary, they will avoid eye contact and pointedly look away when they are feeling stressed.

Smiling

Just when you thought pups could not get any cuter, they smile. And this one actually has a lot to do with you!

Smiling is an adaptive facial expression that dogs often pick up from their owners. Spending time with them, communicating regularly, and making the dog included in your life will bring out the best smile from them.

Go ahead! Look at your dog, smile at him, some belly rubs maybe, and watch their tail do the helicopter!

By Nusrath Jahan

Photo: LS Archive/ Shahriar Kabir Heemel

Treats for your furry babies!

Our fur babies deserve the best treats for being such loving and loyal companions. Commercial pet food or treats, which are often available in pet stores and on online platforms like Petco Bangladesh, are suitable options for fur babies, but sometimes, one might want something a little extra.

Here are some places selling nutritious and organic pet treats fur parents might want to check out —

Treat 4 Tail

Treat 4 Tail brings a range of baked, local

and artisanal treats and snacks for our fur babies. With flavours like 'Murgi Munch' for cats and 'So Fish Ticated' for dogs and many more, their treats contain no gluten, artificial preservatives or any animal by-product. Within a reasonable price range, Treat 4 Tail offers healthy, nutritious and tasty snacks and treats to keep our four-legged friends happy and active.

Sakura Kim Express

This is every cat parent's paradise. With a

100 percent organic menu consisting of unique blends of boiled chicken, eggs, tuna, vegetables and their secret formula, the pet boutique has only the best cat food to keep cats and kittens active and healthy. Offering healthy home-cooked and wet food, particularly catered to cats, they provide the best possible organic wet cat food at reasonable prices, saving both time and money.

BD Pet Mart and Petsmart Bangladesh

These platforms offer multiple ranges of

dry and wet food, treats and snacks for cats, dogs, birds, turtles, and rabbits.

Pet Bangla

Pet Bangla offers food and treats for cats, dogs, birds, rabbits and hamsters, fish and turtles. The e-commerce platform sells premium brands at reasonable prices.

All of the platforms and shops operate online and offer home delivery services.

By Puja Sarkar