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# Charming *the* ENSEMBLE

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## Desi Bhalobashi – wearing local with pride

Bangladesh, a country rich with heritage, brimming with art, and diverse in terms of culture, has traditional paraphernalia originating from every region. Deshi Bhalobashi is a platform that showcases these masterpieces that our artists have been creating since time immemorial, as a manner of passing down our heritage.

During the pandemic, these rural entrepreneurs' businesses came to a standstill. That is when about a year ago, Deshi Bhalobashi was formed to support these local artisans by selling their inventories via digital platforms. They are already providing training in terms of using website and photography to maximise online selling in various parts of the country.

"More than selling, it is about building capacity for rural entrepreneurs through digital transformation. If they are provided with the required amenities such as a device, Internet, and photography training, then they



will flourish with leaps and bounds while curating our heritage," explained Mantasha Ahmed, founder of Deshi Bhalobashi.

In order to celebrate a year of their inauguration and the golden jubilee of Bangladesh, Deshi Bhalobashi conducted a virtual campaign titled, "50 Years of Freedom and Heritage" spanning mid-July to August 2021, where iconic figures from various walks of life presented their thoughts via social media to celebrate this movement.

The campaign was held in collaboration with Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation that shares a common goal with Deshi Bhalobashi, which is to provide a platform to local artisans in order to exercise their full creative aptitude and build their identity, not only in Bangladesh but to also leave a global imprint.

His Excellency Naoki Ito, Ambassador of Japan who was part of the campaign stated, "Deshi Bhalobashi is doing an amazing job to promote folk arts such as handloom, cotton, and handicrafts with their impressive line-up of products that includes nakshi kantha, jamdani, muslin, and indigo dyeing."

Deshi Bhalobashi is playing an instrumental role in constructing the future while keeping in mind our history and heritage. It is not only providing a



springboard for trading, but is also bringing the work of craftspeople and artisans working in remote areas for several generations into the limelight.

In regard to the digitisation of processes, His Excellency Vikram Kumar Doraiswami, High Commissioner of India said, "Utilization of the online infrastructure is critical in reaching the mass market and platforms such as Deshi Bhalobashi create the connect and add a qualitative element, that would otherwise make it more expensive."

Building up on this, His Excellency Shiruzimath Sameer, High Commissioner of Maldives added, "The craftspeople may not have appropriate skills to communicate and reach a larger audience but Deshi Bhalobashi is facilitating this process and building capacity of rural artisans to be more financially independent by selling products online."

His Excellency Mustafa Osman Turan, Ambassador of Turkey said endorsing Deshi Bhalobashi as a necessary platform to promote heritage, "It is a great idea and initiative, especially in today's world where such platforms are essential."

In the last decade, the fashion scene of



our country has altered vastly, as we are no longer highly reliant on our neighbouring countries. While previously, the younger generation possessed a fascination towards foreign products, gradually they are growing a fondness for local garments and accessories, and initiatives such as Deshi Bhalobashi are offering such exclusive contemporary products that have a traditional significance.

The products of Deshi Bhalobashi hold a cultural value and yet are modern. It is not only revamping closets with a unique and fashionable twist, but their workmanship is promoting the rich textile of Bangladesh as well. Additionally, when urban people choose to wear local products, they are advocating for our country while creating a sustainable source of income for the people in rural areas.

Superficially, Deshi Bhalobashi may seem like an ordinary e-commerce platform, but it is much more than that. A movement that strives to bring forth our local heritage, crafts, and traditions on both a national and international scale, while adding a modern flair to traditional products, it is also supporting local artisans and craftspeople.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DeshiBhalobashi>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/deshibhalobashi/>

Website: <https://www.deshibhalobashi.com/>

By Fariha Amber

Photo: Deshi Bhalobashi

Wardrobe, Styling & Concept: Deshi Bhalobashi

Studio Courtesy: Durjoy Bangladesh Foundation

## #PRESS RELEASES

### Sharodiyo Collection by Rang Bangladesh

Keeping the upcoming Durga Puja in mind, Rang Bangladesh has released their Sharodiyo Collection, focusing on the themes of temple motifs, ornaments of the goddess, and shatranji.

The colour scheme is suited for the festivities of puja, as is the choice of fabric, which is perfect for the sultry autumn of Bangladesh.

Various offers are available for online purchases, and buying from their brick and mortar stores.

Essentials —

Visit their website, [www.rang-bd.com](http://www.rang-bd.com) or follow them on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/rangbangladesh>

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ঐতিহ্যের আর এক তাম্র আধুনিকতা  
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চার আভিজাত্য মানেই

# অ্যান্ডালিনা

## সোপ

রূপচর্চার আভিজাত্য...



#FOOD & RECIPES

# ROSHOGOLLA

## — wrapped in rich history and taste



Shorot is a time of clear blue skies with wispy white puffs of clouds floating here and there, with bright sunny days and cool evenings.

The clouds of autumn, like its kaashful are iconic, soft, white, and endearingly squishy to the naked eye. Would it then be strange to want to put them on a plate and eat them? The closest we can get to eating the Shorot cloud is the equally soft, white, and squishy roshogolla. Perhaps that is why it remains among Bengal's favourite desserts, and is always a crowd pleaser right after coconut narus during Shorot's main festival—the annual Durga Puja.

The delectable and unique sweets of Bangladesh are indeed a culinary representation of our country. After all, the array of various *mishtis* from different parts of the country speak volumes about its diversity — chomchom from Tangail, roshmalai from Cumilla, monda from Mymensingh, doi from Bogura, and pera from Naogaon are all regional delicacies that we may take pride in.

However, one might argue that the legendary roshogolla triumphs all! Sweet, syrupy, soft cheese balls that is a game changer of a dessert — or that is how famous British Chef William Harold described it in a journal. In Bangladesh, roshogolla of Jessore is widely popular across the country.

The soft spongy balls of deliciousness drenched in a sugary syrup is not only rich in terms of taste, but also history. While the item is sweet, it gave rise to a bitter debate between two states in India being West Bengal and Odisha in order to win the tag of its Geographical Indication (GI).

After a tug of war that lasted for about two and a half years, finally the state of West Bengal had been rewarded the Geographical Indication for Bengal roshogolla. However, given the fact that this sweet delicacy is an indispensable part of our cuisine, many Bangladeshis may argue that roshogolla is an invention of our country!

Amidst the raging dispute, the movie entitled Roshogolla had hit the screens on December 2018, giving the audience a fresh look back at the history of this sweet treat.

The movie circulating

around the creation of roshogolla also emphasises on the amount of time, effort, and money that went behind its making.

It accentuated the struggles and hardships that a sedulous sweet maker, Nobin Chandra Das had to go through to invent the roshogolla as we know it today. Not to mention the continuous method of trial and error, which is the practice behind many great inventions of food. This eventually created a legacy, given that not many food items have a biopic of their own!

Legend has it that Nobin Chandra Das, also known as the “Columbus of Roshogolla” successfully prepared this dessert first in 1868, and taught others how to create it rather than applying for a patent. His descendants carried down the original recipe and further popularised it along with successfully commercialising it in canned avatars.

Amazingly, the victory of West Bengal in earning the GI tag led to the inauguration of Roshogolla Day in Kolkata (which ironically happens to be World Diabetes Day as well), complete with a Roshogolla Festival. Here, one can find the sweet treat in all colours of the rainbow, in flavours unimagined, including strawberry, pineapple, mint, chocolate, coffee, and even red chilli!

Over time, like most other things, roshogolla has also evolved, the other highly popular variant being the brownish tinged sweet balls from the state of Odisha. But now, contemporary chefs are trying their hand at modernising this dessert, and Kishwar's attempt at making a croissant stuffed with roshogolla in an



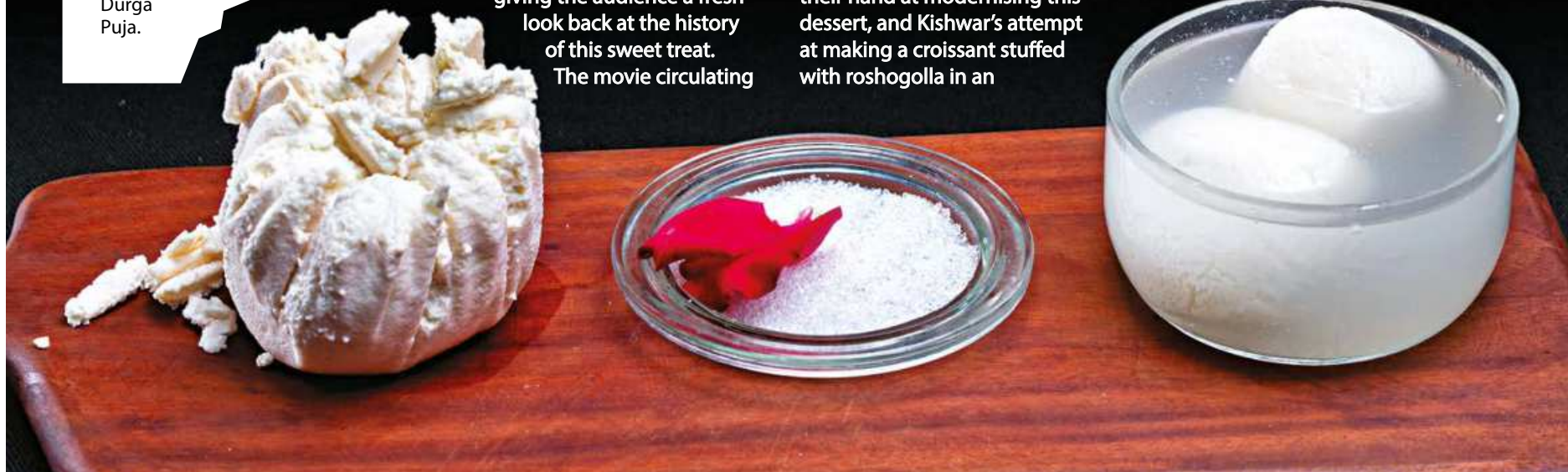
episode of MasterChef Australia Session 13 is just one example.

Despite the dispute over its geographical indication, we can all agree that every household has their version of preparing roshogolla. The vast availability of sweetshops has made it a less common practice to prepare sweets at home, but otherwise the recipe is simple to follow.

The original version involves curdling milk and separating *chhana* from it before forming them into balls mixed with a combining agent, followed by cooking them in hot sugar syrup. Nowadays, renditions made with semolina or milk powder have also surfaced. Although these newer versions do not contain the authentic taste, they have a unique flavour profile of their own.

Whether homemade or not, roshogolla has become customary as a dessert without which any occasion or festival seems to be incomplete. Be it the holy occasion of Eid or the auspicious festivities of Puja, roshogolla is omnipresent in any celebration of the Bengali diaspora. Like every other food, it is a way to connect people, beyond boundaries and cultures.

**By Fariha Amber**  
**Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed**  
**Food Styling: RBR**





**A NOTE ON NUTRITION**

**CHOWDHURY TASNEEM HASIN**  
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 Associate General Secretary  
 Bangladesh Nutrition and Dietetics Forum  
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# Food for a healthy heart

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) account for nearly one-third of all deaths worldwide, and is on the rise in Bangladesh. Diet plays a major role in cardiovascular health, and can impact our risk of developing heart diseases.

Once we know more of which food to eat and which to limit, we will be on our way toward a more heart-friendly routine.

**HEALTHY FATS**

Not all fats are bad for you. Monounsaturated fats are considered one of the healthiest sources of fat in the diet. This includes olive oil, canola and peanut oils, most nuts, nut oils and nut butters, olives, and avocados. (Nuts also contain vitamin E, which helps lower “bad” cholesterol and some, like walnuts, are high in omega-3 fatty acids).

Olive oil is high in antioxidants and monounsaturated fats. It has been associated with lower blood pressure and lower risk of heart disease. But if it is cooked for too long, its health benefits are diminished. So, it’s preferable to add olive oil only 10 minutes before wrapping up cooking.

Good sources of polyunsaturated fats include safflower oil, flax oil and flax seeds, sunflower oil, walnuts, fish (hilsa, tuna, rupchanda, salmon, koral), soybeans, canola oil, etc.

**HAVE PLENTY OF FIBRE-RICH FOOD**

Most of us do not get enough fibre in our diet. The recommended amount is 25-35 grams of dietary fibre per day.

Dietary fibre is a type of carbohydrate that the body cannot digest. As fibre passes through the gut, it affects the way the body digest foods and absorb nutrients. Fibre can help reduce our LDL level, which is considered as “bad” cholesterol.

A fibre-rich diet can also help control blood sugar, promote regularity, prevent gastrointestinal disease and help manage weight. Soluble fibre provides the greatest heart benefits. It helps lower total and LDL cholesterol levels by binding to bile in the gut and removing it with the body waste.

Good sources of soluble fibre include oats and oat bran, barley, legumes (dried



beans, lentils and split peas). Apples, bananas, pears and citrus fruits, Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, sweet potatoes, and squash.

Insoluble fibre is generally referred to as roughage. Wheat bran and whole wheat or grain bread/bread products, vegetables etc. are good sources of roughage.

**NUTRIENTS**

Leafy green vegetables are high in vitamin K, fibre and nitrates, which can

help reduce blood pressure and improve arterial function. Berries (strawberries, jam, blackberries) are rich in antioxidants. Studies show that eating them can reduce multiple risk factors for heart disease.

Tomatoes are rich in lycopene, a type of organic pigment called a carotenoid, and have been associated with a lower risk of heart disease and stroke, as well as an



increase in good cholesterol. Eating chia seeds, flaxseeds, sweet pumpkin seed, etc. may improve several risk factors for heart disease, including inflammation, blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides.

Garlic and its components have been shown to help reduce blood pressure and cholesterol. They may also help inhibit blood clot formation. Be sure to consume garlic raw, or crush it and let it sit for a few minutes before cooking. This maximises its potential health benefits.

Green tea is high in polyphenols and catechins. It has been associated with lowering cholesterol and triglycerides, and blood pressure.

Pomegranates contain numerous antioxidants, including heart-promoting polyphenols, and anthocyanins, which may help stave off hardening of the arteries. Oranges contain cholesterol-fighting pectin. The fruit is also rich in potassium, which helps control blood pressure. The antioxidant hesperidin present also helps lower blood pressure.



**FOODS TO AVOID**

Eating a lot of sodium can contribute to high blood pressure, a risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Reducing sodium is an important part of a heart-healthy diet. Many condiments are available in reduced-sodium versions, and salt substitutes can add flavour to food with less sodium.

Sedentary lifestyles, consumption of excess carbohydrate, saturated fats and trans-fats, and limited fibre in diet are mostly responsible for causing CVD. The sources are fatty cuts of beef, the skin of poultry, full fat and processed cheeses, cream cheese, high-fat dairy products, such as whole milk, cream, butter and sour cream, fried foods and fast foods, tropical oils — palm, and coconut.

Trans fatty acids are formed when a liquid fat is changed into a solid fat through a process called hydrogenation. Many manufacturers use hydrogenated fats in their ingredients because it creates a product with an extended shelf life and better consistency.

Trans fatty acids raise the levels of LDL cholesterol in our blood and lower the levels of high-density lipoprotein cholesterol. Fast foods and fried foods are high in trans fats.

It’s clear that healthy eating and living can make a huge difference. With planning and a few simple substitutions, we can eat without having to worry our hearts.

**Photo: Collected**

## ◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



**ARIES**  
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Lay your cards on the table. Expect sorrow from newly discovered information. Involvement in groups will be favourable. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



**TAURUS**  
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Don't let criticism rile you up. Be accommodating to requests. Consider starting your own business. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



**GEMINI**  
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Residential changes will be upsetting. Consider investing in a moneymaking venture. Don't make large uninformed purchases. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



**CANCER**  
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Catch up on pending tasks. Take time to gain new knowledge. Relatives will be cordial. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



**LEO**  
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Channel your energy into household chores. Relationships will be strenuous this week. Old friends may not like your choices. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



**VRIGO**  
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Opportunities to at work are evident. Make valuable connections. Take time before making personal decisions. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



**LIBRA**  
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Get your own way with charm. Opportunities for romance will arise if you travel. Take part in stimulating debates. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



**SCORPIO**  
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Get the job done. Your partner may not understand your mood swings. Don't fall for shady deals. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



**SAGITTARIUS**  
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Romantic encounters will develop through group activities. Don't let anyone steal your thunder. Get on with work. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



**CAPRICORN**  
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Visit someone who isn't well. Host a social event. Make time for family this week. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



**AQUARIUS**  
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Overcome obstacles at work. Spend time with friends. Maintain good relations with colleagues. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



**PISCES**  
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Make a fresh start. Wrap up overdue personal legal matters. Do whatever your partner wants. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.





#FASHION & BEAUTY

## Tenzing Chakma's Sozpodor

A celebration of colours, culture and heritage, Tenzing Chakma's latest autumn designs are the polar opposite of incognito.

Curated under his own label, Sozpodor, Tenzing's line strives to remind us what power Bengal's indigenous clothing is poised to carry and what statements of sartorial grace they can convey.

"Fashion is deeply introspective. It is a personal expression of self, meaning, you can either take it or leave it. If you choose to embrace it, it is liberating and dictates every part of your life. With my own self, I've always chosen fashion and every time I've chosen it, it's been to tell the story of my community. This means championing originality and staying true to my roots," shares Tenzing.

Never one to compromise his vision, Tenzing bids to do just this with his autumn portfolio. What the Bangladeshi designer deserves credit for is his unique ability of taking native attires of Chakma tribes from the hill tracts of Bengal and transforming them into luxury prêt-à-porter fashion. But how exactly does he do this?

The Pinon and Hadi adorning the beauty of a Chakma woman in the majestic hills of Rangamati is the vision that Tenzing deconstructs in his autumn clothes. Allocating ample space in his garments for bursts of vibrancy tethering to cerulean blues, tangerine oranges and vermilion reds, Tenzing's rendition of the indigenous garb reveals tales of grace.

Extraordinary inventions like blouses in twos<sup>¾</sup> cause, let's face it, two is better than one <sup>¾</sup> add layer and structure in the most contemporary way imaginable to the traditional clothes. Every drape has the perfect amount of pleats and every garment oozes infinite swish.

Look closely at the flow of the fabric and you will notice the language of unique motifs placed so strategically that they exude



minimalism. These keynotes are of tribal origins fused with Indo-Asian patterns, an iconic trademark of Tenzing's designs, and one which cements his place as the cool Bangladeshi designer well ahead of the fashion curve!

Style with avant-garde headgears and hairdos inspired from exotic Mongolian cultures and Tenzing's display is complete, his penchant for reviving tribal cultures strengthened more so than ever.

Undoubtedly, Tenzing is a fearless designer, a trait not only reflected in his clothes but also in his campaigns

for diversity and inclusivity in the Bangladeshi fashion industry.

"Promoting different cultures and indigenous roots is very important to me and this has always been my eternal goal as a designer. This is why I try to make my fashion campaigns as diverse as possible. It's crucial for the advancement of fashion to include models of different skin and ethnicities, to advocate for tribal identities and to make collections as inclusive as possible. These are some of the principles I try to follow in my own endeavors," explains Tenzing.

With an ethos so clear and transparent, Sozpodor's autumn line only cements its reputation as an unapologetic fashion house of Bangladesh. Such brazen advocacy reassures us that Bengal's indigenous identity will never be lost. Not as long as Tenzing Chakma, standing at the helm of this movement, can help it.

**By Ramisa Haque**  
**Models: Trijita Khisa, Dhipannita Chakma, Anushka Chakma, Arpa Chakma, Eretrina Chakma, Sristy Chakma**

**Photo: Hill Valley Production**  
**Wardrobe: Sozpodor by Tenzing**  
**Makeup: Deedhiti Chakma**





# Jewellery for the gem that you are!

It's a fact universally acknowledged that we love jewellery. Since time immemorial, women, as well as men, have adored it, and adorned their persons with it. Crafted from every material imaginable, ornaments of all shapes, sizes and designs have been worn and flaunted by mankind and it only keeps getting more and more interesting. Latest trends and designs emerge regularly that fascinate us mere mortals and obsessed as we are with beauty and magnificence, make it our own! True to form, this year also has brought us many exciting new surprises by way of latest styles of jewellery that are truly must-haves for every fashionista worth her stilettos!

## STRIKING DANGLERS

Long, shoulder-dusting and sensuous, danglers are fabulous and how! They are statement pieces that look amazing and dress up any outfit instantly. Made especially popular by style icon Bollywood actress Sonam Kapoor, danglers are something you want in your jewellery box. They are extremely versatile; a pair of traditional Multani danglers will look wonderful with your festive kaftan, as well as a sleek black jumpsuit blending east and west seamlessly. Crystal danglers look chic and will bring panache to your evening look, whereas a pair of beaded, colourful danglers will elevate your beach dress instantly.

## HERITAGE JEWELLERY

In the South-Asian subcontinent, jewellery is viewed more as an asset than adornment; an investment if you will. Heritage jewellery was considered ancient and boring up until a few years ago — so much so that young women refused to wear them entirely for fear of looking old! Things have changed completely as heritage jewellery has become very trendy! What's more, you can bring out your mother's treasure chest of a jewellery box and take your pick! If looking too gaudy is your concern, pick a statement piece, preferably a stunning necklace with polki, kundan or jadaw work. Heritage necklaces are all the rage now; when teamed with a sleek bun, simple outfit and no-makeup makeup — you will look ravishing!

## GENDER-FLUID JEWELLERY

Why should the ladies have all the fun? There has always been a great debate against and about men sporting jewellery, but things have changed radically. In an inclusive, post gender world, the lines between archetypal masculine and feminine associations have blurred, creating a huge, much-needed segment for jewellery that caters to any gender and happily so! Things like the famed Cartier Love bracelet and rings, Tiffany necklaces and bracelets, Gucci Link to Love line that celebrates love in all forms are all extremely



special and equally fabulous. They are definitely investment pieces that can be passed down to daughters as well as sons!

## STATEMENT CUFFS

We say a lot with our hands and hence, jewellery for the hands has always been considered important. A cuff that lovingly hugs your wrists looks beautiful and makes a solid fashion statement. This all-important cuff could be made of gold, silver or any other material as long as it makes you happy! Thickness of a cuff is also a matter of personal taste. Especially trendy now is the gold cuff with oversized stones in their au naturale avatar. Pick a chic piece sporting a baroque-style, misshapen natural pearl or an intricate, tribal one oozing sensuality and style!

## JEWELLERY WITH PRECIOUS STONES

Precious metal studded with precious stones — indeed a match made in heaven! After all what could be the perfect setting for nature's most precious offerings but gold and silver? Rich and opulent, any kind of jewellery studded with precious stones is one of a kind, looks fabulous and will keep sparking joy for years to come. Look out for pieces with deep-hued precious stones like

emerald, rubies, sapphire, and tourmaline — they are timeless. Pair a jewel-toned outfit with coordinating jewels — it is highly fashionable and looks very elegant. Word of caution — these are investment pieces so choose your jeweller wisely! Renowned jewellers that have a solid reputation are your best bet.

## MIX AND MATCH YOUR JEWELLERY!

This is a pandemic-ridden world where rules are meant to be broken! You only live once so make it worth your while! Mix metals — gold actually pops more when worn with silver. Stack up some bracelets that hold special meaning to you and throw caution out the window! Stack up some rings and make a statement. Layer some chains and add a few colourful strings of beads in between. Got multiple piercings? Pick a long piece for one ear and a simple stud for the other! Let your imagination run wild and let your unique personality shine through.

## AGATE JEWELLERY — THE TRENDIEST OF THEM ALL!

Agate is a form of naturally-occurring quartz that is affordable and looks gorgeous when made into jewellery. It also has naturally healing properties that

balance the mind, body and soul. It helps centre one's energies, providing clarity and focus. Agate has many rich hues and its tough texture means it's perfect for jewellery. Rings, pendants, necklaces and bracelets made from Agate look fabulous for daily wear. Perfect for offices, classes or lunches this is a simple gemstone that looks chic and provides positive vibes!

## SWAROVSKI CRYSTALS

Swarovski, although man-made, is a very high-quality crystal that is good value for money. As these come in a range of colours, jewellery studded with Swarovski is highly desirable and stylish. Swarovski has an extensive range of jewellery, starting from rings, earrings, bracelets, necklaces to even clutch bags. Shiny, sparkling and chic — it is everything you want from a treasured piece of jewellery! Renowned house Judith Leiber makes stunning clutches that are studded with Swarovski crystals. These clutches are art, and are real collector's items. Owning Swarovski crystal jewellery is great because it's versatile and timeless.

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan  
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed/  
Jarwa House





**DESHI MIX**  
 SALINA PARVIN


# Sweets for DURGA PUJA


**NEYYAPPAM**

A name derived from neyy, meaning ghee, and appam, meaning pancake — neyyappam has its origin in South India. It is a sweet dish originally meant as a teatime companion, but is also served as offering in Hindu temples in Kerala.


**Ingredients**

1 cup raw rice  
 1 cup grated jaggery  
 ¼ cup grated coconut  
 2 bananas  
 ¼ tsp cardamom powder  
 Pinch of baking soda  
 Ghee or oil for deep fry

**Method**

Rinse the rice and soak in water for 2 hours. After 2 hours, drain the water, grind the rice in a mixer. Until a fine paste is created. Do not add water while grinding. Now add coconut, banana, cardamom powder to the mixer. Grind it to a fine paste. Finally add jaggery, mix well. Let the batter rest for 1 hour. Heat oil or ghee in a pan. Pour the batter into the hot oil and fry the neyyappam on both sides until golden and crisp. Remove from pan. Allow it to cool. Neyyappam is ready to serve.

**PALMAND COCONUT CAKE**
**Ingredients**

1 cup rice flour



½ cup plain flour  
 1 cup ripe palm pulp  
 1½ cup sugar  
 1 cup scraped coconut  
 1 tsp baking powder  
 2 eggs  
 1 cup milk cream  
 1 cup palm oil  
 Pinch of salt


**Method**

Fry the rice powder slightly, as you do before cooking semolina. Keep aside to cool. Beat the egg thoroughly and mix all the ingredients except rice powder and flour, mix well. Now add rice powder and plain flour slowly and mix. Make a thick and smooth batter. Grease a mould of about 8-inch diameter with ghee. Pour the batter into a mould. Place the mould in the preheated oven. Set the temperature to 180 degrees Celsius and bake for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick, when inserted, comes out clean. Once done, take it out from oven and let it cool. Cut into slices and enjoy.

**ROASTED COCONUT LADDU**
**Ingredients**

2 cup scraped fresh coconut  
 1 cup dry roasted flattened rice powder  
 2 cup jaggery  
 1 tsp ghee  
 Condensed  
 2 tbsp chopped nuts

**BEOL** | adani wilmar

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**Method**

Heat ghee in a non-stick pan. Add scraped coconut and fry for 5 minutes on low flame. Add jaggery, cook for 10 minutes. When the water dries, add ½ cup flattened rice powder and condensed milk to it. Mix well and cook until it turns sticky and you can make laddu from the mixture. Now add mixed nuts and turn off the heat. Mix continuously for 2-3 minutes. Transfer the prepared mixture in a bowl and set aside to cool. Divide the prepared mixture into equal portions, shape them into laddus. Coat the laddus in the remaining rice powder. Store or serve.

**MALAILADDU**

**Ingredients**

500g cottage cheese  
½ cup condensed milk  
½ cup mawa  
2 tbsp sugar, if needed  
Few drops kewra essence  
½ tsp cardamom powder

**Method**

Knead cottage cheese by hand till smooth and creamy. In a pan, mix mashed cheese and condensed milk. Cook on a slow flame, stirring constantly. Cook till the mixture thickens and stops sticking to the sides of the pan. Add mawa and cardamom powder, mix well. Pour this malai on a plate and allow it to cool. Make laddu of the malai and serve.

**JAGGERYKALAKAND**

*The recipe is simple enough, but does take time. It is popular in India and is made by reducing milk and sugar.*

**Ingredients**

2L full fat milk  
Pinch of alum (phitkari)  
4 tbsp jaggery  
Pistachio, chopped for garnish

**Method**

Boil milk in a deep, thick-bottomed pan, on medium heat, till it thickens lightly. Add alum, stir continuously and cook till the milk becomes grainy and most of the moisture evaporate. Add jaggery, mix well, and cook for 5-10 minutes or till the mixture thickens again. Grease an aluminium tray with ghee. Pour the milk mixture in to the tray and level the surface. Sprinkle pistachios and keep the tray in the refrigerator until set. When completely set, cut into pieces. Arrange them on a serving platter and serve.



**KHEERSHA PULI**

**Ingredients**

1 cup rice flour  
1 cup jaggery  
1½ cup water  
1 cup kheersha  
1/8 tsp salt  
Oil for deep fry

**Method**

Boil water and add jaggery and salt to it. Add rice flour to boiling water and keep stirring with wooden spoon to form a firm but soft and not sticky dough. Adjust accordingly. Knead well for about 3-4 minutes. Take a portion of the dough and roll it out as thick tortilla. Cut out circles with a cookie cutter. Place a small amount of kheersha on each circle. Repeat the process with the remaining dough. Brush the edges with water and seal tightly to form a semi-circle. Heat oil in a pan. Fry the kheersha puli in medium heat until the dough is cooked through and golden. Serve warm or at room temperature



**KOPRA PAK**

This is a Gujarati coconut barfi. The sweetmeat is now commonly served in Hindu festivals.

**Ingredients**

3 cups freshly grated coconut  
1 tbsp ghee  
3 cups full fat milk  
¼ cup mawa  
1½ cup sugar  
6-7 tsp cardamom seeds

**For the garnish —**

1 tbsp blanched and finely

chopped pistachios

**Method**

Heat ghee in a deep non-stick pan, add cardamom seeds and sauté on a medium flame for few seconds. Add coconut and sauté on medium flame for 7-8 minutes. Add the milk and sugar, mix well and cook on a medium flame for 40-45 minutes, while stirring occasionally and scraping the sides of the pan. Add mawa and mix properly. Transfer the mixture into a greased tray and spread it evenly using a flat ladle. Garnish with pistachios, press it lightly and keep aside to cool completely for 1 hour. Cut the kopra pak into pieces and serve, or store in an air tight container.

**GUJIYA**

Made from suji (semolina) and maida (all-purpose flour), gujiya is a sweet, deep-fried dumpling popular in Hindu festivals.

**Ingredients**

**For the dough —**  
2 cups refined flour



over medium heat till it looks slightly fried. Add sugar and mix well. Cook for 2 minutes. Add cardamom powder and almonds. Mix well and remove from heat. Allow the filling to cool. Shape the filling into ovals about 21 cm length and 1 cm thickness.

Make balls of the dough and roll out into small round roti. Take a round roti, wet the edges with water and place a piece of filling over one half. Fold the other half over and press the edges together to seal, make a design by pinching and twisting all along the sealed edges. Make all the gujiya in this way. Heat ghee or oil in a pan and fry the gujiya till golden brown on all sides.

Make sugar syrup by cooking water and sugar together, to one thread consistency. Dip the gujiya into the sugar syrup. Lift and let dry on a plate. Serve or store in air tight container.

**PERA SONDESH**

**Ingredients**

2 cups of milk powder  
½ cup milk  
½ cup sugar  
2 tbsp ghee  
¼ tsp cardamom powder  
Pistachios for garnish

**Method**

Heat milk in a pan. Add sugar and mix until dissolved. Stir in milk powder. Mix and mash on low flame. Add ghee and cardamom powder. Turn off the heat and mix well until smooth and soft. Let it cool. Create round balls with the mix, press down in the centre with your thumb, and place a pistachio in the centre before serving. Enjoy.

**Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed**

**Food: Selina Parvin**

**Styling: RBR**





# Vegetarians assemble!

While there are people who willingly follow a vegetarian diet, there is also the other group who are unable to fathom how one can survive by eating just vegetables! Whether you are a vegetarian or not, you ought to know some facts about vegetarianism.

Becoming vegetarian can have reasons aplenty, be it health, ethics, environment, or religion. Whatever be the cause, following a vegetarian diet poses some special health benefits. According to the American Dietetic Association, properly planned vegetarian and vegan diets can be healthy, nutritional, and may prevent certain diseases.

In order to celebrate vegetarianism and bring the limelight on vegetarian diets, World Vegetarian Day was inaugurated on October 1, 1977 by the North American Vegetarian Society, which was later endorsed by the International Vegetarian Union in 1978, now celebrated annually worldwide.

Vegetarianism is a way of life, and yet being a vegetarian in Dhaka is not so easy. Among finding appropriate eateries, absence of adequate information about ingredients, and the lack of sufficient alternatives, there are many hurdles a vegetarian has to overcome. For your ease, we have listed down the best vegetarian eateries around Dhaka, including both physical and online establishments.

## OLD TOWN

### Govinda's Restaurant

If you ever set on a hunt for the best vegetarian restaurants in town, you definitely came across Govinda's Restaurant!



Situated in ISKCON Ashram in Shamibagh, the restaurant is strictly vegetarian and boasts a gamut of vegetarian delicacies, which may not make you miss meat at all. Kashmir ponir, soya bean bhuna, cottage cheese biriyani, and payesh are some of their most loved items.

### Gopal's Restaurant

Within the bounds of ISKCON Ashram in Shamibagh is another newly opened restaurant. This one features a more modernistic menu and offers items such as pizza, macaroni, and chow mein, which are cooked following strict vegetarian recipes. Along with these, classics such as chilli paneer, basmati rice, and fried rice are available. Gopal's Restaurant

also serves fresh, seasonal fruit juices to accompany your delicious meals.

## NEW TOWN

### Jatra Biroti

Tucked away in the bustling food hub of Dhaka in Banani is a colourful oasis that is filled with food, music, and art. Jatra Biroti houses both indoor and outdoor dining spaces along with options for home delivery in Gulshan and Banani. Their unique menu offers unusual, yet delicious items such as mushroom tehari and mushroom halim. They also offer a range of fulfilling platters, drinks, and a delectable selection of pithas.

### Bangu Vegan

Located in Uttara, Bangu Vegan is a sister concern of Obhoyaronno – Bangladesh Animal Welfare Foundation and the first vegan food joint in Bangladesh, which functions in a pre-booking basis. However, this does not stop their patrons from enjoying their rich, vegan menu. Some of the highlights from their menu include turmeric rice, achari kumra daal, malai curry, and mustard eggplant – all of which are finger licking good!

## CLOUD KITCHENS

### Reyansh

Reyansh is a vegetarian online food store that has an elaborate Indian menu, ranging from light snacks such as paav bhaji,

pani puri, shingara chaat, and paneer pakora to filling meals including palak paneer, daal makhani, chilli paneer, and paneer pulao. It also offers a range of delectable sweets such as boondi laddoo, mawa gujiya, jaggery kalakand, and jilapi. Currently, they deliver all over Dhaka.

### Shanchayita

Shanchayita is located in the food hub of Dhaka – Banani. While the restaurant has a brick-and-mortar establishment, it runs only on a pre-booking basis for dine-in. However, their array of vegetarian options including items for breakfast, lunch, and snacks along with frozen delicacies are available online. The restaurant offers a variety of fulfilling platters including cashew korma platter, paat shaak platter, and niramish platter along with a selection of delicious sweets.

Apart from these, there are several restaurants around Dhaka that are not fully vegetarian but are inclusive of a rich vegetarian menu. Lucknow Dhaka, Tarka, Santoor, Binni Restaurant, Mint Leaf, and Khazana all feature a delicious vegetarian menu to choose from along with non-vegetarian options.

By Fariha Amber  
Photo: Sazzad  
Ibne Sayed  
Food Styling:  
RBR





**LIFE AS IT IS**

**WARA KARIM**

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# Tong, America's first fuchka cart

In a tin foil container there were seven crispy semolina shells filled with seasoned potato, yellow peas, onion, green chilli, and cilantro; they were topped with grated hardboiled egg. The sauce cup at the centre was almost full to the brim with a lip-smacking tamarind water. I dunked a 'fuchka' in that water, popped it into my mouth, and closed my eyes to relish the burst of flavours, which is unique to Bangladesh's most beloved street food. My palate danced to the crunchiness and hot-sweet-tanginess of the deep-fried orb. I was instantly carried back to the life I left behind in Dhaka.

On that September afternoon, however, I was nowhere near Dhaka, I was standing in Jamaica, a neighbourhood of Queens, New York City. I had been waiting in front of Tong, America's first fuchka cart. NYC's borough of Queens is famous for Bangladeshi restaurants, but there was a niche market quietly waiting to be tapped; no one was selling authentic Bangladeshi street food until Tong came on the food scene.

"When I first came up with the idea of selling Bangladeshi street food, not a single person I know encouraged me to go for it," said Naeem Khandaker, 29, the brain behind Tong. "If it is not bhat-mach-biriyani, it is not going to sell, everyone said to me."

Khandaker proved every naysayer wrong. However, it took him countless hours of hard work, sleepless nights, and an ironclad determination to be successful in the business. The first Tong cart was established on 73rd Street in Jackson Heights. Today, in addition to its Jackson Heights location, Tong boasts fuchka carts in Jamaica and Ozone Park neighbourhoods of Queens. There are also two Tong franchises in Bronx and Brooklyn.

The beginning was not easy; it was a one-man show. "I cooked all night and in the afternoon, I sold my food. I did this every day, seven days a week," he said.



The first one month was slow, people were not ready to pay \$6 for a plate of fuchka or chotpoti. One can buy a plate of chicken biriyani for as low as \$7 at the Bangladeshi restaurants of Queens. However, the reluctance of customers soon changed into curiosity and anyone who tried Tong's fuchka, chotpoti or jhalmuri came again and again. It was what Tong was selling, the uniqueness of its menu and its quality that brought people back to Tong.

"Tong has very limited social media presence today, but in the beginning, it literally had zero presence on social media," Naeem said. "I believe that for a business to become successful, promotion by word of mouth is the most effective method."

"If you consistently sell quality products or services, you do not have to worry about promotion or advertising," he added. "It is your customers who will promote your business."

Today, many people drive to New York from neighbouring states like Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania only to enjoy

a plate of fuchka at one of Tong's five carts. Its customers are not just Bangladeshi Americans, Indian, Pakistani, European, Hispanic, and African Americans are also spotted in front of Tong, all waiting for a taste of authentic Bangladeshi made-from-scratch street food.

In addition to traditional fuchka, Tong is also popular for its doi fuchka, chotpoti, jhalmuri, and bharta prepared from green mango, guava, strawberry, and pear.

Asked what's now cooking in Tong, Naeem, who started his street food business in 2018 with just \$50,000, said that he was looking forward to opening his first brick-and-mortar Tong in Jamaica, Queens this October.

"In the restaurant version of Tong, our customers will enjoy a wider range of Bangladeshi street food," he said. "We will have an open kitchen, which will allow our patrons to directly see how our food is prepared."

Back in 2018, Naeem was a 26-year-old college student in New York City. The

more he explored the city, the more he realised that not one Bangladeshi culinary entrepreneur was selling authentic Bangladeshi street food. Not only that, a large number of restaurateurs of Bangladeshi descent were actually selling North Indian food under names like Taj Mahal, Gandhi, Kohinoor, Star of India, etc.

"I am proud of my Bangladeshi roots and I was willing to take the risk to do something that nobody dared to do before and that is, sell Bangladeshi street food to the New Yorkers," Naeem said.

His venture not only proved profitable, but also drew attention of the media — Tong was featured in The New York Times and NY Mag, and is soon expected to be featured in an HBO documentary on street food. Tong was also one of the six finalists in the Best Freshman category at the 2019 Vendy Awards, a prestigious street food contest that used to be hosted by a non-profit advocacy organisation called Street Vendor Project, to promote the vibrant street food scene of New York City. The annual festival successfully ran from 2005 to 2019.

Tong's success has inspired other entrepreneurs as well. A number of young Bangladeshi immigrants have followed in Naeem Khandaker's footsteps and opened their own successful fuchka stands in New York City.

If I have to mention one Bangladeshi food that I always missed here in the US, it was fuchka made in Bangladeshi style. Although I do not live in New York, I do not live too far from it either, so I rejoice in the fact that I have finally discovered a place whose crumbly-flavourful fuchka can satiate my craving for it 365 days a year, for Tong is open every day rain or shine.

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



#ENTERTAINMENT

# Badhon on movies, struggles and aspirations

*"I had been flung into the raging sea during my daughter's custody battle. This is not all, many belittled me and discouraged me through and through and yet, I rose like a Phoenix from the ashes."*

## Azmeri Haque Badhon

Badhon has been living in the dark confines of her movie *Rehana Maryam Noor* since its releases on July 7, 2021. That's what happens when a movie is based on harassment, social injustice, and inequality. But before she became an overnight cult favourite, Badhon was a regular person like the rest of us: a girl with her own set of misperceptions and mental struggles.

We met the actress for a tête-à-tête to know more of the lady before the success, the lady who never knew she'd be mentioned at Cannes.

As we meet, she is dressed in a radiant magenta crop-top and check printed trousers, her moderately long jet-black tresses spill over her shoulders. In fact, once she walked in, she made the aura more comfortable with her quick jokes and casual conversations, as if we were previously acquainted.

"*Rehana Maryam Noor*, directed by Abdullah Mohammad Saad has been extremely close to my heart," she begins. "I have had a similar tumultuous personal life and the subtle connection with the drama had been a relief – as if the universe was reassuring me that everything would be



ok, that there are more people out there going through similar struggles," Badhon confessed.

Abdullah Mohammad Saad became instantaneously famous for his unabashed, fearless take on the female character. While working on the project, both Badhon and Saad bonded well enough for her to be able to claim to us that Saad was a complete recluse, typical of geniuses and had zero inclination towards anything else but fresh creative establishments.

"This man is a genius! A person who could convert a clueless, 'whitewashed with

makeup' person like me, into a dedicated actor with zero makeup, can be nothing but pure talent. And yes! I do not mind if this information goes to print," remarked Badhon.

Naturally speaking, we wanted to know more about the makeup bit. Badhon was all animated as she began to explain. "You see I was never comfortable in my natural skin tone. I always thought white was beautiful and I used to put on heavy makeup even if I had to go out for groceries. Saad was the first person to make me appear before screen in zero makeup. He is the one who instilled that enormous level of confidence in me through the character. After *Rehana*, I realised for a fact, that I didn't need makeup to hide my flaws or to impress anyone. People should like me for who I am, the person with all the flaws, if not then too bad," stated the actress.

It's true that when Badhon was a little girl and even a young lady, her family life had been achingly normal, with conservative parents; she had no other inclination but to be the perfect daughter, wife and mother. "My failed marriages exposed me to the ugliest of truths, of life being anything but rosy.

"And this increased tenfold during my daughter's legal-custody battle. I had to fight against society, barbaric laws and even sexual harassment to win back my daughter. A daughter who I had raised with all the love in the world, and yet, being a mother to her meant nothing to the world!

But thankfully, this made me the resistant person that I am today. The confidence that you see oozing is nothing but the strength which I had gained while being on my own two feet, alone, fighting against the world with only one belief that I had to get what I wanted, and that was all of what was needed."

Moving onto lighter topics, we discuss *REKKA*, Mushkan Zuberi, and her brilliant portrayal by the actress. "It would be wrong to say that I wasn't intimidated at first, but Srijit Mukherjee believed in me and his encouragement helped me bring the character to life," revealed Badhon.

Returning back to the world of fiction and the daunting task of a follow-up on a *RMN* or *REKKA*, Badhon says, "I can't keep on being lucky forever, but definitely I will always be on the lookout for movies that challenge dogma."

And we expect nothing less from the confident, feminist, artist that she is today. Her sky-rocketing confidence level only encourages other young woman out there to break down the glass ceilings and take their truest form, rather than what they have been taught to appear as, for the sake of society.

Dear Badhon, keep on dazzling us with more brilliant works. The world waits to see more of the Phoenix that is you.

**By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury**  
**Photo Courtesy: Zaaya**

