

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

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IS FOOTBALL BANTER ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA GETTING  
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THE ARTISTRY OF CLASSIC  
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IS IT TOO LATE TO  
**SAVE THE PLANET?**  
SAVE THE PLANET?  
SAVE THE PLANET?



ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR



# EDITORIAL

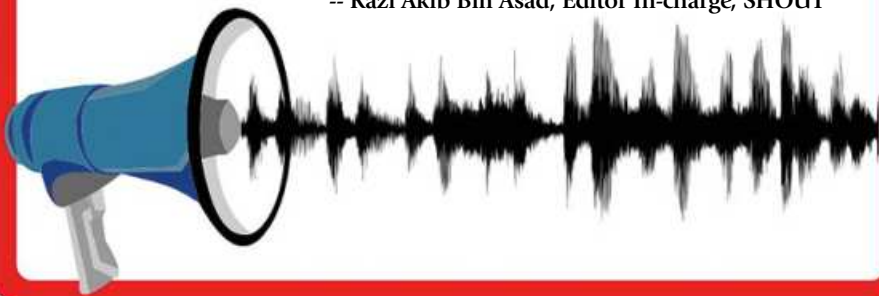
The world's leading environmental conference is taking place right now in Glasgow, Scotland. COP 26. All the king's horses and all the king's men, including a few kings, too, are discussing how to save the planet, and enjoying their steaks in an air-conditioned room while it rains outside.

It's more than just rain, my friends.

The global climate crisis is at an all time high right now. Sure, you might be barraged with information and news articles about what's going on. However, my personal request is that we start at home. There's a constant risk of high sea levels and saline water in the southern regions and the trees of CHT are felled to make "eco resorts". Winter in the north bites harder every year, and leaves the farmers to deal with the droughts. And we, in the cities, hold debates behind our glass windows if it's the fog outside or a smog, while asking for another cup of coffee.

Even when we know it's probably too late, we hope against hope. But for how long?

-- Kazi Akib Bin Asad, Editor In-charge, SHOUT



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## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIES



# We need to talk about Wes Anderson

## HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

If you ask anyone what a Wes Anderson film looks like, they'll say that it looks symmetric.

Yet, if you try to make a Wes Anderson rip-off and manage to maintain unparalleled symmetry, you'll still fail miserably.

What then makes a Wes Anderson film, truly Wes Anderson-esque?

### STORY, ALL A STORY

While other directors strive to make the characters as human as possible and conceal the presence of a storyteller, Wes draws attention to it. He has no desire to disguise the fact that this is a movie and that a story is being told. The story in many of his movies is initiated by a narrator telling a story or someone reading a book to someone else.

In *Rushmore*, he starts and ends the movie with curtains, whereas in *The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou*, the protagonist's ship is shown as part of a stage in a theatre. Elements such as a storyteller, a book, a curtain or a theatrical set are all his attempts to point out this is all just a story being told.

### CHARACTERS

His films consist of characters showing contradictory behaviour.

*Moonrise Kingdom* has kids acting like adults, whereas *The Darjeeling Limited* and *Rushmore* have adults acting like kids.

### AGAINST NATURALISM

One of the most subtle yet crucial aspects of Wes Anderson's filmmaking is planimetric composition. His characters move parallelly in a straight line. The movements can be towards the frame or away from it, but never in an oblique

line. Even the whip pans are always 90 or 180 degrees, and the frame is always facing one of the directions of the compass.

This imposes a sense of formality and makes the audience feel like they're watching things happen in an enclosed world from a distance. While other filmmakers try to make the camera move realistically in an attempt to make the audience feel like they're part of the world, Wes almost detached us from it. Thomas Flight's video titled "Why Do Wes Anderson Movies Look Like That?" on YouTube has an amazing take on his filmmaking style.

### EMOTIONS

This childlike storytelling and deliberate seclusion of the audience poses another problem -- conveying emotions where necessary. Wes has an unusually quirky take on stories that deal with serious themes and emotions. Then how does he divulge emotions in this childlike enterprise?

He puts a brief pause on his story-book approach. The symmetry, the flat lines, the bold colour palettes are still here. Yet, the subtle touch of artificiality that persists throughout the movie is held back. This instructs you to sit straight and concentrate on the characters being emotional, characters who'd otherwise be rather ridiculous throughout the rest of the film.

Wes Anderson's works are less like movies and more like paintings in motion. While legends like Scorsese and Spielberg might be the last of their kind, Anderson is the only one of his kind.

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# The Bechdel Test is a low bar

**RAYA MEHNAZ**

The Bechdel Test was introduced in 1985 by Alison Bechdel in her comic strip, *Dykes to Watch Out For*. In one episode, Bechdel surreptitiously jokes, "I only go to a movie if it satisfies three basic requirements. One, it has to have at least two women in it, who two, talk to each other about, three, something besides a man."

While the requirements for the Bechdel Test sounded easily achievable, it often wasn't the case. The test initiated conversations about gender bias in the entertainment industry when such inclusion was absent. It made way for the films and television in 2021 that were consciously aware of such biases and actively worked on passing the test.

However, the question remains. Is the Bechdel Test enough?

There seems to be consensus regarding the Bechdel Test and its purpose in evaluating media. After all, Bechdel herself didn't intend the test to be a one-stop evaluation for feminist media. There are also concerns regarding the context of the inclusion in media, as the test doesn't analyse the capacity of the role women play in that media. The women could play the oft-used tropes of "damsel in distress" or "femme fatale" that have been historically constructed for the male gaze, yet still pass the test because of a vain conversation. It was true in the movies such as *Twilight* and *Fifty Shades of Grey*. But are these movies truly doing justice for female representation?

They aren't. It's partly because the test method is hardly foolproof, and also because it isn't asking the right questions. It is applauding two minor female characters having a conversation about road-directions, yet not asking whether

the women have agency. For example, *Gravity* and *Highway* are two exceptional films with empowering female protagonists, but it doesn't pass the test due to not having another named female character.

Similarly, the test disregards the possibility of women finding empowerment in a conversation about men. It effectively disregards the lived experiences of women who are intrinsically affected by patriarchy, gender dynamics of society, not to mention abuse by men. The test also disregards the endowed freedom of expression in a female character who is going after what she wants, be it a relationship with a male character.

The test also doesn't look into the storylines that were crafted in a gendered manner as opposed to a universal one. For example, *Avengers: Age of Ultron* passes the test, yet it introduces a sterilisation storyline specifically made for the Black Widow. It is one of many instances that uses gendered obstacles in a character arc, especially considering Captain America wouldn't be subjected to such a dehumanising storyline. In contrast, *Alien* avoids this practice by introducing a universal obstacle that affects not only Ellen Ripley. This is why the Bechdel Test cannot be the only measure of female involvement in media today. It is a thought exercise that implores the primary stage of proper female representation in media. It's 2021 now, such primary requirements don't do justice to the multifaceted representation discourse that has sprung up since 1985.

*Raya Mehnaz likes to live life dangerously — one House MD episode at a time. Send help atfb.com/raya.mehnaz*



## Is football banter on social media getting out of hand?

**TAMJIDUL HOQUE**

Social media, for over a decade now, has brought forth a new dimension to being football fans. Fans on social media are now engaged in all sorts of discussions and heated debates. This ultimately leads to fans poking fun and taking digs at their rival fans. But while doing all of this, should we remind ourselves that we are all here to have a good time and not to be hateful?

To outsiders, the football fan community on social media might seem like a group of people that simply likes football but to the fans it is much more than that. For them, it's a temporary escape from real life responsibilities and pressure, a medium to meet new people that share the same passion, a place where they feel heard.

Indeed, on social media, you can share your joy and excitement with many other people even when you are watching a game alone in your room. This is why it is crucial for fans in the community to create an environment full of love and respect instead of hate and toxicity, because consciously or otherwise, it ends up having an impact in their life.

The football community in Bangladesh is made up of tight-knit groups of people mainly in Facebook groups. The problems arise when people take things too seriously, when their opinions diverge, or when someone says or shares something with the intent of inciting anger. Football fans are very passionate, and when you say something that mocks their passion, rage ensues.

Furthermore, fan emotions are sometimes exploited. People make fun of a team or a player and even use vile language solely to incite anger among rival fans. This is especially noticeable among a group we could call the "fanboys".

Fanboys are a group of people who are obsessed with someone or something, in this case football players. For example, fanboys of player A mock player B, and fanboys of player B mock back, creating an endless cycle of two groups of fans mocking each other. While this may be some people's way of "bantering", the truth is that it creates a toxic environment among the fans.

While casual banter isn't a big deal, things can get out of hand when a group of fans orchestrates a targeted attack on someone whose opinion differs from theirs. There have been many instances of personal attacks in comments, people creating separate posts to target a specific person, and even threats. Some people appear in other people's message requests because they said something they didn't like. Many fans stop interacting and leave football groups after witnessing or experiencing these things. Football is supposed to bring fans together, but it sometimes feels like the fans are more divided than ever.

While it's not all doom and gloom in the football community, a little more respect amongst each other would really improve the situation a lot. After all, we all get together to celebrate the spirit of football, not just to banter each other.

*Tamjidul Hoque likes spicy food and wants to watch a new anime now that his exams are finished. Give him anime suggestions at tamjidulh@gmail.com*





# The Artistry of Classic Bangla Movie Posters

ABIR HOSSAIN

Weaved in familiarity, entrenched by the unknown – the movies of Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, and Ritwik Ghatak have layers to them that transcend themes and time, and have consolidated themselves amongst cinephiles as classics. Their films are meticulously crafted in almost every aspect, whether it's the technicalities of the cinematography or the poetic dialogues that leave a lasting impression on viewers. Such attention to detail finds itself in places outside of the film too.

Ray started his career as a commercial illustrator and made a majority of his film's posters himself, combining his distinct voice and local influences. With specialised Bangla typography, usage of primary colours and borrowed aspects from the Dadaist movement, his posters are timeless.

Bangla typography, even in the contemporary era, leaves a lot to be desired. Much of it is unexplored and most commercial type foundries tend to conform to the norm. However, Ray was breaking expectations from day one. The poster for *Sonar Kella* utilises a stylised geometric, paper cutout style of Bangla lettering, filled with an eye-catching red-maroon. The forms change in pattern with each letter, rendering the cutouts with a persona of their own. Other renditions of similar out-of-box typography are seen in the posters of *Hirak Rajar Deshe* and *Mahanagar*.

This multimedia approach to design was unique that Ray pioneered in the field of subcontinental graphic design. His knack for unconformity ranged from child-like doodles to pieces of work which are painfully intricate. Ray's fascination with photography found itself

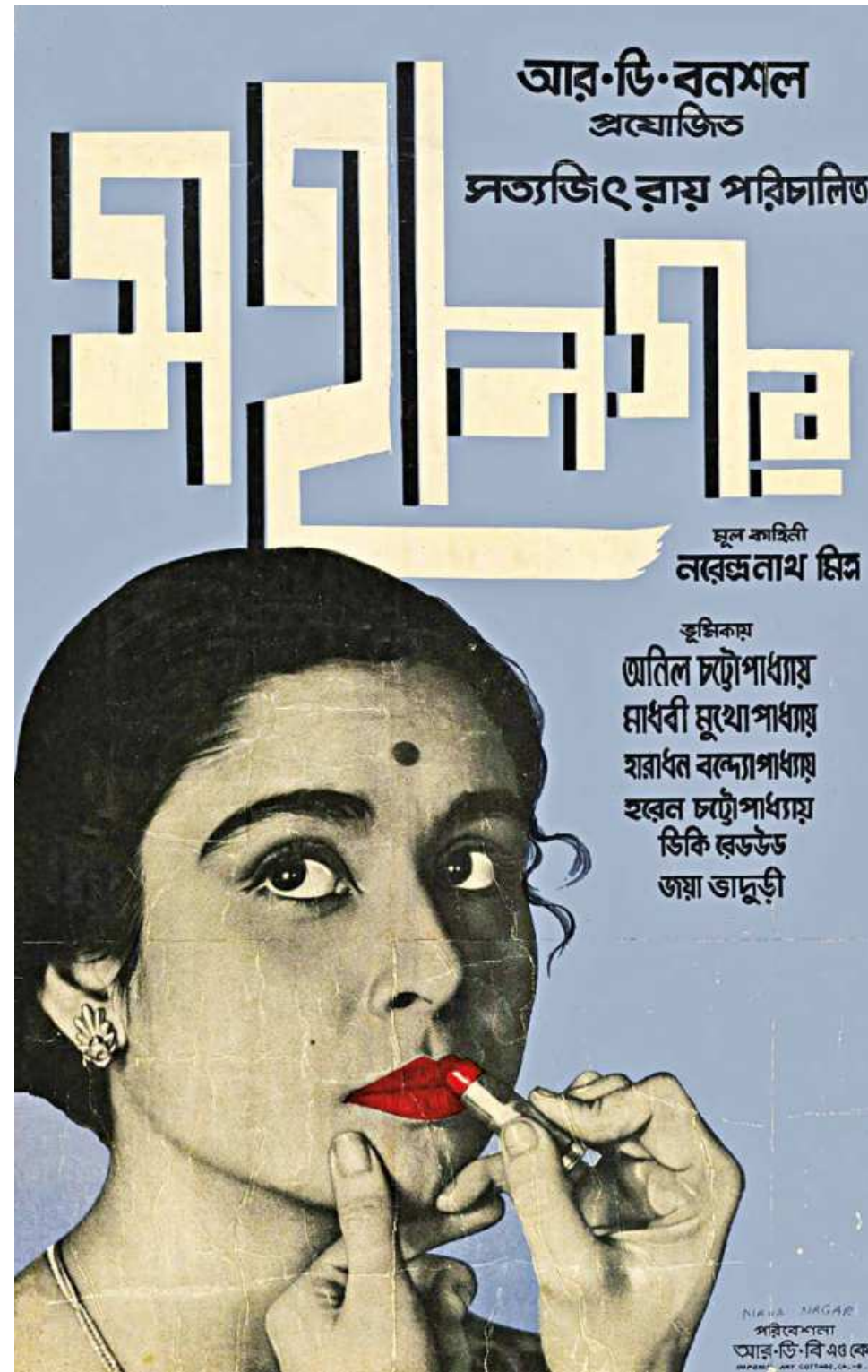
in posters for *Nayak*, *Pather Panchali* and *Debi*.

Elsewhere, Mrinal Sen's posters possess the same uncompromising feel as his films. Rebellious, unsettling, and provoking – the poster for *Calcutta 71* is a combination of illustrations and photography. Similar techniques of Ray's such as collages are used. The typography is a little more grounded and embodies the graffiti that might have been seen on the walls of Kolkata during that era. Posters for *Baishey Srabon* and *Abosheshe* also symbolise the profundity of Sen's artistry.

A friend and collaborator of Sen's, Ritwik Ghatak told the same stories of class struggle, a colonised subcontinent, and melancholy of the masses through a different lens. *Komal Gandhar* has a spine-tingling feel in its promotional poster. A blue backdrop of a familiar rural scene and complimentary *alpona* fuse to form a unique look. His 1965 opus *Subarnarekha* offers a juxtaposition of playful colours against a more stern portrait. The contrast is complementary and forces you to gaze back at the poster.

These films went on to define the golden age of Bangla cinema. The experiences of the people, whether told through the nihilistic approach of Mrinal Sen, the piercing reality of Ritwik Ghatak or the humane qualities of Satyajit Ray, document a significant time for the subcontinent. Lands plagued with poverty, famine, and the aftermath of war held stories in every nook and cranny of a new land. Their works have influenced people on a global scale, and spark conversations to this day.

*Abir Hossain is a failed SoundCloud Rapper. Tell him you too can't find anything to rhyme oranges with at: fb/abir.hossain.19*



# It's fine if you can't finish a hundred books a year

FATIN HAMAMA

During a month-long reading slump last year, I started watching BookTube videos and following every single big name bookstagrammer I could find. I thought that frequent exposure to book related content would eventually push me out of my reading slump.

Instead, I found myself feeling stressed every time someone posted their completed yearly reading challenge on Goodreads consisting of some hundred books, or when someone uploaded a reading vlog where they finish two books a day at one go.

It just felt as if I wasn't enough of a dedicated reader myself, despite trying to read as much as I could. Or because I wasn't always completing monthly reading goals, keeping track of the books I was going through, jumping on the hype train of every single hot release from fan-favourite authors like most people I followed in my small bubble were. It was actually my own mistake for not realising early on that reading is not a race.

The first thing that comes up after searching on YouTube for tips on how to be a better reader, is an array of videos with guidelines on how to read a hundred books a year, twenty books a month, and so on, almost as if



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

being a proper bookworm has to be synonymous with being able to devour tons of books within a particular span of time.

More often than not, these "guides" include booktubers droning on and on about how it's important to read whenever you have some free time, tracking what

you read, building a routine for your reading hours, and even following a few specific authors whose books are supposedly life-changing, or a *must* read.

This ends up presenting recreational reading as more of a chore than a way to enjoy oneself, which, according to me, is more or less the main purpose.

After all, not everyone who reads for a few blissful hours for escapism or relaxation should be bound to treating reading as a task where they stress out about ticking this and that off on their Goodreads, digesting books that are not their tempo just because the whole book community is into it, or making a schedule out of reading.

Some people can't go a day without reading at least a bit and some dive into a nightlong book binge session after a month-long readers' block. A lot of us use reading as a coping mechanism, but just as many need to be at peace and have proper headspace to even focus on the words. However, none of the latter ones make anyone any less of a bookworm. Types of readers come in as many varieties as Penguin's collector's editions, and it's more important to read at one's own pace and preference than anything else - especially when it comes to leisure reading.

# Is it too late to save the planet?

HIYA ISLAM & SYEDA AFRIN TARAN- NUM

Climate change is a global issue impacting every country on every continent, albeit unequally. Vulnerable groups and populations who are least responsible for this mess are on track to suffer the most. Some countries and companies are bigger emitters than the rest. The inaction of world leaders and exploitation by major corporations are significant drivers of climate change.

*What is really going on?*

Released this year in August, the latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reveals that human-caused emissions have warmed up the earth by 1.1 °C in the past 170 years. The IPCC's worst-case scenario predicts a rise of 2.4 °C from 2041 to 2060 with global emissions doubling by 2050. The best-case scenario models an increase of 1.5 °C between present year and 2040, and is estimated to fall back as the century ends. This means that there may still be time to act.

The 2015 Paris Agreement mandates all countries to set emissions-reduction pledges with the goal of preventing the global average temperature to rise 2 °C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to keep it under 1.5 °C. But the IPCC report shows that the earth is highly likely to exceed this mark. Nonetheless, the larger goal of steering clear from a two-degree catastrophic rise is very much possible, according to scientists who co-authored the report.

For every trillion tons of carbon emitted into the atmosphere, the world's temperature rises by roughly 0.45 °C, and every half degree of warming averted translates into a massive difference between the intensity and frequency of extreme heat, drought, and rainfall.

The world has cut down carbon emissions by 2.5 billion in 2020 due to pandemic-related lockdowns. This, however, is temporary and emissions are supposed to rise at increasing levels as economies recover. This is proof that humans are capable of drastic behavioural adaptation during a crisis.

*The world is falling apart as we speak, and we can do something about it. Then why aren't we*

*able to make an actual difference?*

Pollutants and emissions are by-products of burning fossil fuels for commercial purposes and also private or residential ones. According to the Center for Global Development, 63 percent of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the environment is released by middle-to-low income countries, such as Bangladesh, that are usually striving to achieve a level of development that allows them to be able to provide the basic needs for their people.

In order to reach that level in a country where most people are either trying to escape the clutches of poverty or trying to have their basic needs met, it is difficult for governments to prioritise renewable energy sources and take measures to mitigate emissions and other forms of pollution. Therefore, it is not impossible to reduce emissions, but emissions seem to be unavoidable.

For example, the Rampal and Matarbari coal power plant projects are still being built in Bangladesh, a country which is at risk of losing 11 percent of landmass, not to mention the loss of biodiversity and human lives that will follow.

The consumption of meat also contributes largely to the overall level of carbon emissions. The solution seems simple. We need to consume less meat and switch to a plant-based diet. However, this relies on the availability of affordable alternatives, especially in low-income countries where meat is more affordable than other plant-based alternatives.

What about the richer countries? Many simply choose not to act. With higher incomes, the richer populations usually switch to a more lavish lifestyle. Many even view indulgence as a status symbol or essential to "the current way of living". Living less lavishly may seem to them to be a degrowth of sorts, especially when there are little to no consequences.

The reason why almost nothing tangible is being done is because "the perfect solution," one which satisfies everyone, does not exist. Not only do we have to think about stopping all future emissions but we must also reduce the current levels of CO<sub>2</sub> from the Earth's atmosphere.

There are too many problems that require too many specific solutions. We do not have time for that.

The United Kingdom, France, Norway and New Zealand are some countries that have legally committed themselves to reach zero emissions by 2050. As for the rest, nations have drawn up ambitious deep cuts. Conversations, accords and agreements almost always end in vague arrangements and quotas with no real consequences set for those who do not follow. Furthermore, debates about the right "clean energy" and the perfect methods to be implemented also cause further delays for available solutions to take effect.

To find the absolute best solutions that do not lead to this "degrowth" and allow people to continue with their way of living needs expensive and time-consuming experimentation. As of now, no one is willing to pay for it, and the delay caused is something we can no longer afford.

While countries strive to meet their stated emissions cuts, big corporations are not to be excused. It is important to realise the outsized corporate contributions to climate change as they are involved in just about everything from what we buy, use, and dispose of.

Climate deniers and big corporations have been using green-washing and consumer-blaming techniques for years to shift their share of responsibility to the common people. But what happens underneath the surface? To understand how these companies are "fighting" climate change is difficult due to the lack of regulatory standards requiring disclosure of information like, carbon emissions, framework of carbon targets, method of action, and etc.

With growing pressure from investors, employees and customers alike, a slew of major corporations are making lofty promises to take care of the planet. However, setting up carbon budgets is one thing and following it through is another. The effects of climate change have become long obvious.

The first step for any company sincerely trying to reduce its impact on earth starts with measuring and analysing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and what activities contribute to its production. Once this is settled, companies can look for or even create eco-friendly solutions.

*So, what can we do?*

Over the years, companies have used the theory of demand and supply to show that harmful goods are only being produced because there is a demand for it. Using the same roundabout logic, we can say that making better choices in terms of the products we use could be used as a signalling device for producers to shift their resources into making more environmentally friendly products, at affordable prices. Furthermore, an increase in public interest in matters of the climate would allow politicians and government bodies to be encouraged in making correct choices to earn the votes of the citizens.

Growing interest in greener choices can also be endorsed both online and offline to spark the interest of people around the world, who would then pass it on to more people and thus, create a larger impact.

As the earth gets warmer, climate troubles will only get more pronounced and disastrous. Once the two-degree rise is hit, chances of survival will radically change for humans and other species on earth. Time is running out and our best bet is to mend our ways and hope they work.

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THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE SHOUT





## Get Started with Your Own Skincare Routine

**HIYA ISLAM**

Skincare is not a one-size-fits-all. However, it has some elements that should be common in everyone's routine. At the heart of skincare remains the four basic steps – cleanse, treat, moisturise, and protect.

Good skincare starts with getting to know your skin type (balanced, dry, oily, sensitive, combination, and ageing) and any skin concerns like acne, hyperpigmentation, sun damage, blackheads etc. that you need to address. These details will point you towards the kind of products you need, and help build a more suitable regimen.

The morning care is to protect and prevent, meaning you should use an anti-ageing elixir coupled with sunscreen. The night care aims to repair and correct your skin, which also includes having a good sleep.

Here is a scary thought – that one serum bottle you splurge on like clockwork is not working for you because you are applying it in the wrong order. Applying sunscreen, for instance, under a lotion or moisturiser is not wise as it can block sun rays and everything else from absorbing into the skin. The only thing that should be going on top of it would be face powder, concealer or foundation.

The order of application, and pauses needed between steps, is crucial to getting the most out of your products. In skincare jargon, this is known as "layering". Typically, you want to start with water-based products first and work your way towards oil-based or heavier products. This makes sense as

thinner products, like serums and eye creams, cannot penetrate the thicker face oils or night creams.

For layering, it is easy to mix conflicting ingredients. Say, Vitamin C with any acid like salicylic acid. This can cause irritation, redness, breakouts or render a product less effective or useless. Here, personal research comes in handy. If that sounds like too much work, try following a beauty blog or estheticians/skincare gurus on Instagram. Cassandra Bankson and James Welsh are well-known vloggers who make great skincare content. A lot of beauty brands, too, participate in educating their potential customers online these days.

Skincare goes hand in hand with patience. To know if your routine is paying off, wait for at least a month of regular use to see the results. Follow this through for about 3 to 4 months more to understand if the formulation is effectively working on your face.

For those with sensitive skin, try before you buy. Patch test new products, which is a quick way to check for allergies. Dab a small amount on the inside of your wrist or elbow and watch out for reactions like rashes or dry, flaky skin. Wait for at least 24 hours for any delayed response. If none, you are good to go.

Not everyone needs a 10-step beauty routine. If you are just starting, it is best to keep it simple. Once you eventually get to the stage where you understand what suits you best, you can invest in some masks and face peels for a weekly pamper. Maybe jade roller and gua sha stones, too.

**satire.**

## Toilet cleaner salesman refuses to come out of the bathroom

**MALIHA MOMTAZ OISHI**

Imagine waking up one morning, and suddenly hearing your doorbell. You open the door to see a mysterious cap-wearing man, bright blue bottle in hand, flashing a toothy grin at you.

"Are you a Mr.Pic family?" he asks, and you're confused. Is he asking if you're made out of Mr.Pic toilet cleaners? Before you can even answer, he barges into your house without saying a word along with an entire camera crew.

Such was the plight of Fariha last Wednesday.

"First, it was all those toothpaste guys invading the whole neighbourhood, going around asking us if we had salt in our toothpaste," said Fariha. "Because that's just what we do. In our spare time, we sit alone in our rooms, analysing the amount of salt in dental products."

"We thought that was as bad as it would get, but now it's a whole another game," added Fariha. According to her, once the salesman had entered the place, he refused to come out.

Our team found the man clutching his cap and sitting in a corner of the master bathroom. He seemed to be having some sort of a crisis. After multiple attempts from our end, he finally agreed to talk to us.

"I went to Yale," he said, in a state of utter agony. "Yet, here I am, barging into people's bathrooms. You think I enjoy doing this? They'll... they'll take away my bonus if I don't." The salesman went on, "You think you're going to be a movie star, but the next thing you know you're signing a contract agreeing to smile like a maniac, going door to door asking people what kind of toilet cleaner they use."

Fariha's 11-year-old son, Fahim, also had something to say about the incident.

"I guess it was a bit of a surprise," reported Fahim. "You don't go into your bathroom expecting to see a weird stranger wail and tell you not to grow up and how the job market is a curse. I offered him some juice to cheer him up, but he just ended up pouring it all over himself."

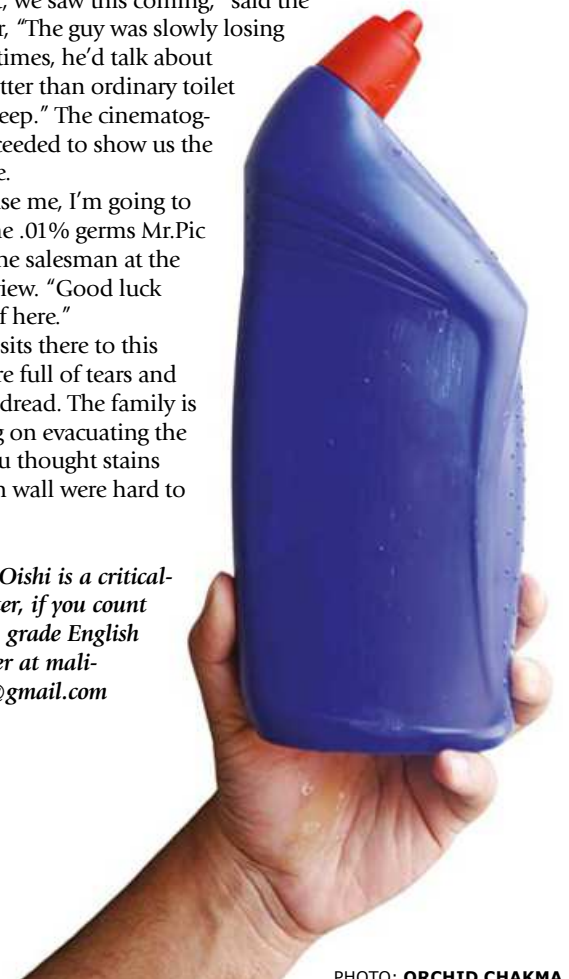
We also got to have a word with one of the camera crew.

"To be honest, we saw this coming," said the cinematographer, "The guy was slowly losing his sanity. Sometimes, he'd talk about how Mr.Pic is better than ordinary toilet cleaners in his sleep." The cinematographer then proceeded to show us the haunting footage.

"If you'll excuse me, I'm going to hang out with the .01% germs Mr.Pic can't kill," said the salesman at the end of the interview. "Good luck getting me out of here."

The man still sits there to this day. His eyes were full of tears and heart filled with dread. The family is already planning on evacuating the house. Boy, if you thought stains on the bathroom wall were hard to remove.

*Maliha Momtaz Oishi is a critically acclaimed writer, if you count full marks in 5th grade English tests. Motivate her at malihamomtazoishi@gmail.com*





# To Save Oneself

**SAFA AHMED**

Why must the sunlight on my skin always be scorching?  
The waves, forever drowning?  
The sirens roar at the highest pitch, obscenities.  
Feet first I push off the edge, into my infinities.  
Paying time and time again in blood and shards of gore,  
What you don't understand, my absolute paramour  
Is that, like you, I too am beyond a soul.

Under my breath, I cast upon myself this curse to never become whole,  
Never with the scraps and bits they toss my way,  
Never with the ulterior glances and phrases twisted to sway.  
Exhausted, I promise to the holy pillar my revived intentions,  
It's about time I became my own salvation.

# Befriending My Ghosts

**NAFURA HOSSAIN**

It casts a shadow upon my frame  
Dragging itself wherever I go.  
People tell me to stand up straighter  
But they don't know of the sharp claws digging into my shoulder  
Of the ghost of my would bes and could've beens and what was.

It whispers to me, of my glory days and of what I lost.  
It reminds me of how I did this to myself.  
I made myself fall. I messed up.  
I lost. I did, I chose, I failed, I, I, I, I, ME. ME.  
I lost my path to my dreams.  
And the ghost is here to make sure I know.

I have denied its words a million times.

But today, I will concur.  
Today I will befriend my ghost.  
Take it's clawed hands off of my shoulders and into mine,  
Hoping to learn something more.  
Yes, it is I who ruined me.  
But it is also I who made it here.  
So, I will befriend my ghost  
And walk side by side into the future.

# Only path out

**SAFA AHMED**

This version of you that runs rampant  
through the halls of my mind all night,  
Isn't the person you are now,  
isn't the person you'll ever be again.  
And yes at first, it felt like I was splitting my head in two,  
while my heart climbed up my throat and suffocated me,  
But I think I've found some clarity through it now.

I fell in love with a version of you that,  
like the flames of our fleeting love,  
simply dissipated into thin air.  
If I could make the world spin backwards  
I know I would be forever stuck in those moments  
but I am not God and You are not my hero.

*This week's stories and poems are the winning entries of Word Capsules '21, an online writing competition organised by the North South University Communications Club (NSUCC).*

*SHOUT was the media partner of the event.*

# Disaster

**SAADAT SHADMAN HOSSAIN**

As he came from the other room with a heavy heart, I knew what had happened. All my memories started flashing before my eyes. I wanted to cry, feel the pain, but it was as if I was numb. Still holding onto those broken bangles, the silence has slowly shadowed my sight.

I rested my head on the pillow for a while, and then it happened. I was in the car, "Santa Monica Dream" was playing on the radio, and there she was, alive and nodding to the song. I never thought I'd have to relive my worst memory. It was happening all over again. The same broken signs, the lighthouse near the cliff, and the growling thunder. However, this time it was different. The storm seemed to have changed its mind and let us go unharmed.

We stopped in front of the lighthouse and sat on the bench near the cliff. Our eyes gazed at the red sky, and the wind did the talking. The sun was setting over the horizon, all the while the wind was rising. She held my hand, and I felt free; the sirens inside me were waiting to step forward. As I opened my eyes, I felt the same wind. I leaned towards the window to feel the rain and play with the shape of the clouds. Because I know, one day you'll be back and you'll be proud of the person you see.

# Phoenix

**NOVERA MOYEEN**

I thought about ending you. Well, no. I am too squeamish about violence in even my imagination. So, no violence for you. How about dismantling? Like those Lego figurines. Makes a neater picture. Just pop the parts off. Then place them in a heavy-duty hydraulic crusher to turn them into fine powder. Dust those off and throw them in an incinerator to ensure complete and utter destruction. Cool, right? But then, I felt empty. You see, you took some of my colours with you. So I came up with another plan. You were resurrected by me. I tried to scrape the colours off the figurine. But I kept at it, and it became more of a polishing job. My colours looked brighter on you, and I was using my remaining colours to correct little imperfections. I even painted you a new bow. My days and nights were blended by this project. As I reached the bottom of my paint barrel, I came to my senses. It was time to end you again.

But that didn't work the last time, did it? Killing you each time means resurrecting you after. Keep my colours; maybe, they were yours to keep. I can replenish my stock, create new ones; there are so many possibilities! And, it's time to resurrect myself, don't you think so?





# ORDINARY FINDINGS

Day and night, while walking down the roads in this city of surprises, I come across many things that catch my eye. Things that are in plain sight, yet they remain hidden from our view. They are nothing special, you see. Ordinary findings, like you and me.

PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA  
TEXT: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

