

Star

LIFE

Style

E-mail: lifestyleds@yahoo.com

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

Remembering *the* **MARTYRED** intellectuals

SAVE YOURSELF THE HURT
TELLTALE SIGNS OF EMOTIONAL ABUSE **P4**
WHAT COLOUR ARE YOU?
COLOURS THAT MAKE BANGLADESH **PC**
A COLOURFUL TRADITION
LEGACY OF BISHWO RANG **P12**

Another 14 December, another reminder of the dark episode that unfolded on this day 50 years ago. Hours before the Pakistan army surrendered, collaborators of the occupational forces helped them erase some of the brightest names of this country. Fifty years on, and we still ponder on what could have been the bright fate of Bangladesh, had these souls lived long and full lives.

For the last 50 years, people of Bangladesh as a nation have walked a path towards a brighter future, crossing many distant miles and milestones together. There have been moments of despair, there have been moments of sheer joy — perhaps that is to be expected. Road to prosperity is not an easy road to traverse. It is a journey, which takes time.

In two days' time, we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the fateful 16 December. But today, regardless of the fragrance of freedom that seems to be in the air, the glee of living 50 glorious years as an independent nation on the phase of the earth, we stop to think of the martyred intellectuals, and the countless others who we have lost in the war. We remember the lives we have lost in the last 50 years. Lives whose existence then led to our glorious reality today.

— LS Desk

COVER ILLUSTRATION: BIPOB CHAKROBORTY

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প্রয়োজন
দেয়াল নয়
আমার
সৃষ্টি আঙিনা

BERGER
LUXURY
Silk
Hygienic Coating

Advertisement for BERGER LUXURY Silk paint. The image shows a woman in a purple dress standing in a room with a green wall, a mirror, and a poster. A paint can of BERGER LUXURY Silk is shown on the right. The poster on the wall has Bengali text: 'শুধু প্রয়োজন দেয়াল নয় আমার সৃষ্টি আঙিনা'. The paint can also features the text 'BERGER LUXURY Silk Hygienic Coating'.

Break the Silence, Eliminate the Violence: 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence

Gender-based violence, unfortunately, is not a concept we are unfamiliar with. In fact, according to UNICEF, gender-based violence is the most pervasive yet least visible human rights violation in the world. It includes physical, sexual, mental or economic harm inflicted on a person because of socially ascribed power imbalances between males and females. It also includes the threat of violence, coercion and deprivation of liberty.

KrayonMag, a social storytelling platform that aims to promote activism through art and culture, has taken a unique approach to express their strong stance in the fight



against gender-based violence through a 16-day campaign named "Break the Silence, Eliminate the Violence (Nirobotar Papchokro)," which is filled with a plethora of thought-provoking activities and events. Their partners in the event are: Backpage PR, Naripokkho, iCan, Children & Women Vision Foundation, Volunteer Opportunities and EMK Centre.

The first event began on 25 November, which is commemorated throughout the world as the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and closed on the 10 December, which marks the International Human Rights Day.

To make the movement known across all platforms and make more people aware, KrayonMag also organised a thematic photoshoot representing violence against women in black and white where five



renowned personas participated as models.

"The idea was to portray a crucial social issue in a unique thematic manner and make the power of the voice against violence known," said Tanzir Dilshad Ditan, founder of KrayonMag.

With the theme and campaign slogan "Orange the World" in mind, the photography and concept was done by Avishkek Bhattacharjee, while the photoshoot was modelled by Meher Afroz Shaon, Azra



Mahmood, Bulbul Tumpa, Ayreen Khan, and Sadia Roshni Soochana.

On Day 1 of the campaign, a webinar was conducted by Ayreen Khan, founder of the iCan Foundation. A panel discussion was held on the issue of violence against women and the society's stance on it amongst distinguished personalities like Asif Uddin Ahmed, Acting Director of EMK Centre;

Mehrin Mustafa, lawyer and senior news presenter; Sarah Zita, National Consultant of UNDP Bangladesh; and Azra Mahmood, media personality.

After the end of this webinar, the panellists and participants all changed their social media profile photos to the black and white photos of the campaign to show solidarity towards the same movement.

On 28 November, KrayonMag organised a Culture Awareness Program at Rabindra Sarobar. The event consisted of a live painting session called "Becoming" by Ayreen Khan, musical performances and poetry recitals.

Ditan expressed inspiringly that it was very empowering to see politicians and cultural activists coming together for the same cause. Moreover, a theatrical work was also demonstrated where the participants were holding "dari palla" or the scales of justice in their hands.

The whole concept focused not just on serving justice right, but more about reducing societal victim shaming.

"We stood there with the scales until someone else came up and took the scales from us, to kind of signify that they share our sorrow and stand in solidarity with us," explained Ditan in details. Almost 500 people attended this soul-stirring event and it ended after sunset with the lighting of candles.

Sabrina Munni photographed the event.

A panel discussion on "Violence against Women on Cyber Space" was held on 1 December, conducted by Sadia Roshni Soochana, where esteemed panellists including Meher Afroz Shaon, Tanzir Dilshad Ditan, Barrister Ahsan Bhuiyan, Azra Mahmood, Advocate Neshat Unzum Lopa, Mithun Das Kabbo and Mahfuza Mala participated. Cyber bullying has been a burning issue since the rampant rise in the usage of and reliance on social media. Women, specifically, have faced some sort of bullying or harassment on cyber space and the dialogue was aimed to address these very issues, enhance social awareness and discuss ways to resolve them.

KrayonMag has been working towards raising awareness towards crucial social causes surrounding us for some time now and this year, their goal is to create a dialog, instead of staying silent about pressing sensitive issues like gender-based violence.

"When we remain mum about these problems when they happen, we are passively normalising them," said Ditan.

"We want to break the silence by speaking up; we are doing so in this event through telling stories, expressing ourselves through art, drama and music and bringing people from different walks of life together for the same unified cause," she elaborated with enthusiasm. Through this unique collaborate and art/culture-based approach, KrayonMag aims to continue raising awareness and with proper funding and sponsors, they plan to do more series of events and even spread across to outstation activities in the coming year.

The event will continue virtually from the 10 December until 17 December, in which a photography exhibition will be held on the online platform of EMK Centre. The exhibition will end with a closing webinar.

By Nafisa Faruque
Photo: KrayonMag

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ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেমন রূপচর্চার আভিজাত্য মানেই

অ্যান্ডালিনা

সোপ

রূপচর্চার আভিজাত্য...

WISDOMTOOTH

SANIA AIMAN
Sub-Editor, Lifestyle
The Daily Star



Bangladeshi traits

There is a long and proud history of each nation (mostly) and we as Bangladeshis are strangers to taking pride in ours. Nothing wrong in that. But there are also some quintessentially Bangladeshi character traits that could be seen with a touch of humour or inquiry, if I may.

Everybody is a poet

While there is nothing wrong in trying to be a writer or writing poems, it does not mean everybody who can string two sentences together is a creative writer. There are people who have wanted to publish "collections" of their Facebook statuses, without a backstory or context, into books. Others have self-published books which I found at the Ekushey fair, and still rue the minute I decided to pick those up, for the lasting and traumatic images of romance in my head.

Loud is what we are

Bangladeshis cannot be quiet. In any group large or small, the noise level is likely to be large! Be it the loud honking, music at weddings, greeting someone known from across the street, or enjoying a sunset, there will be NOISE.

Where is the courthouse?

We as a people have a penchant of abusing the protection that the law is supposed

to give us. Being litigious needlessly and often maliciously is a very well-known trait, such that there is a local curse in the south-western region of the country which goes like "tor ghor e mamla poruk," which means may you suffer from someone filing cases against you.

Glorify poverty

People of Bangladesh have long struggled against the forces of nature like floods and cyclones, as well as the unfair structures of society. While there is grace in maintaining dignity during all roubles that life throws at us, there is no justification to glorify those struggles. Glorifying poverty is akin to allowing policymakers leeway of letting things be, rather than being moved to change it.

The self-aggrandization

The Bashundhara City shopping mall is the largest in the world/Asia. Or, the marine drive road in Cox's Bazar is the longest road in the world... etc are just two examples of how we ascribe the "best/greatest/largest" adjectives to anything that strikes our fancy, simply because we have not seen any better.

The dodo tendency

The term "hujug-ey Bangali" is often applied to us, for it seems we are always

ready to jump on the trending wagon, regardless of whether it is or is not sensible or applicable to us.

What traffic rules?

There will be people crossing roads at every minute of the day regardless of the traffic lights. There will be hose running like chickens, those who simply put up a hand expecting vehicles to screech to an immediate halt, and those who are driving these said vehicles without any training or even licences.

Tumi Jano Ami K?

Translated "do you know who I am?" is an often herd phrase in various social situations, most of them downright unpleasant. This is generally thrown/bellowed towards an adversary, presumably to intimidate them, and often works simply because the other person would rather not want an unwelcome surprise of the awful person being related to somebody powerful, which can mean a host of problems in this country.

These and such aside, there are some cute characteristics associated with Bangladeshis too... our love for the sari and panjabi, for the roshogolla, muri and fish, the national love affair with kohl, and of course the zest for life. But that is for another day!

While intimately aware of our flaws, there are some endearingly typical aspects of Bangladeshis too. The fondness for rice and muri (in its various preparations) for meals and snacks, the adoration for fish curries and fries and *bhortas*, the absolute love for 'Biyer Kacchi' or the food served at weddings and the 'alu' therein, still beats the hankering for burgers and pizzas hands down. And what beats a pudding? Steaming, soft, and crowd-favourite roshogollas!

The Bangladeshi love affair with books has led to a thriving publishing sector with millions of books of all types. We talk about politics and celebrate literature over numerous cups of tea at the makeshift tea stalls peppering every nook in the city. We turn out in droves, dressed in the same colours, to participate in festivals full of zeal for life. We adore our saris and panjabis, and miss no occasion to don them, and line our eyes with dark kohl. We like our colourful glass bangles, and the flower crown in our hair. We love our jhola bags, and writing diary entries, and nurturing our plants.

Best of all, we form deep and lasting bonds and relationships easily—all older people become mama-khala's and chacha-chachi's by default, with respect, be it the corner shopkeeper, or the neighbour we lived beside 20 years ago. We are resilient as a people, surviving and thriving in spite of the dark, corrupted and scary systems that governs our lives.

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Look out for manipulation tactics and emotional abuse

Although some forms of abuse are easier to detect early on, in a lot of cases, acts of emotional abuse have a tendency to go unnoticed, even by those who fall victim to it. Unfortunately, when it comes to those closest to us, we forget to pay attention to toxic patterns as we lack objective vantage points. This may especially be the case if the perpetrator adds positive reinforcement to the mix in order to keep those affected by their unhealthy behaviour catching on. Even though emotional abuse knows no gendered boundaries, women are disproportionately vulnerable to it.

Here are some of the harder to detect signs to look out for if you believe you may be in denial about potential emotional abuse.

broader society, gaslighting is a tactic which has various gendered implications.

Appreciation replaced by negging

Negging consists of the use of backhanded compliments, or insults disguised as passing remarks, jokes, and 'constructive' criticism. Even if the word is more often used in the case of romantic relationships, this manipulation tactic is pervasive through all types of relationships, be it work relationships or ones shared between family or friends.

When trying to detect negging, it is important to take note of how the perpetrator reacts to your accomplishments. They may congratulate you on a well written report before asking you who helped you with it. How they react to you sharing your feelings or

When trying to detect negging, it is important to take note of how the perpetrator reacts to your accomplishments. They may congratulate you on a well written report before asking you who helped you with it.



Gaslighting and other doubts

Gaslighting is a manipulation tactic used to make one question their own sanity, and in extreme cases reality itself. Gaslighting may take various forms. While some who gaslight have a tendency to invalidate people's emotions and feelings, others may try to get the victim to believe that their recollections of memories are fictitious altogether. One of the more common cornerstones of this tactic entails the perpetrator denying their past behaviour in order to plant seeds of doubt in the sufferer's perception of events.

Although gaslighting is also used to make one appear unreliable or unstable to others, the main objective of this tactic is to bring doubt into the sufferer's mind about their own sanity. This not only normalises future abuse but additionally breaks down their self-esteem and self-worth, helping enable co-dependency. Unfortunately, as labels such as 'crazy' or 'unstable' are more easily slapped onto women than men in

experiences may also exemplify negging. If they always react to achievements you share by following up with their own accomplishments in an attempt to trivialise your feat, it may be a red flag.

One of the most obvious forms of negging is the repetitive use of jokes to bring someone down. Whether it is offensive jokes about weight, skin tone, intellectual capability or skills, if someone knowingly keeps insulting you in ways which sting, it may be important to start creating a distance.

Ultimately, the usual goal of negging is to make the sufferer feel like they are never good enough. While rare instances of this may be compartmentalised as a slip of tongue, repetitive occurrences may be a warning sign of emotional abuse, or the beginning of it.

Constant guilt trips

Similar to negging, in some cases the very occasional guilt trip may be an excusable instance of unhealthy communication. Some

people just have issues with being direct. Nevertheless, if it is irrationally persistent to the point of having you continuously walk on eggshells, you may be a part of an unhealthy, or even abusive relationship.

Guilt trips may have various forms. Offenders may constantly bring up their own efforts or contributions to the relationship to make you feel as if you have fallen short. They may silence you whenever you try to address your wrong doings. Guilt trips may even entail hostile body language as an expression of displeasure. When such reactions are brought on by acts which would barely bother others in the same context, it may be time to re-evaluate the relationship.

Perpetrators of this manipulation tactic often carry it out to create unbalanced power dynamics in the relationship in order to make the sufferer feel indebted. It is also frequently used to make strictly established personal boundaries easier to transgress.

All balanced with love bombing

Those who use manipulation tactics often resort to overwhelming people they manipulate with periods of excessive love, affection, kind words or even gifts. This tactic, known as love bombing helps create safe spaces from time to time in order to keep sufferers bound. Love bombing leads to victims excusing toxic behaviour as short termed ruts, or as 'sides' of the offender which are not true reflections of their 'real' self. Regardless of the type of influence it creates, love bombing is not only a common phase in abuse cycles, but one of the main ways in which sufferers are blinded to their circumstance and made to feel indebted.

Even if infrequent instances of the previously mentioned manipulation tactics may be compartmentalised as hiccups in healthy communication, paying attention to possible patterns is crucial. When a few of the aforementioned behaviours are coupled together as a part of a well-established pattern, it may be time to reach out to someone you trust for help or guidance.

By Tasfia Ahmed
Photo: Galleri Kaya



#HEALTH & FITNESS

Breaking the stigma associated to MENTAL ILLNESS



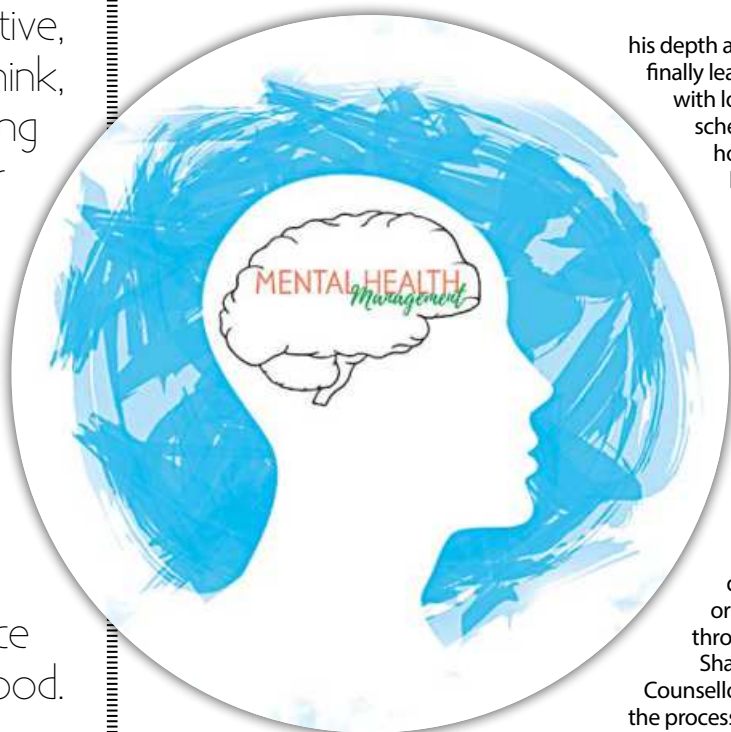
Mental health condition is an important aspect of our existence. It incorporates everything from our emotional state of being to our psychological and social well-being. Our mental health, positive or negative, affects how we think, make life changing decisions or even who we choose to be friends with. It is extremely important at every stage of our lives, from early childhood through adolescence to even adulthood.

There is no way, that we can skip maintenance of our psychiatric needs at any given point and still expect to live healthy and functioning lives.

“And this message needs to get through,” says Rehnuma- E-Jannat, Psychological Counsellor, PHWC (Psychological Health and Wellness Clinic).

Shabab Sabbir, a 28-year-old from Wari, Old Dhaka, is a graphics designer by day and student by night. His full-time schedule impedes him from spending quality time with friends or even family. Additionally, with the pandemic hovering over, his schedule somehow became shoddier than ever, and Sabbir was no longer living a normal life – a common complaint by loved ones.

He was not sleeping



properly or feeling any attraction towards his favourite meals. Most of the time he was found lying on the couch, fatigued, tensed and irritable. His parents became concerned, not knowing what to do, they consulted with neighbours first, who referred a specialist to the family.

Today, Sabbir is back on his feet, thanks to the well-wishers, directing his family to the right course of action. Having completed his MBA successfully, he is pursuing better work opportunities elsewhere, one that matches



his depth and competence. Sabbir has finally learned ways to spend quality time with loved ones, even amidst a hectic schedule, and has also taken up new hobbies, ones which he had been keen on adopting for long.

Was there any fairy-tale like enchantment involved...?

“Not at all,” Jannat reminds us, “Sabbir had been suffering from ‘untreated borderline depression’ for years, which got worse during the frenzied pandemic, but with consistent therapy he was thankfully able to get back on his feet, leading a healthy lifestyle once again.”

Jannat added on to say, “Most of the time the answer is very easy. All a person has to do is meet with a psychologist or a psychiatrist and talk their way through mental health obstructions.” Shamima Akter, Psychological

Counsellor, PHWC, further breaks down the process for us. “Mental health has been a long unaddressed issue in this part of the continent, ‘a topic’, which we do not feel free to discuss at all because of the associated stigma.

“People consulting mental health practitioners are termed derogatively as ‘pagol’ and their medics as ‘pagol er daktar.’ It’s so demeaning! We do not realise that physical and mental health actually go hand in hand, if one is not satisfactory, then the other is equally affected.”

According to both the psychologists, many patients who suffer from borderline mental dysfunctions could be easily treated with light

therapies such as consultation, and one-to-one sessions with the practitioners. Instead, the patients ‘prefer/choose’ to hide their conditions in fear of the associated stigma, making the condition worse.

“Mental health is as important as physical health, if we go to the doctor for fever or a cough, then we should also go to a therapist when we feel anxious or agitated. A consultant can deduce the real reasons behind our problems and help in overcoming the unwanted condition,” revealed Akter.

Finally, all being said, we assume that in the 21st century, people should be more empathetic towards people suffering from psychological distress, as they are to any other medical disorder, and should be ‘informed and educated’ enough to be able to direct the

HOW COMMON ARE MENTAL ILLNESSES?

- Mental illnesses are among the most common health conditions in Bangladesh.
- Nearly 17 percent of adults in Bangladesh are suffering from mental health issues.
- Amongst the above 92.3 percent do not seek any medical attention.
- Globally, more than 50 percent is diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime.

PROBABLE CAUSES BEHIND MENTAL ILLNESS

A number of factors may contribute:

- Adverse life experiences, such as epidemic, pandemic, trauma or a history of abuse.
- Experiences related to other medical conditions, such as cancer or heart disease.
- Biological factors and use of alcohol or drugs
- Having feelings of loneliness or isolation

longsuffering, to a registered mental health clinic, if and when required.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury Creatives: TurnUp Pr

Essentials:

In case of any mental health conditions, please contact PHWC at the following address: Flat 6/B, House 4, Road 23/A, Block B, Banani, Dhaka 1213

Contact Number: 09609013000

http://www.phwcbd.org

Disclaimer: Names of patients have been changed in the article to maintain privacy.

THE BANGLADESHI KALEIDOSCOPE What do certain colours mean to us?



How you connect with a colour largely depends on who you are: where you are from and what culture and country you belong to. And so, this makes us ask, what do different colours symbolise in Bangladesh, how do we perceive certain colours, and how do they relate to our national identity?

After all, colours often have meanings attached to them. You will be wearing black in funerals in some parts of the world, but in some others, you will be wearing white!

Let's do this then -- take some common hues and see what it means for us and how they reflect our culture and history!

What comes to mind when you think of red? Passion and love? Danger? Blood? Or perhaps a rising sun?

For Bangladeshis, it can evoke a sense of glory, uprising, and rebellion. Red reminds us of the bloodshed which our forefathers had to bear for the independence of this nation.

As the song goes, 'Purbo digonte, shurjo utheche, rokhto laal rokhto laal rokhto laal.'

And it is hard to imagine red without green, with the latter resonating with the rich vegetation of our beautiful country.

Red and green, together, has sealed our identity as a people. This set of colours is ubiquitous, from the national flag to fashionable attires and sports jerseys -- a nation united.

This is of course not the only colour duo we see in our culture. Black-and-white is common during International Mother Language Day. From saris and panjabis to even decor themes, the whole country seems to turn black-and-white in commemoration of Ekushey February -- a

solemn remembrance of the martyrs of the Language Movement, a pride of the mother tongue, a celebration of languages -- all summarised in the black-and-white.

Just like various cultures can have different interpretations of a colour, different cultures can have different meanings for colour combinations too. To illustrate, black-and-white also brings about the iconic symbol of Yin and Yang philosophy that is popular in many countries.

Back to ours, another colour duo is the red-and-white, often seen in the attires donned during Pahela Baishakh. Although there are many variations of it, and indeed the colour spectrum to choose from is much broader, the 'shada-sari-lal-par' of the Bengali belle remains a classic.

Pahela Baishakh and Pahela Falgun celebrations brim with vivid colours. The mangal shobhajatra procession features colourful gigantic masks and replicas of animals, birds, etc. Women adorn their hands with coloured glass bangles. And the village fairs are a vibrant affair, with the colourful shokher hari and the delightful pink candyfloss and the myriad toys and dolls and so on.

And then there are colours which in some way or the other became associated with certain aspects of our country. There is 'rupali ilish', the silvery glimmer of our favourite hilsa of which we have an endless fascination for. Meanwhile, there is of course the 'golden fibre', referring to jute, owing to the golden hue of its fibre and arguably the added metaphorical connotation of prosperity of our nation associated with this agricultural produce.

Colour association can also hold a personal place in our minds, going deeper than culture and countries. It is a place built with experiences, memories, and interests of an individual -- but then again, those memories and interests are often shaped by the land you call your home.

So, when imagining yellow, my mind wanders off to the mesmerising vast mustard fields of my ancestral village-home. If I think of blue, the history buff in me prompts me to delve into the matter of indigo farming and the oppression of the colonial rulers. As I picture white, I see the cinematic excellence of the iconic train scene from Pather Panchali, where Satyajit Ray magically showed 'kash phool' and the vast skies and white fluffy clouds.

When it comes to white, I seldom think of snow. The colour blue has little association with melancholy for me. And my mustard fields are nothing like those yellow fields Van Gogh painted.

Indeed, thoughts and interpretations that come with particular colours are often shaped by the distinct flora and fauna and the unique history of the land. When commonly shared by a people, it defines what we hold dear and the things we ascribe value to and take pride in -- a spectrum portraying our national identity!

By M H Haider
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



#PERSPECTIVE

Colours, sounds and smells are often critical to our recollection of events and our emotions. A homeland, or someplace where we belong, also has these associations for each of us. Sometimes these are guided and formed by the popular perception, and sometimes each individual's intimate emotional understanding or experience. For Bangladesh, most people when asked what colour they associate with the country, a go-to answer is green and red of the flag. For me, the colour I most associate with living in Bangladesh is the grey-blue of heavy rain clouds, specifically the eerie yet beautiful shades the sky turns right before a Kalboishakhi. I love enjoying those storms from my (very privileged) balcony or roof, much to the chagrin of the parents.

Colours of BANGLADESH



"Green. If you don't mean Dhaka, but the whole country, I can't think of anything other than vast lush fields of green crops almost everywhere." -- **Mehraz Hossain**

"I feel it is green, but not because how books say that Bangladesh has green fields and such, because other countries are also lush and have arable fields. I am a keen sports enthusiast, and Bangladesh always wears green in sports." -- **Abdul Fattah**

"Green. The green landscape of the countryside, the abundance of veggies, the moss growing on almost every wall." -- **Rafia Tehseen**

"I most associate the lush bright green of a rice sapling as the colour for Bangladesh." -- **Raffat Binte Rashid**



"I would definitely describe my country as green to others. Cause it brings positivity in mind also depicts the colour of nature." -- **Jannat Noor**

"Yellow. Bangladesh is all about the sun... the warmth, the extra bright days, the sunny glares, the sweat, the tan, the complaints of heat wave! It's all so bright and yellow in my mind and I absolutely can't do without some of this Asian sunshine every day." -- **Tanzin Chowdhury**

"Red. The way I see it; it applies to the blood spilled by the brave to free ourselves from the oppressors. You can apply it to the anger you feel at every turn of modern Bangladeshi living (seeing red). You can apply it the blood spilled by innocents now, what with accidents, malpractice, enforced Houdini antics, exploitations, encroachment etc. You could see it as an open wound in a country that could reach higher and go further if not being constantly given self-inflicted wounds." -- **Intisab Shahriyar**

"Brownish? For the straw and village huts. It is what we were forced to draw



in art classes a hundred different times." -- **Amiya Chowdhury**

"Yellow, everything here is heightened and people are so passionate. Sometimes people are passionate even though they might not know what they are talking about." -- **Saad Ashraf**

"It's mostly white because it has a lot of work to be done and it's somewhat like a clear canvas." -- **Disha Ekram**

"I was going to say grey due to the experience I had with the smog the last time I was there, but I will say red now due to the bloody horrific news I keep reading. But green too because of how its GDP is rising except poverty is still not decreasing, it is a mixed bag." -- **Audi Amin**

"It's black to me. The people of this country are such hypocrites, self-centred, corrupt to the soul and they are so lame to blame others for their own deeds. Still we act like each of us are saints and rest of the other are demons." -- **Mofidul Topu**

By Sania Aiman

The Diaper Story

No parent ever discusses this before popping out a lump of cuteness. Neither did I! My idea of rearing a baby meant buying cute clothes, to colouring the nursery all pink and blue. I didn't have the tiniest bit of awareness that a baby needs to 'pee-pee' and 'doo-doo' every 20 minutes of their carefree lives. As if we, the parents, have nothing else to do but clean the little monarchs.



Minutes after giving birth I realised, my little one simply hated being soiled and would scream at the top of his lungs as if his tiny little bum was on fire. Right out of the blues came an angel in disguise. Well! Actually to be more precise, right out of the blues came out a packet in disguise – a sizeable carton of diapers. I still don't know, who that thoughtful gifter was. But I do pray for that person till date.

All because my baby slept through the night, for the first time in his first four days of life on the blue planet! Don't judge me.

And this was only because the little tyrant was clad in soft, white, dry and fluffy nappies.

"Blessed be those who created such magic!"

The next bit wasn't as amusing nonetheless and we were flung with numerous options like whether to use the pant version or the belt, the organic ones or the gel based. Time somehow taught us to navigate

through the rough seas. Here are few thoughts from my end as a seasoned mama. Yes! I am very proud to call myself that.

Pants are for toddlers, who have already learned to pull down their pants. And this can be used as an antecedent to potty-training. If your toddler has learnt to navigate through the mysteries of the diaper pants, then probably its time that he can shift to wearing none at all.

For the laymen, here's what it means, belt system is more for children who haven't mastered the skill to squat on the potty...

Organic! Well, I still love to use the 'trendy term' for food but there are organic variants to diapers as well. Yes. Ladies. You heard it right.

Here's why you want to use the rare variants. In case your little one is allergic to synthetic materials; the organic cotton version can be a very good alternative. Whatever the case, I preferred to use the gel based one, that actually gives out warning colours, once full. And you can comprehend... why.

I leave the rest of the mystery to be discovered by you guys. Because half of the fun of being new parents is to be able to bond with the little blob over new discoveries.

Happy parenting guys.

By Mehrin Mubdi Chowdhury
Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

সুপারমম
ডায়াপারের ৩ লেয়ারে
ঠান্ডা থাকে
অনে...ক
দূরে

সুপারমম ডায়াপার ৩য় লেয়ারে গুয়েটনেস লক করে
বাবুর তুকে ভেজা ভাব আসতেই দেয় না। তাই
ঠান্ডা লাগার ভয় একদমই থাকে না।

SQUARE TOILETRIES LIMITED



#FASHION & BEAUTY

Bangladesh Couture Week 2021

A weekend-long extravaganza that was the ultimate medley of song, celebration and fashion, the Bangladesh Couture Week 2021 championed the majesty of Bangladeshi silk in all its forms and glory. Taking place at Edge Gallery of Gulshan North Avenue, the fashion exhibit was a successful instalment

and courtesy of the Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh (FDCB) who pieced together the event for the sole purpose of bringing the regal sophistication of a mesh of silk to the fore.

The inauguration of the exhibit was carried out by chief guest Dr Dipu Moni, Minister of Education of Bangladesh. In her own

words, "Handloom fabric such as silk, jamdani and muslin are the insignias of Bangladesh, it's what we are known for to the rest of the world. Our honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the greatest brand ambassador of the traditional clothes and fabrics of Bengal. I laud FDCB's attempt in reviving heritage fabrics through fantastic exhibits like this one which has been dedicated to silk and the government is also playing its part in preserving our traditional crafts and history."

Joining her as another esteemed guest at the exhibit was the Japanese ambassador to Bangladesh Naoki Ito who remained much appreciative of Bangladesh's diverse culture and the FDCB's noble efforts.

At the heart of this exhibit that ran between 2nd to 4th December, 17 designers of the fashion council envisioned 17 different concepts and weaved stunning creations, any one of which can easily be housed in a museum. Afsana Ferdousi, for example, glamorized Bengali folk tales of Bon Bibi- the protector goddess of the Sundarbans and 'sheetal pati'. She does so by taking the



but minimal. Make it all statement was her endgame, a sartorial ideology adopted by many of the other fashion designers as well.

Considering Farah Anjum Bari's creations, the designer is an inspired soul who pours her concept of creating oceanic ripples onto beds of organza. Sequins sown in waves give you the illusion of a warm summer day by the sea, standing by the shores, completely mesmerised by how the water catches the sunlight. Farah Anjum Bari's clothes are nostalgic, her designs the epitome of grace.

Shahrukh Amin, the debonair designer of the FDCB, was another designer to watch with his posies of flowers stitched strategically onto his masterpieces. Sarah Karim, with her poise and acumen takes the darkness of the timeless black and contrasts it with the pristineness of white to design fascinating cuts and clothes that are the sartorial equivalent of the boho diva.

Maheen Khan also shows us a few tricks from her sleeve in her works of art as she reimagines the traditional drape and cut of a Bengali's belle's ultimate garb, the sari. Khan deconstructs the humble blouse and incorporates cropped jackets to make it a two-step wear. She puts an interesting spin on her designs with symmetrical pleats and monochrome colours and drapes the folds of a sari in a much looser, almost hippie style.

More artistic designers who took part in the exhibit were Chandana Dewan, Faiza Ahmed, Shaibal Saha, Farzana Nova, Tasfia Ahmed, Sadia Rashid Chowdhury, Rifat Rahman, Rupo Shams, Rima Naaz, Lipi Khandker, Nawshin Khair and, finally, Emdad Hoque — all with their spectacular creations.

Bangladesh Couture Week 2021 also took the time to honour 11 celebrities for their charismatic personalities, dedication to style and for being true icons in their own ways. Bangladeshi actors Siam Ahmed and Jaya Ahsan and musician Xefer were some of the awardees.

blooms of Bangladesh's six seasons and expressing them in bold prints against subdued backgrounds that are anything

By Ramisa Haque
Photo: Fashion Design Council of Bangladesh (FDCB)





FLORENCE

spirit of the renaissance

Certain aspects of travel are better left to imagination, but what happened this time threw us off balance.

The flight from London to Pisa, our gateway to Italy, was so smooth that my buddy, with his family on board, slept like a baby. Descent into Pisa opened up lush green pastures sliced by the Arno.

Airport formalities over, we hurried to the on-site shuttle bay, only to find that the shuttle had just malfunctioned. Bummer!

We hopped on a slow airport bus, instead, to get to our intercity bus. Darkness descended fast amid anxiety. Clueless, we circled the airport twice, unsure of where to get off. Hamstrung by language barrier and the weight of our luggage, a stream of sweat ran down my cheek. So little-known was our bus station, and so poor the cellular network, that even a Smartphone didn't help.

My friend, a risk analyst by profession, hunched over a paper map, faced a tough assignment. Sensing our plight, a fellow American, well-versed in Italian, kindly started liaising with the increasingly irritated Italian driver, who had never heard of our nondescript bus stop.

I started doubting my risk-tolerant friend who had made our reservation. Flustered, we got off in the darkness to try our luck and trudged toward a distant light source. Exhausted, we finally got there.

Turned out that it was indeed our bus company. This would be close to a stop on our missed airport shuttle route. Our pounding hearts took a breather, and our sweat streams evaporated as we finally boarded the waiting bus. The ladies even managed to rework their lipsticks.

Leaning back on our seats, relieved, we dreamed of our destination: Firenze, Florence in Italian. My friend tossed his backpack lazily over his seat to an empty one in front. The one-hour bus ride in the dark didn't offer much of a view except for the opportunity to reflect on our innate ability to recover from a risk.

Did the recent events portend trouble ahead?

When we arrived in Florence, early in the morning, the last bird had just retired. A few sodium lights reluctantly stayed on to greet the unappreciative stragglers, woefully unable to arrive at a better time to fall in love with her at first sight.

After disembarking, we were delighted to learn that our hotel was just far enough for a distance runner. Few sighs later, our sprint began in earnest, commando style. I could never imagine running through the dimly-lit unassuming stretch of Florence this early, backpacks on, and suitcase wheels clattering in protest, to the amusement of the locals.

I had driven with a GPS on, but never had I run following a GPS. I instantly appreciated my ability to compete in the Olympics. It was as if the hotel could also leave us on wheels. We finally reached our hotel, panting. Our Florence trip now began. Or did it really?

During check-in, my friend slumped to the floor with everything rapidly darkening around him. Clutching the desk, he announced in an almost inaudible voice, that his backpack containing all their travel documents had opted to

part ways with him to relish more Italian road trips. Remember that backpack? Suddenly, the promised comfort of our cosy hotel room seemed miserably distant with pearls of anxiety reappearing on our foreheads. Another piece of good news followed: there was no food available for growling stomachs this early, and all shops had long been closed.

Welcome to Florence where the Renaissance started after Europe was down on its knees! What better place to be down on our knees, hoping for a Renaissance of our own?

Florence, the capital of Tuscany, tucked in the Arno-river valley, is a very pedestrian-friendly walkable city with streets lined with designer shops, restaurants, and grand piazzas. Caressed by the rolling hills, she exudes a sense of optimism. Europe, ravaged by war, with its economy in tatters, found a new direction here in the form of the Renaissance in the 15th century, which dispelled despondency and lifted Europe toward a new vibrant self-worth, led by the human spirit.

The Arno, witness to it all, proudly spins a yarn with



her flowing water. This wave of optimism attracted artists, architects, and painters alike to a place where they flourished. World-famous art galleries and museums stand as testaments to Europe's march toward prosperity.

We had reserved well in advance of our timed museum visits to avoid long queues. We were allowed immediate entry to the chagrin of many, saving us precious time.

Uffizi Gallery, a leap from the Gothic to the modern, houses artworks of many renowned Renaissance artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Michelangelo. We were in awe of Leonardo's exquisite paintings, some on wood.

Uffizi overlooks the Arno and the Ponte Vecchio, the famous old bridge reminding us of the link between the old and the new. Once occupied by the farmers, it was now home to sophisticated art dealers and jewellers. An outstanding engineering achievement, this stone bridge was left intact while all others were destroyed.

I got the lure of Academia, boasting one precious piece of

exhibit, once inside. The marble statue of David at the centre of the museum, slightly taller than I am, revealed every muscle and vein in a human body in a depiction of youthful beauty and strength. Michelangelohoned his skills by dissecting dead bodies to grasp anatomy, and those skills manifested themselves in the breath-taking statue. David exuded the energy with which a new day dawned.

Then there was her iconic towering Duomo, in Gothic style, with a magnificent dome that set the tone for Europe's revival. The dome, an architectural masterpiece, was designed by Brunelleschi. The unfinished cathedral needed a dome. A challenge was thrown to the public and Brunelleschi won it.

His answer: a freestanding brick structure with curved walls without the use of a wooden frame. This feat, a symbolic stride into a new horizon, combined art with science. Architectural marvel combined with artistic splendour to put Florence firmly in the driver's seat to lead Europe. A young couple getting married at the Duomo sought to etch this spirit of Florence into their new life.

But I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the famous Medici family, whose fingerprints are all over Florence, from the palatial mansions to the exquisite piazzas. They ruled here for generations. Not only did they provide stability, but also commissioned art. Ironically, in later years, David was seen as a symbol of Florentines' struggle against the ruling Medici.

Florence is home to Bistecca Alla Fiorentina, an Italian steak made of veal and sourced entirely from Tuscany. My friend, a foodie, escorted us to a special steakhouse. Different cuts of meat are served together on wooden platters, usually complemented by Chianti wine. It's a large T-bone cut, usually not well done. Florence boasts great gelato chains. Shops specialise in such flavours as crunchy Stracciatella, tangy Amalfi lemon, and even pistachio.

On arrival in Florence, all doors seemed shut in a cruel mockery, but one tiny place, piercing early-morning darkness with its flickering lights, beckoned us.

It was a food stall owned by a Bangladeshi. Their freshly-made hot sandwiches tasted better than the best food I had ever had. When we showed up later at the invitation of the owner to share his untold stories with us, his joie de vivre was palpable.

The stage had been set with our beloved jhalmuri brought in, fused with mustard oil, and affectionately served in newspaper cones. A banquet theatre was set up with stools behind the shop, Dhaka style, exclusively for us. The stories began with initial struggles and hopelessness, and ended with a sense of achievement and unbounded optimism.

Next morning, after a "Cornetto-Eggs Florentine-Pastry-Cappuccino" breakfast at the hotel, I accompanied my dejected, sleep-deprived friend to the station, in search of his lost backpack. He boarded as soon as that bus pulled in and emptied out. Miraculously, the backpack came home with every document intact inside.

By Arif Shahjahan
Photo: Arif Shahjahan

#CHECK IT OUT

Bijoy 50 Uthsob — Celebrate Victory Day at InterContinental Dhaka

To celebrate the 50 years of victory of Bangladesh, InterContinental Dhaka has arranged a three-day Bengali food festival called "Bijoy 50 Uthsob". The food festival will start from December 16 and will continue until December 18, 2021.

To honour our Bengali culture and cuisine InterContinental Dhaka has decided to arrange this festival during the "Victory Day Celebration". The festival food will be



served on both buffet lunch and buffet dinner at Elements.

The feast will have appetisers, salads, and soup sushi as a starter. The highlighted main dishes for the occasion will be mutton rogan josh, sorisha ilish, beef kala bhuna, duck curry with coconut milk, prawn malai curry, tandoori rupchada, murgh massalam, chitol kofta curry etc. As it will be a Bengali food festival it does not mean that you will miss out our signature items like pizza,

grill prawn, mini steak, grill chicken, lasagna etc. Nevertheless, the dessert section will have a mix of Bengali and house special items like shahi tukra, carrot halua, firni, payesh, golap jamun, roshogolla, sweet yoghurt, borfi sondesh pudding, fruit roshmalai and many more pastry items.

During this festival buffet lunch will be Tk 4500 net. per person and buffet dinner will be Tk 6,000 net. per person. They are offering BOGO with selected bank cards. For more details or place your reservations at +880 2 55663030.



Twelve clothing opens new branch at Mirpur

On 4 December, Twelve Clothing Ltd., a lifestyle fashion brand has launched an exclusive new outlet at Mirpur-2. Stars and celebrities were present at the occasion. Twelve Clothing Ltd, produces eco-friendly designs with high quality products for a more social and ethical environment.

The brand now has over 30 outlets in the country. Customers can avail 20 percent discount at the new outlet of Mirpur 2 for a limited time.

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Make personal changes to enhance your reputation. Things at work will go well. Be patient and understanding. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Your partner will be emotionally unavailable. Your ideas will bring recognition at work. Be careful when signing a venture. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Your outgoing nature will be appreciated. Control your bad habits. Opportunities for romance are present. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Family get-togethers will be interesting. New interests will take up your time. Don't confide in anyone. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Get back in the action. Don't leak any personal information. Someone may not have your best interests. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Don't blow situations out of proportion. Romantic encounters will be exciting. Experience the spice of life. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

This is a great day to hang out. Don't overindulge in any way. Your fickle nature may cause jealousy. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Don't give in completely. Don't jump to conclusions. Be more understanding at home. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Don't let anyone rush you. Take care of your health. Make changes to your appearance. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Take matters of romance slowly. Make plans to do things you enjoy. Avoid any confrontation. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Your cultured looks will mesmerize others. Changes regarding your career direction will pay off. Your partner won't be pleased with you. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Don't spread personal information. Keep your temper in check. Try to be a bit more understanding. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

এখন
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ফ্রী!

লব্ধী সাবান

#FASHION

Bishwo Rang celebrates 27th anniversary

Bishwo Rang is all set to step into the 27th year of its colourful journey this December and it has come bearing gifts for us. As a symbol of gratitude to all customers, the fashion house is offering up to 70 percent discount on its products across all outlets starting from 5 November until the stocks actually run out!

Bishwo Rang started its journey on 20 December, 1994. Interestingly enough, Rang was not meant to be a clothing store at the beginning.

During his student years at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Dhaka University, Biplob Shaha along with his mates took up decoration projects on a small scale. These were mostly art works, stage decorations and 'alpans' in many events. When their work gained recognition, Shaha and his friends decided to rent a 100 square feet space in Narayanganj thus naming it 'Rang'. The shop consisted of various ceramic art pieces and they continued to take orders for event decoration.

Their turning point came a year later in 1995 when handloom saris and panjabis were showcased in the shop for the first time. Rang brought forth the intricate beauty of Bangla in bright colours and patterns. People instantly fell in love with the unique details of these clothes, and Rang ultimately transformed into a fashion house. The overwhelming response from customers resulted in several outlets being opened in different parts of the country and eventually helped this brand to cross international borders.

In 2015, Rang changed into Bishwo Rang with the dissolution of the partnership and has proceeded since with Biplob Shaha as the captain of the ship. Shaha often refers to the famous words of Rabindranath Tagore, "The colour, my core must be blushed with, my deeds be painted," that have in many ways acted as his inspiration.

"Even among the turbulence of free market economy, as a fashion designer I have always prioritised the traditional weave and sought out my roots," explained the designer. True to his words, we can see *deshi* fabrics like Tangail, khadi, and taant being the focal point of his fashion house.

Saris and panjabis were only the beginning for Bishwo Rang. As the brand grew in popularity, so did the diversity of their work. The stores soon added shalwar kameez sets for casual and occasional wear,

shirts, and fatuas for men and women to their collection.

A noteworthy fact is gender barriers do not exist in Bishwo Rang. Stripes and checkers are not set aside for men only; neither is the women's line restricted to floral designs. The children's section is perhaps the most adorable of them all, where they have successfully combined comfort and tradition along with bright colours that is undoubtedly loved by children everywhere.

Stepping out of the box of clothing line, this brand also offers unique jewellery designs with a touch of tradition.

Biplob Shaha takes inspiration from Bangla and celebrates it. The history, folk tradition, the natural beauty of Bangladesh, are all mixed and portrayed in his designs with a dash of colours. From the simplicity of our daily lives to the bright smiles of our children, this brand is all about upholding the beauty of Bengali

culture. Walking into the outlets, one cannot help but feel the festivity any time of the year.

It is now a renowned name among the people of countries like India, America, Malaysia, Canada and many more. Amidst the pandemic, they launched their online platform keeping in mind the safety of workers as well as

customers.

Bishwo Rang has always looked beyond race and religion when celebrating the culture. Eid, Puja, Baishakh or Falgun, it brings us the latest of their works with the sole aim of adding to our joy. Thus, after more than two decades, Bishwo Rang stands tall as one of the biggest designer names in the fashion industry of the country.

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Antora
Wardrobe: Bishwo Rang
Make-up: Sumon Rahat
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

