

VOLUME 22, ISSUE 30, TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2023
MAGH 3, 1429 BS

Star

Life

Style

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The perfect COAT *is* a must-have

WINTER STAPLES **P4 & 5**

COATS

LOST IN THE STORM

CHILDREN AND THEIR STRUGGLES IN DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES **C**

WINTER BECKONS BANGLADESH'S FINEST TREATS

PITHAS FOR EVERY MOOD **P12**

PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED

MODEL: EFA, REHAN

STYLING: ISHA YEASMIN

MAKEUP: SUMON RAHAT

WARDROBE WOMAN: TAHOOR STUDIO

WARDROBE MAN: CATS EYE BANGLADESH

SET: ESKAY BY SAIMUL KARIM

Healthy habits for skin care during winter

Winter can be a tough season on your skin, with dry, cold air stripping it of moisture and leaving it feeling dry and irritated. Here are some healthy habits to follow that can help keep your skin healthy and glowing all winter.

Moisturise regularly

One of the most important things you can do for your skin during the winter is to moisturise regularly. The dry air and indoor heating can strip your skin of its natural oils, leaving it dry and tight.

It is essential to use a thick and nourishing moisturiser and apply it to your face and body as soon as you get out of the shower. This should be made a habit to keep your skin healthy.

Protect your skin

In addition to the dry air, the cold winds and low winter temperatures can also be harsh on the skin. It is often vital to cover up when you go outside to protect your skin.

Wear a scarf or wrap a wool or cashmere scarf around your face to protect your skin from the cold. You should also apply a moisturiser to your face before heading out into the cold, as this will help to create a barrier between your skin and the harsh weather.

Do not over-wash your face

While keeping your skin clean is essential, it's also important not to over-wash your face during the winter. Washing your face too frequently can strip your skin of its natural oils, leaving it feeling dry and tight. Instead, stick to a gentle, non-foaming cleanser, and only wash your face once or twice a day. And always remember to use moisturiser after

washing your face to not leave it dry.

Use a gentle exfoliator

Exfoliating your skin is vital for removing dead skin cells and keeping your skin looking bright and healthy. However, it's important not to overdo it during the winter, as exfoliating too frequently can strip your skin of its natural oils and leave it feeling dry and tight.

Try to use a gentle exfoliator, such as a scrub with small, round beads, and only exfoliate once or twice a week. The exfoliator should be used in a way that is not harsh on the skin.

Take care of your lips

The lips are especially prone to drying out during the winter, so it's essential to take good care of them. Use a lip balm that contains ingredients like beeswax, shea butter, or coconut oil to help keep your lips moisturised.

You may carry a pocket-size balm with you while you are outside. Moreover, avoiding licking your lips would help, as this can strip them of their natural oils and lead to dryness.

Stay hydrated

Drinking plenty of water is vital for overall health, but it's crucial during the winter when the air is dry. Make sure to drink at least eight glasses of water a day to help keep your skin hydrated and healthy.

Proper hydration is crucial for maintaining healthy skin, as it helps to keep the skin moisturised and plump. It also helps to control body temperature in balance during the winter.

By Ahmad Tousif Jami

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed



KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

এবার শীতে আপনার সজীব ও কোমল ত্বক পাক অভিজাত্যের ছোঁয়া

এখন প্রতিটি **বিউটিনা** বডি লোশনের সাথে একটি **ম্যাডামিনা** সোপ **ফ্রী**

Beautina
BODY LOTION

HEALTHY ত্বকে আত্মবিশ্বাসী আমি।
আর আপনি?

*বিউটিনা বডি লোশন ২০০মিলিঃ এর সাথে ম্যাডামিনা সোপ ৭৫ গ্রাম এবং বিউটিনা বডি লোশন ১০০মিলিঃ এর সাথে ম্যাডামিনা সোপ ৫০ গ্রাম ফ্রী।

#FASHION & BEAUTY

Titan's Edge and Raga range gets new models to entice watch aficionados

In this age of technology, watches have become a fashion statement from everyday utility, which in turn, evolved the feature of a watch greatly. Innovative features have been added to the classic look, and the designs have adapted with time. Be it formal or casual, regular wear or special occasion — it adds a new dimension to any look at any time.

In the world of watches, Titan is a name that is well-known. Titan is celebrated for its sleek, modern, unique, and minimalistic designs which are reflected in both Titan's new collection for gents and ladies — Titan Edge and Titan Raga, respectively.

Titan's very new collection Titan Edge introduces three new designs, focusing on Ceramic designs and rich leather straps. This makes the watch slim in appearance, and sleek in design. These designs, created in combination with the classic design with modern technology, are able to appeal to everyone — a classic or a trend lover.

The minimalistic design of the Midnight Gold watch from the Edge Ceramic Collection will complement any look, be it casual or formal. A mix of rose gold with midnight black, along with a case that is just 4.4mm thick with 1.15mm thin edge, makes for the slimmest, sleekest design Titan has ever constructed.

If you are looking for a rugged and extra-durable design, then look no further! You can opt for the Titan watch with the sapphire crystal blue dial. Scratch resistant of any kind, this watch is also splashproof, which means you will not have to worry about being caught in the rain or getting wet in any way!

Not just stylish or durable designs, this collection also features timeless, classic Titan Original design. Applied rings around the smooth glass dial, with a satin finish to match the classic leather belt, are also easy on the eye. This design is perfect



as a collector's item! If you are a watch connoisseur, this watch is curated for you.

Not just for men, Titan Raga has brought three exquisite new designs for women, each of which adds elegance to every look and, even more personality to any attire. Created with the two-toned combination of golden and silver, this first design has a sunray dial with a beautiful sheen and the function to see both the day and date at once. The interdictory pattern on the belt adds a distinctly fashionable, trendy touch to any woman's outlook.

Rose gold has become a crowd favourite because of the elegant and complimenting attribute of the colour. But if you want to add a little exceptional touch to it, you can choose this design with the oval-shaped dial. The stunning bracelet-esque, aerodynamic design of this watch will give you the taste of wearing a watch and jewellery all at once!

The amalgamation of the classic round,



minimalistic design, and the contemporary rose gold colour will create a chic and classic addition to your look. If you are not the one for accessories, then this watch alone is more than enough to complete and complement your whole fit.

Timepieces are not just to check time anymore; it is now part of your personality. And in the world of watches, Titan is a symbol of grace, finesse, and refinement in your daily hustle AND your special moments. There is no token of appreciation more sophisticated, more luxurious, more tasteful than a delicately crafted Titan.

You can find these watches at All Titan Stores (Titan - Bashundhara City Shopping complex - +8801678007451, Titan - Dhaka, New Market - +8801678007456, Titan - Khulna, New Market - +8801678007497, Titan - Polwel Carnation - +8801678007469) and Authorized Sales and Service centre of Time Zone.

With winter jackets your outfit is finally complete

People get quite confused about whether they should invest in a proper coat, jacket, or blazer for the brief winter in Bangladesh. Our suggestion is: like any apparel essential, one needs to have at least one or two trendy coats hanging in their closet, otherwise a wardrobe is never complete.

Having said that, inside my wardrobe, I have at least ten winter coats of various sizes, five velvet capes, multiple shawls, and most importantly berets and headscarves to match all the winter dressing — all because of my love for seasonal fashion and not quite much for the chills.

As a style adviser and someone who has tested the waters well for the season, I can personally vouch for four must-have designs.

Printed jackets

To brighten up any sort of winter blues, one must take a walk on the wild side with printed jackets. The prints may come in any form from geometrical shapes, tie n' dye prints, to animal silhouettes. The more imaginative the prints, the better the display.

Chic and colourful coats

Fuchsia seems to be the most popular colour to bring some heat into the season. Other colours that are close to the favourite are neon green, electric blue, dusty orange, etc. But if you are more inclined towards earthy tones then muted colours are more suited for your styling sense.



Whatever the preference, the idea is to cover up the bases with a solid colour that would blend in perfectly with your winter wardrobe.

Denim and luxury leather

A denim jacket is the ultimate wardrobe staple that works well across all seasons. The same can be said for luxury leather jackets. These can be paired easily with traditional, as well as any western outfit.

Check and plaids

Those who love dressing in the vintage style should go for plaids because these are classics and make anyone look good and fashionable. Contrary to popular belief that these specific coats are too expensive, they can actually be bought from local stores in Dhaka or the crowd favourite, H&M outlets outside the country.

Having said all this, we should also mention that longline coats are forever in fashion and will never go out of style. So, if you are planning on investing in one, please do so without any worry. The winters will keep on coming and you will be able to repeat this one garb over and over again if maintained properly. Other than that, we can only guide you to keep it minimal with sleek paired sari jackets from Friendship Colours of the Chars, or maximal, in a colourful number from Tahoor.

By Fashion Police

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Model: Efa, Rehan

Styling: Isha Yeasmin

Makeup: Sumon Rahat

Wardrobe Woman: Friendship

Colours of the Chars

Wardrobe Man: Cats Eye Bangladesh

Jewelry: Friendship Colours of the Chars

Set: Eskay by Saimul Karim

Disclaimer: No alcoholic beverages have been used in the photoshoot.



Although many marriages seem wholesome and strong on the outside, the dynamic can be entirely different behind closed doors. The cracks however, are only addressed when a seemingly perfect marriage suddenly crumbles, leaving people to wonder, ‘what could’ve possibly gone wrong?’ What often remains unaddressed is how children in these settings are coping with changing home environments.



How dysfunctional marriages AFFECT CHILDREN



To shed light on the issue, The Daily Star speaks to Nafisa Naomi, a freelance English teacher, who shares her accounts of being wedged between parental conflicts, elaborating how it affected her life. Moreover, we weigh in the words of Dr Farzana Islam, Head, Child Development Centre, Evercare Hospital, Dhaka and Syeda Samara Mortada, Partner, Coordinator, Bonhishikha-Unlearn Gender to better understand how parents can assess their relationship and identify some behavioural red flags to ensure that safe spaces remain safe and children do not have to bear the brunt of their parent’s marital problems.

WITNESSING DISPUTES

“My father had a tendency to misbehave with my mother, but instead of taking responsibility for his actions he would justify it and gaslight her to make her forget what he did,” recalls Nafisa.

Addressing domestic disputes, Dr Farzana Islam, Head, Child Development Centre, Evercare Hospital, Dhaka, finds a number of children who’ve shown signs like bedwetting, selective mutism i.e., refraining from speaking, lack of attention, aloofness, sleep problems, a lot of anxiety issues — some even present obsessive-compulsive disorders (OCD) — when raised

in environments where there’s parental conflict.

Other behaviours may include clinginess, refusal to go to school or poor academic performance because of changes in dynamics between parents. The first thing parents have to do is to stay calm in the face of such behavioural expressions. They must provide them reassurance of safety, security and comfort during those times. The second step should be to validate the feelings of the child displaying challenging behaviour.

ROLE REVERSAL

“After the divorce happened in 2012, I had no relationship with my father. And even before that, from 2010, things started going downhill to the point where right before my parents separated, I was genuinely relieved that my father was gone. I wanted him to leave before my mother did,” informs Nafisa.

Being raised in households where fights are an everyday scene may force children to ‘grow up’ way too quickly.

“When a parent struggles to get out of a difficult marriage, children may sometimes act out on behalf of them. This may include aggressive behaviour, and blaming the parent as a sign to leave the dysfunctional environment. In the process,

they become high-functioning children and start thinking beyond their age. This is something they are doing subconsciously as a response to something going wrong at home,” explains Dr Islam.

When exposed to adverse childhood trauma, children’s brains go through structural changes that primarily affect their personalities, causing them to learn maladaptive behaviour, meaning that normal means of communication will not convey their needs; hence, they must take a different route to achieving them.

“Over time, these children may show characteristics which resemble borderline personality disorder, even though it may not be the condition. However, exposure to chronic trauma can eventually lead them to become suspicious, struggle to build relationships, and fail to trust their partners or even co-workers in the workplace,” she adds.

Moreover, they may act out in manipulative ways and in turn, have trouble adjusting to people.

Dr Farzana Islam recommends that parents need to modify themselves in order to put an end to their children’s sufferings. Children’s brains have a tendency to stay in survival mode, which is the fight or flight response to early trauma.

“If it’s difficult for the parent to be in charge of the situation, they may seek professional help. Various approaches may be helpful for both children and parents such as Cognitive Behaviour Therapy to Mindfulness exercises,” she suggests.

These can help address the trauma and shift the brain away from the survival mode to the cognitive mode or rational thinking mode.

SIBLING TRIANGULATION

“Although my mother was progressive and believed in equality, I was openly discriminated against by my father and made to feel small because I was a girl-child and thus, pitted against my brother. He and I are living reminders for each other of where we come from. Although we’ve had some good moments as siblings, I have made peace with the fact that he and I aren’t on talking terms and I won’t be an active part of his life,” explains Nafisa.

When it comes to parenting, Dr Islam strongly advises against criticising and comparing children as these can be devastating to the development of their personalities.

“Every child comes with their unique qualities; hence parents must acknowledge and respect that. If parents continue

to criticise and compare children, this will result in them harbouring grudges, developing inferiority complexes, low self-worth, or may even result in aggressive behaviour leading to sibling rivalry which is a very common behaviour. Anyone who has been subjected to criticism struggles to appreciate others and views things in a negative way,” she states.

It’s up to parents to neutralise the situation by emphasising in words and actions that all children are valuable.

AGENCY OR LACK THEREOF

“I would do as I was told — whether it was about food, interacting with people, going to places, maintaining my body or choosing my own clothes. There were a lot of extracurricular activities that I wanted to do but my father didn’t allow me. I learned how to gauge my father’s moods and act accordingly,” shares Nafisa.

Even as toddlers, children want to see themselves in leadership roles; however, critical parenting may cause children to become defensive.

“If their needs aren’t prioritised or validated and instead, parents enforce their own choices on them, such as preventing them from wearing a certain clothing, the child learns that their opinions have no

value,” highlights Dr Farzana Islam.

In the long run, their decision-making skills will be hampered by a lack of confidence. They may feel the need to consult their parents for major decisions in life. Hence, parents should try encouraging children to develop their confidence by making decisions for themselves.

The expert suggests giving children enough permission to explore their surroundings at early infancy within safe boundaries.

“Give them choices before giving suggestions. The key to raising a child’s self-esteem is to see them being good and to praise them for that specific act. Practice praising their efforts rather than the results and try to preserve their self-respect by praising them in public and correcting them privately,” elaborates Dr Islam.

NORMALISING ABUSE

“Initially, my father never hit my mother, but the one time he did, I remember fighting back with him and he shoved me away when I stood in front of him. Sometimes, I would run away to my best friend’s place who lived right across the road. My father didn’t even give me money for rickshaw fares; so, for pocket money, I started tutoring students from a very early age earning Tk 2,700 so that I didn’t have

work. Women here wait for other people to support them, thinking they don’t have the strength in them to walk away...but they do,” reflects Nafisa.

Addressing why people stay in chaotic marriages, Syeda Samara Mortada, Partner, Coordinator, Bonhishikha-Unlearn Gender, explains that stigma and taboo are major reasons why couples continue to stay in dysfunctional relationships.

“Parents too, often don’t want their daughters to return to their own houses. In the case of single mothers, the situation is far more complicated, because there are hardly any day-care or childcare services available. Furthermore, even when someone is financially stable, as a society, there’s limited acceptance of an environment where single women can rent a house and live by themselves if they wish,” she says.

While domestic violence is often labelled a ‘private affair,’ what is not thought of are the consequences. Gender and power imbalance occurs when there is a lack of division of household labour and the burden of looking after the elderly or children falling unequally on women. As a result, women and children are the victims. In addition to that, women are also viewed as martyrs who are responsible for upholding the ‘honour’ of the family, as well as the ones who bring ‘shame’ to them.

Unfortunately, in a society that is rife with divorce stigma, children’s needs take a backseat because people are more concerned about their self-respect, which is a reflection of role models from their own childhood.

“If a mother or father didn’t have parents’ model healthy help-seeking behaviours in the past, they will be accepting of similar difficulties in their own marriages, internalising that there’s no other way out of it,” says Dr Islam.

She also adds that in case women think they have no choice, but to accept the chronic stress and suppression in the marriage, they need to relearn that their self-respect and rights are also important in order to help their children develop in healthy ways. For this to happen, they need to be educated properly before marriage.

“Positive parenting training should also be practiced regularly in schools and workplaces for personal growth and empowerment of parents and children to show them parents modelling healthy help seeking behaviours,” explains Dr Islam.

Mortada establishes that first and foremost, couples must understand that it’s important for children to see both parents happy and growing in life. When parents are stable mentally, it will automatically manifest in their children’s lives. It is also important for both parents to remain civilised with each other, even if not together, to communicate and jointly make decisions regarding their children.

“For whatever the reason may be, it’s usually best for couples to separate when things don’t work out, for the sake of each other’s mental well-being; although it might not be the easiest option for all. When children have active and involved parents, that too counts, for them to be emotionally and mentally stable and for their own developments and future relationships,” she concludes.

By Rubab Nayeem Khan
Photo: Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Dhaka International Trade Fair (DITF) 2023: A must-have experience

Bangladeshi people love going to fairs, be it the Ekushey Book Fair, Baishakhi Mela, or the Dhaka International Trade fair taking place right at the peak of winter. Even record low temperatures this time around is no hindrance as people crowded the Bangabandhu Bangladesh-China Friendship Exhibition Centre at Purbachal and became part of the quintessential trade fair experience. So how is the fair going this year? Let us find out.

Stalls galore at the fair premises

Experience myriad offerings at this year's fair with a variety of brands, discounts, and unique stalls. A total of 331 stalls and 17 pavilions have been leased out to various companies, both local and international. At the fair, you can find stalls from well-known local brands like Walton and Vision, where you can get a glimpse of their latest products and gadgets. There are also



exclusive discounted prices from furniture brands like Hatil and Brothers Furniture.

The open area of the fair features some unique pavilions, like the double-storied stall from RFL, ice cream stalls from Igloo,



and Savoy with high ceilings and beautiful interior designs. There are also medium and small stalls selling everyday items and more. Foreign stalls can be found throughout the exhibition.

Foreign stalls offering unique products

This year's fair drew a lot of attention with participants from 10 countries, including India, Türkiye, South Korea, Pakistan, and Thailand. Women were particularly drawn to the beautiful dress collections from India and Pakistan, such as the kaftans, salwar kameezes, and Kashmiri shawls. Korean cosmetics were also a hit at the Korean stalls, as were electronics like blenders, juicers, and electric irons at the Thai stalls.

The most beautiful foreign stall, however,

was the one with all the Turkish mosaic lamps made out of stained glass, lit up from the top—a perfect Instagram-worthy moment.

Trademark trade fair things

Trade fairs offer unique shopping experiences that you cannot find anywhere else. From the 'Ruti maker' stall promising convenience by churning out rutis furiously, to the pickle stands with over 40 varieties to sample, you will find something to overwhelm your senses. You will also find great deals like 'Buy one oven and get 10 items free', but be sure to read the fine print before you make a purchase!

Prices were higher this year due to global instability, but savvy shoppers were able to

score discounts on many items. No matter what you are looking for, a trade fair is sure to have it and if you are willing to haggle, you can get it at a great price too!

Still overpriced food, but there are alternatives

The food at the trade fair is a source of contention every year; it has almost become a ritual to enter a restaurant after a day of shopping and roaming the fair, only to find out the biriyani you have ordered is double the usual rate! Unless you are really hungry, it is best to avoid these food stalls. However, that does not mean you cannot eat anything, as there are plenty of alternatives.

MGI Group's Fresh has a stall offering instant noodles that can be prepared with hot water. Mithai and Tasty Treat have khichuri and rice platters that will not break the bank. In addition, Jhotpot offers light snacks. So, when you are at the trade fair, make the smart choice!

Neat arrangement this time

The shift of the fair to Purbachal has been a welcome change, bringing with it a more neat and organised arrangement. Greeting visitors is a Metro Rail-inspired front gate that adds a touch of visual appeal. To make sure the children do not get too bored, a kid's zone has been added to provide a fun and safe place for them to play while their parents take a break. With this new, engaging setup, the fair has become a much more enjoyable experience for visitors.

By Feda Al Hossain
Photo: Rashed Sumon

Moner Bondhu launches mobile app

Tawhida Shiropa, Founder and C.E.O of Moner Bondhu is a brave young mind. She decided to stand apart from any taboo surrounding mental health in Bangladesh and extend a helping hand to whoever is in need. Moner Bondhu started its journey in January 2016 intending to provide accessible and affordable mental health and well-being services to the people of Bangladesh. Slowly this small initiative grew into something much larger, contributing to the lives of thousands of people.

On 10 January 2023, Moner Bondhu crossed another milestone with the official launch of its mobile app.

Honourable MP Zunaid Ahmed Palak, State Minister, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), was one of the distinguished guests in attendance at the event.

While sharing his thoughts on mental peace and happiness, he said "The key

to happiness is satisfaction. Once you're satisfied, you'll realize that you have also become happier."

Renowned Psychiatrist Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed stressed that keeping your mental health in check is essential for your overall well-being.

"Your heart and mind also need to be fed just like your body," he said, "Moner Bondhu is a safe place where you confide your fears and they give you the much-needed support."

Renowned Actress Aupee Karim added her thoughts saying, "A friend has no substitute, but it is not necessary that the friend be physically present in your life. Moner Bondhu is the friend we all need at some point in our lives."

Mental health is something that rarely gets focused among people of our country. In fact, we have witnessed a time when seeking professional help for problems like



anxiety or depression was frowned upon by many. Not being able to discuss certain traumatic or triggering events has had detrimental impacts on many lives.

Over the course of six years, Moner Bondhu has changed the lives of 800,000 individuals through online counselling on different platforms and another 100,000 through various offline events. They have worked with educational institutions

within and outside Dhaka, assisting more than 18,000 young minds. Their parenting workshops also helped raise awareness among parents on the importance of being more emotionally engaged with children.

Moner Bondhu is the first institution of its kind to reach out to the workers of RMG sector of Bangladesh. By partnering with BGMEA, Moner Bondhu provided counselling to more than 37,000 workers across 75 factories.

Moner Bondhu today is the result of endless hours of effort by a team of enthusiastic professionals who have always been huge advocates of mental health and well-being. With Moner Bondhu app, they are closer than ever to help anytime with whatever may be troubling you.

For more information, check out their website: monerbondhu.org

By Nusrath Jahan

#FASHION & BEAUTY

Nusrat Jahan Sonia's journey with henna

Nusrat Jahan Sonia first found her love for henna nearly ten years ago, in 2012. As a young teenager, she was fascinated by intricate mehendi designs and would often try them on her friends and family. With time, this little hobby grew and her interest led her to learn the art as well as the process of making organic henna.

After two years of working, training, and learning, Jahan officially started her venture in 2014. Using her social media page, Nusrat Mehedi and Fashion Buzz, to showcase her work, she succeeded in garnering popularity within a short time.

Jahan worked hard to make a profession from her passion. She participated in numerous fairs, bridal makeover events, and henna events. As challenging as these projects were, each of them added to her experience while helping to grow her customer base.

"We all use social media to promote our business, but I think honest feedbacks from happy customers are the best form of advertising for artists like myself," said Jahan.

Besides her henna designs, Jahan also has a separate clientele that loves her handmade organic henna. Made from pure mehendi powder and essential oil of Rajasthan, India, the henna tubes used and sold by Jahan are nothing like the usual

ones we often come across in shops. After drying up, the henna takes the form of an intense maroon colour that is guaranteed to stay like that for at least ten days.

With a successful venture built solely out of passion, Jahan now works with several NGOs as well as other organisations for training women and providing them with a source of income. In addition to teaching classes online and offline, Jahan now leads a team of twenty young henna artists, all trained by her.

In an account of her journey so far, Jahan explained how she faced her fair share of difficulties over the years.

"Since we go to our clients' homes, it requires a lot of personal interaction," said the artist, "and while in some places, we are treated just like family, there have also been some unpleasant instances where our profession has been looked down upon."

Jahan says that she is working towards a number of goals. Not only does she want to expand her work within and eventually outside Bangladesh, but also wishes to establish that every honest profession deserves to be respected. This artist truly sets an example and reminds us that there is indeed no shortcut to success.

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Nusrat Jahan Sonia



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Exploring the history of Kolkata and Murshidabad

It was during one of our visits to Kolkata that we decided to explore the various temples and other places of interests. The very first morning, we drove for almost two hours to reach the Dakshineswar Kali Temple located on the eastern bank of the Hooghly River. The temple was built by Rani Rashmoni, a philanthropist and a devotee of Kali. The temple compound, apart from the nine-spired main temple, is beautifully designed and contains a large courtyard surrounding the temple, with rooms along the boundary walls. There are twelve shrines dedicated to Shiva — Kali's companion along the riverfront, a temple to Radha-Krishna and a bathing ghat on the river.

The temple is famous for its association with Ramakrishna, a mystic priest of the 19th century. His house attracted several monastic and householder disciples, including Narendranath Dutta, who later became Swami Vivekananda as one of the chief monastic disciples.

In the afternoon, we visited the Kalighat Kali Temple dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali. Kalighat was a landing site sacred to Kali on the Bhāgirathi River. The temple was undergoing restoration and piles of garbage were dumped along the road leading to the temple. The narrow road was nevertheless vibrant with vendors selling flowers, sweets, fruits and all types of toys, including colourful clay toys.

Our next destination was the Birla Mandir in Ballygunge, built by the industrialist Birla family. It took 26 years to complete the entire structure. The main temple houses statues of deities Krishna and Radha.

We started the next day with a visit to the Missionaries of Charity, a Catholic religious congregation established in 1950 by Mother Teresa, now known as Saint Teresa of Calcutta. The Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity, located at A J C Bose Road has been home to Mother Teresa and her sisters since then. It is here that Mother Teresa lived, prayed, worked, and guided her religious family of sisters spread across the world. Her tomb has become a place of pilgrimage and quiet meditation to people of all creeds.



Our next destination was to offer prayer at the Nakhoda Masjid, the principal mosque of Kolkata in Chitpur. The mosque was built by Kutchi Memon Jamat, a small sunni community from Kutch. The mosque was named Nakhoda, meaning "Mariner" by a Kutchi shipping magnet. It was Jumma and naturally, the mosque was filled to the brim with hundreds of devotees spilling onto the main roads and alleys. The pavements were all occupied by the vendors and we had to squeeze ourselves to the mosque owing to the chaotic traffic by all modes of transport including horse carriage and rickshaws.

We have longed to visit Murshidabad, once the capital of Bengal and then the richest province of India. Having visited the Emperors, Sultans and Kings across the planet, it was always our desire to visit our Nawabs. With this intention in mind, we left for Murshidabad.

Murshidabad was the capital of Bengal during the Mughal period. In 1704, the Diwan of Bengal, Murshid Quli Khan, following Emperor Aurangzeb's orders transferred the capital there from Dacca (now Dhaka) and renamed the town Murshidabad. After the British conquered Bengal, Murshidabad remained the seat of administration for a while until 1790. It was the capital of the Bengal Subah in the Mughal Empire for seventy years, with a jurisdiction covering modern-day Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. Bengal was then the richest Mughal province. The city's decline began with the defeat of the last independent Nawab of Bengal, Siraj-ud-Daulah at the Battle of Plassey in 1757.

It took us five hours by road to reach



Murshidabad. Sprinkled along the highway were few small towns with one-two storied old dilapidated buildings and shops selling daily essentials. The road was in many places full of potholes.

Before reaching the city, we dropped at the site of the Battle of Plassey. We were totally disappointed at the poor maintenance of the park and adjoining areas. A concrete column mentioning the Battle of Plassey with the year of occurrence and a bust of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah is all that exists at the site of the battlefield amidst the mango garden. There has been no attempt to write a few words about the historical background of the site.

When we reached Plassey, pages began to unfold from the tragic, heart-rendering events. The conspiracy of the East India Company, bribery of Mir Jafar, retreat of Madan Lal from the battlefield, the treacherous role of Jagat Sheth and lastly, the heavy downpour that drenched the uncovered gunpowder all contributed to the defeat of the last independent Nawab of Bengal.

After spending some time at the site of the battlefield, we drove through Murshidabad to the eastern end of the

city. We crossed the Bhagarathi river in a ferry in about ten minutes. We then availed a three-wheeler and drove for another ten minutes before we reached Khoshbagh.

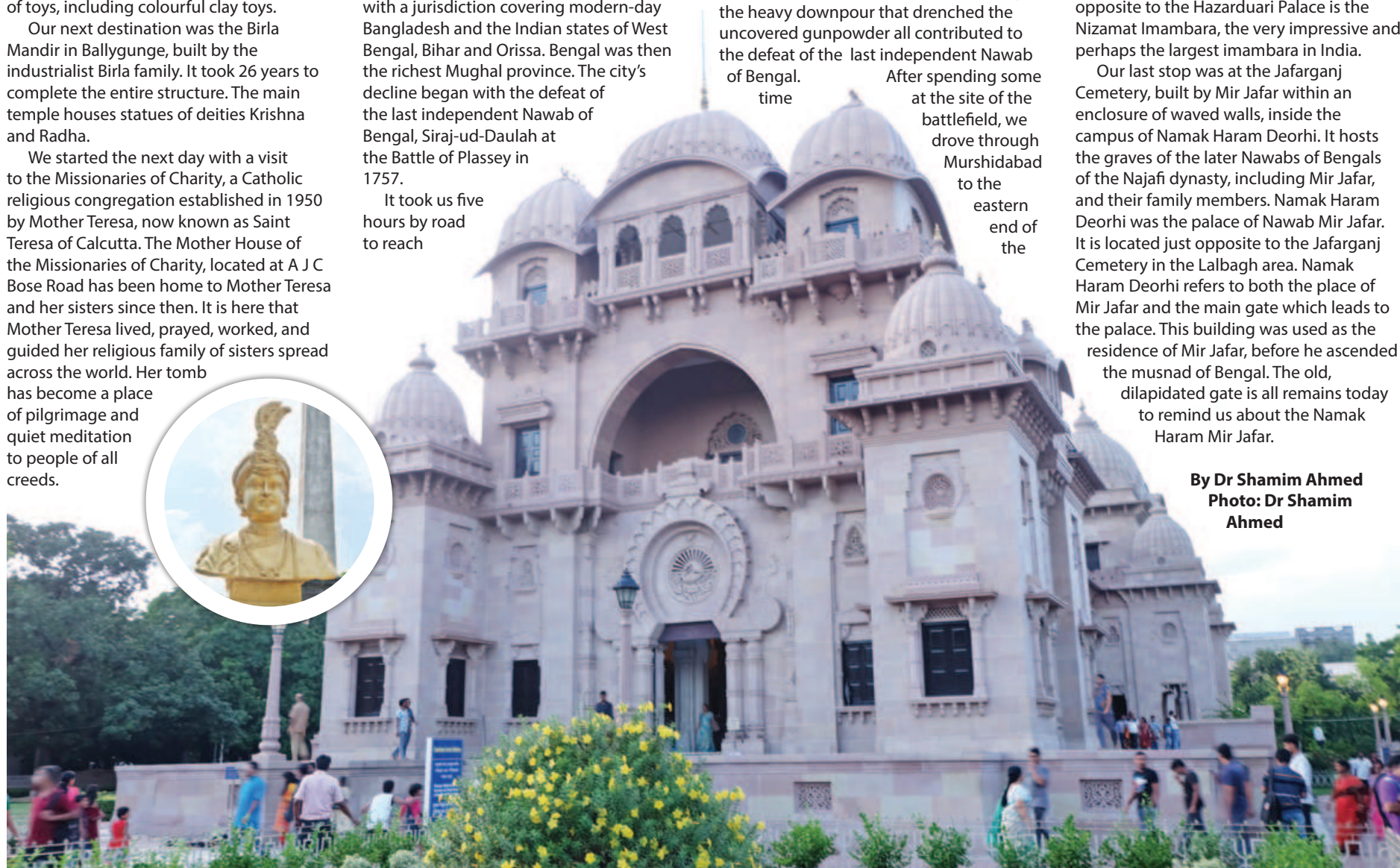
We were overcome with emotion as we approached Khoshbagh, the garden-cemetery of the Nawabs of Bengal, situated on the west bank of the Bhagirathi River. Khoshbagh is the resting place of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah, his wife Lutf-un-nisa, Nawab Alivardi Khan and their family members. The garden-cemetery is well-maintained with ornamental trees.

The following morning, we dashed to the Katra Masjid, a mosque of immense architectural beauty, meticulously restored in a well-maintained immaculate garden. It was built by Nawab Murshid Quli Khan, the first Nawab of Bengal. The tomb of Nawab Murshid Quli Khan lies under the stairs of the mosque. However, prayers are not allowed officially within the premises and we had to be content just by admiring the beautiful masjid.

We then visited the Hazarduari Palace - The Palace with a thousand doors, the chief tourist attraction of Murshidabad. It has a thousand doors and hundred plus rooms. It is now a museum and has an exquisite collection of armours, splendid paintings, exhaustive portraits of the Nawabs, beautiful works of ivory from China and many other valuable works of art. Located opposite to the Hazarduari Palace is the Nizamat Imambara, the very impressive and perhaps the largest imambara in India.

Our last stop was at the Jafarganj Cemetery, built by Mir Jafar within an enclosure of walled walls, inside the campus of Namak Haram Deorhi. It hosts the graves of the later Nawabs of Bengals of the Najafi dynasty, including Mir Jafar, and their family members. Namak Haram Deorhi was the palace of Nawab Mir Jafar. It is located just opposite to the Jafarganj Cemetery in the Lalbagh area. Namak Haram Deorhi refers to both the place of Mir Jafar and the main gate which leads to the palace. This building was used as the residence of Mir Jafar, before he ascended the musnad of Bengal. The old, dilapidated gate is all remains today to remind us about the Namak Haram Mir Jafar.

By Dr Shamim Ahmed
Photo: Dr Shamim Ahmed



#FOOD & RECIPES

Cheat code for chowder

Traditionally, seafood did not suit the deshi palate. We were more accustomed to having freshwater delicacies. Time, however, is changing and we now enjoy delightful, seafood dishes. The following are recipes of some popular seafood dishes, with added cheat codes that make them easier to make.

Seafood chowder

A spoonful of creamy chowder on chilly evenings is bliss. While soups can be thin and light, a chowder is usually thicker, somewhat like a stew, with the base being a mixture of mainly potatoes, onions, and celery.

Ingredients

1 tbsp butter
2 stalks celery, chopped
1 onion, chopped
1 bay leaf
1 tsp dried dill or dried thyme
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 large potatoes, peeled and diced
2 cups water or fish stock
1/3 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup milk
2 cups chopped raw skinless fish fillets, cooked seafood, or a combination
2 tbsp lemon juice

Method

In a large pot, melt butter over medium

heat; sauté celery, onion, bay leaf, dill, salt, and pepper for about 5 minutes or until the onions start to brown. Stir in potatoes; sauté for 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high; stir in water or fish stock (you can make your own stock by boiling a piece of fish, shrimp heads garlic onions) and bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat to medium, and boil for about 5 minutes or until the potatoes are almost tender. Whisk flour into milk and stir



into the pot; bring to a simmer, stirring often.

At this point, you can blend the broth for a smooth consistency. Stir in fish or seafood. Let it simmer until the fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork or seafood is hot. Discard bay leaf. Stir in lemon juice and season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve hot with crackers.

— RBR

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

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ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Focus on improving your financial status. Travel may help alleviate your stress. Spend time with your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Don't hesitate to ask for help. It's time to consider career changes. Make sure to communicate clearly. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Your family may not appreciate your decisions. Socialise with those with high social standings. Be extra cautious when going outside. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Entertainment should include your loved ones. Don't go over budget when shopping. Don't let problems at work persist in your mind. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Make your partner feel wanted. Your emotions will be all over the place. Don't get involved in other people's financial matters. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Emotional upset at work will be upsetting. Either mend or leave your current relationship. Your colleague could try to undermine you. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Dazzle others with your charm. Make sure to stay on top of things. Don't lose your temper easily. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Make alternate plans just in case. Control your emotions. Be honest about your intentions. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Underhandedness will affect your reputation. Get your expectations back down to earth. Business trips might prove unproductive. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Avoid lending money or possessions. Trips will be favourable for business. Don't neglect your problems and deal with them promptly. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Lay all your cards on the table. Romance may develop through work-related activities. Relationships will be erratic this week. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Your questions will help ferret out secret information. Put in some overtime at work. Find ways to release your tension. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

us on f /Sandalina

ঐতিহ্যের আর এক নাম আধুনিকতা
ঠিক যেসব রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য ঘাটেই

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#FOOD & RECIPES

Ti's the season of pithas

Every country has a host of traditional sweets that they proudly plate as a representation of their food and culture; for Bangladesh, this is undoubtedly pitha. For us, pitha is not just any other ordinary food but is also a treasure trove of great memories.

Growing up, winter would mean seeing your mum making pithas of various sizes and shapes and listening to the stories of the origin of these sweets. Or, it would mean having steaming hot, warm chittoi pitha for breakfast with *mangsher jhol*.

In winter, several carts and vans pop up all around the city, selling chittoi pitha with an array of bhortas for you to pick from at unbelievably low prices! Shrimp, tangy tomato, herby coriander, spicy chilli, pungent mustard – the options are endless. For a sweet tooth, there is always the option of steaming bhapa pitha which is stuffed with jaggery, malai, and coconut.

Whether we stand by the roadside and delve into this display of bhortas or buy bhapa pitha for our family on our way back home, swapping these for street food for a short time holds unparalleled excitement. Apart from these, there are endless variations of pithas available in our country.

Chittoi Pitha

Every year, the traditional soot-blackened earthenware makes a reappearance in our kitchens during winter. This artifact is a prized possession in every Bangladeshi household and is solely used to make chittoi pitha. It can be enjoyed plain with bhortas, have savoury stuffing, or be drenched in milk. Dudh chittoi is soaked in reduced milk, contains a generous amount of jaggery and topped with earthy grated coconut.

Patishapta Pitha

Patishapta is another crowd-pleaser when it comes to pitha — this Bengali stuffed crepe can be a tough contender for the more widely known French crepe! Made with a runny mixture of powdered rice and date palm molasses, they are then filled with a thick, creamy concoction of reduced milk. Every household has their variation of patishapta and all are uniquely delicious.



Bhapa Pitha

Bhapa pitha is quintessentially the ultimate pitha of Bangladesh with its own fanbase. These sweet rice cakes are made with roughly pounded rice, stuffed with date palm jaggery, fresh coconut shavings, and a drizzle of malai. Although the final output is the same, there are several renditions of bhapa pitha in households, stores, and street carts. There is hardly any Bangladeshi who misses out on enjoying this classic winter delicacy in winter!

Nakshi Pitha

Bangladesh is a country rich with culture and heritage that we often see glimpses of in various forms of art, and nakshi art is one such example. Nakshi art weaved its way into our food and behold, the nakshi pitha was invented! These crispy rice cakes are made with kneaded rice flour dough and then creatively given intricate designs before being soaked in a mixture of date palm molasses. Traditionally, these designs were made using the thorn of date palm trees.

Puli Pitha

Puli pitha is another versatile one that can be prepared and consumed in various ways. Traditionally, it is like steamed dumplings with a sweet filling of coconut and jaggery. Dudh puli is a delicious variation that is boiled in milk and flavoured with condiments and sweetened with date palm molasses and a generous amount of coconut shavings. These pockets of coconut filled rice cakes are also enjoyed fried.

In Bangladesh, pitha is reminiscent of joy and celebration, of cosy winter mornings and evening soirees. With the festive wedding season occupying us during winter, pitha tends to be a big part of wedding celebrations. Pitha utshob, or pitha fairs are also arranged in different parts of the city where people can see and try out these sweet delicacies from various regions all throughout Bangladesh.

To us, pitha is not just a food but a true amalgamation of culinary excellence, heritage, and jollity.

By Fariha Amber

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed