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The eyes of RESOLVE

A SOURCE OF PRIDE NOT CONTENTION
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PHOTO: SAZZAD IBNE SAYED
MODEL: PROMA
STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
HAIR & MAKEUP: SUMON RAHAT

#PERSPECTIVE

Wearing a teep is my choice

Five decades after independence, it's irrelevant, even undesirable to talk about how women should dress up or carry themselves. There is a push to box people's dress-up, style, movement, and eating habits within some set bounds with the use of various theories.

Recently, the attention has even shifted to a very personal accessory – the teep (a colourful fashion add-on pasted on the forehead also known as bindi). The incident of a police constable questioning the age-old right of women to don a teep in April 2022, is when progressiveness stopped in its tracks. This questionable act by the constable surprised everyone, and waves of protest arose from all quarters.

It raised protests across generations and countries. Some have written on social media; some have uploaded their photos of wearing a teep on Facebook; others have come out onto the streets. Some men have put on teeps themselves and stood with women. These are the languages of protest. Those who have criticised boys wearing the teep do not understand the language of a protest. I don't think this needs any further explanation.

As a Bengali woman, donning a teep is part of one's culture and tradition. I had seen my mother use the teep as a part of her look in the '60s and '70s. It was not just my mother; many in my family wear the teep. I wear them every day myself, and in my opinion, it has nothing to do with the plight of my piety.

When I went to university in the 1980s, almost all the girls wore teeps with saris. We would dress up in saris, teeps, kajal, and bangles, put flowers in our hair, put henna on our hands, and alta on our feet. We did the same in college. But suddenly, the teep became a matter of shame. There is a rumbling that wearing teeps would lead to dishonour but those who regularly wear the teep think of it as their stylistic statement.

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Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Simmi
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Hair & Makeup: Sumon Rahat

#HEALTH & FITNESS

Dos and don'ts of menstrual health and hygiene

Recently, a granddaughter of mine reached her menarche stage in life. It's a stage when an adolescent girl first experiences her menstrual period. I was surprised to see her approaching the change in a matter-of-factly manner and adjusting to it sportingly. She even went outdoors to play with her friends. I, in my menopause, wished I had her attitude toward such natural biological changes.

That got me thinking about the social taboos, silence, shame, and restrictions our mothers have had associated with periods, for no reason at all. We couldn't play, have mobility, freedom, and access to normal activities. Even showering for the first few days was not recommended; we could not tell our fathers and brothers about it; even interacting with people was limited.

We could not even buy our pads. Many of us were forced to use cloths instead of sanitary napkins, which, at that time, were thought to be bad for our health. The superstitions, like God will punish us if any boys see our stains – had no base. I realized that in the later part of my life.

Menstruation is a physiological phenomenon and we need to accept it as a normal occurrence; we should neither shun it like unmentionables nor feel differently about it. 'Those days' are part of your everyday as well, it is not shameful and you are not impure, as mothers and aunts ostracised it.

I love my granddaughter's attitude towards it. Instead of all these meaningless talks, I just told her about menstrual hygiene and how that is of utmost importance to menstrual health. I thought I would jot a few down for other adolescents.

Women and adolescent girls should have access to using a clean menstrual product, must have the privacy to change their sanitary wear, and also must know and have access to neatly dispose of the used product.

Many women nowadays have to work outside of their homes for extended hours, often without access to appropriate washroom facilities. This issue is further exacerbated when it comes to menstruation. This kind of scenerio requires a sanitary napkin that can provide reliable protection for at least 12 hours, alleviating the concerns of requiring changes while out and about with no worries regarding leakage or discomfort. Finding such an appropriate product is essential in ensuring that women can be productive and confident at work.

Menarche typically occurs between the ages of 10 and 16. Many girls have it as early as 9 at times. They should be prepared early onwards to face any untoward fuss while away from home when it occurs.

Bathing during menstruating is highly recommended for cleanliness. It is best to use running warm water to rinse off any bacterial growth.

You bleed heavily during the day, so the pad absorbs more blood, sweat, and sebum. This creates a breeding ground for bacteria and you might need to change as often as possible one every four hours. However, during the night when your bodily functions slow down, and the bleeding intensity decreases, you can safely wear a pad overnight.

It is important to learn how to dispose of a used pad. You should roll up the used pad, secure it in the wrapper of the new one or toilet paper, and throw it away in the bin (never down the toilet). It is mandatory to wash your hands after disposing of your menstrual products. The use of feminine deodorants and sprays can trigger vaginitis and is not recommended during menstruation or even on safe days. Good menstrual health and hygiene prevent infections, reduce odours and help you stay comfortable during your periods. On the other hand, if you don't take care of your menstrual hygiene, it can pose serious health risks. So, for all my granddaughters out there, enjoy growing up naturally, but be tidy, neat and clean regarding period mannerisms.

By RBR
Photo: Collected

#EMPOWERMENT

Rising above adversity: In conversation with Nazrul Islam Ritu

Nazrul Islam Ritu is the first transgender elected union parishad chairperson in Bangladesh. The 44-year-old activist and politician was born on 15 June, 1979, and lives in Trilochanpur, Jhenaidah District, where she is the chairman of Union 6.

Well-groomed and versed, Ritu was donned in an off-white and red silk sari and light jewellery and simple make-up, when she appeared in the two-day WOW - Women of the World international festival in Dhaka - recently, to celebrate the achievements of women, girls, and non-binary people and look at some of the obstacles they face across the world.

Ritu had to face scorn and strong antagonism in her homestead when she was young. And at the age of 10, she decided to run away from home and take refuge in a transgender community located in Demra Thana, Dhaka. There, her Guru Ma, Dipali, took Ritu under her wing and became a mentor.

"I was taught to dance and sing and whenever there was a wedding or a birth of a baby to be celebrated, our group used to dance. That was my early source of income," Ritu explains, adding that it was also the beginning of her savings.

"I was with the group for a long time, but I always longed for my home and wanted to go back to my roots," she says, adding that she frequently visited Jhenaidah to stay connected with the Trilochanpur people during her sojourn in Dhaka.

In her late twenties, she returned to Trilochanpur and started doing charity work with her savings. From fixing a community tap, and building roads, to helping poor families to get their daughters married off. Her most notable assistance was donating

to several local Hindu temples and helping with the construction of two new mosques. Locals said Ritu has been providing financial assistance to the helpless people of different villages of Trilochanpur Union for the last 15 years and thus, becoming well-liked among them.

"My villagers started seeing me in a different light and insisted I contest the union parishad or local government polls. I started my political career in 2020 in Jhenaidah district, and promised to eradicate corruption and uproot the drug menace. I ran as an independent candidate in the elections and won against my opponent, Nazrul Islam Sana, who was supported by the ruling Awami League, with a 2:1 vote ratio. I did not ask for a vote, they voted for me. I got elected for my work, which I was doing for the last 15 years or so," she adds.

The love and support for her are immense in her hometown because of her trustworthiness and honesty.

"I have no family, no kids, I don't need big houses or cars to carry my life. My need for money is even less so; whatever I do, I do it for my village people. They trust that I will not betray them. We are 13 members in the union, including myself, and we work relentlessly for the welfare of the community. I can proudly say we are corruption free," she states.

For her, family means the world, her three brothers and sisters and her Guruma, and she believes family support has bought her where she is now. The trauma of initial rejection has been overcome.

"I have won the election as a transgender person. Now, I want to serve the people of my union for the rest of my life. The government has given the right to vote and access to various opportunities to transgender community members. I have no regret for being a transgender person," she says.

"I am in the mind of my people, my idol is our Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, I follow her dedication towards her work. If you don't give labour and hard work, you cannot achieve success or fame. I have no intention of going further into general elections, I am happy the way I am today," she says with a smile, as she rushes off to give her speech as the 'Women of the World.'

Almost a decade ago in 2013, Bangladesh gave the country's estimated 1.5 million transgender people the right to be identified as a separate gender in the country. Five years later, they were allowed to register as a third gender when signing up to vote.

By RBR
Photo: RBR

#PERSPECTIVE

When Nurunnahar, 14, who was a victim of child marriage, died because of forceful sexual intercourse, it still could not be referred to it as "rape," as the perpetrator was her husband. Incidents such as this shows us how we have legalised rape through our legal codes. Those who are victims of rape and sexual assault after marriage cannot speak up about it because neither society nor the law accepts it.

We have to speak up against marital rape

In Bangladesh, the definition of rape has an exception. It says that only if the girl is under the age of 14, "sexual relations will be considered rape." However, in Bangladesh, individuals are considered children until the age of 16, and the age is 18 according to the United Nations.

These are strange rules!

If a married woman or a child is forced into sexual relations and dies as a result of it, can a case be filed for rape? The law is also silent on the matter.

It is to be noted that Bangladesh is one of 36 countries in the world where a 14-year-old child can be forced to have sexual relations. In the rural and urban areas of the country, 63 per cent of men still think "it's okay to hit your wife if they say no to sexual relations."

In a survey by BRAC in 2019, almost none of the respondents believed marital rape to be violence against women. This is why no one talks about the topic of "marital rape," no one thinks it's a crime.

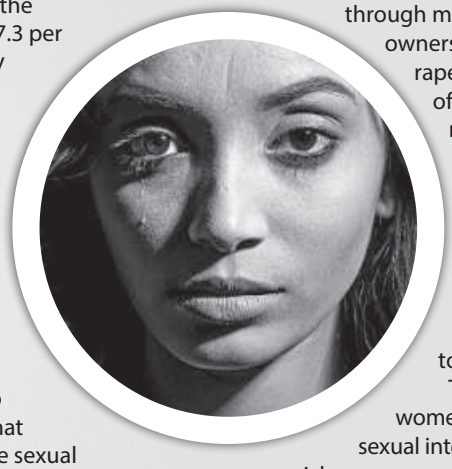
Only 4 per cent of people considered that the wife can be a victim of rape by her husband. Society thinks that a husband has rights over his wife's body, a husband can enjoy his wife whenever and however he wishes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in interviews taken over the telephone between March and August, Manusher Jonno Foundation, an NGO, has seen that one of the biggest reasons behind the rise in domestic violence was the refusal to have physical relations.

According to information from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 27.3 per cent of women have said that they were forced to engage in sexual intercourse by their husbands against their wishes.

A worker for World Vision, another NGO, has commented that it is extremely difficult to explain to people the exact nature of "marital rape." When they visited houses in rural areas and tried to explain to guardians that forcefully trying to have sexual relations even after marriage can have detrimental effects on the bodies and minds of girls. Parents said that they did not want to listen to anything on this topic.

So, as long as the laws are not amended, and more is not said on this topic, societal taboo cannot be shattered. As long as marital rape is not considered a crime in Bangladesh, it will not be considered rape in the minds of the people. Many think that it may be a "crime" to force a wife to have sexual relations, but why would it be "rape?"



Nahid (30) and Shammi (22) (pseudonyms) are victims of this type of thinking. They have been victims of various sexual tortures by their husbands during intercourse, but they have not been able to bring any allegations or even trust someone to help. Their families have said that the husbands have married them under proper societal and religious norms, so these allegations mean little.

The main problem is with the word "rape." To us, rape means someone other than a husband committing the crime. Known people, strangers, and family members can all be rapists but not the husband because, through marriage, the husband claims ownership of the wife's body. Yet, marital rape is a horrific experience in the life of a woman. It's even worse than rape at the hands of a stranger.

Dr David Finkler, who has worked against marital rape said, "When a strange man rapes a woman, she lives on with a horrific memory. But if she is made a victim of rape by her husband, then she thinks she goes to sleep with a rapist."

There are many instances where women have been forcibly made to have sexual intercourse during menstruation, sickness, pregnancy, after surgery, or after childbirth. Most men think there is no need to take the woman's permission or be aware of her desire or reluctance before intercourse.

It was unimaginable to hold men accountable for their inconsiderate indulgence of their wives under these laws made in the British-era. Special laws for the prevention of violence against women have been legislated three times so far after independence but our lawmakers consciously decriminalise marital rape every time. This exemption clause has been retained instead of repealed. Yet, the British have criminalised marital rape in 1991. Even Pakistan repealed the exemption clause for marital rape in 2006.

If the law is changed, maybe people will understand that if a wife is forced to have intercourse or if she is tortured for this, it is rape. In a country like ours, a lot of awareness needs to be raised about it.

By Shahana Huda Ranjana
Translated by Azmin Azran
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Model: Proma
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নির্ভয়া
Celebrating women's championship in the digital era

The Daily Star and UNDP jointly organised Nirbhoya for the third time, to recognise six exemplary women who have remarkably contributed to the digital space despite societal obstacles.

A joint initiative by The Daily Star | UNDP

Supported by Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

A symbol of hope for women with disabilities

The life of people with disabilities can be particularly challenging in our country, but 49-year-old Chumuki Biswas has turned her own journey into an inspiration despite facing physical and financial hardships.

Chumki Biswas established Ankur Handicrafts, a handicraft shop located in Mymensingh Sadar in 2017, which has since offered employment opportunities to more than 40 women with disabilities. The shop has become a symbol of hope and empowerment for disabled women, providing them with a platform to showcase their skills and talents.

However, when the Covid-19 pandemic hit in 2020, Chumki's business was threatened. The sudden economic loss put her team and their families in jeopardy, and she was unsure how they would survive. Nevertheless, Chumki remained resilient and refused to lose hope.

During that critical moment, ekShop, an e-commerce platform developed by the a2i Program and UNDP, proved to be a lifeline for Chumki by providing her with essential training.

Throughout 2021-22, Chumki participated in three training programs offered by the ekShop initiative: She Means Business, Business Communication and Online Business Operation, and Capacity Building for Women Entrepreneurs with Disabilities. These training programs equipped Chumki with the necessary skills to navigate the digital landscape and adapt to the changing economic conditions. She also received a mobile phone and a Taka 50,000 grant from the Prime Minister's fund for women entrepreneurs.

"Before receiving training from the ekShop initiative, I had no idea about online business, but now I am able to send our products to various outlets in different parts of the world. We are receiving orders from France, Germany, Japan, and many other places," says Chumki.

She further shared her future plans, saying, "I aspire to build a factory with accommodation facilities where women with disabilities can work together."

Written by Priam Paul

A mission for sustainability and women's health

Maria Mehedy, an aspiring innovator and environmental enthusiast, has embarked on an ambitious mission to create Shuddhi - a biodegradable sanitary product and make it accessible to all women, regardless of their socio-economic status. Her passion for sustainability and her unwavering determination to make a positive impact on the world have led her to create a product that not only benefits women's health but also the environment.

At just 15 years old, Maria was inspired to create biodegradable sanitary pads after undergoing an ovarian cyst operation. Her experience with traditional cotton cloths during her periods led her to realize the importance of sustainable alternatives. Despite facing various hurdles, Maria's determination and passion led her to participate in environmental competitions and give presentations on reusability and biodegradability.

Years later, Maria's dream of creating a biodegradable sanitary product became a reality. As a computer engineering student, she participated in the innovation competition CHT Innovation Challenge 2022, which was organized by a2i iLab and UNDP and provided the necessary funding to bring Shuddhi to life.

Maria's vision for Shuddhi is to make biodegradable sanitary pads accessible to all women, regardless of their socio-economic status, and she plans to use organic cotton, bamboo fiber, banana fiber, plant-based starch sheets, and organic gum to produce the sanitary pads.

Maria reflects on her journey with pride and gratitude. Despite facing numerous challenges due to her humble background, Maria believes that small actions can lead to significant positive changes, and she remains determined to be a catalyst for that change.

Written by Sara Kabir

The courageous journey of a transgender entrepreneur

"Although I was born in a male body, I think and feel like a woman. I like dresses and dressing up, which became a threat to me," says Mowon, a transwoman and an entrepreneur from Savar. Because of her feminine attributes, she used to be bullied by her neighbours, friends, teachers, and even her family used to speak ill. Her parents separated when she was only 1.5 years old.

Despite all this mental pressure, she stayed headstrong and continued her study. Mowon joined Dhaka Polytechnic Institute's Civil Department after finishing SSC in 2019. She also attended a make-up course on beautification once she arrived in Dhaka.

Through social media, Mowon found many people like her, which helped her to gather the courage to do something herself instead of getting involved in odd professions. "That is when I got introduced to the organisation called Pothchola Bangladesh, which gave me a chance to work in various youth camps," shared Mowon. As a project coordinator at Pothchola, she helped many transgender people with relief funds and food during the COVID pandemic. Besides, she helped various transgender individuals to become entrepreneurs by conducting make-up workshops as a part of the organisation.

"Meanwhile, I started working in e-commerce. I received the Smart Women Entrepreneur grant of 50,000 Taka in 2022 through UNDP's Anondomela project with the help of Pothchola to grow my business," added the enthusiastic and strong-willed entrepreneur.

Currently, Mowon works as a make-up artist through her page "Mowon Makeover's", where she receives many projects. "I dream of establishing a parlour and boutique shop where I will appoint and train people from my community so they do not have to struggle for jobs," shared Mowon.

Written by Sarah Bintay Shakahwat

Championing women empowerment through digitalisation

In today's rapidly advancing technological world, Priyanka Rani Sur, 28, realised that a gap in computer skills was hampering women employment in her village in Jashore. "In 2016, I decided to open a computer training centre for people in our village, especially for women, since travelling almost 20 kilomteres to the town for such training is nearly impossible for them," shares Priyanka.

She loaned money from an NGO, purchased three laptops, and began her journey with "Borno IT Institute" in Chhatiantala Bazar, Jashore. "Lugging three heavy laptops to the training centre, which was far away from my home, was challenging. Yet, I was determined to help the women in my community," says Priyanka.

Understanding the unique struggles of women, Priyanka made sure to charge a meagre training fee. Countless women utilised the training to go onto becoming teachers, creating online businesses,

freelancing, and even becoming computer trainers themselves. "I had the honour of training a woman much older than me from a nearby village. She had completed her SSC but was then married off, feeling trapped in a life of domestic work with abusive in-laws. After completing her computer training, she escaped that life and is now working at a fulfilling job." This is one of the hundreds of success stories born in Borno IT Institute.

In 2018, Priyanka brainstormed a new idea - she initiated an e-commerce platform called "Deshi Feriwala", dedicated to selling women's handicrafts such as Nakshi Kantha, and local food items such as gur patali (molasses) online. Through this platform, she eliminated the need for middlemen who underpaid women, giving women the power to take full ownership of their products' sales.

Priyanka shared her gratitude towards UNDP Anondomela Platform and UN Women Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) Programme for helping to scale up her initiative and allowing her to understand gender issues on a more nuanced level, so she could better support the women her work directly impacts. "In the future, I hope to keep growing my institute, and empower as many underprivileged women as possible," concludes Priyanka.

Written by Mayabee Arannya

For the love of education

The Shikkhok Batayon programme has brought a significant transformation to the education scene in Bangladesh, and Ruksana Akther is among the pioneers who have made this change possible. By creating unique educational content online, she has enabled hundreds and thousands of teachers and students across the country to benefit from her passionate efforts.

Ruksana Akther's passion for education blossomed after completing Science Teacher Training in New Zealand. During her training, she witnessed the transformative impact of an effective teaching method and curriculum, inspiring her to bring this innovative approach to her country's education system. Thanks to the Shikkhok Batayon programme, she was able to take one step closer to realizing her dream.

Shikkhok Batayon was established under

a joint initiative of the Education Ministry, the Primary and Mass Education Ministry, and the a2i Programme, which is jointly implemented by the ICT Division and the Cabinet Division, with support from UNDP.

"During the period of COVID-19, I had the opportunity to work with a2i, and they appointed me as the ICT for Education (ICT4E) District Ambassador. Working with Shikkhok Batayon inspired me to start my journey of establishing an online school. This programme truly empowered me as an educator," shared Ruksana.

So far, Ruksana has created over 300 individual pieces of content and 200 online classes on the platform, and is focused on expanding her own online school, Learn Biology.

Through the Shikkhok Batayon program, she was able to establish a network with teachers across the country, which has allowed her to share her knowledge with them.

"In the future, I want to focus on making science subjects more interesting, effective, and appealing to students. I also want to pursue a higher degree," concluded Ruksana.

Written by Aaqib Hasib

On a road less travelled

In 2018, Samina Alam found herself at a crossroads. She had recently received the ADB-Japan scholarship, which allowed her to pursue an MSc at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT).

With hope in her heart and a dream to fulfil, Samina travelled to Thailand to pursue her degree. However, she learned she was pregnant within a week of starting AIT classes.

Caught in a dilemma that most South Asian women have to face, many of her relatives advised her to drop out of AIT and return home so that she could focus on becoming a mother.

However, Samina bet on herself and chose to continue her MSc while preparing to bring a new life into this world.

At times, life was not easy for her. On many occasions, Samina stumbled and struggled, breaking down in tears at the hurdles she had to face. But even in the

darkest moments, she found the courage to stand up and fight back.

Her hard work paid off as she graduated and returned to Bangladesh with a new dream to better her hometown of Chattogram. Samina's interest in Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) led her to win an ICS designing competition organised by Strengthening Inclusive Development in Chittagong Hill Tracts (SID-CHT)—a project of the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs and UNDP—with technical assistance from a2i's iLab and financial support from Global Affairs Canada.

This helped Samina survey and develop her cooking stoves while allowing her to apply her theoretical knowledge in practice. A major reason behind women's heart and lung diseases is the smoke from straw stoves widely used in hillside areas. Samina's ICS will help to better such conditions.

Speaking on her overall experience, Samina Alam said, "This was a whole new experience for me, and I was able to learn how to set up and pilot a project. Hopefully, once my innovation in ICS is developed, I will improve the lives of those living in the Chittagong Hill Tracts."

Written by Aaqib Hasib

Women's struggles to rise above discrimination

A common theme in the lives of women, particularly those who come from rural areas or the lower end of the economy is that they are never groomed for success. Society and even their parents do not have the same aspirations for them as they do for men. It is only under dire and unfortunate circumstances that they are forced to go and make a living.

Women's struggles have been very well documented throughout the years but despite such extensive research, we uncover new facets and nuances about them every time we take a deeper look into their lives. Despite all odds, some of these women rose above all the torment and broke free of their shackles but if only they had received the proper support and encouragement from the get-go, maybe their stories would have been different.

Take Salma Akhtar for example who always aspired to be a doctor but was married off when she was in grade six and gave birth to her first child when she was in grade eight. A few years into the marriage, her husband suffered from a stroke which rendered him unable to work anymore. Without any qualifications or training, Salma found herself taking on all of the financial burdens of the family.

Maya Chiran and Shelly Akhter also found themselves in similar circumstances. The former had to join work because her family could not bear the cost of her education while the latter was left by her husband for another woman and she had no one to turn to.

"I had to work at people's homes to feed my children. I decided to come to Dhaka with no work experience.

I joined a nursery as an orderly but I felt as if I could do better. If only I had finished my education, perhaps I could have gotten access to better opportunities," Salma Akhtar stated. She currently works as a doctor's assistant at Rainbow Heart Limited but said that she was not allowed by her in-laws to complete her education.

Shelly Akhter too gave up on her education to marry off young but she was soon abandoned by her husband. Her parents had already passed away so she had no one to go to. She went into depression and constantly had suicidal thoughts but she translated her grief into something extraordinary by picking up a steering wheel and learning how to drive.

"I had two younger brothers to take care of. I was sad but I knew I had to go forward and make something of myself. I wanted to show those who hurt me that they can't keep me down. I decided to run away from home and join BRAC driving school. I wanted to show everyone that women can do everything men can," Shelly explained.

Her journey has led her to become a full-time professional driver for the UN.

Just like Salma and Shelly, Maya did not give up on life. She joined the American International School Dhaka (AISD) as a support staff and finished her undergrad.

"It was a difficult road but I knew I could only rely on myself to make my aspirations come true. I got married and I have two beautiful children but I also never lost sight of what I wanted from life," elaborated Maya.

A lack of educational qualification is not the only thing that women have to worry about. Their career choices also often get questioned.

Take Fatama Rimi for example. She is one of the highest-rated beauticians for Sheba XYZ but her choice to pursue her dream career has led her relationship with her parents to get strained.

"I have a master's degree so my parents had other expectations of me. They don't understand how happy I am with what I do because I am so good at it. In addition, I make way more than I did from any other job," she stated.

Mukhta too is an individual who has had a similar road. A professional cleaner by choice, her choice of career was not accepted in her home.

"I have been with my organisation for 11 years. My family doesn't understand the level of respect I get here. To them, this is not a prestigious job but they don't realise how appreciated I am and how important my work is", she added.

These women have done everything to make the most out of their lives but under the right circumstances and with the right support, they could have made so much more out of themselves.

"Life can get unpredictable so it's our family's job to help us be prepared for it and not leave things to chance," added Salma who wants every girl in our society regardless of their aspirations to pursue their education.

The others share the same sentiments. They want a society where girls are given the same opportunities from the beginning as boys do. For them to be encouraged to get prepared for life in other ways.

"Organizations like the UN and even Brac are doing so much to help women but they will be able to do so much more only if society changes its outlook towards women", said Shelly.

"Boys are encouraged to go as far as they can, to fly as high as they can while they set limitations to our dreams," added Maya.

These incredible women we spoke to outperformed and outdid all expectations despite the odds being stacked against them. This only raises the argument of how much more they could have achieved if only they had the proper support.

Perhaps, Salma would have been a doctor, Maya could have been a lawyer by now, and Fatama would not be scrutinised for choosing to be a beautician. Society still has a long way to go but one thing is for certain, women will always rise above these barriers.

By Irfan Aziz
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed
Participants: Shelly Akhter, Salma Akhter, Fatama Rimi, Maya Chiran, Mukhta
Styling: Isha Yeasmin
Makeup: Fatama Rimi
Special Thanks to Naim Chowdhury
In collaboration with KrayonMag

LG Ambassador Challenge 2023 Winner Announcement

LG Bangladesh announced the winners of their annual LG Ambassador Challenge program on February 27th, 2023. The event was held at the Gulshan office and attended by Managing Director, Mr. Peter Ko, along with Head of Corporate Branding, Mr. Mahmudul Hasan, and other senior officials. This year, LG Bangladesh selected six projects to fund under their LG Ambassador Challenge program, which has been running since 2017. Among the winners were Md. Imam Hossain, his two projects "Project Life" in Kishoreganj and "Project Kishori" in Kushtia received Tk of 443,500 respectively for implementation; Asaduzzaman Bhuiyan from Brahmanbaria, who received 700,000 Taka for his "Child Education Material" project; Md. Jahidul Islam of Cox's Bazar, received 452,850 Taka for his "Irrigation Pu mp" project; Rezowana Nur of Gopalganj, received 622,446 Taka for "Cheer Up Soul" project; and Abdullah Roni of Panchagarh, who received 510,000 Taka for his "Distribution of Wheel Chairs to the Handicapped" project.

STITCH DESIGN IN OPPO RENO8 T

An aesthetic that's way more than a mere fashion statement

Nowadays, we often hear this catchphrase that 'fashion is intertwined with technology.' What does this mean actually? Let us go back a few centuries to trace the history of fashion and then we will come back to technology. Sewing (stitching clothes) originated in the Palaeolithic era (the Old Stone Age) when people used to stitch to produce clothes from animal skin, fur, or bark. Over the years, the art of stitching evolved with the advent of modern amenities. It evolved into a whole new art to create fashionable items.

Now modern fashion designers have taken this art of stitching to a whole new level. In fact, stitching is the new phenomenon. That's why, things like handcrafted shoes, wallets, and jackets with works of stitches are gaining momentum among the youth and fashion connoisseurs.

One of the prime reasons behind this is that works of stitches add flamboyance to any piece — be it a wallet or even a smartphone. Now we dive into what they actually mean by technology merging with fashion. Just think about it — how will it feel if the same flamboyance of stitching is added to a smartphone design? If you are struggling to visualise it, you do not have to go far. Just have a look at the OPPO Reno8 T, the new sensational flagship meant for passionate people.

The latest edition to the Reno series, Reno8 T, comes with a Fiberglass-Leather Design, elevating the design approach one step ahead while intermingling the everlasting allure of stitching with the appeal of design aesthetics. Employing a new technique to remove plastic edging together with a new leather stitching pattern surrounding the camera model, Reno8 T flaunts a design inspired by stitching art that offers a multitude of benefits for tech-savvy users.

OPPO Reno8 T is the very first smartphone to feature a 'stitch design' on fiberglass leather, using an embossing process that will offer nothing short of a premium experience for smartphone users. Driven by an urge to add dimension to the fashion statement of smartphone users, OPPO has added a textured design around the camera module for simulating the effect of leather stitching and layering visual effects.

The outcome of this new stitching design is simply breath-taking, along with several functional features for users. First, the stitch design on the OPPO Reno8 T will add a touch of style and personalisation to the overall user experience. This design will add a decorative touch, making the phone look unique and stylish. Just as people like to show off their leather products or any fashion item with grace, they can also carry this smartphone with style as it will match their sense of style.

But this design aesthetic is way more than a mere fashion statement as it comes with lots of other benefits including a better grip and extra protection against any damage. Owing to the new technique used in Fiberglass-Leather Design, there is no plastic edging around the phone, allowing for a better grip. Moreover, the stitch design has reinforced the edges and corners of the case, providing extra protection against damage. So, the next time you drop your phone, you do not need to panic as it's a Reno8 T.

Simply put, the new stitch design on OPPO Reno8 T is simply scintillating and will add a flair of splendour to the overall look and feel while also ensuring functional benefits for the users. This combination of functionality and design aesthetic makes it different from other smartphones in the market.

Photo: OPPO

#PRESS RELEASES

Taste authentic Turkish cuisine by Turkish chefs at Sheraton Dhaka

Sheraton Dhaka invites all the food aficionados in Dhaka to visit and enjoy authentic Turkish delicacies at The Garden Kitchen. To offer authentic Turkish delicacies to diners in Dhaka, Sheraton Dhaka has flown in master chefs Ahmet Guler, Sait Dursun, Mehmet Aslan, and Erhan Demir.

As a specialist baklava chef who has been making the dessert for over 25 years, chef Ahmet Guler can prepare over 30 types of baklavas along with other Turkish desserts. Pistachio baklava, walnut baklava, pistachio durum, chocolate sekerpare, havuc dilim, and sobiyet are his signature items.

Chef Sait Dursun is a kabab master and has over 30 years of experience. He has extensive knowledge about the different styles of preparing kebabs. Sait is an expert in sourcing local products for developing new dishes to cater to the local taste. Adana and beyti kebab are his signature dishes.

Based on his work experience in countries like Libya and Egypt, chef Mehmet Aslan has gained first-hand knowledge about varied cuisines. His signature items are shwarma and various types of pide.

Lastly, chef Erhan Demir is a master pastry artist with over 19 years of experience. He specialises majorly in Turkish, French, and Arabian pastries along with having a vast knowledge in preparing Italian, Continental, and Mediterranean dishes.

Interested diners will have to make table reservations by calling +8801313709099.

HOROSCOPE

ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Sign up for courses that will bring you mental stimulation. You will be popular with acquaintances. Don't spend carelessly. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Unexpected bills may set you back. Home improvement projects will go smoothly. Join any creative endeavour. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Keep your own family in mind. Go after your professional goals. Trips will be favourable. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.

CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Invest in something that will grow in value. Make plans for a pleasure trip. Investments are best left alone this week. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Lend an ear to an old friend. Take your time with everything. Underhandedness will affect your reputation. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Your temper could get the better of you. Take advantage of your good fortune. Find ways to fill your extra time. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Don't let loved ones rule your life. Your relationships will reach a critical point this week. You need a change of pace. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Find out if they're married. Attend social functions this week. Don't be oversensitive when dealing with things. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Be careful while travelling. Someone from your past will revisit you. Be prepared for a rewarding day. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.

CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't trust everyone reaching out to you. Don't be afraid to make a move. Socialising will lead to partnerships. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Children may not entertain your suggestions. Take care of elders. Emotional deception is evident. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Don't say anything that can be used against you. Restrictions may be difficult to live with. Look into physical activities. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.

Star LIFE Style

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#PERSPECTIVE

Wearing a teep is my choice

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

The teep was an accessory in this region's dress-up culture and I believe culture and religion are two different contexts, thus it was prevalent among women of all faiths and classes. I have seen my mother and aunt use gura teep or powdered ones or in pastes called kumkum er teep.

Once upon a time, red teep was drawn with vermillion powder. They would use kajal made from soot to draw teep as well. Then came the velvet leaves with glue on the back, and that is the trend up until now. We have glittering teep with gemstones, designer teeps made out of pieces of cloth, and other materials like wood, glass, or even terracotta are also in vogue now.

Sirajul Islam, a member of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh and a former professor of the Department of History at Dhaka University, told the BBC, "Women in many countries of the world have been wearing the teep for millennia. It has never been particular to Bengalis or followers of the Hindu faith. In the 19th century, the use of teep became commonplace. Women used the teep in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Burma, the Philippines, and Indonesia especially."

During trips overseas, my colourful forehead ornament drew the attention of foreigners first and was a pleasant conversation starter.

The teep originates from the Indian sub-continent. This is a part of Bengali culture. There is no connection between this and anti-religiosity. However, Ziaul Huq, a noted researched, mentioned in his book, Itihaser Oligoli, that once upon a time, the teep was used to differentiate between class and caste in the Indian subcontinent. He stated, "The teep on the forehead has become an inseparable part of the daily life of the modern Bengali woman."

Those who want to pollute society, who want to destroy harmony, want to exploit women and build a regressive society — are the ones creating the debate around the teep in Bangladesh. Everyone should realise that national culture and religious culture are completely different. And the teep is a part of Bengali culture.

By Shahana Huda Ranjana
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