



NOT ALL MEN, BUT  
YES, ALL WOMEN

**PG 3**

THE WAFFLE-ON-A-STICK  
REVOLUTION

**PG 6**



# Inside the world of food vlogging

# EDITORIAL

Learning a new skill is never easy, but it need not be that difficult either.

The struggle with learning a new skill starts right away if you don't stick to your initial plan and practise it as you intended to. Things get harder when you start drifting away from the commitment of learning the new skill entirely.

But having said that, is it not our fault for failing to stick to a schedule and practise this skill or at least commit to it?

Not necessarily. I personally feel it's all about how interested we are in learning that skill or how important that skill is for our professional or personal growth. For instance, if that skill is a must-have for a job we're doing, we can't but commit to it, even forcefully at times if necessary. So, at the end of the day, if you're failing to commit to learning a new skill or something new in general, rethink your reasons why you wanted to learn in the first place. Maybe you'll rediscover the purpose.

– Faisal Bin Iqbal, Sub-Editor & Digital Coordinator, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### ANIME



# Vinland Saga is a Viking classic for the ages

AYAAN SHAMS SIDDIQUEE

The violent and unforgiving world of medieval Vikings is a popular setting deeply explored in fictional media. The grisly violence and political intrigue make for a thrilling journey into the realm of blood-stained feudalism. But *Vinland Saga*, a Viking epic by mangaka Makoto Yukimura, isn't just about brashness and violence. It also builds on top of the central war motif by taking the viewers on a spell-bounding journey of revenge, redemption, and self-discovery.

The story follows Thorfinn, the son of a famed Jomsviking named Thors who renounced his life as a ruthless war machine to seek a peaceful future. However, Thors would still be murdered at the hands of a Viking gang, permanently scarring his son. This incident fuels Thorfinn to embark on a hate-filled journey toward becoming a great warrior worthy of avenging his father.

The first season wastes no time in throwing Thorfinn into the clutches of an actual battlefield where the limits of survival are put to the test at every nook and corner. Moreover, almost all 24 episodes feature limitless action as the Danes and English seek to annihilate one another. Villages are mercilessly torched down and people are incapacitated or sold off as slaves.

Despite this overarching theme of war and slaughter, the first season of the show only serves as the prologue to *Vinland Saga's* true story.

Season two shifts gears drastically moving away from the earlier action-filled, gnarly sequence of events and embracing one of the series' very first messages – no one has any enemies. This principal lesson was first introduced through Thors, who realised the error of his ways and tried to impart the

same ideals to Thorfinn. The latter may have rejected that during the first half of the show due to being blinded by revenge, but as season two rolls around, he realises just how pointless it all was and devotes himself to pacifism.

This ability to smoothly adjust the narrative thread based on the characters' lives points towards one of *Vinland Saga's* massive strengths. Additionally, the change in tone reveals just how well-paced the show is. Even though a big chunk of the season is dedicated to the mundane events in Thorfinn's new life as a farmer, certain mysteries, and growing conflicts in the other parts of the country are revealed to maintain just the right amount of tension. It also reiterates the fact that the path to redemption and self-discovery is a slow-burner, and that couldn't be truer for the protagonist's case.

On a production level, *Vinland Saga* needs no prior introduction. Handled by Wit Studio and MAPPA throughout the years, the set pieces have always looked stunning and the art style breathes life into Yukimura's luscious world. The smooth animation in the action scenes, coupled with the perfect musical scores, constantly keeps the viewers on their toes.

*Vinland Saga* might be imperfect, but the thematic ambition of discarding the very hook that attracted most of its fanbase speaks volumes in favour of the show's structural metamorphosis. At its core, it might just be a tale of a young man searching for his place in a world that has displaced him, but the nuanced, complex, and bold approach makes it a must-watch.

Ayaan immerses himself in dinosaur comics and poorly-written manga. Recommend your least favourite reads at [ayaan.shams@gmail.com](mailto:ayaan.shams@gmail.com)

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THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE  
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PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

# Inside the world of food vlogging



**TAASEEN MOHAMMED ISLAM & IRINA JAHAN**

Whether you live vicariously through food vloggers eating at places you could never afford or just enjoy seeing videos of aesthetic restaurants, there's a 99 percent chance you've encountered a restaurant review on social media. What started as a small community of people posting for fun has gained overwhelming mainstream prominence. In a country with a lack of activities to do, food content is a big reason young people stay active on platforms.

Food content creation in 2023 has come a long way from when a man with a smartphone and a dream decided to take on Takeout 2.0. So, how is the content that magically pops up on our feeds made?

Let's start from the beginning: why do people make content?

There isn't a one-size-fits-all answer to

this, and everybody has their reasons for starting. Noodar Yasmeen, @noodareats, an up-and-coming food content creator mainly active on Instagram, says, "Food is something me and my cousin always bonded over. So, I decided to take a chance on my platform to share my love and knowledge on food-related content and help others connect over it."

On the other hand, Shahbaz Amin Bhuiyan, one-half of the vlogging duo Recommended Or Not, which is active both on Instagram and Facebook, decided to start posting after seeing a need for proper reviews.

"I used to go out to eat a lot seeing reviews on social media, but the food and atmosphere didn't always meet my expectations. I realised there was a shortage of sincere food reviews, which motivated me to open a page where I could post my reviews and help people," he says.

There's a lot of planning that goes into creating a video. As hard as it might be to believe, you can't just film yourself wolfing down food and post it impromptu. First comes the ideation stage, preferably, you want to create content that captures your audience's attention, which requires insight into what's popular.

"Before we film, me and my friends spend a lot of time researching and coming up with video ideas that could generate hype and traction," says Iftekhar Rafsan, more commonly known as Rafsan the Chotobhai.

While most restaurants don't mind creators, it's best to let them know ahead of time to allow them to accommodate you without disturbing any patrons. However, brace yourself for some degree of awkwardness.

"People's reactions to me filming used to bother me a lot initially, but I've gotten used to the stares and try not to pay attention to them," details Nazia Zaman, also known as Whatsinmybox on YouTube and Instagram.

Speaking of equipment, the myth that you need a whole reality television-style crew and camera production for shooting videos simply does not hold true.

Elaborating on this, Rafsan the Chotobhai states, "I started filming with my OnePlus 3T and used my friend's phone for recording audio and lighting. I upgraded to an iPhone X after going past 300K subs. Last year, I shot a video having coffee on top of the Burj Khalifa on my phone that got over seventeen million views, performing way better than many of my better-produced videos."

But if a content creator starting out wants to buy equipment, a digital camera, a shotgun microphone, a tripod, and a ring light is good enough to start. As your page grows, managing it only gets more challenging.

"I have a team of around nine people to run the brand, but when I started out, I had to be very hands-on and manage the planning, editing, and other nitty-gritty aspects of my page all on my own," says Rafsan.

After sorting out the logistics and equipment, you'll have to go out and judge the food and restaurant. So how do creators judge a place to review?

When asked, Noodar says, "Obviously, the food. I always compare the quality to the price point, as I don't expect to get similar quality food from a 100 taka meal compared to a 500 taka one. The restaurant's location and ambience also matter, and finally, the service is really crucial, as it can make or break the entire experience."

When editing, you need to make stylistic choices based on the platform you'll post on. For Facebook, videos are longer and more vlog style because it has to be kept in mind that they will reach the general public. However, some creators, like Noodar, make shorter videos on TikTok and Instagram, which suit the algorithm and her audience's preferences.

After all of that's accounted for, you'll finally have content worth sharing. Managing a social media presence demands skill and grit. Videos must be optimised based on the platform it's intended to serve.

"Replying to comments and messages and posting regular reviews while keeping track of the timing is crucial for running a successful page," says Shahbaz.

Facebook remains the go-to platform for food-related content in Bangladesh. While newer platforms dominate certain demographics, Facebook's large reach makes it prime real estate for reviewing food and creating content. Despite its pitfalls, Facebook can be a springboard for reviewing food and content creation.

Moving forward, there's obviously a lot of work put into running a social media presence, and holding down such a large commitment being a full-time student or job holder can be taxing.

"A lot of effort goes into creating content, and it becomes hard to balance the two. During certain times, I've lost motivation to create content as I wasn't in the right headspace to be creative," remarks Nazia.

*"Before we film, me and my friends spend a lot of time researching and coming up with video ideas that could generate hype and traction," says Iftekhar Rafsan*

On the other hand, female content creators are susceptible to a unique form of struggle – misogyny. Unfortunately, many viewers don't feel comfortable with the idea of women creating food review videos.

Fahrin Zannat Faiza, the digital creator behind the popular food vlogging channel Khudalagse, shares her experience from her early days. She says, "During the initial days of my channel, there weren't many females in this industry, and a lot of people found it hard to accept a woman being in front of the camera, eating out in restaurants and making videos about them. Things have changed a lot since then, and thankfully, the overwhelming

support of my family and community kept me going."

She adds, "Even the restaurants are more open to food content creators these days. There is an increasing number of people in the content creation world who bring in a lot of quality content and it makes restaurant staff receive us with more enthusiasm."

Barring exceptions, making content can be a good side hustle but not a viable alternative to stable employment. There are going to be sponsorship opportunities occasionally, but getting a channel monetised is a lot of work, and YouTube doesn't pay enough to live off on.

"As creators in Bangladesh, it's harder for us to be included in Instagram's Reels Play bonus program or the TikTok Creator Fund. So, having it as a career isn't viable without a backup income," says Noodar.

There's also a lot of hesitation regarding getting started, to which Shahbaz suggests just doing it. "You might be bad at taking pictures or writing reviews at first, but you'll never be good at it if you don't start. And once you start, you'll only get better at it," he says.

Faiza remarks, "The only advice I always give is to start creating if you have the passion for it. Getting into content creation simply because everyone else is doing it would be a waste of time, money and effort."

On the other hand, Rafsan says, "If you're gonna start out now, focus on originality and differentiating yourself, and be prepared to grow a thick skin. You'll need it to deal with the comment section."

*Writing this article made Taaseen want to eat tacos. Suggest taco places at taaseen.2001@gmail.com*

*Irina does not like tacos. Send her your controversial food opinions at irinajahan17@gmail.com*



# The waffle-on-a-stick revolution

NAHIAN JAMAL JOYEETA

Waffles on a stick are popping up at every corner of Dhaka city, slowly becoming the newest street food sensation. If you haven't tried one yet, you should seriously consider it because the crunchy little baked squares on popsicle sticks coupled with mouthwatering colourful toppings are irresistible.

I had been planning to go on a dessert run to satisfy my sweet tooth, so I decided to make a day out of tasting waffles. I visited the highest-rated waffle places that have been taking Dhaka's foodgram by storm.

My journey began at Waffle Time, Dhanmondi. Needless to say, I was feeling a little adventurous so I went with the red velvet waffle topped with whipped cream and red velvet crumbs. The first plus point was that it looked exactly as delectable as it looks on the menu but I didn't expect it to be as sweet although the crunchy texture and the gooey cream melted right into my mouth.

Next on my list was Waffle Street which took me all the way to Mirpur-1, to try their Nutella Ice Loaded, which was the most expensive one on their menu. It was a Nutella-coated waffle that came with



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

vanilla ice cream, drizzled caramel, and chocolate sauce as well as banana cubes and chocolate chips as toppings. Given the price and the journey, it was quite the mouthful. The waffle got a little messy to eat out of a stick as the ice cream was melting fast. And so, I was compelled to

use a fork and a spoon.

The final station of my sugar rush was at Waffle Up's flagship outlet in Banani. I wanted to save it till the end because that's where I had my first-ever waffle on a stick last summer, so it made perfect sense for it to come full circle. Their classic

Nutella Waffle that comes with a teal interior tasted rich, fluffy, and as sweet as you would expect it to be. It balanced out my palate, being simpler than my experimental rendezvous throughout the day.

The taste of the individual waffles is comparable because there is little variation in flavours, with the toppings usually having a Nutella or whipped cream base of a classic waffle batter. As for the menu prices, they are between BDT 150-200, well below regular waffles.

You might want to think twice before getting extra syrup or Nutella add-ons because they can at times overpower the taste. It's also best to steer clear of runny toppings when you're having waffles on the go. Not only do they run the risk of spills, but the waffle could also get soggy and come off the stick.

The outlet's kiosk-like structure with signature funky wallpapers accented by vibrant LED strip lights provides a perfectly cosy and inviting atmosphere for a budget date or a snack out with your friends. So, if you're craving a sweet, delicious, and affordable snack on the go, treat yourself to your nearest waffle joint.

Spill the tea with Joyeeta at [Instagram.com/nahianjamaljoyeeta](https://www.instagram.com/nahianjamaljoyeeta)

## Critical thinking in our curriculum: Too much or too little?

ZIBA MAHDI

Critical thinking has always been emphasised heavily in education and with good reason. It is known to improve creativity, foster curiosity and enhance decision-making. Another benefit of mastering this ability is that it's universally relevant across all professions and fields.

Being a critical thinker has ramifications outside of academic and professional surroundings as well. It's easier than ever for fake news to spread and more than a little difficult to determine what is correct, given the overwhelming number of information sources. The amount of misinformation circulating around the pandemic should serve as an eye-opener in this regard.

There has been constant debate about whether the quality of our national education is up to par with global standards, as well as attempts to reinvent it. Thankfully, the NCTB has been going through a much-needed overhaul, starting from 2022.

Here's a little recap: in the revised framework, there will be no public exams before class 10 and no exams of

any kind for students up to class 3. SSC exams will consist of five subjects, while HSC will be held in two phases. The division of science, humanities, and business studies will occur from class 11 instead of 9. All these revisions are reportedly devised to facilitate holistic learning and improve creativity and competence.

The current creative question system was introduced in 2008 to promote critical thinking and discourage rote memorisation. Whether it has achieved that goal is debatable. The answer may be leaning towards a firm no, considering the amount of criticism the curriculum has received over the years.

Infrequent revisions have exacerbated its existing flaws like outdated syllabuses and textbooks riddled with errors. The creative questions are usually creative in name only, since educators encourage memorisation over all else, and that is what students are judged on, not their analytical capacity. The extent of memorisation unfortunately stretches to subjects like English and Bangla as well.

The system also fails to give teachers the necessary guidance and training required to make exams that test students'

critical and analytical thinking ability. To make matters worse, there are no universal guidelines to mark these questions provided to examiners either.

Replacing memorisation culture with a more updated system is a necessary goal, but whether it's practical in our geographical context is a glaring issue. While students in Dhaka are equipped with the best schools, teachers, and coaching centres, students outside of the capital barely receive a fraction of the academic support. The more you move towards the rural side of our country, the further the discrepancy widens. There are already doubts about whether the recent changes can be implemented in these areas due to lack of space, funding, and technology. Further modernisation might put strain on schools which are already struggling.

Some of the recent changes to the national curriculum have been wel-

come ones. Whether they affect everyone equally remains to be seen.

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Ziba Mahdi is your resident pessimist. Cheer her up at [mahdi@yahoo.com](mailto:ziba@yahoo.com)



ILLUSTRATION: ABIR HOSSAIN

**FABLE FACTORY**



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

# [You stand here again]

**RAIAN ABEDIN**

You stand where you always have –  
You are five, you are seven;  
You are as many years as you’ve ever been.  
And something about the night and the way  
The tree bends in the fields where  
The blowers lift everything  
But you – because you have smoothed your creases over –  
Is reminiscent of how all loose threads belong to the same web,  
You listen to hushed conversations  
You shouldn’t, nor should the trees listen to you  
But they do, because what is living if not  
Defiance against absolution. You think of running  
Away, and the tree understands, because the tree knows.  
But living is defying, and you are living.  
Or so you tell yourself.

*Raian aims to be a poet of great renown someday.*



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

# Curtain call

**SARA KABIR**

The curtain rises,  
Silence engulfs the theatre,  
All eyes fixed on her.

A lone figure stands,  
Centre stage with bated breath,  
Heart pounding, shaking.

A sea of faces,  
In anticipation held,  
For the grand debut.

A soft drumming beat,  
From the orchestra below,  
Sets the stage aglow.

Words churn the play,  
A world of make-believe spun,  
Enrapturing all.

Tension builds and ebbs,  
Emotions raw, bittersweet,  
The story unfolds.

The performer glides,  
Across the boards with such grace,  
Transfixed, the crowd stares.

The plot thickens fast,  
A drama of love and loss,  
And twisted kismet.

A grand finale.  
Audience too stunned to speak,  
A magic spell cast.

She takes a last bow,  
The curtains fall to applause,  
The show ends in bliss.

# BLUE CLAY

**SYEDA ERUM NOOR**

The blue model of clay vices  
That sits in a house of glass  
Will shrink about three sizes  
As it waits for the moon to pass.

With her hair moulded perfectly,  
and her eyes shaped to cry,  
Her blue clay turns to burgundy  
As darkness drains the sky.

She sits in the clear palace –  
Picture perfect in her place,  
Unaware of the mould and its malice  
Inching into her embrace.

Like promises made in secrecy,  
It tells her sweet, green lies  
While spreading through her sheepishly  
Like poison does to flies.

She’s frozen in her state of being  
A model built to die  
With smooth skin that is for pleasing  
But a heart built to deny.

So, the mould extends its ugly tendrils  
Of deceit that it will preach.  
While she stays set on her lovely end trail  
Where she’s never meant to reach

So doomed the blue clay princess

Her skin now turns grey  
Too lost to even witness  
The crime that was at play.

Her hand perched atop her side,  
Her head turned to the sky,  
She looks to darkness to confide  
But the moon passes her by.

Her eyes frozen in memory  
And skin broken in plea  
She begs, but not for mercy  
But only for her fee.

The one she’d earned for holding  
The impossible serenity  
That had the glass house going  
While she lost her sanity.

But alas the mould is rigid  
As it crawls into her ears  
While she stands still and she listens  
She sheds not one stray tear.

And while her colour slowly fades  
And her blue clay turns to dark stone  
No part of her is jaded  
And no part of her, her own.

*Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious  
and has no sense of time. Send help at  
erum.noor1998@gmail.com*



ILLUSTRATION: FATIMA JAHAN ENA

Send your short stories, poetry and illustrations to [shoutfablefactory@gmail.com](mailto:shoutfablefactory@gmail.com)

# How children are affected by their parents' unhappy marriage

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

In a study conducted in 2018, it was found that one divorce is filed every hour in Bangladesh. While the statistic might sound alarmingly high, it is, in fact, quite low compared to the number of couples who remain in unhappy marriages.

There is no denying that an overwhelming stigma around divorces still exists in our society. Not only are divorcees subjected to endless mockery and malicious comments behind their backs, society often tends to label them as failures. This disapproval and social stigma lead most couples to stay in their unhappy relationships. However, many people also choose to continue their marriage only because they mistakenly believe it is better for their children if they do so.

Marital conflict can result in constant fighting and can breed a hostile atmosphere in a household. An environment like this strips away the sense of safety and security that is necessary for a child to have a healthy and nurturing childhood.

Fatema Khatun, 19, shares her own experience saying, "The never-ending anxiety of not knowing when or how another fight might break out ate away at me. I simply wanted them to stop being with each other."

When a marriage deteriorates to the point where there is endless fighting and separation appears to be the obvious solution to end the suffering of both parties involved, it can have serious consequences on the mental health of their children.

Porom Chowdhury\*, 17, grew up watching his parents tearing away at each other with their words. He says, "Without proper reference to what a healthy relationship looks like, my parents' relationship seemed normal to me. It was easy to convince myself as a kid that it was just something they did. I got desensitised to them fighting to a point that even when something serious happened, I shrugged it off. It took me a long time to grow out of it."

It can even affect their ability to form meaningful connections in the future, lead them to have trust issues and lose faith in marriage as a concept.

Aranyo Rishi, 18, states that, "My parents used to be physically violent. The fights that broke out, or even just the general attitude between our parents took a toll on my sister and me. We developed an irrational and deeply distorted view of marriage. Even if I acknowledge that it's an unreasonable view grounded in trauma and tainted objectivity, there's a subconscious part of me that can't help but insist I never get married."

Children, especially those that are very young, are incredibly intuitive and can easily pick up on cues. Even if their parents are trying to hide their unhappiness, they can detect it. This can, in turn, lead them to formulate their own reasons which sometimes involve blaming them-



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

selves. Not only can this make them feel responsible for their parents' sadness, but can even serve as a precursor to them developing self-esteem issues.

Moreover, conflict does not only occur in the form of fighting. Sometimes, one partner might be more demanding and in order to avoid discord, their other half is forced to make adjustments despite their own wishes.

Leyana Hasan\*, 19, elaborates, "My mother always makes sure to do things exactly as my father wants. She even goes so far as to defend him when he's horrible to me and my brother, all in the hopes that he won't start shouting. But seeing her struggling like this only makes me grow contemptuous towards my father."

This feeling of reproach towards a parent or both parents can also stem from a general decline in the quality of relationship between parents and their children. As the parents' frustration and pain builds up, they can become overwhelmed by

their own emotions. Consequently, the parents' dissatisfaction can manifest in the form of neglect or anger, which may result in the parents lashing out at their children over entirely unrelated reasons.

The idea that staying together as a complete family unit is beneficial for the children is erroneous. From certain perspectives, it can be understood how someone might be misled to make this judgement. There is, after all, research that shows that children growing up with divorced parents tend to fare worse than those that grow up with parents married to each other.

What people don't acknowledge is that this happens when the couple is satisfied in their relationship. There also exists evidence to suggest that growing up in a house full of conflict can do more harm to a child than a divorce. Furthermore, in many households, physical, verbal, or emotional abuse is present. Exposure to this, whether it is directed from one par-

ent to the other or towards the children, is infinitely more destructive than exposure to divorce.

When asked about the impact of conflict ridden families on children, Mithila Khandaker, consultant psychologist at LifeSpring, says, "A child learns about the world, about the meanings of words such as love, respect, affection, and marriage through their parents. Thus, when they see their parents disrespecting each other, the meanings of these words become blurred for them. It disturbs them deeply, to see these concepts taking such hideous forms and the dilemma it puts them through is quite harmful. Study shows that a marriage of conflict can be detrimental to the brain development of a child."

She continues, "Every parent wishes for their child's mental well-being. Hence, they don't want to put their child through divorce. But while a divorced family might not be considered normal, the child can at least be free of the daily trauma of seeing their parents fighting. The struggle of surviving the divorce is considerably less."

There are also instances where people stay together not because of their children, but instead use the children as weapons to stay together. Not being able to rid themselves of the terror of what might happen if they get divorced, they hold the children as a sort of collateral, wielding them against their partner in order to force them to stay in the unhappy marriage.

Anindya Arif, 20, shares a similar view, "Children are seen as a guarantee that the other person won't leave them. Thus, our parents are ultimately doomed to repeat the same toxic cycle their parents made."

Perhaps the best way that children feel about their parents remaining in unhappy marriages because of them can be summed up by what Rishi shared with us, "There's a certain unbearable pain in watching two people close to you, who used to be close to each other, purposefully hurt themselves deeply, because of you."

\*Names have been changed upon request.

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