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Dream Girl

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STORY OF A HAATH PAKHA SELLER
EXPERIENCING SWEDISH MIDSUMMER **P4**
TRAVELOGUE
OVERCOMING MUM GUILT **P5**
PARENTING BASICS

PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN
MODEL: MIM MANTASHA
WARDROBE: STARLET STYLE STUDIO
JEWELLERY: AMISHEE FINE JEWELRY
STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
MAKEUP AND HAIR: SUMON RAHAT
LOCATION: SYED BARI GAZIPUR

KUNDALINI RISING
SHAZIA OMARWriter, activist and yogini
www.shaziaomar.com

Is yoga the secret to enhancing MEMORY AND LEARNING?

David Beckham, the famous footballer, has often spoken about how yoga has helped him maintain fitness, improve flexibility, and recover from injuries more effectively throughout his career. Incorporating yoga into the training regimen allowed Beckham to enhance performance on the field and extend his professional playing career.

Yoga is not just about being strong and beautiful; it also has health implications. Emerging research suggests that yoga may serve as a preventive measure against dementia and cognitive degeneration. A focal point in these studies is the role of subtle micro-adjustments practitioners make to maintain balance, proper alignment, and fluidity. These small adjustments are crucial as they engage multiple neural pathways, promoting brain plasticity.

For instance, practitioners must subtly adjust their hips, spine, and shoulders to maintain balance during a seemingly simple routine like the tree pose. This continuous fine-tuning stimulates the brain's proprioceptive network responsible for spatial awareness and coordination.

The 29 April 2024 issue of Harvard Health Publishing states, "When you lift weights, your muscles get stronger and bigger. When you do yoga, your brain cells develop new connections, and changes occur in brain structure as well as function, resulting in improved cognitive skills such as learning and memory. Yoga strengthens parts of the brain that play a key role in memory, attention, awareness, thought, and language. Think of it as weightlifting for the brain."

One study conducted by the

Alzheimer's Research and Prevention Foundation found that regular yoga practice significantly improved cognitive function in participants. The study emphasised that the intricate, mindful movements and breathwork required in yoga led to enhanced connectivity between brain regions. This connectivity is vital in maintaining cognitive function and delaying the onset of dementia.

The hippocampus, a brain region critical for memory and learning, benefits particularly from these micro-adjustments. Research published in the Journal of Alzheimer's Disease highlighted that yoga practitioners showed increased grey matter volume in the hippocampus compared to non-practitioners. This increase is likely due to the neuroplastic changes

prompted by the continuous, mindful adjustments required in yoga.

Yoga has also been shown to help individuals with Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) by improving concentration and reducing hyperactivity. The focus on breath control and mindfulness in yoga practice can enhance attention span and promote calmness, making it a beneficial practice for managing ADHD symptoms.

As research continues to unveil the profound impact of yoga on cognitive longevity, incorporating yoga into daily routines could become a widely recommended strategy for maintaining brain health and preventing cognitive decline.

By Shazia Omar
Photo: Courtesy





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#CRAFTS

TURNING LEAVES INTO LIVELIHOODS

The story of Mohammad Abdul and his haat pakhas //

Battling changing times: Mohammad Abdul and his story

A figure stood distinct amidst the crowd in the streets of Gulshan-2, just a few days before the festival of Eid-ul-Azha. In the sweltering heat – clad in ragged clothes and bearing the weight of tradition both literally and metaphorically – was Mohammad Abdul.

He was carrying a load of haat pakha – hand fans made with palm leaves – each woven with stories of a fading craft. So, what was he doing just before the happy occasion of Eid?

“I wanted to earn a little extra money to buy my children something nice,” he replied.

Hailing from Kushtia, Mohammad Abdul has been making and selling haat pakhas for more than two decades now. Like Abdul, many people used to earn their livelihoods by making such pakhas – a tradition declining with time.

“We usually craft these pakhas from palm leaves. However, many in our village, especially the women, make nakshi pakhas. We have been making pakhas for generations now and frequently, come to the city in hopes of selling them,” explained Abdul.

The haat pakha is not just a tool for battling the relentless heat but is a symbol of Bangladeshi heritage. These hand fans are typically crafted from palm leaves, featuring a sturdy yet flexible structure that provides a natural, cooling breeze – much needed in the tropical climate of our country.

Traditionally, these fans come in various forms – plain and adorned with elaborate naksha (designs). However, as technology advances and electric fans and air

conditioners become more accessible, the demand for these handcrafted fans has dwindled, casting a shadow over artisans’ livelihoods.

“Do you remember any particular story about haat pakha?” I asked, intrigued by the generational craft.

With a smile, Abdul’s eyes lit

up with nostalgia. “My

grandmother used to tell me stories under the cool breeze of her pakha. Those were simpler times,” he said.

“Summers were harsh, but a haat pakha was always within reach. My mother would use it to lull me to sleep or shoo away the flies while we ate.” Abdul reminisced with teary eyes.

In rural areas, where many homes lack air



conditioning and sometimes even electric fans due to power outages or economic constraints, these hand fans are invaluable. They are used to generate a breeze during the hot and humid days and nights, making the oppressive heat more bearable.

For many rural families, making and selling haat pakhas provides a supplementary income similar to Abdul but the winds of modernisation are challenging this age-old tradition. Abdul laments, “The young ones, even my children say there is no future in this. They might be right, but what about our past, our livelihoods?”

So, as the young generation, our role is pivotal – we are the bridge between the past and the future. One of the most direct ways we can support artisans like Mohammad Abdul is by purchasing their products.

For artisans like him, every haat pakha sold is not just a transaction but a lifeline. Buying one or two pakhas, whether for personal use, as gifts, or even as decorative pieces for homes and offices, can make a significant difference.

It is through these collective efforts that we can help preserve not just the craft itself but also the stories, traditions, and livelihoods associated with it – preventing this unique part of our heritage from fading into oblivion.

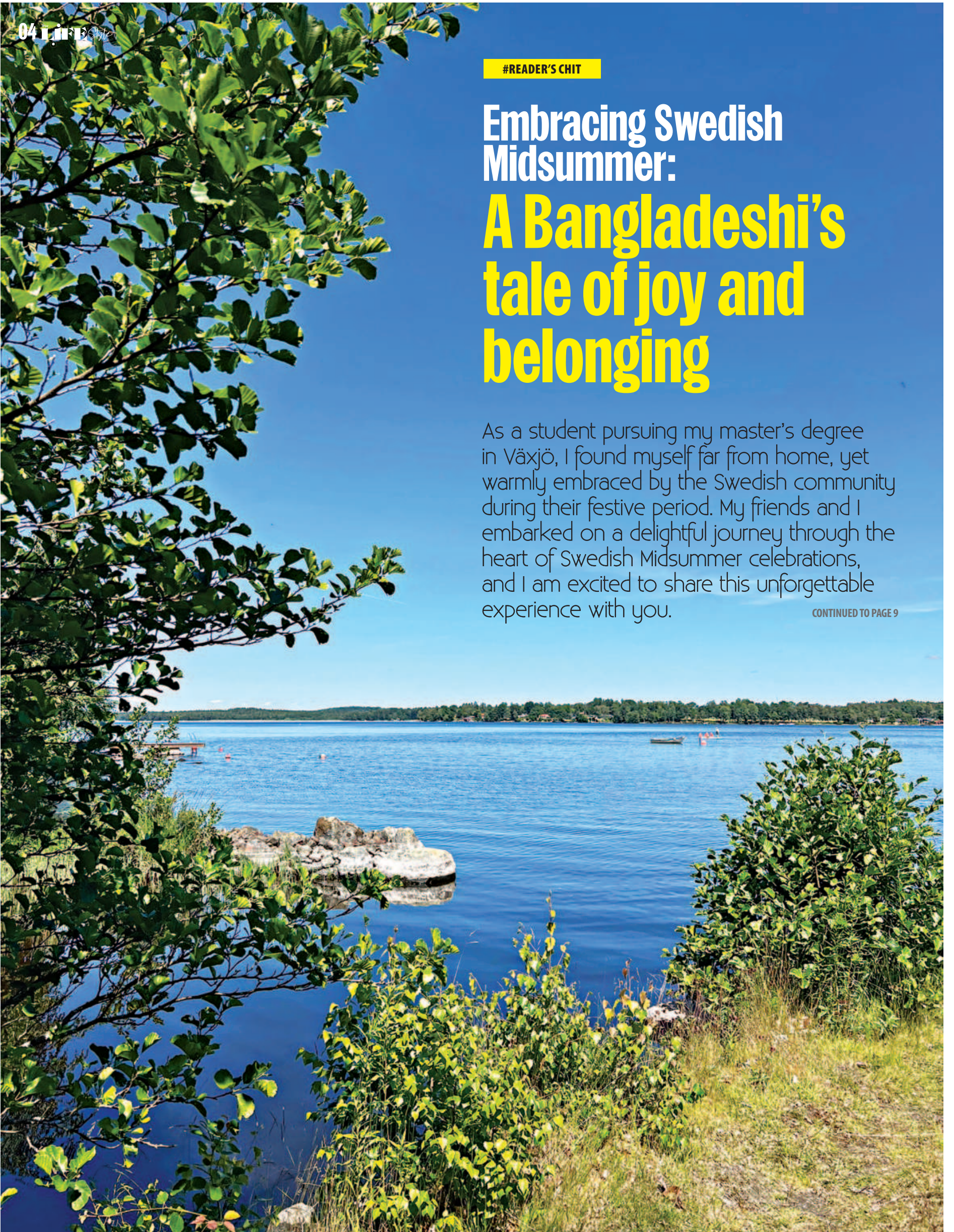
By Ayman Anika
Photos: Ayman Anika

#READER'S CHIT

Embracing Swedish Midsummer: **A Bangladeshi's tale of joy and belonging**

As a student pursuing my master's degree in Växjö, I found myself far from home, yet warmly embraced by the Swedish community during their festive period. My friends and I embarked on a delightful journey through the heart of Swedish Midsummer celebrations, and I am excited to share this unforgettable experience with you.

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#RELATIONSHIP

HOW TO CONQUER MUM GUILT

A Guide to Self-Compassion and Balance



Easily the most pervasive feeling that plagues mothers around the world, “mum guilt” usually stems from the belief that they are not doing enough for their children. It can be emotionally exhausting, impacting not only their mental health but also their overall well-being. Fortunately, with the right strategies, it is possible to help mothers eventually overcome this guilt and embrace a more balanced and fulfilling life.

Here's how: Acknowledge and validate your feelings. The first step to addressing mum guilt is to acknowledge that you are suffering from it. Recognising that these feelings are common can provide a sense of relief. Talking about your feelings with trusted friends, family members, or a therapist and generally expressing these emotions out loud can help you process them and help you understand that you are not alone.

that rejuvenate you — whether it's reading, exercising, or spending time with friends.

Remember, a happy and healthy mother is better equipped to take care of her children. Delegate and seek support.

Many mothers feel they must handle everything on their own, leading to burnout and increased guilt when things do not go as expected. Learning to delegate tasks and seek support from your

Incorporating mindfulness practices into your daily routine can help you stay in the moment and reduce anxiety. Techniques such as meditation, deep breathing exercises, or journaling can help you manage stress and gain perspective. Practising gratitude can help shift your focus from what you are lacking to appreciating what you have. Reflect on the positive aspects of your life and your parenting journey. Focus on quality, not quantity.

The quality of time spent with your children is more important than the quantity. Engaging in meaningful activities and being fully present with them during your interactions can strengthen your bond with your children and alleviate guilt. Remember that short, focused periods of connection can be more impactful than long hours filled with distractions. Forgive yourself. Finally, practice self-forgiveness. Let go of past mistakes and the guilt associated with them. Understand that every mother faces challenges and that learning



Set realistic expectations

One of the main contributors to mum guilt is the unrealistic expectations set by society and even personal standards. It is crucial to recognise that perfection is unattainable and that doing your best is enough. Give yourself grace when you make mistakes and celebrate small victories and progress, rather than fixating on perceived shortcomings. Prioritise self-care.

Self-care is often overlooked by mothers who feel guilty about taking time out for themselves. However, self-care is not selfish; it is essential for maintaining your well-being and ability to care for your family. Make time for activities

partner, family, or friends can significantly lighten your load.

Do not be afraid to ask for help with childcare, household chores, or other responsibilities. Building a support system is crucial for maintaining balance. Embrace flexibility.

Life with children is unpredictable, and rigidity can exacerbate feelings of guilt when things do not go as planned. Embrace flexibility and adaptability in your daily routine. Understand that it is okay to change plans and that flexibility does not equate to failure. Being adaptable allows you to navigate the ups and downs of parenting with greater ease. Practice mindfulness and gratitude



from these experiences is part of the journey. Treat yourself with the same kindness and compassion you would offer a friend in a similar situation.

By Munira Fidai
Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

A gown is not just a mere dress. It is a shining beacon of hope, of wishes that one has held dear in one's heart since childhood. Most women will agree, the right outfit has a magnificent transforming effect on a person instantly.

BEHIND THE SEAMS

A guide to styling GOWNS

While ball gowns are hardly relevant in modern times unless one is headed to the Met gala (its theme permitting the said ball gown!), they are largely relegated to the regency-style balls of Bridgerton and such! But a gown is so much more.

It's stylish, versatile, elegant as well as sophisticated. What's more, one does not have to be invited to the Queen's ball to wear one!

Gowns of today are sleek and stylish and can be worn to most occasions with ease and panache. There is a right gown for every occasion; all you have to do is find one that makes your heart sing a happy song!

Have you got your senior prom coming up? A gown should be your first choice. A body con silhouette is perfect, with fun details like cutouts on the waist or at the back. Lace inserts also look fabulous. Choose a jewel tone like ruby, emerald, sapphire, or topaz even to truly shine like a precious stone!

Keep details minimal though; focus on one design element and keep the rest of your look simple for a sophisticated, glamorous look.

For weddings, one is spoilt for choice. A claret-hued gown with gold embellishments is stunning and will be the perfect foil for gold jewellery.

Black is also another fantastic option. For receptions, a pale gold/silver lamé column gown will look fabulous. Choose a slinky number to cut a slender silhouette. Fusion-style gowns look incredible for deshi weddings.

For bridal showers, baby showers, or birthdays floral gowns are sweet and stunning. Sheer materials such as organza, Muslin, taffeta, or tulle will make a pretty gown. Choose a beautiful print that will complement your body shape. Off-shoulder gowns are also chic.

Hot rocks! Timeless jewellery trends

Even the most humble, down-to-earth among us find it hard to resist the charm of the sparkle and shine of beautiful jewellery. Our love affair with jewels of all manners is nothing short of legendary and even more

so when diamonds are involved. This precious rock has all of us mesmerised and captivated, and to resist its allure is certainly not for the faint of heart!

In recent times, most of the pieces designed by jewellers complement the modern woman, who likes to set herself apart from the crowd. She also has a keen understanding of style, appreciates quality and is respectful of tradition and heritage.

A diamond choker with emeralds and rubies is spectacular; when adorning your neck, it will make you look ravishingly beautiful. Not to mention that this exquisite piece will remain an heirloom, a piece that will be appreciated and loved by posterity.

If you are looking to buy new jewellery, look into the range of diamond cuffs, stunning and elegant in design and style. These cuffs are versatile; you could wear one and let that do the talking by skipping any other pieces. Or, you could pair it with other simpler pieces to create a beautiful, subtle look letting the fabulous cuff shine.

When worn with a solid-coloured dress these cuffs will bring the sparkle of the stars to your look!

A wispy floral necklace fashioned out of diamonds and rubies is simply stunning. It will dress up the simplest outfits in the best way possible. Especially pretty is the necklace with teeny tiny flowers. One can see the amazing craftsmanship and detailing that goes into creating such stunning designs.

Cocktail rings are a staple in every woman's jewellery collection, they add pizzazz to anything and everything. From mid-sized to extra-large the best jewellers are bound to have a piece that will sing to you the sweetest song and it will be the best gift to yourself that will keep on giving!

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan



Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Mim Mantasha
Wardrobe: Starlet Style Studio
Jewellery: Amishee Fine Jewelry
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Makeup and Hair: Sumon Rahat
Location: Syed Bari Gazipur

#FASHION

Fashion across continents: Fusing traditions of Bangladesh and Senegal

"It all started over a cup of coffee," explained Faiza Ahmed. Hadja Sata Seck is a Senegalese interior designer and radio host by profession. She met Faiza Ahmed, proprietor and designer of the clothing brand Manas, quite serendipitously. And, what began as a casual rendezvous soon blossomed into a rewarding cultural collaboration.

Seck, standing at 5 feet 11 inches tall, had previously purchased a saree from Manas that unfortunately did not fit her. "When we met, she asked if I could design something tailor-made for her. And I thought, why not? That's how the idea of our unique collaboration came to mind," Ahmed shared.

Symbolic motifs weave a collaboration
"I have always been eager to collaborate



I was wearing my attire and Seck wore hers – and we were surrounded by abundant rural greenery," detailed Ahmed.

In the words of Ahmed, it was an interesting experience for all of them – and especially for Seck. There is something special and memorable about visiting a hundred-year-old house and staying all day in the lap of rural tranquillity.

For Ahmed and Seck, the photoshoot held distinct value because of the place and overall concept they worked with.

The anticipated launch

While the exact date is yet to be announced, Ahmed plans to unveil the collection physically in a gallery. "This collaboration is very dear to me as it not only allows for a cultural exchange but also showcases the craftsmanship of our talented local artisans on an international stage," she remarked.

Truly, fashion has the power to tell stories and connect people across borders. Faiza Ahmed's collaboration with Hadja Sata Seck exemplifies this.

As the beauty of diversity gets celebrated worldwide, including in Bangladesh, let's hope to see more such multicultural collaborations in our fashion industry.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Courtesy

with the lungi weavers of Sirajganj and this project presented the perfect opportunity," said Ahmed. The lungi saree, 12 haat long, was designed specifically to accommodate Seck's height.

The collaboration's standout element involves motifs that resonate deeply in both Bangladeshi and Senegalese cultures — curated through screen print and wooden blocks, which are integral to their overall collaboration.

A similarity Seck found between the two countries, as explained by Ahmed, is "car rapide" – minibuses that are central to everyday life in Senegal, just as rickshaws are for us. Consequently, car rapide became a symbolic motif featured in the attires.

It may come as a surprise to many that hilsa is readily available in Senegal and is

quite popular. Thus, the fish motif also became an integral part of the designs.

"We used the motifs and tried to come up with something exceptional. The shared symbols not only adorn the garments but also highlight the cultural parallels between the two nations," said Ahmed.

A mesmeric photoshoot

The photoshoot took place at Betila Landlord's House, Manikganj.

"It was not a typical shoot as we didn't feature any professional models. It was us –



Embracing Swedish Midsummer: A Bangladeshi's tale of joy and belonging

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The day began with a traditional Swedish lunch at my friend Hasse's summer house. Nestled in the woods, the place was beautiful and peaceful. The picturesque setting immediately seized my heart, and I felt as if a part of me remained there even after we left.

The house, with its rustic charm, overlooked a stunning lake that mirrored the sky, creating a tranquil and almost magical atmosphere. The air was filled with the scents of nature, mixed with the aroma of our upcoming feast. It felt like a place where time stood still, a perfect sanctuary away from the hustle and bustle of daily life. I felt that that is the place, I should be living away from the crowd.

Our table was a feast for the eyes as much as for the stomach. We indulged in herrings in various marinades. The different marinades included mayonnaise with ginger and chilli, onion and chilli in vinegar and mustard, and a special one called "old man's mash," made with eggs, fish, and mayonnaise.

Each flavour was a new and fascinating experience for me, showcasing the rich culinary heritage of Sweden.

We also enjoyed boiled potatoes with



fresh dill, eggs, a lovely cheese pie, and sausages. To accompany the meal, we had shots of snaps, both store-bought and home-brewed, adding a festive spirit to our lunch. The snaps, with their sharp and warming taste, were a new experience for me, heightening the celebration's traditional feel. The interesting tradition



was to sing a special song before taking the shots.

After our hearty meal, we moved to the backyard where we enjoyed drinks and played games. The laughter and companionship were infectious, filling me with a deep sense of belonging. Some of my friends, feeling adventurous, decided

to take a swim in the lake. Watching them from the shore, I felt admiration and apprehension.

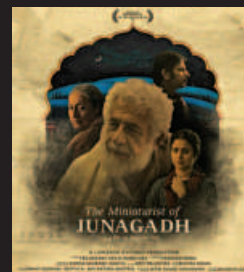
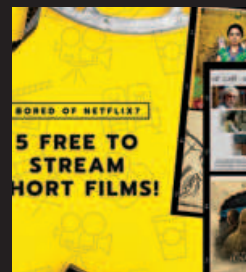
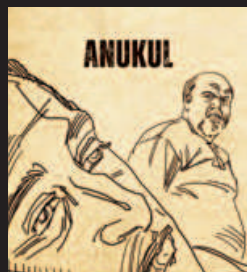
While I longed to join in, my inability to swim kept me on dry land. Nonetheless, the sight of my friends laughing and splashing in the water added a lively and joyous dimension to the afternoon. Their excitement was contagious, making even those of us who stayed on shore feel part of the fun.

As the day progressed, we set off for Evedal, a scenic area by the lake known for its traditional Midsummer festivities. The slow walk there was filled with anticipation. The air was filled with the sound of music and laughter as people danced around the Maypole, a tall wooden pole decorated with flowers and greenery.

It was my first time participating in such a dance, and although I stumbled through some steps, my friends' encouragement made it an enjoyable and heart-warming experience. The folk music played on fiddles and accordions, seemed to carry the spirit of Midsummer itself — joyous, vibrant, and full of life. Each dance move and each melody felt like a celebration of life and togetherness.

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#ENTERTAINMENT



Bored of Netflix? Here are 5 short films for you to binge!

Imagine you and your spouse are sitting on your living room couch, staring at the screen, scrolling endlessly to find something fresh and new on platforms. Nine out of ten times, you keep scrolling until you pass out or both of you settle on re-watching the over-watched FRIENDS episodes (seriously, you've got to stop!). If all this rings true to your ears, here are 5 Indian short films you can watch for free on YouTube! Yes, you heard that right!

Gadhedo

Starring Vikrant Massey, "Gadhedo" offers a whimsical interpretation of a Rajasthani folktale, portraying how easily fools can be exploited by the clever. The plot centres on Goru Dhobi, Massey, who naively pays to turn his donkey into a man under the tutelage of the ill-equipped teacher Maatsa, Chandan Roy Sanyal.

Set in a Rajasthani village, the film delivers a profound message through its exaggerated, comically portrayed characters and straightforward storyline. With distinctive performances and striking cinematography, "Gadhedo" is a must-watch, providing rich entertainment in just 16 minutes.

Anukul

"Anukul" — adapted from Satyajit Ray's short story, stars Saurabh Shukla as Nikunj, a Kolkata resident who employs a robot housekeeper, Anukul, played by Parambrata Chatterjee.

The film portrays a polite and well-meaning Anukul who develops a friendly relationship with Nikunj, which is disrupted by Nikunj's irritable cousin, Ratan played by Kharaj Mukherjee. Faithfully capturing Ray's narrative, including Anukul's light-blue checked shirt and black half pants, Sujoy Ghosh introduces a humans-vs-machines conflict, typical of sci-fi. Running 21 minutes, "Anukul" showcases the potential of Ray's stories in film, hinting at greater possibilities if more creative filmmakers like Ghosh could access Ray's works.

Interior Cafe Night

In the 13-minute short set in a quaint Kolkata coffee shop, as it nears closing time with Bengali music filling the air, the café owner, Naseeruddin Shah encounters his long-lost love portrayed by Shernaz Patel, who left him three decades ago. Their tender

reunion unfolds alongside a flashback of a younger couple, played by Shweta Basu Prasad and Naveen Kasturia, enduring a painful farewell—a stark contrast to the older couple's serene and loving reconnection.

While the theme of lovers reuniting is familiar, this film distinguishes itself with its unique narrative approach and stellar performances.

Chutney

With a runtime of almost 17 minutes, the short film begins in a subdued tone, set against a backdrop of gossip, scandal, and infidelity in a small Delhi community. It creates a sense of calm, making its jarring climax more disconcerting. The plot unfolds unpredictably, surprising even the most astute viewers.

Centred on Tisca Chopra's dream-like performance, with strong support from Rasika Dugal, the narrative primarily revolves around a conversation between two housewives over a plate of pakodas.

While the surface story tackles a husband's infidelity with a younger woman, the film's darker essence is cleverly woven into a

recipe shared by the older and wiser of the two women, revealing the depth of her experience and discontent.

The Miniaturist of Junagadh

A personal favourite that will leave you hauntingly enchanted by the story throughout its length of 30 minutes.

Set during the tumultuous period of the 1947 partition in the princely state of Junagadh, "The Miniaturist of Junagadh" stars Naseeruddin Shah as Husyn Naqqash, an elderly miniaturist artist forced to sell his ancestral home and relocate to Pakistan.

Adapted from Stefan Zweig's "The Invisible Collection," the film explores the profound impacts of partition on ordinary lives, portraying Husyn's struggle with the loss of his homeland and the erasure of his cultural identity. Through its narrative, the film delves into India's painful past and addresses broader themes of cultural loss and reconciliation relevant to contemporary global conflicts.

By **K Tanzeel Zaman**
Photo: **Collected**



#FASHION

MAKE SCHOOL COMFORTABLY COOL

School Smart shoes from Apex

Children are unstoppable! From conquering playgrounds to acing their classes, they take on the world with boundless energy. Their school shoes need to keep up and with the new school session around the corner, there's no better time for parents to get a pair of Apex school shoes for their children.

Apex has recently launched a "Make School Comfortably Cool" campaign making sure that every step your child takes is a perfect blend of coolness and comfort! But that's not all— this season with each pair of School Smart shoes, Apex is offering Toggi Fun World entry tickets, turning shoe shopping into a fun family outing!

Additionally, the renowned shoe manufacturer has introduced the "Cool Kids in Action" campaign, where parents can upload pictures of their children engaging in exciting activities wearing school uniforms on Facebook (with proper hashtags) and win a premium set of stationery gifts.

School Shoes by Apex is designed to keep feet odour-free. Featuring Velcro closure for proper fit, with a lightweight and flexible outsole, these shoes allow



kids to run, jump, and play without worry. Whether they are navigating the playground or dashing into class, these shoes provide the perfect blend of comfort

and resilience.

Get ready to make this school year the most stylishly comfortable one yet with Apex school shoes!

Campaign- https://www.apex4u.com/brand/school-smart?sortby=new_arrivals
T&C- <https://www.apex4u.com/page/make-school-comfortably-cool>

#TRAVEL

Exploring wonders of the Middle East

7 PLACES YOU CAN'T MISS

In favour of more mainstream vacation destinations, many people disregard the oases of culture that await visitors in the Middle East. Home to stunning destinations and hidden gems, various countries in the region are quickly becoming popular vacation spots as they are treasure troves of historical grandeur, natural beauty, and rich cultural heritage.

So, get ready to update your travel bucket list with some of the best places in the Middle East!

Dahab, Egypt

Relaxed and beautiful, the village of Dahab in Egypt is an ideal place for summer vacations. This secluded location, known as the Diver's Paradise, has gorgeous coral reefs and picturesque blue lagoons to offer. The city's two halves — Masbat and New Dahab — make for an ideal historical travel destination. Dahab also offers fun activities

like sandboarding and safari trips. You may spend a few nights here and make unforgettable vacation memories for life!

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Embracing Swedish Midsummer: A Bangladeshi's tale of joy and belonging

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As the sun began to set, painting the sky with hues of pink and gold, we returned to Hasse's place for fika — a cherished Swedish tradition of coffee and cake. We savoured the delicious strawberry cake, a Midsummer staple, accompanied by freshly brewed coffee. The cake, with its layers of sponge, cream, and fresh strawberries, was a sweet reminder of summer's bounty.

The simple pleasure of sharing dessert and conversation added to the warmth of the day. The ritual of fika, unhurried and comforting, felt like a moment of peace amid all the festivities.

Later in the evening, we fired up the grill for a late-night barbecue. The sizzling meat, cheese and corn's aroma filled the air, and we

enjoyed a relaxed meal under the twilight sky. The bond and laughter shared around the grill highlighted the strong bonds of friendship we had formed.

Each bite of the grilled delicacies, each sip of a cool drink, and each shared laugh felt like a thread weaving us closer together. The twilight, with its gentle fading light, seemed to cast a magical glow over our gathering, making the night feel even more special.

The night's adventure, however, did not end there. Almost missing the last bus back to my home, we found ourselves walking through the serene woods at nearly 1 AM. The tranquillity of the Swedish night, combined with the sense of adventure, made this an unforgettable part of the day.

The moonlight filtered through the trees,

casting a silvery glow on our path. We finally reached the bus stop and caught the last bus, laughing about our little misadventure. The walk, though unexpected, felt like a fitting end to a day filled with so many wonderful experiences. The serenity of the woods at night, the laughter of friends, and the shared sense of adventure made it a perfect conclusion to our celebration.

Through this Midsummer celebration, I realised that while being away from family can be challenging, having like-minded and welcoming friends can make all the difference.

My Swedish friends have opened their arms to me, making me feel at home in this beautiful country. Leaving Hasse's summer house was hard because I truly wanted to stay longer, and I look forward to

more celebrations with them. The warmth and generosity I experienced were like a comforting embrace, making me feel connected despite the physical distance from my family.

To my fellow Bangladeshis reading this, I encourage you to embrace the cultures and traditions of the places you visit. The world is full of warm-hearted people ready to share their lives and traditions with you, just as my Swedish friends have with me. Every experience, every new tradition embraced, enriches our lives and expands our hearts. Each moment, each shared tradition is a step towards a more connected and understanding world.

By Tahmina Tasnim Nitu
Photo: Courtesy

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Your emotional state could leave you vulnerable. Overindulgence could result in minor health problems. Take a different approach. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Talk to peers in order to get sound advice. Travel may be confusing. Set your priorities straight. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

You might not meet your goals this week. Arguing won't help. Avoid taking on more than you can handle. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

You will learn valuable lessons if you travel this week. Don't trust co-workers. Avoid getting involved with married individuals. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

You will communicate well this week. Keep your wits about you. Talking to your confidants will help you sort problems. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Avoid hanging out with co-workers. Things may not be as harmonious with your partner. Don't lose your temper. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



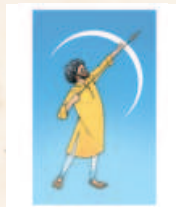
LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Take on home improvement projects. Let your boss know your goals. You will get upset over trivial matters. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Save up money for a rainy day. Your partner will get on your nerves. Professionalism will be of utmost importance. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Get involved in groups that offer physical activities. Your contributions will enhance your reputation. Look into alternate career choices. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



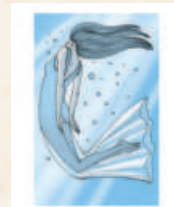
CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Put your efforts into moneymaking ventures. Your attitude may be unrealistic. Children will keep you busy. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Keep your intentions under wraps. Your personal life is in a state of upheaval. Win points by presenting your ideas this week. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Your efforts will bring great satisfaction. You may attract attention on social outings. Don't get into disputes that will lead to estrangements. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



Typhoon

Fabric Care

প্রথম ওয়াশেই কাপড়ের কঠিন থেকে
কঠিনতম দাগ দূর করে।

টাইফুন... লাগে কম, তাই সশ্রয় বেশী।

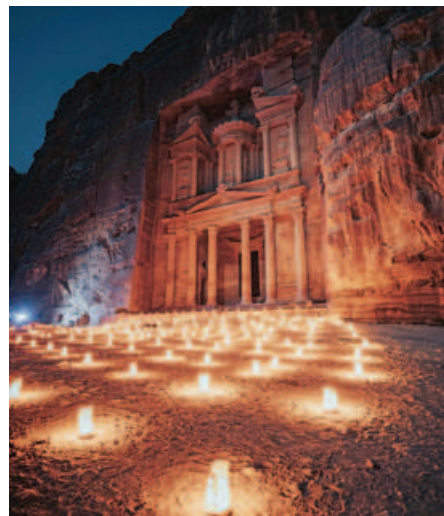




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সুপার পাওয়ার



Exploring wonders of the Middle East : 7 places you can't miss



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Petra, Jordan

While most people may not have Jordan on their travel bucket list, any traveller worth his/her salt must visit Petra, one of the Middle East's ancient wonders. With its rustic and varied hues, Byzantine remains and more, the town is an archaeological gem. The Great Temple, the Treasury, the Siq, the Dam, and the Street of Facades are also a few of the many historically magnificent temples that adorn the sandstone city of Petra. If you are a fan of ancient sites and cultural heritage, this will be a place for you to explore!

Bald Sayt, Oman

Situated in the lower reaches of Al Hajar Mountains, Bald Sayt is an oasis and a must-see when visiting the Sultanate of Oman. The small village is in a remote location and the only way to get there is to hike across the valleys of Wadi Bani Awf and Wadi Al Sahtan. Upon descending from the last canyon, your initial sight will be the terraced fields, accompanied by dense groves of date palms laden with fruits.

Wrapped in mountains on all sides, the knot of tan and ivory buildings gives the impression that it came out of the pebbly slopes by magic. Hiking around the village will allow you to take in its natural

splendour. It is also worth walking to the village's crumbling watchtower for a great view of its medieval houses.

Al-Fateh Mosque, Bahrain

Located in Manama, the Al Fateh Mosque is one of Bahrain's most famous landmarks. Constructed in the 1980s, it is the largest house of prayer in Bahrain, with a capacity of 7,000 attendees. The structure is crafted from light-coloured Italian marble, and the largest fibreglass dome on Earth adorns the main prayer hall.

The Al Fateh Mosque prides itself on being the first mosque in Bahrain to provide tours to the public. Viewed here is the Mihrab, or prayer niche, with its enormous chandelier crafted in Austria and encircled by calligraphy in an extremely ancient style, typical of Bahrain. While you sit with the attendees, you can get a wealth of knowledge and enjoy an enlightening tour.

Beirut, Lebanon

Beirut is home to breath-taking vistas of the Mediterranean Sea, in addition to a plethora of sights that are historically significant and rich in cultural significance. Visitors will have a wonderful time studying the National Museum of Beirut's medieval artefacts and exploring souqs for traditional souvenirs. The American University of Beirut has priceless antiquities, and the Mohammad Al-Amin Mosque is also a sight to see. Both places will provide you with depth to understand Beirut's glorious past.

Salmiya, Kuwait

Just fifteen kilometres outside of Kuwait City is the magnificent city of Salmiya. You can view and learn about the history and culture of Kuwait at numerous intriguing places. More than 30,000 artefacts including Islamic

manuscripts, calligraphy, sculptures, jewellery, and more may be seen in the Tareq Rajab Museum of Islamic Calligraphy, which is open to the public. The Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Cultural Centre also features 22 galleries and more than 1,100 items.

Salem Al-Mubarak Street, one of the country's biggest and oldest retail areas, is located in Salmiya as well. Although certain portions of the city have been updated, other traditional stalls in the side lanes will transport you back to old Kuwait.

Liwa Oasis, UAE

The Nahyan dynasty, the current rulers of Abu Dhabi and the UAE were born in the region now known as Liwa. From here, you can witness the glory of the Empty Quarter, a vast desert that stretches over the UAE, Yemen, Oman, and Saudi Arabia and is often believed to be the biggest sea of dunes on Earth. Moreover, the Moreeb Dune, which is 300 meters high and one of the world's tallest is located in Liwa!

By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy
Photo: Collected

