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Spirit of the EARTH

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MANGO RECIPES FOR THE SEASON

PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN
MODEL: MRIDULA
STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
JEWELLERY: DIPU'S CANDOR
MAKEUP: PIASH

Work less, do more, and still catch your breaks? That's the Pomodoro promise

Do you struggle to stay focused on your work? If the answer is yes, don't throttle yourself with guilt. It's quite common to lose attention as distractions are a part of life, be it social media reels, texts, phone calls, food cravings, movies, or a friend's visit. So, how to overcome this barrier when you are on a tight deadline? The Pomodoro Technique may have the answer!

How does it work?

The Pomodoro Technique is a process that minimises your distractions and optimises work productivity with regular intervals of break, meaning, you can meet the deadline without being burned out.

Working continuously for hours is impossible. Even machines need their battery charged! That's why, the Technique follows a 25-minute stretched time for focused work, followed by a five-minute break. This timed work and break is termed a cycle, called "Pomodoro". After four of these pomodoros, you can enjoy a longer relaxation of 15 to 20 minutes.

Sounds fascinating, right? Well, the inception of this technique comes from an experience fairly familiar to us.

In the late 1980s, Francesco Cirillo, a university student, was drowning in intense study pressure and overwhelming assignment deadlines. However, he persevered by challenging himself to work steadfastly for 10 minutes, followed by regular short breaks. He used a tomato-shaped kitchen timer called 'Pomodoro' for this purpose. It worked! Today, it is acclaimed as one of the best productivity-boosting methods.

Note that during the timed schedule of your 25-minute work, removing all possible distractions is mandatory. You have to solely



concentrate on the task in these 25 minutes. For this reason, move to a silent and isolated space. Keep your phone in 'Do not disturb' mode. Give your best to accomplish a short task goal within this duration.

Reasons to try the Pomodoro Technique

Getting started on a project is the toughest part. The thought of a 20-page long report is energy-draining itself, especially for the procrastinators. That's where the Pomodoro

Technique helps.

When you break down your pile of work into smaller chunks of 25 minutes, the timed practice develops your self-commitment to stay focused. Short breaks at intervals work as a tonic to move on to the next Pomodoro. It lets you work on your terms.

If you look from a different perspective, it also works like a one-player game. The

timed task pushes you to put your best foot forward in completing the task. You score a Pomodoro for completing the task timely and reward yourself with a much-deserved break. So, productivity becomes a fun game!

Dos and Don'ts

The short breaks are the best part. Having said that, how you spend the break immensely matters. If you choose to go back to scrolling your phone or watch something on the computer, it won't be effective. You don't want to strain your eyes by looking at the screen during the break and resume your work.

Instead, indulge yourself in the real world. Make yourself a cup of tea or coffee, grab a snack, or interact with a friend or family. Walking or meditating would be perfect to help you recommence your task with a rejuvenated spirit.

Helpful Pomodoro apps

You might be wondering, if there's a timer on smartphones, why should you use Pomodoro apps? Well, a Pomodoro app removes the recurrent hassle of setting the timer. It schedules your circles of work time and breaks, which makes the process smoother and more time-saving.

Due to the success of this technique, many people have developed Pomodoro applications. Some of the most useful Pomodoro apps that you can consider installing are Focus To-Do, Focus Keeper, Pomotodo, Minimalist, FocusList, Toggl Track, Focus Keeper, etc. These apps can even help you customise the time duration depending on your body of work.

By Afnan Rahman
Photo: Collected

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

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#PERSPECTIVE

Confessions of a donkey enthusiast

For millennia, donkeys have befriended humans. Traditionally used as load carriers, they still serve as pack animals in parts of Africa, Asia, even Europe and the Americas. This is the story of how a philatelist and animal lover combines his two interests — donkeys and stamps — to create a curious narrative.

A casual Google search started it all. Apparently, the number of people “killed” by donkeys is greater than the number of lives claimed in plane accidents annually!

It is, of course, a myth, like many others, surrounding the donkey. Further investigation showed that there are over 40 million donkeys globally and still a major contributor to

Night’s Dream gave a different feel to the human perception of the animal, and brushing up on mythology to find donkey references took me back to my childhood.

I watched Shrek for the umpteenth time and laughed at the subtle jokes, some of which made sense for the first time. Not that I had any intention of breeding animals, but there I was going through veterinary articles in the pursuit of unravelling all things donkeys!

The donkey population of Bangladesh is perhaps confined to zoos as historically, there was no need for their use in this riverine land but as a simple

by women to finish chores like carrying drinking water.

If we start to compare the lives of donkeys with the lives of horses in the present scenario, one may easily relate to the cruelty that these animals endure.

Often termed “stupid” and “stubborn,” donkeys are in fact, extremely intelligent creatures. Their stubbornness is a misinterpretation of their carefulness, which they nearly always exercise to assess their surrounding environment before making a move. Once they establish a relationship

Mining during the Californian gold rush perhaps could never have happened without the help of donkeys and mules. It was Christopher Columbus who introduced the animal to the Americas during his second voyage, and they had a profound impact in building the local economy. Speaking of mules, it serves as an interesting anecdote that George Washington, the first US president made a handsome living, upon his retirement from politics, by breeding mules!



the rural economy in many countries.

Days and countless hours spent on Wikipedia later, I found myself spiralling down the proverbial rabbit hole!

Amid the COVID-19 lockdown, I started buying books, from nursery rhymes to scholarly works on the social contribution of donkeys; re-reading A Midsummer

animal lover, I was intrigued by the nature of these neglected animals and moved by the plight of donkeys and mules across the world.

Biologically speaking, they are distant cousins of horses and zebras. As early as 4000 BC, donkeys were domesticated in North Africa and Egypt for meat and milk. While horses were tamed for hunting by men, donkeys were predominantly used

with their human custodians, donkeys start behaving like the perfect animal companions.

It is also a little-known fact that donkeys have helped humans conquer hostile territories — from creating habitats in remote islands to moving the mail and other loads across deserts and jungle terrains. Humans probably could never have survived on remote islands like Ascension and Tristan da Cunha had there been no donkeys to help them carry water.

Now, the question may arise, how does philately come into donkey matters? Well, one of the popular ways of collecting stamps is by themes, where one attempts to collect stamps and other postal materials on a chosen subject.

The goal is to narrate a story. Thus, a thematic collection on “lions” not only comprises stamps with the animal in the design but, for instance, also a section on the philanthropic movement, Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF).

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A new school for your child? What parents need to know

Transitions are hard at any stage of life, but for a school-going child, it can be particularly difficult. Children resist change just like adults and feel stressed about unfamiliar surroundings, the challenges of making new friends and missing the comfort of old ones. Following a few simple steps, however, can help ease your child's transition into their new school and allow parents to support them both emotionally and physically during this time.

Touring the new school together before the start of the term can help a child feel more confident on their first day. Seek the help of school authorities to arrange a tour of the most important or popular areas. This



could include their new classrooms, the common library and play zone, the cafeteria and the washrooms they will be using. This will allow them to feel more self-assured when they find themselves alone on their first day.

Reema Shanta, a counsellor at a renowned English medium school in the capital, advises students, "It is only human to feel nervous in the face of change, there is no shame or cowardice in it."

A positive outlook can empower children to seize new opportunities.



Shanta suggests discussing what excites them about the new school, what uncertainties and apprehensions they have, and setting small and achievable daily goals for them. These challenges can be as easy as learning a classmate's first name, trying a new game at school, or being brave enough to ask a group of students if they can sit with them at lunch.

Teachers are aware of how a move can affect children as they often welcome new students themselves. Discuss your child's adjustment with their teacher and share any concerns you have. The school counsellor too, might have specific resources to help new students feel more at ease in their new surroundings.

Speaking to newly transferred students at school has revealed that it's not just them struggling to fit into the new environment, it's also them missing the old — familiar spaces, and estranged friends.

Reema Shanta recommends that parents help their children feel better by keeping

their old friendships alive. They can do this by arranging playdates and get-togethers so that their child is reassured that they are not losing old friends, only gaining new ones.

If your child has a special morning routine, it may be wise to stick to it. Keep their old workstation to come back home to, and do not rotate their responsibilities and chores around this time — nothing at home has to change simply because the school has. Routine and familiarity can be comforting and children should have that to turn to when everything else feels a little bit uncertain.

In the face of change, your child may want more of you. Be prepared to spend quality time with them. Some children



gravitate towards their hobbies; allow them time to do what makes them feel calmer. This could be painting, playing instruments, or even participating in martial arts or sports. Parents can additionally support their children by being open to questions from them without being judgemental, and generally being a safe space where they can vent out their feelings.

By Munira Fidai
Photo: Collected

#LS EDITOR'S NOTE

EMPOWERING WOMEN, ONE JEWEL AT A TIME

The inspiring story of Dipu's Candor

During the challenging times of COVID-19, one woman's creativity soared, transforming her vision into a flourishing business in a remarkably short span. But it was only a few months ago, teacher-turned-entrepreneur Dipu decided to take her vision for unconventional jewellery to the masses. Her dream, however, was not to succeed alone, but to take underprivileged women in her community with her.

Dipu's Candor brings nature's beauty to life through handcrafted jewellery made from leather, jute, precious stones and metals.

Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Mridula
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Jewellery: Dipu's Candor
Makeup: Piash



“When I was suggested by one of my colleagues to take up painting during the COVID-19 lockdown, I was puzzled. I had never painted before and I was not sure I could start now,” said Dipu. However, the suggestion had piqued her curiosity and she went ahead and tried it anyway.

WILD WHISPERS

Dipu’s nature-inspired dream jewellery

“My first painting had people asking if they could buy it,” shares Dipu. “I was amazed they even wanted to spend Tk 1,000 on it. Since then, I have sold paintings for as high as Tk 25,000.”

As Dipu’s confidence in her work grew, so did her sense of doing business. “I knew paintings were not something that could take my talent across the world. They were bulky and not always according to customers’ tastes.”

Jewellery, on the other hand, was something that she thought could allow her to represent her country, while also giving wings to her

creativity.

It was as if a seed was planted in her mind and she duly watered it with dedication and honesty.

“I looked for the right material and experimented with it for years,” reminisces Dipu. “I let it rest, from 2021 until late in 2023. Only when I was sure my jewellery was colourfast and that its quality would not deteriorate with time, I thought about giving it a name — Leopid.”

Dipu’s business instincts are strong and she follows them blindly. “I could have sold my jewellery for a few hundred takas and it would have still taken off. However, I knew that playing it safe would never take my designs where they deserved to be. At the top!” Dipu used gemstones and pearls in her work, targeting the upscale segment of society.

“Whenever I thought my designs were becoming monotonous and predictable, I looked for unconventional materials such as jute and leather,” said Dipu.

She added, “I remember walking hours in search of the exact sort of leather I required for my jewellery, with my ever-patient husband whiling away time in the car. I remember driving to Bhakurta, Savar to look for artisans who would help me in crafting metal the way I wanted. I remember spending close to three hours looking for the right kind of stones for my pieces in Tantibazar.”

From working in extreme heat without a fan to top designers such as Zurhem in Dhaka and others in Russia, vying for collaboration, Dipu has seen it all. Much of her success can also be attributed to her strong knowledge of her client base.

Dipu’s customers are all women in their 40s, comprising quite a few foreigners who do not mind spending money on genuine stones such as amethyst and pink rose used in her pieces. Pricing, therefore, is not a problem for the

entrepreneur. She pays handsomely to her artisans and they give her the best of their creativity.

Dipu believes in reinvesting in her business to make it grow. She has managed to move her work out of her home and into a proper workspace, thanks to the rolling profits.

“My single-minded focus to earn and earn fast is driven by my dream of creating a women-only workplace,” confided Dipu. “I am still working with women who need additional sources of income. I never call them workers or labourers. They are my designers and the heart and soul of what I do.”

What started as a passion project is now a responsibility for Dipu, as not excelling at her business could mean trouble for her artisans. “People depend on me now. I want to be able to solve all their problems through Dipu’s Candor. I want to keep going for them.”

Her next project, unique bridal jewellery, is now claiming her mind and her time, and we cannot wait to see brides flaunting the best of what Dipu has to offer.

ByMunira Fidai
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Mridula
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Jewellery: Dipu’s Candor
Makeup: Piash





#FOOD

Our pick for your pick: Mango recipes for summer

Indulge in the taste of summer with our handpicked mango recipes — a compilation of some of our favourite mango recipes. From delectable salads to luscious desserts and refreshing beverages, these dishes celebrate the season's favourite fruit in deliciously creative ways.

MANGO AND CHICKEN SALAD

This tropical salad is great to make at this time of the year, bursting with fresh flavours from mangoes and a spicy kick from grilled chicken.

Ingredients

For the chicken –
2 chicken breasts
1 tbsp olive oil
½ tsp paprika powder
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp salt
1 tsp garlic powder
½ tsp cumin powder
1 tbsp lime juice
For the salad –
1 large ripe mango
1 red bell pepper
A bunch of lettuce
¼ cup olives
1 red onion
1 cup grape tomatoes

Method

Start by marinating the chicken with olive oil, paprika powder, black pepper powder, salt, garlic powder, cumin powder, and lime juice. Rub all these ingredients over the chicken breast pieces and let it rest for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, slice the mango, onion and bell pepper into juliennes and chop fresh

lettuce. Also slice the black olives and grape tomatoes. Grill the chicken on medium heat flipping only when one side is cooked entirely. Let the chicken pieces cool slightly before slicing them.

Arrange the chicken pieces with the fruits and vegetables, sprinkle paprika powder and black pepper powder on top and toss together. You can serve this with freshly squeezed lime juice or a vinaigrette dressing.

MANGO RASIYA

This luscious sweet pickle is a must-try for any pickle lover. With the perfect balance of jaggery's sweetness and mustard oil's zesty flavour, raw mangoes transform into Bengali version of a delicious marmalade.

Ingredients

4 medium-sized raw mangoes
3 cups of sugarcane jaggery
3 cups of mustard oil
1½ tbsp salt
1 tbsp five spice
2 tsp sliced dried chili
2 tbsp roasted cumin powder
½ cup vinegar

Method

Begin by taking ripe mangoes, and cutting them into 4 slices and place them in a sieve for excess water to drain away. Meanwhile,

heat a pan and add the jaggery. Once it's dissolved into a rich liquid, add the mangoes. Next, add salt and vinegar to taste with five spices blend consisting of cumin, cinnamon, cloves, star anise, and fennel seeds. Once the mangoes softened, add dried chillies, cumin powder, and a touch of mustard oil. Lower the flame further and cook until the pickle takes on a reddish colour.

MANGO FOOL

Ingredients

4 raw mangoes (medium sized)
400g condensed milk
Powdered sugar, to taste (depending on the mango)
Aam ada (mango ginger), for flavour. If not available, mango flavour can be used or skip this.

Method

Boil whole raw mango with skin. Scoop out the flesh, cool it, and keep it in the fridge for some time. Mix cold condensed milk, mango pulp, and sugar with a hand blender. Divide the mixture in serving bowls, keep it in the fridge at least for 4-5 hours. Ideal dessert for summer.

VIRGIN MANGO ORANGE MOJITO

This unique virgin mojito is made with everyone's favourite summer fruit. It tastes

fizzy, fruity, sweet, and tart all at once, making your taste buds tingle with deliciousness. Now is the best time of the year to make this virgin mango orange mojito when mangoes are at the peak of their glory, available in several varieties.

Ingredients

1 cup orange juice
1½ cup lemon soda
½ cup mango puree
1 tbsp lime juice
1 tsp lime zest
1 tsp orange zest
1 tbsp sugar
Bunch of mint leaves
5-6 ice cubes

Method

Peel off the skin from one large mango and finely puree its cheeks to get ½ cup of mango puree. Slightly muddle a handful of mint leaves with a tablespoon of sugar to attain a deep mint flavour. Be careful not to overdo it as this will extract the bitterness from the mint leaves. Grate the skin of one lime and one orange with a micro-plane grater to extricate their zest.

In a blender, blend the mango puree along with freshly squeezed orange juice and lime juice. Then, pour in lemon soda and sprinkle orange and lime zest and mix them together properly with a spoon. Drop a few ice cubes to your serving glass and add the muddled mint leaves first. Pour in the mango orange mojito mixture and garnish with slices of lime, orange, and mint leaves.

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed

#FICTION

Two monsoons, and counting

She shuddered at the sound of thunder, clutching my hand ever so tightly. Her was trembling, as the car made its way out of our wedding venue. Was she

That is the only vivid memory I have of the rainy afternoon when we got married. The rest is a haze, possibly because the event was an overwhelming experience.

Since then, whenever I hear a loud, sudden thunderclap, my mind automatically goes back to that afternoon, followed by a hug if she is around, to reassure her that it's alright.

Monsoon has always been a joyous season for me. People speak of the monsoon blues but the rains come with a sense of thrill and awe, especially in the brief minutes just before it actually starts pouring. It is also a time of hurry and restlessness.

Sometimes, I am running for shelter. Or I am rushing to the terrace to bring back the clothes that are laid out for drying. Or perhaps, I am going to the balcony just to enjoy the view. Back in my childhood, I would excitedly take a football, call my neighbours, and go out to play.

Nowadays, I rush to her in case she gets panicked because of the thunderstorm.

I love the anticipation and the pre-rain play of nature — the smell of the earth, a drop in temperature, the erratic dance of the trees amidst the wind going wild, grey clouds crowding the skies...

All these, I would assume, were happening in that afternoon last monsoon, when we were in the car going home but all I remember is her nervous hand tightly held hand on mine.

A year has passed since then. Another monsoon -- and our first anniversary!

She dressed up for the occasion, in a simple blue saree. The plan: a long drive with a short stopover at some nice, rural place.

Her fascination with blue sarees on rainy days knows no bounds. During our honeymoon, she did



not forget to pack a blue saree. When a date night got cancelled because of heavy rain and flooded streets, which made me put together an impromptu candle-light dinner in the house with leftover pizzas, she was wearing yet another blue cotton saree.

I was not surprised that she draped herself in blue to venture out on a rainy day during our anniversary.

The stopover in the afternoon, exactly one year since the wedding, has formed yet another vivid memory, and an eye-opening one at that.

It all started with the usual pre-rain play of nature: the smell of the earth, a drop in temperature, the erratic dance of the trees amidst the wind going wild, grey clouds crowding the skies -- and then an

ear-shattering thunder!

I quickly went close to her whilst my mind automatically flashed back a year ago, when I thought that she had a fear of thunders. But to my surprise, she was not panicked at all.

It was then she revealed that she was not afraid of thunders. Here's her version of the story: as the storm took over that afternoon last year after our wedding, yet another presented itself in her heart. It was the uncertainty of the new life ahead -- a whirlwind of anticipations and concerns, and the millions of "what-ifs" a bride feels when she is about to enter a new family -- that made her panic.

Yet, in this one year, whenever there was rain and thunder, she never disclosed the real reason; in fact, she pretended to be panicked sometimes -- to break the ice as a new couple in an arranged marriage.

I let out a smile, and hurriedly went back to the car as rainfall began, promising myself to continue drawing close to her whenever the sky rumbles!

By M H Haider
Photo: Yusuf Shahriar Muntakim
Model: Uzma
Wardrobe: Rang Bangladesh



shivering a little bit? Maybe she got shocked by the lightning. Does she have a fear of thunder? Yes, that must be it -- a fear of thunderstorms!



DHEU: A wave of Western fashion in Bangladesh

An alluring new sub-brand of SaRa Lifestyle Limited, DHEU is a youthful Western fashion label that is as lively and connected to the other side of the globe as tidal waves. DHEU stands out from competitors thanks to its extensive selection of personalised fabrics and patterns in Western clothing.

The dresses from this brand are crafted from a variety of fabrics including silk, cotton, knit, and denim. The entire DHEU line has been meticulously crafted in a Western style, catering to the tastes of today's youth and keeping up with the latest fashion trends worldwide.

As a second-year student at the University of British Columbia, Saraf Saiyara began DHEU at the age of 18, after harnessing a lifelong passion for fashion. She has always had an affinity for styling and clothing, ever since she was a little girl playing dress-up with her Barbie dolls.

Throughout her middle school, it was the events she organised that finally motivated her to pursue a career in fashion business. Now, as the Founder and CEO of DHEU, she is always pushing herself to take the brand to greater heights.

"I saw that the youth around me would get Western clothes from abroad because they were priced high in Bangladesh. I



realised that there was a need for good-quality Western clothing at affordable prices for them, and so DHEU was born," expressed Saiyara.

Men's apparel from DHEU features a wide variety of shirts in denim, corduroy, printed, and casual styles, as well as t-shirts in regular and oversized cuts, denim pants,

joggers, cargo pants, and jackets. Among the women's clothing options at DHEU are trendy tops, midi dresses, western shirts, slacks, bodycon, gowns, skirts, crop tops, and blazers.

Anyone from teenagers and up can rock DHEU's all-Western clothing and the prices range between Tk 750 and 3000. Taking an

item of apparel and redesigning it in various ways is something the brand does pretty often.

Saiyara explained, "We take inspiration from Western trends and also see what people like here in Bangladesh. Combining them, we come up with clothing through which young adults get to express themselves."

It has been a year and a half since DHEU was launched and the customer response has been delightful. "When I go out and see people wearing DHEU clothing, it makes me extremely happy," gushed Saiyara. As a CEO, she prioritises customer feedback to bring out relevant collections every launch.

As DHEU grows with every passing day, Saiyara dreams big to take DHEU's waves of popularity to newer horizons. "It is going to take time and the progress might be slow, but once you are determined and really work hard, things might just work out."

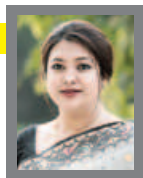
Interested to know more about DHEU? Check out their website!

DHEU - <https://saralifestyle.com/sara-store/DHEU>

By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy
Photo: Courtesy

A NOTE ON NUTRITION

CHOWDHURY TASNEEM HASIN
Chief Clinical Dietician & HOD, Clinical Dietetics and Nutrition Dept, United Hospital Ltd. She is also the AGS, BNDF.



Mastering menstrual nutrition for balance and energy

A healthy menstrual cycle involves more than just timing; it's about understanding how hormonal shifts impact our bodies. From mood swings to energy dips and hunger pangs, these fluctuations can disrupt daily life. However, with a planned diet, these symptoms can be managed effectively.

During her period, it is common for many women to experience mood swings, bloating, exhaustion, nausea, vomiting, indigestion, diarrhoea, and abdominal cramps.

For a healthy menstrual cycle, meals must include foods high in iron, such as whole grain cereals, entire pulses, green vegetables, even dry fruits, eggs, and offal. Foods fortified with iron can also be incorporated into the diet.

During menstruation, there is a



consumed.

Staying hydrated can reduce the chances of getting dehydration headaches, which is the most common symptom of menstruation.

Certain menstrual symptoms can be alleviated by sipping a warm cup of ginger tea. Because of its anti-inflammatory properties, ginger helps relieve sore muscles.

Some women experience yeast infections during or after their periods.

Yoghurt and other foods high in probiotics can support the growth of "good" bacteria and potentially prevent infections.

Yoghurt is also a great source of calcium and other important minerals, like magnesium. Calcium absorption may be improved and cycle regulation may be aided by vitamin D.

Serotonin and endorphins, two "happy" hormones released during exercise, may help lessen the symptoms of mood swings, cramps, and menstruation pain.

The writer is the Chief Clinical Dietician & HOD, Dietetics and Nutrition Department, United Hospital.

Photo: Collected



comparatively high demand for protein in the body. Eggs, poultry, red meat, fish, legumes (whole), lentils, milk, and dairy products are all good sources of protein.

In addition, the issue of iron absorption must be addressed. It is improved with the addition of vitamin C found in lemon, oranges, amlaki, guava, capsicum, tomatoes, sprouting legumes, and lentils.

Avoiding tea and coffee will help you absorb iron better. The caffeine and tannin from tea and coffee can also lead to anxiety during the heavy flow days.

To recover from the extra weakness and low blood pressure due to blood loss, energy-dense food which includes cereals

(whole), nuts and seeds are needed.

Diet also needs to be rich in Vitamin B12, which is stored in the liver; B12 helps the body form red blood cells.

Processed foods are high in sodium and sugar, which can worsen bloating and mood swings. Fried and greasy food have the same effect.

As omega-3 fatty acids reduce inflammation and cramping, foods that contain omega-3 fatty acids like saltwater fish, flaxseed, and tree nuts should be



Confessions of a donkey enthusiast

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

While researching donkeys, to boost my collection, I was also making significant purchases from shops in Dhaka, dedicated Facebook pages trading stamps, eBay, and foreign auction houses dealing in philately.

There are thousands of stamps featuring donkeys in the world (surprise!), and technically speaking, they all have a space in my album, but any attempt for a world collection, even on a topic as obscure as donkeys, is futile. Whatever the limitations, it did not stop me from being an ardent donkey philatelist!

The moment I learned something interesting, the pursuit was to find a stamp or postal item to narrate that very story. Some materials came cheap, others were



affordable, and in my conquest to collect the best of the best, I came across a bizarre material that bore 5-figure price tags in dollars, which I could not afford!

A stamp collector's pursuit is never complete. My thematic collection is an ongoing project that presents the lives of

donkeys and starts with the evolution of the animal, the process of its domestication, and further use through time as a pack animal.

It touches upon how donkeys helped humans and continue to help the ultra-poor lead their day-to-day lives. It depicts donkeys as seen through popular culture, in Shakespeare's plays and Shrek, the animated movie franchise.

The philatelic story ends with the narrative of the birth of Jesus Christ and the famed nativity scene, which always features lambs and a donkey along with baby Jesus!

Despite being historically neglected, the role of donkeys in human society is gradually being appreciated. 8 May is celebrated as World Donkey Day; organisations like the Donkey Sanctuary in the UK are doing their part in creating a global movement

to ensure the proper treatment of donkeys. Through my collection, I consider myself a humble helper in achieving that goal.

As a donkey enthusiast, I, too, am often at the receiving end of jokes and mockery. If you remember your grade eight literature, you can probably recall laughing at the antics of Nick Bottom. Even Shakespeare did not let go of a chance to make a joke at the donkey! But like the animals I admire, I take things lightly.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif
Photo: Courtesy

The writer is a Senior Sub-editor at The Daily Star and avid philatelist. His other exhibits on the Liberation War of Bangladesh have won several awards at international stamp exhibitions.

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Don't spend too much time with the wrong person. Investments will be lucrative. Your intuition will be right on. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Enlist co-workers to get the job done. Don't say things you'll regret. This is a great week to start any wellness regimen. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Make changes that will be appreciated. You're in the mood to party. Be careful while helping someone. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Look into travel opportunities. Don't spend if you are tight on cash. Consider making changes at home. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Make sure your papers are in order. Be direct about your feelings. Don't judge others. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Double-check any propositions before investing. Prepare for drastic changes in your life. Not everyone will be your friend. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Don't try to impress others. Travel will bring about new romantic connections. Your emotional stability will be tested. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Don't spend for no reason. Make sure to present your ideas at work. Double-check before you go out. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Include your family in your decisions. Get your tasks completed ASAP. Be cautious while traveling. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Don't trust those with overly strong convictions. Take care of pressing health problems. Make time for loved ones. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Find a backer to realise your ideas. Investments can be successful this week. Physical activity can help distract you. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Your unique ideas will attract attention. Take advantage of travel opportunities. Put in that extra effort at work. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



ক্লিন মাষ্টার

লিকুইড টয়লেট ক্লিনার



সবচেয়ে Safe
সবচেয়ে Clean






#DECOR



Sofa set ideas for your new home

Moving into a new house as a young married couple can be a daunting experience. There are a hundred to-do lists and you always need to figure out what to start with. One of the crucial decisions is how to decorate the living space. This section of the room is for your friends and family to feel at home. There are endless options for sofa sets but let's look at the current trends!

Maximalism is back again

Pairings of orange, blue, and yellow for sofas are trending now. Bold colour couches with touches of artefacts in the living room give off boho vibes. Pairing a bold sofa with geometric scatter cushions, graphic curtains, and statement wallpaper is a must. The colour combo with the handcrafts naturally gives the room a more joyous

tone. Vintage features alongside modern segments will turn your living room into a guest's favourite.

Consider flexibility

Although bold colours and experimenting work best. It is more applicable if your living room is spacious but if you have a more compound room, go for storage sofas and footstools. While decorating a room, if you mix different styles and colours, it often results in dynamic and revitalising spaces that feel comforting — perfect for any room that needs to serve multiple people.

Curve my space

Curvy sofa sets are your next calling for your new living room. Demands for soft edges, fluid shapes, and cocooning forms hit high. This is set to give your living space a more

rounded look. It has been seen that curves, archways, and more fluid forms making a comeback, but this trend is now really starting to build a spur in people's homes, especially the living spaces. Merging curves with pops of colour is a fun look for your living room, as the dopamine colour and curved furniture trends strike well.

Cosy corners

A 2024 popular sofa choice is a good old corner sofa. This sofa shape offers a sophisticated look but is also a pleasant choice. A corner sofa can be augmented with multiple cushions and throws to underline its presence in the room, and is also a relaxing alternative to other shapes.

There are multiple options for sofas so, go for the one that will reflect your personality in the room. Your living space is

your sacred haven for you and your partner. You will also get to entertain your friends and family in that area of the house, making it accommodating for all.

The choices of sofa sets are limitless and while it is understandable that getting married and moving into a new house can be your cherished dream, decorating as you please may be a very costly affair. Difficult situations arise because answers to them exist. You may opt for EMI (Equated Monthly Instalment) while investing in your new furniture. This will bring joy to your new home while giving you the financial flexibility to pay the amount partly each month.

By **Tasnim Kabir**
 Photo: **Courtesy**



Yearlong EMI Facilities

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