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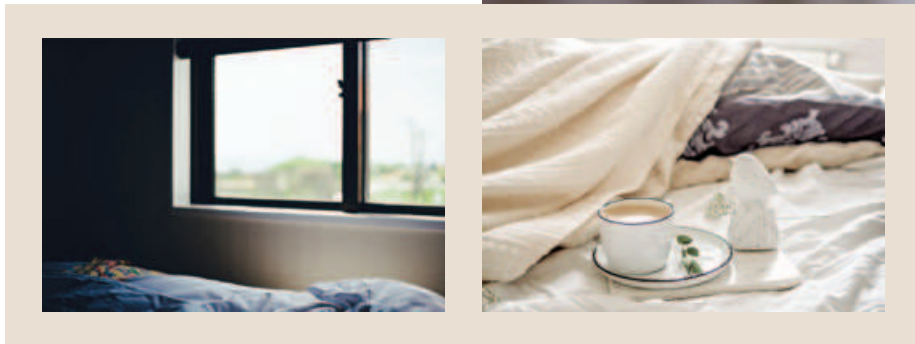
# Breaking BRIDAL *Stereotypes*

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PHOTO: SHEIKH SURAIYA REHNUMA / LENZKRAFT STUDIO  
MODEL: AFSANA AHMAD  
STYLING & CONCEPT: SHEIKH SURAIYA REHNUMA /  
LENZKRAFT STUDIO  
MUA: NAZRUL MAKEOVER

# How to trick your body into being a morning person

Waking up early is a boon for morning people, giving them extra hours in the day to get things done and more. This does not necessarily come easy to everyone, especially those whose energy levels peak towards the end of the day, rather than in the beginning.



Becoming a morning person does not mean that one has to join the 5 AM club. However, being able to give one's best in the early hours of the day comes with a host of benefits. Simply being able to get in a good workout and a well-deserved cup of coffee before the daily grind can set the mood for your day. Thankfully, even if the body clock is not used to such a routine, adopting a few habits and sticking to them religiously can help one gradually become a morning person, day by day.

"I learned how to be a morning person by brute force," says Neela Armani, a 34-year-old mother. Understanding the importance of a strict routine for her son, Armani decided to sacrifice her largely nocturnal habits. "I was hoping things would get better but now with his school and everything, it seems I'm stuck in this lark phase for good!"

Opting for a slower transition, Neela Armani started setting her alarm 10 to 15 minutes earlier every few weeks to ease

herself into a morning routine. She feels considerably better about waking early after six months of rigorous discipline and most times, opts to stay awake after dropping her son off, to get things done.

"I have at least 1.5 extra hours in the mornings now. It's definitely welcome!" she said.

Once you are awake, the next step is to get your productive juices flowing. Sleep experts have found that exposure to natural light works wonders in regulating our internal clock, as it suppresses melatonin, the key driver of good sleep.



Stepping out in the sun can help kick-start your system. You can also get moving to wake your brain up — simply get a tall glass of water, and hit the gym or the nearest park for as little as 15 minutes. There's nothing quite like a good workout or morning jog to spur your brain into action.

Make up on lost sleep by treating yourself to a slower evening of winding down, by dimming the lights and putting on some slow music, or simply by cutting down on screen time an hour before sleep, using the time to indulge in a longer bath and reading few pages of your

favourite book.

Consistency is key, and if you are going through a transition from owl to lark status, definitely rethink your decision to lie in on weekends. Whether you make a slower transition like Neela Armani or choose to go cold turkey and do it all at once, expect the change to be difficult in the beginning.

Becoming a morning person may take effort and patience but the rewards are well worth it. With small, consistent changes, everyone can ease into a new routine, enjoying quieter mornings, enhanced productivity, and a fresh start to each day.

By Munira Fidai  
Photo: Collected

# Typhoon

## Fabric Care

প্রথম ওয়াশেই কাপড়ের কঠিন থেকে  
কঠিনতম দাগ দূর করে।

টাইফুন... লাগে কম, তাই সশ্রয় বেশী।

**Fabric Care** -এর  
**সুপার পাওয়ার**

#FYI

# BIRD FEEDING 101

## Feeding tips from Old Dhaka's bird expert



Birds are beautiful creatures, and whether you keep them as pets or enjoy watching them flock to your balcony for a quick snack, providing the right food is essential. However, how much do you really know about bird food?

In Dhaka's Sutrapur neighbourhood, Mohammad Musa has spent years perfecting the habit of feeding birds and advising others on how to cater to their unique needs. As the winter season approaches, Musa shares his expert knowledge on selecting bird food that is nutritious, seasonal, and suited to creatures of all ages — helping you ensure that your feathered visitors stay healthy and well-fed.

Musa begins by recommending seeds, which are versatile and suitable for various bird species, including pigeons, sparrows, and even mynas.

"Sunflower seeds, millet, and canary seeds are commonly found in local pet stores and markets," he says. "Sunflower seeds, high in fat, are ideal for the winter months or for birds that need extra energy. Millet is easy to digest, making it perfect for young or

smaller birds, like sparrows."

Musa's advice highlights the need to boost birds' caloric intake during colder months when they burn more energy staying warm. Staple grains like rice and wheat, commonly found in Bangladesh, are also recommended.

"Grains are beneficial for ground-feeding birds, such as crows and pigeons," Musa notes, adding that cooked rice is particularly nourishing and easy for birds to digest. "During winter, when natural food sources can be limited, these grains provide a reliable energy source."

Moreover, Musa emphasises maintaining hygiene while offering food. "Birds can contract diseases if their food is dusty or improperly cleaned," he warns. Musa advises that bird owners carefully sift and clean seeds, as dust and debris can lead to

respiratory and digestive issues in birds. This simple precaution goes a long way in safeguarding their health.

Feeding requirements vary as birds progress through life stages and Musa shares specific advice for younger birds.

"For young ones, avoid whole seeds as they may choke," he explains. Instead, Musa recommends offering bits of boiled rice and lentils, which are easy to digest and gentle on their developing systems.

For an extra layer of safety, he suggests blending or softening food before offering it to young birds, especially when transitioning to solid foods.

During the breeding season, birds require a nutrient-rich diet to support their health and that of their young.

"For breeding birds like parakeets, sparrows, and mynas, increase protein intake with foods like dried mealworms or with fresh fruits, particularly," Musa shares.

Birds also benefit from a calcium boost for healthy egg development, which crushed eggshells, easily mixed with seeds, can provide.

After the egg-laying phase, birds need balanced nutrition to support feather regeneration and recovery. Musa advises a mix of protein and fat, such as grains, seeds (especially sunflower seeds), and cooked rice, during this period.



Beyond food, creating a safe environment is vital for attracting and caring for birds. Offer fresh water for drinking and bathing, especially in the dry season.

Consider planting native trees and shrubs that provide natural shelter, food, and nesting materials for birds.

For quick advice on bird care, you can reach Mohammad Musa directly at +8801677627822.

**By Ayman Anika**  
**Photo: Ayman Anika /**  
**Collected**



# Is respect really declining, or are we just measuring it wrong?

To most parents and grandparents of today, children are decidedly less respectful now than they were in the past, largely due to changing family structures and shifting styles of upbringing.



In the last decades, children were inevitably taught to respect authority figures such as parents, teachers, and law enforcement. Terms such as saying “please” and “thank you” and addressing adults formally were introduced early, with no questions asked. Family dinners were prime moments to model and practice correct behaviour, allowing children to learn etiquette in a closed, structured environment.

An important difference nowadays is the modern family structure. Thanks to the relatively low economic pressures of the past, at least one of the two parents was full-time, being able to afford the time to make sure their children understood the importance of respectful behaviour.

Busier schedules of today, paired with higher economic pressures, have families relying more and more on dual incomes, making it harder to reinforce consistent boundaries.

Back in the day, parenting was seen less as a complex identity and more as

a straightforward responsibility to raise polite, respectful children. Discipline was doled out strictly and immediately, and there was little emphasis on individual expression.

Today, parents are more aware of their children's emotions, seeking to first understand the root cause of the behaviour, rather than laying out a blanket consequence. While this may outwardly seem like a more relaxed attitude by the parents, it is expected to be better for shaping their personalities in the long run, helping them understand the errors of their ways and rectifying themselves on their own, rather than parroting an apology they do not mean.

Another important shift lies in children's exposure to diverse role models. In the past, family and a few neighbours were chief influences, with television and books playing small roles. Today, children are exposed to the internet and countless other influences. This can create complexities in their value systems and

dilute traditional teachings, as children try to balance a variety of perspectives.

Perhaps, a way of looking at it could be that children these days are more acutely self-aware than in the past. Research has shown that teaching children blind respect can often result in them displaying people-pleasing behaviours later in life, as they focus on being “nice” and suppress their inner voices so as not to upset others.

Parents of this generation are keenly aware of such issues, having enough research at hand to back their children when they displease people by prioritising themselves. This can sometimes be seen as a lack of conventional “respect” but it does not have to be.

Experts note that the perceived decline in respect may reflect a generational misunderstanding rather than a lack of respect itself; considering everything, today's youth are simply navigating a different landscape with their own set of skills and social expectations.

If one looks at it positively, respect has not necessarily diminished; it has evolved. As each generation adapts to its unique circumstances, the notion of respect is shaped by the times, rather than simply being straightforward deference to authority.

**By Munira Fidai**  
LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed





#FASHION & BEAUTY

# History and legacy in every stitch

Dhaka at its core holds quite a bit of history. For many of us, New Market, as popular as it is to retailers, has a lot of fond memories. In our attempt to sail through nostalgia and history, we found an interesting shop at New Market, Bashir Uddin Tailors and Fabrics — this is the story of a sartorial pedigree.

## Bashir Uddin begins

Bashir Uddin built his tailoring business in the '50s, which later turned into a tailoring brand that is famous to this day.

The shop has a very loyal client base, affirming them for generations of the same family who prefer this historic place for their unique and detailed work.

After the passing of Bashir Uddin, only two of his sons, Abdul Hai and Abdus Salam, tried to push the business forward. Abdul Hai had a place at Bangabandhu Avenue in the late '80s for a while, but not everything worked out. Finally, Abdus Salam managed to carry forward his father's legacy and keep the business running, which is the "Bashir Uddin Tailors and Fabrics" of New Market, as we know it today.

## Sewn in the family

Presently, the business is run by two brothers who are the grandchildren of Bashir Uddin. Md Harun, the elder brother, and Md Hasan are the two faces in the shop aside from the five tailors who work at the factory.

The two brothers carry out two very different tasks to keep the business running. Hasan, the younger one, has been with the business for the last 15 years, since finishing college. He runs the administrative, logistical, financial, and other aspects of the

business and being as busy as they are, it's a challenge.

Harun on the other hand, had the opportunity to learn from their father, and he is directly involved in the handiworks that make Bashir Uddin Tailors such a hit.

## The cut and stitch

Bashir Uddin Tailors and Fabrics is known for making panjabis, but they also make coatees, sherwanis, kabli sets, etc.

"It's about how we cut the pieces. Let me reiterate that we are known for making panjabis and the way we cut the pieces is unique. I have seen how others do it and it's not the same," said Harun, the savant tailor who has been part of the business since 1993.

"So, is it just the cuts?" I asked curiously, and Harun pulled out a recently completed panjabi from under his counter. "Look at the stitches," he asked, and I leaned in closer for a better look. Even to a layman like me, with no expertise in stitches and tailoring, the difference was unmistakable.

"These stitches are hand-sewn. It's one of our specialities and you can tell just by looking at it. Other tailors cannot pull this off," he said proudly. "You can even hand stitch a whole panjabi if you want to," he added, confirming what I had been thinking — it's the sartorial equivalent of a secret recipe.

## Popular through generations

Nurul Amin Sentu is the oldest living tailor who has been involved with this business. He worked with Bashir Uddin himself, and later with his son, Abdus Salam. He knows the unique styles that this business offers. Even in his retirement, he sometimes calls on the shop at New Market; out of a love that only 50 years of working together can build.

"I have fashioned panjabis for at least one president of the country.

Countless other political persons and big shots were always coming to the shop, and I crafted for them too," he recalled. "Politically and historically important figures in the history of Bangladesh, from any party, you name them; we've tailored for a lot of them."

"Sometimes, many of these people would come with their children at the shop and that's how those kids know about us," added Sentu, saying that the two brothers who are running the business presently are doing well and he's happy to see the legacy continue.

"I know about your shop because I got married wearing a sherwani that my father got from you," said a customer, and Harun was practically beaming at the admiration.

Today, many prefer to buy ready-made panjabis, but Bashir Uddin Tailors never had to worry about losing clients.

Take the Eid season, for example. They stop taking orders by 8-10th Ramadan and are busy the rest of the month trying to deliver the 1,500 or more orders on time. At least 150 orders are pretty normal in any average month. Their charges, while higher than most other tailors, were never an issue for their loyal customers.

## Future thoughts

While the two brothers are doing a great job at keeping the business alive, knowing the history and legacy of it, one must ask what the future holds. The unique cuts and stitches that Bashir Uddin has passed on are known now only to a few.

Hasan, the younger brother, who looks after the administrative side of the business, wants to learn the tricks of the trade.

"My brother does most of the cutting and such. I've been involved with the business since 2008. I did learn a thing or two, but there are a lot of other things that I need to take care of, so there's that. But I want to learn more," said the young man.

"It's a family business and the way we do it is unique. Naturally, I want it to carry on, so I want to teach it to my younger brother. And my son, who albeit young, but I'd love it if he picks up the family business when he grows up," added Harun, the couturier.

If you are a younger customer, perhaps you might check them out to see what all the fuss is all about. However, if you are one of the older customers, this is your reminder that Bashir Uddin Tailors and Fabrics are not only alive, but also proudly holding up their legacy.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro  
Photo: Shadab Shahrokh Hai



#PERSPECTIVE

# Meet *the* NEW AGE bride!



Let us reminisce for a moment. Think back to those sepia-toned photos of our mother's wedding day. Shy and demure, the young girl in the photo has her gaze lowered. Her bejewelled forehead is covered with a veil, studded with golden stars and moons.



This veil is no ordinary garment though — a piece of fabric that symbolises a girl's transition to womanhood; she no longer is only her father's daughter but a wife, a daughter-in-law, and so much more. That veil on her head represents her family's values that have been inculcated in her since birth, which she will bring with her to her new home, elevating their status and dignity.

As a bride, her head must be kept respectfully lowered at all times because heaven forbid, should she so much as dare to look up she will be labelled as brazen for years to come! Her hopes, dreams, and aspirations are of little consequence as she will have to honour the customs and traditions of her husband's family, with her head and gaze lowered.

Perhaps, that is why your mother raised you as a woman with a strong voice who is not afraid of having an opinion. As she held you right after birth, she gazed into your little eyes and made a silent promise to you that her daughter will never keep her head bowed and down.

She was not allowed to choose her wedding saree or jewellery, but made sure you get to choose and do things your way. Her hopes and dreams may have been kept aside to make way for others but she, and others like her, gave an entire generation of women the audacity to hold their own — the emancipation that propelled us all towards an equal, more just society.

Thank God for these heroes!

Our mothers are instrumental in shaping us as individuals and they must be lauded, for brides of today are not shying away

from holding their own at their weddings! Gone are the days of patronising parents, relatives and in-laws who created a culture of submission. The modern Bangladeshi woman possesses great substance and she knows her mind.

Is it not refreshing to see brides enjoying their big day, dancing and having a blast? What's more, our society at large is becoming more accepting of couples deciding to have weddings that reflect their style and preferences. After all, it is their big day and not the family's!

A definite and welcome sign of progress is in-laws respecting the daughter-in-law's wishes, be it the choice of venue or the outfit.

A bride wearing sneakers with her saree is breaking stereotypes for sure, and she's comfortable while she's at it!

A girl dreams her whole life about her wedding. Should she decide to wear pristine white or purple for the wedding — that is her prerogative. Brides dancing the night away is not only beautiful but also liberating in the best possible way. Relatives raising their brows at fierce brides wearing an off-shoulder gown for the reception, or a sleeveless choli with her lehenga must feel the winds of change for it is most welcome and is here to stay!

**By Sabrina N Bhuiyan**  
**Photo: Sheikh Suraiya Rehnuma / LenZKraft Studio**  
**Model: Afsana Ahmad**  
**Styling & Concept: Sheikh Suraiya Rehnuma / LenZKraft Studio**  
**Mua: Nazrul Makeover**



#REVIEW

# Forget gourmet, Shahjadpur's muri bhorta is the real explosion of flavours

Imagine taking a mouthful of something that feels light and crunchy at first but explodes into a symphony of intense flavours — tangy and spicy with the smell of mustard oil — all at once. That's exactly what "muri bhorta" would offer you!

The humble yet fiery dish, made from puffed rice (muri) and a special blend of ingredients, has been one of the most popular street foods. For those who live for masala-infused food, this provides a full-bodied punch that makes your taste buds dance.

Shahjadpur Jheel Par brims with many food carts. Here, you can find everything from crispy fuchka to steaming hot momos making it a vibrant hub. However, the muri bhorta stands out for its uniqueness among all the delicious offerings.

A regular at the place, Sanjida says, "I've always been a fan of spicy food, but the



muri bhorta at Jheel Par takes it to another level. The way they mix the ingredients right in front of you, with that punchy chilli and lemon zest — it's irresistible!"

What makes muri bhorta special is its intricate balance of flavours. The puffed rice soaks up the heat of the chilli and the mustard oil while retaining its crunch. As you chew, the boldness of the ginger and the freshness of coriander leaves mix in with the tanginess of lemon juice, creating a multi-dimensional flavour profile. Each ingredient plays a role, turning a simple mash into something mouth-watering.

While the basic masala muri bhorta is already seasoned, there are several variations available for those who want to add an extra layer of indulgence — for

example, dim muri bhorta (puffed rice with egg), where boiled eggs are added to the dish, giving it a richer texture. The egg absorbs the flavours of the ingredients and makes the dish more filling, ideal for those looking for a bit of protein with their spicy fix.

Another variation is murgi muri bhorta (puffed rice with chicken) in which tender, marinated chicken is added to the puffed rice mash, making it heartier. The meat blends beautifully with the other ingredients, adding another layer of complexity.

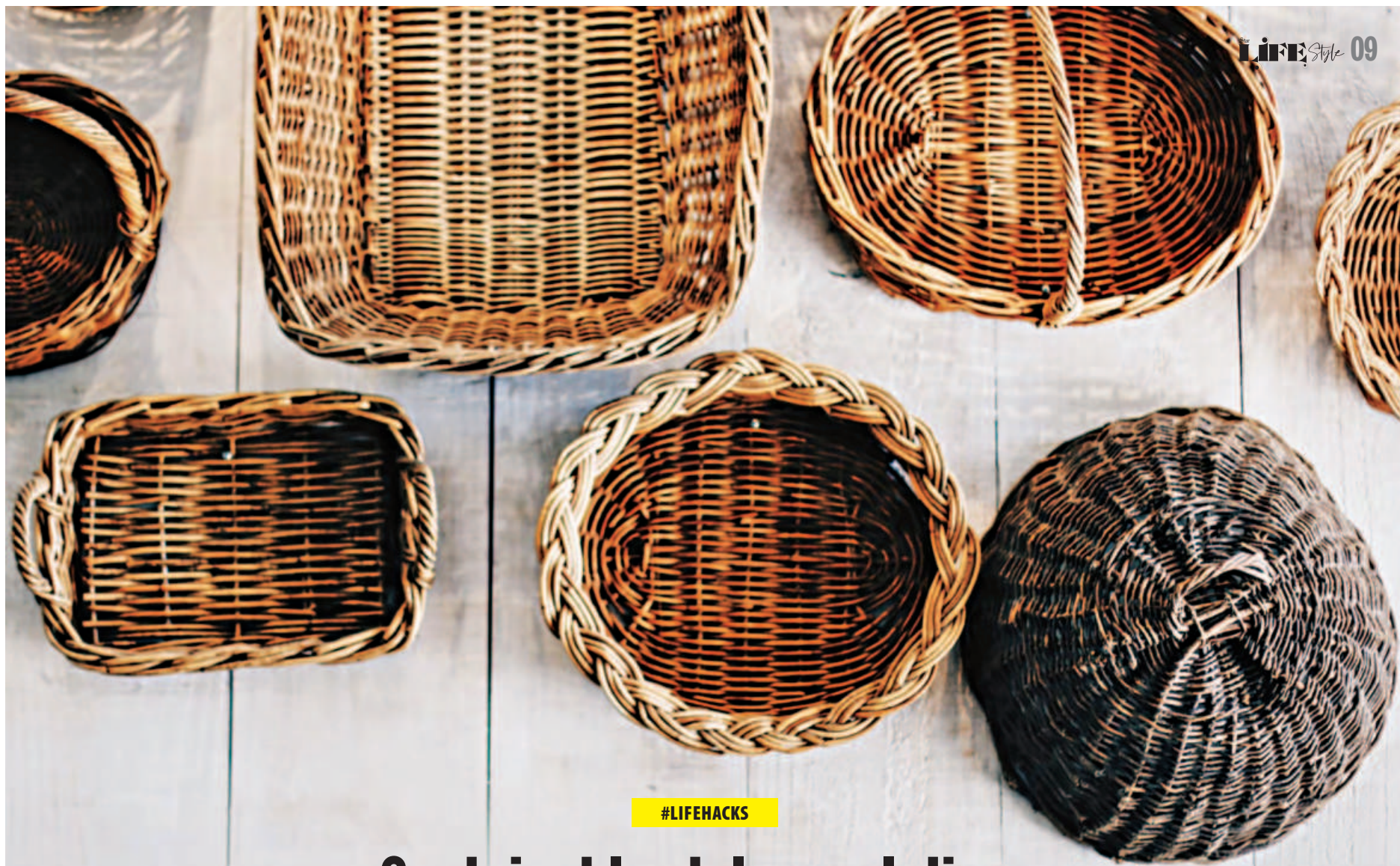
Muri Bhorta is also incredibly affordable, making it a staple snack for everyone — from students looking for a quick bite to families who want to indulge in the flavours

of traditional Dhaka street food.

The price range starting at just Tk 30 for the simplest version and going up to Tk 500, or even Tk 1200 for more elaborate variants with whole chicken or duck, ensures there's something for everyone, no matter their budget or appetite.

So, if you are someone who loves exploring new food experiences and has a deep appreciation for flavours, Dhaka-style muri bhorta should be at the top of your list. The combination of puffed rice with fresh spices and optional additions like egg, chicken, or kalabhuna makes it an exciting choice for anyone looking for a comfort food!

By Ayman Anika  
Photo Ayman Anika



#LIFEHACKS

# Sustainable style revolution: Why jute is today's green go-to

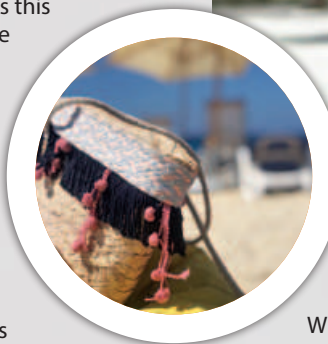
The discussion on an eco-friendly lifestyle has sparked once again, with the government notice prompting us to switch from polybags to jute or cotton-made packaging. In a world that is swiftly shifting towards green living, people are choosing locally-made organic products and luckily for us — the golden fibre — jute has versatile potential to meet our necessities while blending style with sustainability.

Here are a few cool ways this cash crop can help us make a simple start towards sustainable chic living.

## Jute packaging and storage solutions

Say goodbye to plastic pollutants and one-time paper bags with sturdy jute packaging. Make a mark in your professional field with an eco-conscious flair by opting for a jute-made water bottle and lunch carriers for your meal on the go. Not only are they greener choices, but they are also smart investments to run your errands smoothly, thanks to their longevity.

Jute items are great options as kitchen storage for their heat and moisture resistance. Handwoven jute containers, fruit baskets, garbage and laundry bags made of this natural fibre are available options for a plastic-free



lifestyle.

## Furnishing with an earthy touch

While the world convinces you to consume extravagant home décor items, go with jute-made products to radiate down-to-earth features. Jute rugs, carpets, placement mats, table runners, plant holders — all these necessary items meticulously merge functionality with a visual feast.

Jute blinds, cushion covers, and ottomans can be alternatives to plastic-free living. The exquisite texture and beige colour palette of jute fibres create a rustic canvas, and the durable fibres

make sure the products stand the test of time.

## Future-forward fashion with jute fabrics

Jute-made retail items have a timeless appeal to Bengali fashionistas. You may take an extra step towards a green planet by choosing sweaters, scarves, denim, dresses, and jackets made of jute fabrics instead of animal-derived leather or wool.

Jute-made jewellery such as chokers, necklaces, beaded bands, and bangles are top choices for a traditional look with an eco-trendy twist. Statement rings, stud earrings,

and hoops layered with other jewellery in your wardrobe can add a deshi flair to your look.

## Handmade home-décor items

Jute-made art pieces and craftworks are making a comeback as skilled artisans make items with a modern punch. Intricately woven lampshades add a rustic charm to the interior. Jute baskets are cosy additions and jute planters can be the ultimate solution to protect your plants from rain and heat.

From stationery items to decorative details and gift wrappers, natural fibre can come in a myriad of options. Jute-made customised craftworks make unique gifts for your loved ones while taking a planet-friendly stand.

## Eco-chic jute bags

There are a wide array of jute bags for you to choose from, according to your personality.

Printable tote bags are a massive pop-culture hit among the youth for their easy maintenance and eco-chic statement.

Stylish shoulder bags, sling bags, and clutches echo the message of a greener tomorrow in a corporate atmosphere while adding elegance to your style. They are also a smart investment due to their life span and aesthetic quality.

By Tasmiah Rahman  
Photo: Collected



# Pokhara: The city that proved solo travel isn't overrated after all

Many people dismiss solo travel as a most over-rated thing, and I was no different. It was my first overseas trip to Nepal; I started with two other friends, but later, for something personal, I desired to wander alone with a wish to make this more adventurous than relaxed. With my backpack and an open heart, I embarked on the journey that would become a defining chapter of my life.

My destination? Pokhara — a city known for its stunning views, serene lakes, and rich cultural heritage.

From the moment I arrived, I was captivated by the majestic mountain range that greeted me like an old friend whose face I almost forgot! My home for the next few days was a comfortable hotel where I rented a cosy rooftop room overlooking the Himalayan Mountains.

Each morning, I woke up to the golden hues of sunrise washing over the peaks, reminding me that life is not that bad the way we consider it, but full of possibilities. No wonder, I was alone, however, the beauty of my surroundings made me feel more like a companion than a burden.



## Reaching the dreamland

Stepping off the bus and into the crisp mountain air, I was welcomed by the mesmerising views of the Annapurna range. In the afternoon, I visited the sprawling lakeside area of Pokhara teeming with colourful shops, cafes, and the scent of fresh momos wafting through the air.

On my first day there, I opted for a stroll along the lakeside. As the weather was not in my favour, I could not get the chance to ride a boat. Rather, I found love that spread like petals — couples were sharing tender moments under the canopy, children enjoyed playful antics with their parents, while groups of friends laughed and leaned on one another.

## Paragliding over Pokhara

The following day was dedicated to one of the highlights of my trip: paragliding. As an adventure-seeker, the thought of soaring over the majestic mountains filled me with excitement. After a short drive to Sarangkot, I met my tandem pilot, a charming soul who reassured me through every step.

Before I even understood, I was strapped in and ready to take flight. As we lifted off the ground, I felt the rush of adrenaline course through me. The world below started to shrink, and I was engulfed in a

breath-taking panorama of hills, valleys, and the shimmering lake.

As I floated effortlessly in the sky, I gazed down at the vibrant cityscape of Pokhara. At that moment, I felt an exciting blend of empowerment and freedom.

After an elating ride, I touched down safely, my heart racing and my cheeks aching from my wide, joyful smile. This experience stretched my limits, and



filled me with an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. As women, we cherish our freedom, and paragliding made me feel like a bird — unrestrained and liberated.

## Exploring the attractions

With an eagerness to explore, I decided to hire a bike guide for my next two days in Pokhara. My guide, Krishna was an enthusiastic local who was passionate about sharing the beauty of his homeland.

At the breath-taking Stupa Temple, known as the World Peace Pagoda, I felt the sacred air, thick with spirituality. I watched as the sun dipped below the horizon, painting the sky in vivid rays of orange and pink. Surrounded by fellow travellers and locals alike, I felt the gentle embrace of community while being enveloped in my solitude.

Next, I explored the mysterious Mahendra Cave and the interesting Bat Cave. As I navigated the dimly lit corridors, I found a strange comfort in my own company. The echoes of fluttering bats above me were just another reminder that adventure often lies in the heart of the unexpected. Each step further into the caves was a testament to my courage and curiosity.

At Bindabasini Temple, I immersed myself in the spiritual atmosphere and engaged with the warm-hearted locals. Their amiable smiles and curious inquiries about myself and my country reinforced my belief that kindness knows no borders and that sharing my experience with those around me only deepened my journey.

The following day, I found myself drawn to Nirmal Pokhari. Unable to resist the allure, I set my shyness down and immersed myself in the beauty of the surroundings, a timeless moment which I enjoyed alone, yet felt a deep connection to the universe. While there, I decided to try some local cuisine at a cosy restaurant, where I was the sole guest. The owner greeted me with a warm smile, making me feel right at home.

Breathing in the fresh mountain air by the Seti River, I marvelled at its shimmering greenery waters, a stark contrast to the bustling life that thrived around it. This serene spot was my perfect escape, a place where I found solace and reflection, where no other tourist was present. I spent hours contemplating my journey, realising that my sense of security did not come from the absence of risk but from my unwavering trust in myself.

## Dancing to the end of the night

Evenings in Pokhara came alive at Club

16, where I found myself drawn to the magnetic rhythm of music. There, amidst beats that flamed the dance floor, I met three extraordinary women. Together, we embraced the night, twirling and laughing as if we were old friends. The experience reinforced the idea that joy resonates powerfully in companionship, even among strangers, an affirmation of sisterhood transcending borders.

One of the best parts of travelling solo is the chance to meet incredible people. During my stay at a rooftop hotel in Pokhara, I was particularly impressed by the hospitality of the owner, Chandra Bhandari, a man in his forties.

His name perfectly reflects his radiant character, as warm and welcoming as the moon. Chandra went out of his way to assist me with every detail of my trip and offered fantastic suggestions on places to visit. The hotel's tagline, "Guests are our God," truly describes the way I was treated. I felt genuinely cherished and valued throughout my stay.

As my days in Pokhara drew to a close, I reflected on my journey. Travelling alone opened my heart to new experiences and friendships that I never anticipated. I felt a deeper connection not only to the landscapes surrounding me but also to the people I met along the way.

If you are considering a trip to Pokhara, go for it! Whether you are flying solo or travelling with friends, the magic of this lovely destination awaits. Just like me, you might return from the land of lakes and mountains with a heart full of stories and a desire to explore even further.

By Iffat Ara Munia

Photo: Iffat Ara Munia

#HEALTH & FITNESS

# Baking soda: Not just for pancakes

We all know that baking soda makes cakes, breads, muffins, and cookies light and fluffy. Yet, this ingredient has many other uses beyond cooking. It has potential medicinal properties and may help with a variety of ailments. So, keep reading because we are going to share with you some great health benefits of baking soda!

### Treating insect bites

Baking soda is a common remedy for itching and pain caused by bug bites. Not only can it help alleviate the itching but also neutralise the acid that is created by a bite.

You may make some baking soda paste by combining two ingredients – three parts soda with one part water. Then apply it to the infected area. After it dries, you may

wash it off and repeat, if needed.

### Reducing mouth ulcers

Mouth ulcers or canker sores are a medical condition, which a lot of people might be familiar with. These sores are an excruciatingly painful sensation and occur in the gums or the inner lining of the mouth.

Treatment for mouth ulcers includes cleansing the mouth and reducing the amount of plaque that is on the teeth by washing with baking soda. In fact, results from patients who went to the doctor after the use of baking soda indicated that they had improvements to their mouth ulcers.

### Helping with indigestion

Due to its alkaline pH, baking soda is a popular home treatment for this as it eases

the symptoms caused by an excess of stomach acid.

People aged 12 and older can take half a teaspoon of baking soda by dissolving it in two glasses of water. It is not a very appealing treatment but it might alleviate your problems temporarily.

### Managing kidney problems

Baking soda controls blood pH by removing acid from the body. In addition, research indicates that when taken orally, it may decrease the course of chronic kidney disease.

In terms of the functioning of the kidneys, baking soda is also said to be quite beneficial. However, more study is required in this field so, it is best to talk to a doctor

before consuming it for renal health.

### As a mouthwash

In lieu of traditional mouthwash, many people find that baking soda works just as well. Research suggests that it may have antibacterial and antimicrobial effects by raising saliva pH levels, which are critical for preventing bacterial development, and thus potentially freshening breath.

Mix half a teaspoon of baking soda with half a glass of warm water to produce homemade baking soda mouthwash. Swish it about as you normally would and feel the difference!

By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy

Photo: Collected

## HOROSCOPE



### ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

If you haven't planned a vacation, do so this weekend. Look into new interests. Be wary of those with overly strong convictions. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



### TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Love and romance are evident. You will close any deals successfully. Don't blow situations out of proportion. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



### GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Secret affairs will eventually backfire on you. You need a change of pace. Try not to be too lavish with your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



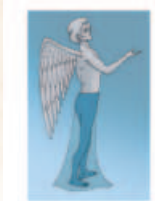
### CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Let your partner foot the bill. Win points by presenting your ideas this week. Don't gamble unless you can afford to lose. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



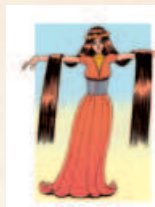
### LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Concentrate on areas where you can make a difference. Physical activities will help burn excess energy. Social functions may arise. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



### VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Your charm will mesmerise members of the opposite sex this week. Avoid arguing with your partner. Passion will be your answer. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



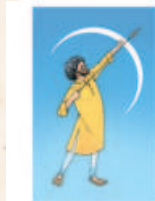
### LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Get ahead by playing your cards right. Residential changes may disrupt your routine. How you deal with others will help secure support. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



### SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Help family members with unfortunate difficulties. Don't settle for less than the best. Romance will develop through social events with children. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



### SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Talk to someone experienced about budgets. People you live with may not be happy with you. Accepting the inevitable brings advancement. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



### CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Focus on legal matters and contracts. Use discretion with work relationships. Be honest with your partner to avoid estrangement. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



### AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Get back to basics. Avoid disputes unless you are ready for irreversible results. Gambling will waste your time and money. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



### PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

It might be time for a fresh start. Don't let your partner curtail your freedom. Throw yourself into work to stay focused. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

**নতুনযানে, নতুনরূপে**

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ফেস ওয়াশ

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REMOVES PIMPLE  
DEEP CLEANSING

**এএম. পিএম.**  
হাববাল

বিডিটিনা ফেস ওয়াশ ১০০মি.লি. সাথে  
**৪৫ গ্রাম**  
এএম. পিএম. হাববাল টুথপেস্ট  
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#DECOR

# WHERE STYLE MEETS FUNCTION: A living room according to your needs

A contemporary living room is more than a pretty space. It can serve multiple purposes while adding charm to your house. Some might prefer using a living room as a cosy family lounge to unwind after a hectic day. Others may want to transform it into a vibrant entertainment centre to enjoy a Champions League game night! Whether you want to use your living room as a private space or a family gathering hotspot, here are some ideas for designing a living room according to your specific needs.

## A delightful family lounge

After spending most of the day in the city, who would not want quality time with family? A well-decorated family lounge can drastically elevate your mood after a day-to-day hustle.

To give the family lounge a delightful vibe, go with informal seating arrangements



creating an entertainment centre in your living room. To make the most of your room, divide it into multiple functional zones. Place your television and sound system at a point where it can be viewed by everyone comfortably. Conceal cables and wires with shelves and cabinets to avoid visual clutter.

For furniture, pick an L-shaped or modular layout to create ample space for an intimate set-up. Bright-coloured leather sofa set with neon-mood lights can create a stylish, Cineplex experience right in your home.

## Homely hobnob spot

Dedicate your living room as a lovely spot for chats and conversations with your loved ones. Consider arranging your sofa set in a way that ensures face-to-face conversations. Add a lavish centre table as the focal point of the room. A wooden armchair set with velvet-warm upholstery creates a cosy aesthetic while maintaining a regal look. Add more glamour to your room by adding ambient lights and artsy lamps. Create a sense of liveliness by splashing colourful artwork on the walls.

Styling your living room is a journey towards self-expression. The process should not drain your budget. An efficient financial option may be to purchase items from furniture and décor brands that offer payment plans like EMI (Equated Monthly Instalment), which will make this procedure smooth for you.

By Tasmiah Rahman  
 Photo: Courtesy



like a modular sofa set or slim-cut divans and make sure of abundant lighting. Spread out multi-coloured cushions on a chic rug to create an engaging seating space.

You may opt for jewel green or turquoise and blend with peach, mustard or red to combine playfulness with a plush look. Add an ottoman and side tables to keep snacks, drinks, and board games.

## Cosy and intimate home-office

Many of us are now choosing remote work or have a side hustle that requires us to work from home. For an efficient performance, you can set up your living room as a perfect home office, brainstorming corner, or

creative nook.

Use comfortable loveseats which are two-sitter sofas to save space and add style to the room. Loveseats are compact and ideal for work because of their comfort and functionality. Settees paired with a petite side table can work as sectionals to create a distinct office zone.

Use a fresh and cosy, colour palette to layer your fabrics, rugs, and cushions. Teal, orange and warm tones create an energetic atmosphere.

## A stylish entertainment centre

Hold the stage for movie nights, football match days, or exciting gaming sessions by



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