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# Colour W **YELLOW!**

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AFFORDABLE ROOM HEATERS  
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AFFORDABLE VETS  
PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN  
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WARDROBE: TANGAIL SAREE KUTIR  
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#FYI

# The essential guide to room heaters this winter

When the season starts nipping at our senses, the bouts of sneezes, coughs, and colds find us anyway, we hope that some sort of warmth will help us to keep them at bay. What better than keeping a room heater as your companion?

Room heaters are people's best friends to keep their homes and offices balmy, a perfect respite in the nerve-chilling winter weather. This is the right time for you to buy a room heater because it does not just heat the room, it makes sure your cold-instigated health concerns are blown away.

There are many kinds of room heaters depending on their size, power, specifications, and place of origin. From automatic to manual settings, the importance of coils used to heat up, intensity of heat using higher power, you will not run out of options while going through every aisle to discover the right one for you.

The automatic ones are easier to use and you

can control the settings with a press of a remote like an air conditioner! This option is available for large and medium-sized room heaters, but not for the smaller ones.

There are power usage ranges for all these heaters, from 750-watt being the lowest to going as far as 2200-watt. The extent of power plays a big role in choosing the room heater based on room size.

While 1000-watt heaters are good for small rooms, equal or over 2000-watt are ideal for big rooms, with values in between these two for medium rooms. The higher the voltage, the speedier the process. But even with such amenities, it will take at least

10 to 25 minutes to heat the room.

Some room heaters also have sensors that turn off when the room is heated and turn on when the room grows cold again, which is good for overnight use. It's a lucrative deal if you do not want to be bothered with waking up every few hours to change it.

Heaters are priced from Tk 2500 to Tk 6500 for the small size, Tk 3500 to Tk 7000 for medium, and Tk 6500 to Tk 9000 for large ones, considering everything a room heater should have to meet your needs.

This very winter essential will be found at the New Market City Complex, not much farther than the New Market, and the Baitul Mukarram Mosque Market.

So, get ready to be free of wearing layers and layers of clothing, because room heaters are so this season!

**By Tasneem Azim**  
**Photo: Collected**

*Prices are subject to change based on weather conditions and do not include limited-time promotional offers from sellers.*



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#PERSPECTIVE

# Poetry books to read on this Victory Day

Many of us find solace in the quiet act of reflection, revisiting the sacrifices and triumphs that define our nation's journey and what better way to honour this spirit than through poetry? This year, to observe 16 December, we have curated a list of four diverse yet fascinating poetry books for you to immerse yourself in.

## **Shonali Kabin**

**Al-Mahmud**

**Nowroz Shahittyo Shombhar, 2015**

To this day, *Shonali Kabin* by Al-Mahmud shines as a poetic gem of Bangla literature. This golden poem is a tender letter to the rural heart of Bangladesh, knitting a profoundly moving tale of tradition, love, and resiliency. Throughout the course of the book, we follow a newly-married couple bound by their kabin — a symbolic representation of their sacred marriage at its core. Their love story takes place with all the simplicity and complexity of rural life, surrounded by expansive fields and gurgling rivers.

Al-Mahmud uses the vivid backstrokes of this couple's destiny to denote the spirit of the Liberation War, referencing themes of revolt, resolution, and national identity. Apart from the titular poem, some of the other mentionable ones are: 'Daaybhag,' 'Notun Obde,' 'Jaatishwor,' etc.

## **Ondhokare Alor Rodon**

**Hridoy Mohammad Ali**

**Shahittodesh, 2023**



Speaking of poems that leave a lasting impression, *Ondhokare Alor Rodon* by Hridoy Mohammad Ali is a powerful and stirring narration that introduces a sculptor whose hands shape not only art but also the turmoil of his tormented soul. Words such as war cries, death, weapons, and power, make him feel a welling sadness, and his brain signals a spike in blood flow. From the quiet nooks of rural Bangladesh to international acclaim, his creations, born out of grief and rebellion, travel the world. Driven by retribution and plagued by his ancestors' pleas for justice, the sculptor transforms

into a creative and destructive force that reflects a society in unrest, ripped apart by conflict and control.

A profound meditation on the tenacity of the human spirit, the story is a nuanced waltz between good and evil, with overtones of historical grandeur, much like the Liberation War of Bangladesh.

## **Poetry on Liberation War**

**Nazmul Hoque Chowdhury**

**BhumiProkash, 2023**

A must-read for the fans of raw commentary and compelling accounts of bravery, Nazmul Hoque Chowdhury's *Poetry on Liberation War* would be a haunting read (favourably or unfavourably, you decide). It is an anthology that narrates selfless, indomitable tales of the fight for emancipation, the spirit of a country risen from ashes. The poet, in striking clarity, depicts the blood-soaked plains, silent valour of martyrs, and echoes of independence continuously resonating in the modern independent country.

Poems named 'Protest against Repression,' 'A Strife on State Lingo,' and 'Final Declaration' place you in the heart of the fight and take you through each victory, each sob, and every tear. More than recounting history, they enact it. This is a

reminder of the price of freedom, an ode to bravery, and a memorial to the ones who sacrificed everything.

## **Bondi Shibir Theke (From The Concentration Camp)**

**Shamsur Rahman**

**Bivas, 2016**

In *Bondi Shibir Theke (From the Concentration Camp)*, Shamsur Rahman delves into the thought-provoking themes of suffering, resilience, and political unrest, continuing the tradition of his earlier works like *Asader Shirt*, *Shafed Panjabi*, and *Swadhinata Tumi*. His voice becomes a fierce embodiment of protest, realising the common man's struggles for freedom and justice. The titular poem perfectly captures the emotional and physical toll of oppression, intertwining the poet's personal journey with the broader fight for liberation amidst a turbulent authoritarian climate.

In this collection, Rahman's poetry transcends into a rallying cry for the masses, immersing the reader in the grief, defiance, and unyielding hope of those fighting for their voices to be heard.

## **By Nur-E-Jannat Alif**

**Photo: Star books / STAR**

The writer is a gender studies major and part-time writer who dreams of authoring a book someday. Find her at @literatureinsolitude on Instagram or send her your book/movie/television recommendations at nurejannatalif@gmail.com.





# A journey to HOLISTIC WELLNESS

From the moment the festival began, it was clear that this was no ordinary event. It wasn't just about yoga sessions or meditation corners; it was an intricate blend of activities designed to enrich the individual and the collective.



The Dhaka Flow Festival 2024 has been a celebration of mindfulness and connection, set against the buzzing backdrop of Gulshan Society Lake Park. For two days, the park transformed into a vibrant hub where people from all walks of life—children, young adults, and the elderly, gathered to embrace wellness, creativity, and community. The air hummed with anticipation as visitors meandered through the thoughtfully curated spaces, each offering an experience to ignite curiosity and nurture the soul. There were sessions on sound healing, art therapy, dance improvisation, and even a concept as simple yet profound as 'Shareapy,' where strangers became confidants, exchanging stories and solace in a shared space. A gratitude wall stood



as a quiet centerpiece, inviting participants to reflect and express their thankfulness amidst the busy hum of the festival. Local and international wellness experts lent their expertise, adding a global flair to the proceedings. Yogini and Dhaka Flow co-founder, Shazia Omar explained the philosophy behind it all, saying, "This approach to holistic wellness is much more sustainable as it focuses not only on individual mental and physical well-being but also on fostering a mindful and conscious community."



Her words resonated in every festival corner, from the meditation garden to the bustling food stalls. The festival began with transformative sessions one of which was led by Vari Morales, an international wellness guru, who seamlessly blended movement and mindfulness. Speaking about his first visit to Bangladesh, Morales shared, "It's inspiring to see a community coming together with such conscious intent for a sustainable future."

Events like this may seem casual to outsiders but they require immense patience and hard work to execute. The vendors here are showcasing handmade products that reflect this culture, which is truly remarkable.”

The festival was not confined to physical or mental rejuvenation; it embraced sustainability in every detail. Vendors showcased local, eco-friendly products—cotton, jute, wood and other natural materials taking centre stage, with everything from clothing lines to handcrafted decor on display.

Humaira Khan, a renowned fashion designer, presented her sustainable collection under her label Anikini, standing alongside a few other designers showcasing eco-conscious practices. Her collection was crafted from local resources like cotton, jute, and khadi reflecting her commitment to promoting Bangladeshi heritage on a global stage.

She shared her vision saying, “As a brand, we are trying to create a Bangladeshi identity and stand as an individual in front of the world with our local resources. This event stands apart—it’s not just about selling or chasing trends, it is about lifestyle and philosophy for the next generation. Most people here seem deeply aware of the environmental challenges we face and that awareness gives me hope”

Her words align with the festival’s vision, blending sustainability with cultural consciousness in a way which resonated deeply with visitors.

The food stalls reflected this ethos as well. Each vendor brought at least one healthy, creative option to the table. From sugar-free ice creams to Bandarban-special coffee, the culinary offerings mirrored the



festival’s commitment to mindful choices. It was not just about feeding the body but nourishing the spirit.

The second day of the Dhaka Flow Festival offered an extensive mixture of activities that was vibrant yet calming. Yoga Beats at Sunset with Shazzy Om and DJ OMDG drew a serene crowd, blending

rhythmic flows with ambient music.

Nearby, the Meditation Garden hosted a soothing Sound Healing session by Swayambhu, providing a haven of stillness.

Art enthusiasts joined collaborative projects at the Art & Soul Corner, while others explored improvisation theatre or participated in dance healing sessions.



Beyond the daily highlights, the festival featured a range of thoughtful activities for community building that exemplified its aspiration for holistic well-being. It also brought interactive activities for children, including a dedicated playground and creative workshops, ensuring every member of the family could engage.

What tied the festival all together was the spirit of community.

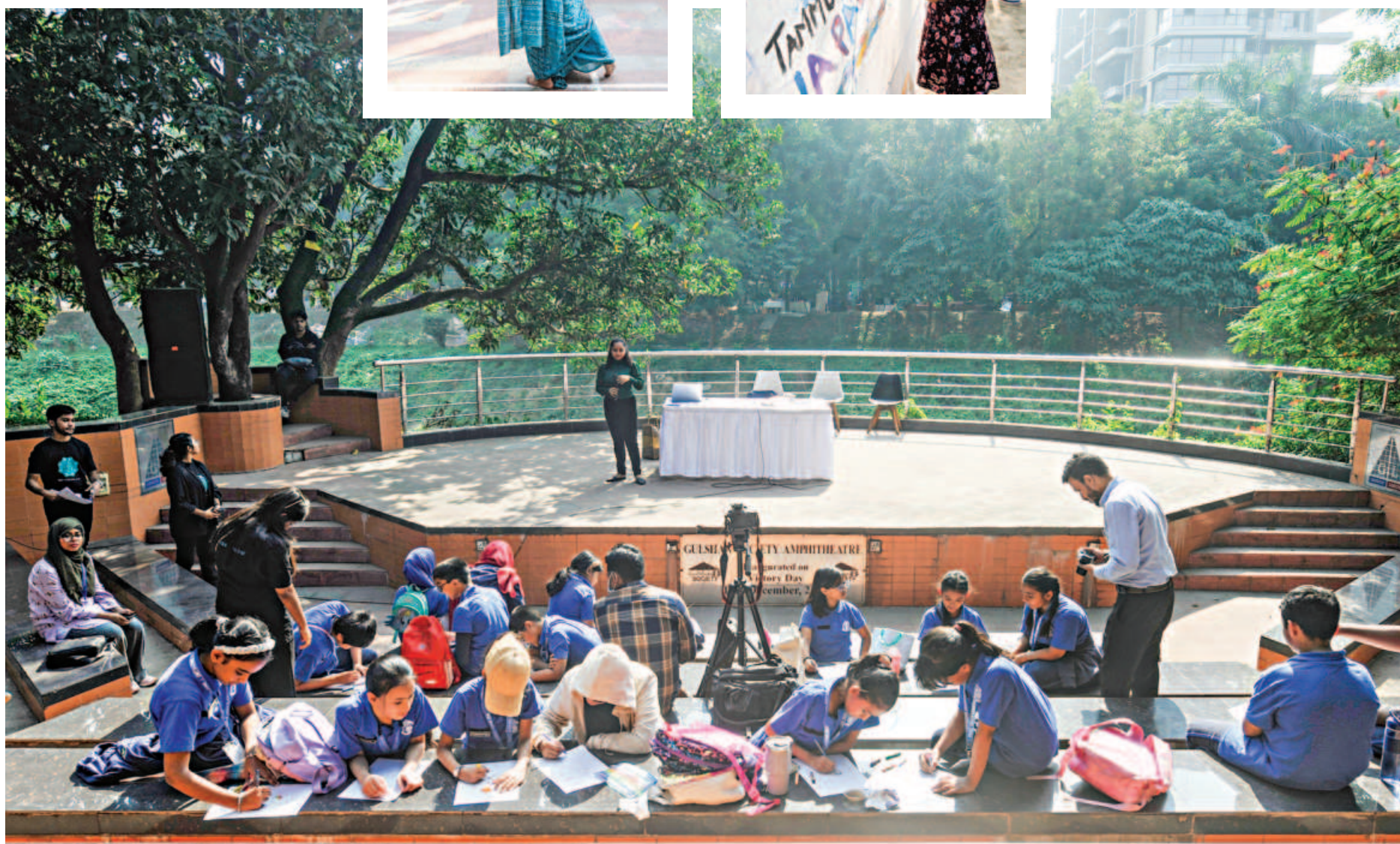
Benjamin Morgan, a visitor, captured it perfectly when he remarked, “This isn’t just another event. It’s a place that brings like-minded people together and connects them through shared interests. The traditional dances, unique products, yoga sessions, and cultural expressions create an experience that’s as enriching as it is entertaining.”

Organisers ensured that every detail reflected a commitment to environmental responsibility from decorations to merchandise to the absence of plastic disposables. Panel discussions explored topics ranging from eco-conscious living to the intersection of wellness and sustainability, sparking conversations that extended far beyond the event itself.

As the festival came to a close, it left behind more than memories—it planted seeds of mindfulness, creativity, and collective care.

The Dhaka Flow Festival was a fleeting escape from the mundane and an invitation to rethink how we live, connect, and grow together. For those who attended, the experience will likely linger, inspiring subtle yet profound changes in their everyday lives.

**By Rehnuma Shahreen**  
**Photo: Shadab Shahrokh Hai**



# CELEBRATING HUMAN STORIES a journey through the seasons of Grameenphone's Lumière

Grameenphone's Lumière has emerged as a platform that transcends the conventional celebration of success. It illuminates the human stories behind remarkable achievements, resonating with the youth of Bangladesh while amplifying the nation's narrative on the global stage. Through its two seasons and special episodes, the platform has brought inspiring tales of resilience and achievement to the forefront, resonating with audiences in Bangladesh and beyond.



**A TRANSFORMATIVE BEGINNING: SEASON 1**

Season 1 of Lumière began with a compelling promise—to unearth and celebrate the untold human stories behind success. The series kicked off with Rubaba Dowla, a distinguished figure in Bangladesh's corporate world, offering a deeply personal glimpse into her journey. Her narrative set the tone for the series, blending professional insights with intimate reflections.

Following this, the platform featured Miti Sanjana, a passionate advocate for equal rights, whose story shed light on the challenges and triumphs of her activism. The season further explored diverse themes through episodes featuring Md. Touhidur Rahman Rad, whose work in corporate leadership was interwoven with his passions for youth empowerment and photography, and Bibi Russell, whose contributions to sustainable fashion have placed Bangladesh on the global map.

The season concluded with Kawshar Ahmed, a trailblazer in technology and entrepreneurship, whose story served as a fitting end to a series that celebrated ambition, creativity, and social impact.

**REACHING NEW HEIGHTS: SEASON 2**

Building on the foundation of its inaugural season, Lumière's second season expanded its horizons, featuring a more diverse array of stories. The season opener introduced Shehzad Munim, former Managing Director of British American Tobacco Bangladesh, who shared his perspectives on leadership and his enduring love for cricket.

Other episodes spotlighted Rezwana Choudhury Bannya, a musician whose work exemplifies the transformative power of art, and Navidul Huq, co-founder of Bongo, whose entrepreneurial journey highlighted the dynamic tech landscape in Bangladesh. Shusmita Anis, celebrated for her evocative vocals, offered insights into her creative process,

while Korvi Rakshand, founder of the JAAGO Foundation, shared his mission to revolutionise education.

**CELEBRATING CULTURAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY: SPECIAL EPISODES**

Lumière also presented two noteworthy special episodes. One featured Kanak Champa Chakma, whose artwork celebrated indigenous cultures, fostering understanding and bridging communities often divided by misconceptions. This episode concluded Lumière's annual offerings, symbolising unity and cultural celebration.

The other special episode highlighted Shafiqul Alam Selim and his eco-friendly factory, Karupannya. As a leader in Bangladesh's handicraft industry, Selim showcased sustainable development inspired by local traditions and village architecture. His story reintroduced Lumière to the youth of a free Bangladesh, emphasizing innovation rooted in cultural heritage.

**A PLATFORM FOR AUTHENTICITY AND CONNECTION**

At its core, Lumière stands out for its commitment to humanising success. The platform brings forward stories that delve into the universal struggles, dreams, and achievements that shape us all. Available across Grameenphone's LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube channels, the episodes foster connections between the audience and the luminaries by showcasing their resilience, authenticity, and humanity.

This initiative aligns with Grameenphone's broader vision of fostering innovation and excellence, not just in technology but in narrative-building. Through Lumière, the company reinforces the idea that every achievement is rooted in deeply personal journeys, encouraging audiences to find inspiration in their own stories.



As the late afternoon sun sets on the horizon leaving a blue sky aglow with crimson haze, it sets the tone for the evening. "Holud Shondha", as it was called back in the days was an intimate, homely affair replete with close friends and relatives gathering to celebrate upcoming nuptials, putting turmeric on the bride and groom amidst jaunty tunes of folk songs sung happily by aunts and cousins, dancing and making merry surrounding the happy bride or groom.

# HOLUD SHONDHA: A celebration of Bengali culture and heritage





Well. Those days are sadly behind us. The age of over-the-top, ostentatious weddings is here diminishing our culture and tradition with it. However, amidst this mindless appropriation of culture borrowed from neighbouring countries that have no rhyme or reason we are slowly forgetting our own.

Yet, some of us soldier on. A lavish “Sangeet” with professionally choreographed Hindi “item” dance numbers is not everyone’s cup of tea. Many couples choose to shun borrowed trends and uphold our simple rituals and customs. We have a rich heritage of traditions that is quintessentially Bengali and they are far more meaningful and special.

The hues of the holud ceremony are bright and happy! While mustard yellow is predominantly the colour of choice for most brides, as it tends to flatter our rich skin tones, there are so many more options. Canary, sunflower, corn and pineapple are lovely shades of yellow that are universally flattering. Off-beat brides can even consider muted shades of yellow. The best thing about yellow is that there is a shade for everyone.

In terms of styling, options are endless. A saree is the best choice for holud still, as it is the attire of choice for us Bangladeshi ladies. A true reflection of our culture and heritage, a saree will never let you down.

Choose traditional weaves if you please, such as Katan, Jamdani, or Muslin. There are so many ways to customise a saree nowadays. Most designers are happy to accommodate brides wanting to make a piece their own.

Go for a blouse in a contrasting colour such as yellow or purple. A red and yellow saree has traditionally been the attire of choice for holuds since time immemorial and is still the best colourway.

Go all out with details — zardozi and

karchupi among others are perfect and rich for holud. Patchwork on the anchal of a yellow saree will look fantastic in bright shades like red, pink, teal, and green. A Maggie-sleeve blouse will add charm to your holud attire. Velvet is another great



option for a blouse and will add a regal feel.

Traditionally, fresh floral jewellery has been a staple for holuds. Feminine and vibrant, there’s hardly any other kind that can compare with it. However, it is an entirely personal choice. Dry flower jewellery is another great option; it will stay with you for years. Brides wanting an element of richness can even layer with Kundan jewellery.

While Nivi drape is the most popular way one can always do things differently. “Ek pech” is an elegant and stylish way to embrace your Bangaliana, especially for holuds. Instead of going to a sky-high teased hairdo go for a plait and string rajanigandha strands over it. Or a “beni khopa” with lots of beli and gajra. Finish off with dewy makeup with natural tones and a lovely red teep.

So brides, embrace your own identity. Be yourself and be the belle of your ball in a Bangladeshi way!

**By Sabrina N Bhuiyan**  
**Photo: Adnan Rahman**  
**Model: Suhi, Mridula**  
**Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha**  
**Wardrobe: Tangail Saree Kutir**  
**Jewelry: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily**  
**Makeup Artist: Sumon Rahat & Team**  
**Set: Eskay Décor by Saimul Karim**





#REVIEW

## SHOPPING FOR THE HOLUD CEREMONY? Here's our take on the "dala dilemma"

With the sound of winter gales comes the ringing of wedding bells.

The season entails a range of customs and rituals but the age-old tradition of exchanging "dala" or gift basket between the bride and the groom has now taken on a life of its own. If you are planning to tie the knot this time around and are uncertain of what to do about the dala dilemma, this article dives into the latest trends, along with a price guide.



### What to buy

For starters, we are all familiar with ordinary gift baskets used to carry wedding essentials — cosmetics, dresses for the bride and the groom, the family, and the entourage, etc. While the gifts remain more or less the same, it is in the way you decorate the boxes where you are spoilt for choice. Perhaps, it's also time to think beyond tradition.

Wedding dalas come separately and in more cost-effective sets. They are available in various sizes and staying true to recent trends, boxes now come with golden

embroidery designs with simple beads and artificial flowers. Along with transparent sheets, they also come with plastic, box-like coverings. While the prices for these are somewhat on the higher side, these are suitable for gifts that are prone to breaking.

For the exchange of sweets, round or fish-shaped dalas are in demand. The recent addition to this has been boxes with separate, small compartments. Arranging sweetmeats will be easier with this particular dala and will cost you less than Tk 700.

Kulas have been traditionally used to

send gifts for the holud and the paanchini. They come in a range of options and are priced between Tk 300 and 1500, depending on the grandeur of the pieces. Mirrors are an important accessory for the rusmat and a variety of designs are available, which will cost you around Tk 800. No exchange of gifts is complete without paan (betel leaf) and dalas are widely available within Tk 500 for this specific purpose.

Along with the boxes, you can also consider buying accessories that will help the newly married couple in the future. Wooden, two-tier dalas to keep essentials within a hand's reach come with price tags between Tk 1000 and Tk 2500. A wooden stand to hang your clothes will cost about Tk 3600.

### Where to shop

The places to go dala-shopping are Bata Signal at Dhanmondi 2, Elephant Road, Eastern Mollika Goli, markets opposite Dhaka College, and Nurjahan Road opposite Mohammadpur Girls' High School.

Remember, to avail of a discount, it is possibly a good idea to get all your dalas from one place. If you want professional help to decorate the dalas, talk to the shop assistants for a good deal.

By Tasneem Azim

Photo: Shadab Shahrokh Hai

#LIFEHACKS

# Scent Secrets: How to impress without choking everyone around

We've all been there. You're minding your own business when — bam! — someone barrels past you in a haze of cologne so intense that it feels like they're *aromatically committing a crime*. Your lungs beg for mercy, and you're left wondering if they marinated in the bottle overnight.

Guilty. I have done that as a school kid thinking it was cool watching the ladies drop dead around me. And while we might roll our eyes at these "serial spritzers", let's be honest — how sure are you that you aren't making a few rookie mistakes with your favourite perfume?

Let's talk about it. Fragrance can be your secret weapon, a finishing touch that whispers elegance or confidence. So how do you get it right without fumigating your surroundings? And is winter really the magical season for lasting scents? Let's dive nose-first into the art of wearing fragrance.

### The basics: Subtle, not suffocating

First things first — less is more. Fragrance should whisper, not shout. Banish the idea that you need to spray yourself into a cloud of scent so thick it can be tracked on Google Maps.

Fragrance should be intimate — something someone notices when they lean in, not from across the room. A couple of well-placed sprays on your pulse points (wrists, neck, behind the ears) is all you need. These spots radiate heat, which helps your fragrance bloom throughout the day.

Now, here's the kicker: **don't rub it in.** Yes, I know it's tempting to press your wrists together like you're sealing the scent in some magical way, but all you're doing is messing with the fragrance's structure. Yes, it sounds pretentious to some, but there's a science behind it. Rubbing breaks down the top notes and mixes the perfume with your skin's oils, which can alter the scent entirely. Spray it, let it settle, and go about your business like the classy person you are.

### The air walk: Dramatic, but is it effective?

You've seen it in the movies, I have tried it myself — someone sprays a cloud of perfume into the air and gracefully walks through it like they're emerging from an enchanted fog. It looks dramatic, but is it practical?

Not really. While it looks fancy, it's mostly an inefficient way to wear fragrance. Sure, it gives a lighter, more diffused scent, but most of it ends up in the air (or on your clothes) rather than on your skin. Save this move for when you're in a rush or want a quick refresher without committing to direct sprays. Or you just want to feel extra theatrical. We need that sometimes.



### Weather wisdom: Why winter smells different

Here's an interesting nugget: your fragrance behaves differently depending on the weather. In the summer, heat amplifies scent, making even a light spritz feel stronger (and sweat doesn't help matters).

Winter, on the other hand, is a bit more forgiving. Cooler temperatures slow down the evaporation process, so your fragrance lasts longer and stays closer to your skin. This means you can go a bit heavier on those rich, warm scents like vanilla, musk, or amber in colder months without fear of overpowering everyone.

There is a big downside though for smokers and bikers in winter. The smell of petrol fumes or stale cigarette smoke clings to woollen clothes like an unwelcome guest, overpowering even the finest fragrance. Science says wool traps odour molecules and your perfume doesn't stand a chance. The result? A mashup of scents you never signed up for.

### The unspoken rules of sampling: Be the shopper, not the fog machine

Last week, my six-year-old daughter dragged me into a store — her mission: inspect every single plushie on the planet. While I stood there in a daze, surrounded by a mountain of stuffed animals, my attention drifted to a young guy in the perfume section. He was on a mission too, apparently. One spray, two sprays, three

— by the time he hit 10 or 12 samples, I'd lost count. He rubbed, aired, sniffed, and nodded in approval like a seasoned critic. And then, to my surprise, he walked out, wallet untouched. A bold move for someone gearing up for a party — armed with not *one* new scent, but *all* of them.

A quick PSA for those of you who love testing perfumes at shops: moderation, my friend. Sampling five fragrances at once will only confuse your nose (and everyone else's). Nothing wrong with spritzing a few pumps to smell nice courtesy of the samples. And please — don't douse yourself in a store sample and leave a scented crime scene behind. Sure, it is free but do you want to smell like a shop? Dab a little on a tester card or your wrist, and give it time to settle before deciding.

### The fragrance philosophy: Tone, not tidal wave

At the end of the day, your fragrance should set the tone, not flood the room. Think of it as an extension of your personality — a subtle nod to who you are, not a screaming declaration.

You've probably seen all those late-night reels with your phone inches from your face, featuring Bollywood celebs gushing over how amazing Shah Rukh Khan smells. It is a refined, perfectly curated extension of his personality, all without anyone dropping dead.

A good scent is like a subtle compliment you wear; it enhances your vibe without overwhelming it. Keep it light, keep it thoughtful, and remember: you want people to lean in, not run away.

Now that you are armed with the dos and don'ts, the next step is finding the perfect scent for every season, occasion, or mood. But hey, we'll save that for another day. For now, spritz smartly, laugh at the mistakes we've all made, and maybe double-check that you aren't aromatically murdering anyone on your way out the door.

By E Raza Ronny  
Photo: Collected

স্বর্ণের ছোয়ায়, তোমার উপমায়,  
বদলে দিলে যে আমায়...

**স্যান্ডালিনা**  
সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আত্মজাগ্রত...

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us on f /Sandalina



#FYI

# Who cares for Dhaka's voiceless? THE STRUGGLE FOR AFFORDABLE ANIMAL WELFARE

In Dhaka, the streets are full of life, humans and animals alike. While the need for veterinary care is clear, the challenges in accessing affordable and quality services remain a great hurdle for many. High costs and logistical barriers to available facilities are common roadblocks faced by pet owners and animal lovers.

So, what can be the solution?

## The state of current veterinary services

The availability of veterinary services in Dhaka has expanded over the years but is still insufficient. There is a mix of government-run and private veterinary facilities. While government-run clinics provide affordable options, many avoid them due to misconceptions about hygiene and quality.

Ferdous Utsho, a cat owner, dispels these myths, sharing, "There is a misconception that government pet hospitals are not hygienic or well-equipped but this is not true. I took my cat to Central Veterinary Hospital to get it vaccinated, and there was no visiting fee. I only paid for the vaccine. Yes, I had to hold my cat myself as there weren't enough assistants, but I was okay with it."

Private veterinary clinics, on the other hand, are better equipped and offer advanced treatments. However, their services come with a hefty price tag making them inaccessible for a significant portion of the population, especially those caring for stray animals.

Sabiha Ferdous, a veterinarian at Pranicool Animal Wellness Clinic, acknowledges this dilemma, stating, "We try our best to make veterinary services as affordable as possible. For example, if someone is a student or rescuing a stray animal, we try to offer special discounts. However, people need to understand that we have to maintain a clinic, bring in medicines, and pay our staff."

She added, "Cost is a big factor for us too. Still, if there is no other way, we suggest the wounded animals be taken to government hospitals. From our end, we always try to ensure that both the animals and their owners receive the best treatment within a reasonable charge."

## The struggle of stray animal rescuers

Caring for stray animals is a labour of love, often funded out of pocket. Yet,

the scale of the problem can overwhelm even the most dedicated animal lovers.

Joyeeta Trisha, a professional photographer and animal lover, shares, "You can help five, six, or ten strays, but you cannot support all of them – at least I couldn't. Crowdfunding is a good option. Post on an animal lovers' group or your Facebook wall and ask for help."

"It has worked for me previously.

However, fraudsters misuse pictures of wounded animals to collect funds. I would advise having proof, such as a prescription from the vet, before posting for crowdfunding."

The government must play a supportive role in addressing the challenges of stray animals. Vaccination and sterilisation programmes can help control the stray population humanely while ensuring public health.

Trisha adds, "How much can we animal lovers do? We need help from the government. If they take the initiative to vaccinate and sterilise strays, the problem can be solved to a large extent."

Moreover, caring for strays does not have to be an individual effort. Joyeeta emphasises, "If the entire community comes together to care for the strays in a locality, the process becomes easier and more beautiful."

## Affordable alternatives for animal care

Caring for stray animals in a city like Dhaka, where resources are limited and the number of animals is overwhelming, can feel like an uphill battle. However, there are practical and cost-effective alternatives that can make stray care more manageable without compromising the quality of care provided.

In certain cases, basic human medications can be safely administered to animals, provided they are used under the guidance of a veterinarian.

Veterinarian Sabiha Ferdous explains, "One must remember that a professional vet will handle the

animal in the best way possible. I always advise bringing the animal to a vet whenever possible."

Several NGOs like the PAW Foundation and Care for Paws, are actively involved in animal welfare. We can reach out to these NGOs for assistance with medical treatments or sterilisation drives. Also, volunteering on our part can be a great way to care for the animals properly.

In the end, making veterinary services accessible and affordable is not just about improving animal care, it reflects the

values of a compassionate society. A collaborative effort between individuals, communities, and government can transform the current challenges into opportunities for better animal welfare.

By Ayman Anika

Photo: Shadab Shahrokh Hai

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