

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 29, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2021
POUSH 9, 142

Star

Life

Style

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Wedding belle

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THINKING BEYOND SAREES

PHOTO: ADNAN
RAHMAN
MODEL: EFA
WARDROBE: ZUBAIDA
FAIZA CLOTHING
JEWELRY: SHOILEE BY
TAHMINA SHAILY
STYLING: SONIA
YEASMIN ISHA
MAKEUP: SUMON RAHAT
& TEAM
SET DESIGN: ESKAY
DÉCOR BY SAIMUL
KARIM

KUNDALINI RISING
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Unlocking the secrets to a longer health span

As global life expectancy continues to rise, a new question dominates the discourse on ageing: how can we live not just longer, but healthier lives? While lifespan measures the total years a person lives, health span refers to the portion of life spent in good health, free from chronic diseases and debilitating conditions. With science, nutrition, and lifestyle medicine, the focus on enhancing health span has never been more vital.



Chronic illnesses such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and neurodegenerative disorders often afflict people in the latter part of their lives, reducing their quality of life and placing a strain on families, healthcare systems, and societies.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the last 10–15 years of life for many people are marked by significant health challenges. This makes it critical to shift our focus from merely adding years to adding vitality to those years.

By improving health span, individuals can enjoy an extended period of productivity, independence, and joy. From a societal perspective, a healthier population

reduces the economic burden of medical care and increases the overall quality of life in communities.

Key pillars of health span

Nutrition and diet

A nutrient-dense diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins plays a pivotal role in maintaining good health. Avoiding processed foods, refined sugars, and trans-fats reduces the risk of chronic diseases. Emerging research also highlights the benefits of intermittent fasting and calorie restriction for cellular repair and longevity.

Physical activity

Regular exercise, including strength training, cardio, and flexibility exercises,

helps maintain muscle mass, bone density, and cardiovascular health. Even small amounts of daily movement — such as walking, cycling, or yoga — can delay the onset of age-related conditions.

Stress Management

Chronic stress accelerates ageing at the cellular level, increasing susceptibility to illnesses. Practices like meditation, mindfulness, and breathwork have been shown to reduce stress hormones, lower blood pressure, and enhance mental clarity. Journaling, breathwork and meditation are great ways to release stress.

Sleep hygiene

Sleep is often overlooked but is critical for repair and regeneration. Poor sleep patterns are linked to cognitive decline, obesity, and weakened immunity. Prioritising 7–9 hours of quality sleep each night is an investment in long-term health.

Preventive healthcare

Regular medical check-ups, vaccinations, and screenings can catch potential health issues early. Advances in personalised medicine, such as genetic testing, allow individuals to understand their unique risks and take pre-emptive action.

Social connections

A robust social network contributes to emotional well-being and reduces the risk of depression and cognitive decline. Loneliness is as detrimental to health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day.

By prioritising health span, we can create a future where longer lives are truly worth celebrating. Let us aim for a life not just well-lived, but well-enjoyed.

Shazia Omar is a writer and yogini. Subscribe to her channel: [YouTube.com/shazyom](https://www.youtube.com/shazyom).

Photo: LS Archive / Sazzad Ibne Sayed

FRUITY
Lip Balm

ত্বা
লিপ জেল

কমপ্লিট
লিপ কেয়ার

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ঠোঁট থাকুক always ... হাসি থুশি

KOHINOOR
CHEMICAL

#PERSPECTIVE

SWEET PITHAS, BITTER REALITIES: The women behind the delicacies //

When winter drapes itself over Dhaka, the city welcomes a familiar comfort: the scent of freshly made pithas wafting through the cool air. At street corners, markets, and bustling alleyways, women with warm baskets and weary eyes sell these sweet treasures — bhapa pitha, patishapta, chittoi — each a delicate celebration of tradition.



We pause to savour their softness, but how often do we stop to ask about the hands that made them?

Tales of survival

Sufia Begum sets up her small stall every day near the Gulshan-Badda Link just as the sky hints at dawn. The chill clings to her, but her hands move with steady resolve.

"I wake up at 5 AM every day," she says, her voice low but firm. "The cold doesn't wait, and neither does hunger."

For Sufia and countless other women in Dhaka, pitha-making is not a seasonal indulgence; it is a lifeline. After her husband's illness drained their savings, she turned to the skills her mother had passed down to her — the quiet craft of turning simple ingredients into something that could warm both bodies and souls.

Yet, even as her pithas sell, she remains invisible, a shadow in the bustling city.

The art of pitha-making is as old as winter itself. Generations of women have passed down these recipes — a pinch of rice flour, a dash of jaggery, and a lifetime of patience. But tradition is no shield against the demands of survival.

For Jamila, a 35-year-old mother of three, every morning is a race against time and poverty. She sells her pithas near a crowded bus stand, competing with blaring horns and restless



crowds. "Some days, I sell everything. Other days, I bring half of it home," she says, her eyes scanning the crowd. "But I can't stop. If I stop, the rent stops. The food stops."

The price of rice flour rises, firewood grows expensive, and the demands of city life press tighter. Yet, customers haggle over a few takas, unaware that they are bargaining over someone's next meal.

Beyond their role as pitha-makers, these women juggle multiple responsibilities.

From caring for children to managing household chores, their lives are a constant balancing act.

"My husband left years ago," says Shahana, who sells pithas at Shahjadpur Jheel Par. "I had to find a way to feed my children. Making pithas gave me that chance, but it also means I'm always working — from dawn to midnight, seven days a week."

The physical toll is evident in their calloused hands and weary faces. Yet, their determination shines through, driven by the hope of a better future for their families.

When tradition builds a future Pitha-making is more than a seasonal trade; it is a window into the resilience of women who refuse to give up. Some women are finding new ways to share their craft — through social media orders, local cooperatives, and community markets.

Shahana, who usually sells on street corners, now delivers her pithas to homes thanks to her eldest daughter.

"I didn't know how to use Facebook at first," laughs Shahana. "My daughter taught me. Now, many people message us for pithas. It feels good to be appreciated."

As we enjoy the warmth of a freshly made pitha this winter, let us pause and appreciate the women who rise long before dawn and shape the dough and hope with the same hands — who fight invisibility with resilience.

The next time you taste a pitha, ask the name of the woman who made it. Look her in the eyes. See her. Because behind the sweetness, there is a world of courage that deserves to be known.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Ayman Anika

#PERSPECTIVE

Nativity scene: A timeless Christmas tradition

And she gave birth to her firstborn son and laid him in a manger... (Luke 2:7)



The mother, a man, and the child represent the central figures in the story. The baby lies in a cradle made from hay, and is surrounded by animals as if they are on guard. Accompanying the shepherds, angels hover over...all witnesses to the birth of Christ.

The scene is made complete with a star placed on top to guide the wise men, the Magi who travel from distant lands with gifts for the newly-born, the saviour!

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you."

Isaiah 60:1

As the holiday season draws near, this is one of the most cherished scenes we encounter in public squares, parks, supermarkets, and churches. It is an artistic, dramatic attempt to capture the very moment that continues to influence billions of Christians around the world.

Like the events it symbolises, the story of the nativity scene itself is one steeped in history. It is a tradition inspired by religious scripture and weaved over centuries with art, storytelling, and local customs.

Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.

(Mark 16:15)

In the early 13th century, it was St Francis of Assisi — an Italian mystic, poet, and Catholic friar, who came up with the idea of a live depiction of the nativity scene. There were, however, significant differences to the scene as we know it today.

Inspired by his visit to the Holy Land, St Francis set the scene in a cave, with villagers playing the roles of Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds. Live animals were used to give the entire event a natural touch! The display was accompanied by a

congregation where St Francis spoke of the humility in the story of Christ's birth and the scene at the manger.

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness.

(John 8:12)

Needless to say, the event was immensely successful, sparking a tradition that spread far beyond the little village of Italy. Although the nativity that we popularly see today is attributed to St Francis, the idea is much older. As early as the 4th century CE, religious art depicted the scene at the manger, but these lacked the human touch introduced at the village of Greccio.

After the inaugural attempt, the tradition became immensely popular. As Christianity spread around the world, local culture was incorporated into it and by the 18th century, the scene found its way from the church to the homes of wealthy Christians.

Every nativity scene, irrespective of how elaborately detailed or simple, conveys the same timeless tale. From its humble beginnings in a small Italian village to its status as a beloved global tradition, the nativity continues to inspire faith and joy.

Compiled by Pothbhola
Photo: STAR



FASHION & BEAUTY

HOW THE MUGHAL ERA INSPIRES WEDDING FASHION

A rich cultural and commercial hub, Dhaka was the capital of Mughal Bengal and boasted of the Muslin trade that extended far and beyond the realm of Asia. One of the most prosperous cities in the world at that time, the affluent families here had an enviable lifestyle befitting their high status. With their brocade ghararas, silk shararas, and velvet Pishwas embroidered with gold and silver threads and studded with real pearls and other precious

stones, they set the standard in fashion.

Photo: Adnan Rahman

Model: Efa

Wardrobe: Zubaida Faiza Clothing

Jewelry: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily

Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Makeup: Sumon Rahat & Team

Set Design: Eskay Décor by Saimul Karim



OF LEHENGAS AND GHARARAS

How the Mughal era inspires WEDDING *fashion*

On the other end of the empire, ghagra choli or lehenga was the attire of choice for women of Rajasthan. In the sweltering heat of the desert, the choli was styled to keep women cool while they went about their daily lives. Noblewomen of Rajasthan also wore ghagra choli in the olden days; needless to say, it was much more opulent and ostentatious.



As time passed, such outfits became impractical for daily wear and became festive attire due to wear grandeur and ceremonial fashion. Chosen for weddings and other celebrations these outfits offer a welcome variation as variety is the spice of life!

We are in the thick of the festive, wedding season and boy are we here for it! While sarees will always have our hearts, lehengas and ghararas are beautiful and demure too. They are now being favoured for holids and have been the outfit of choice for receptions.

This year, lehengas with a cape-style dupatta are all the rage. Pristine white, beige, ivory and Devonshire cream are fabulous shades for the bride with a penchant for white. Nude shades such as tender beige, milky latte, and champagne look fantastic too. Embroidery, pearls, and crystals are the embellishments of choice for these lehengas and only further highlight the beauty of such

subtle but stunning shades.

Another favourite of Dhaka fashionistas of late is the "architectural piece". These lehengas are not your usual kind — structured in shapes never seen before, these outfits are nothing short of works of art. Inspired by movements in nature such as air and water, these are constructed with remarkable flair and an eye for detail. From shades of white to jewel tones such as ruby, sapphire, emerald, and amethyst, these lehengas are truly unique and will make you feel like an absolute queen on your big day!

Ghararas and shararas are also perfect for smaller events like mehendi, firani, or other programmes. An ivory sharara is the outfit of choice for your akdh morning. Pristine and pure, with gold zari and embroidered with zardozi it will complement your natural beauty in the best possible way. Pair it with delicate heirloom gold jewellery and green glass bangles.



Mehendi functions call for something green and ghararas are the perfect choice for it! A green suit paired with a chatta-patti gharara will look fantastic for your fun, playful mehendi night! Wear it with fresh floral ornaments and bright, dewy makeup.

Last but not least, a nude-coloured sharara with a contrast dupatta is ideal for those post-wedding dawats. You could also wear a chundri-chaddar with your sharara or a heavily embroidered shawl to bring a stylish flair to your look. Some stunning jewellery, a pretty potli and matching juttis will add the perfect finishing touches to your lovely look.

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Efa
Wardrobe: Zubaida Faiza Clothing
Jewelry: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Makeup: Sumon Rahat & Team
Set Design: Eskay Décor by Saimul Karim





Creating the perfect Christmas ATMOSPHERE AT HOME

The season of joy, warmth, and togetherness is upon us and there's no better way to celebrate than by transforming our homes into a haven of holiday cheer.

From spectacular table settings and elegant tree decorations to a festive feast that satisfies every palate, here's how to make your celebration memorable.

The giving tree

There's no Christmas without a beautifully adorned Christmas tree. Medium-sized trees look great if you wish to make a cosy corner for a small family but of course, bigger homes will demand a taller pine. Christmas trees can be ordered online nowadays and artificial ones are more practical, especially if one intends to use them over a few years.

Themed Christmas tree décor is in this season and you can deck up your leafy baby in everything from candy to a favourite cartoon character. For a more rustic look, wrap presents in brown paper and use strings or ribbons in colours that go with the theme of your tree. If you are looking for an understated aesthetic, stick to a minimal palette—gold and silver

decorations with white or off-white accents can make a chic statement. A fur rug beneath the tree, sprinkled with confetti and surrounded by thoughtfully wrapped gifts, can make for a warmer visual.

Keeping a perfect table

A beautifully decorated dining table reflects the spirit of the season.

A white and green tablecloth can provide a sharp, fresh base for your setup. For a simple centrepiece, consider placing a bowl of candy wrapped in red cellophane, surrounded by real ferns. If

you have mason jars, create a layered centrepiece using rice at the bottom, pomegranate pearls in the middle, and ferns on top. Tie up the rim with jute strings. For a touch of glitter, you can craft a cone-shaped centrepiece with chart paper covered in glitter felt and topped with a star. White plates paired with gold cutlery add an understated elegance.

If you prefer a more opulent look, choose a printed or matte gold tablecloth and pair it with a deeper gold runner. Crystal glasses, solid-coloured plates, and a matching vase filled with silver and gold twigs or baubles, create a luxurious yet

cohesive visual. To tie it all together, use ribbons in plate-coordinating colours for the cutlery and add satin chair sashes in similar hues.

For a quirky yet sophisticated touch, try banana leaves as a base for gold plates on a polished wooden table, accompanied by fresh roses, gold cutlery, and asymmetric candles. Small details like DIY coasters made from layered cardboard and festive cutlery tags shaped like trees or reindeer

can elevate the charm.

The gastronomic delights

The heart of any Christmas celebration lies in its festive spread, bringing loved ones together over delicious meals. Whether you stick to traditional Bengali holiday favourites or explore international cuisines, the possibilities are endless.

For appetisers, an artfully decorated charcuterie board can be your best and easiest bet. You can also add coloured foods based on your theme, making it a visual treat as well as a culinary one. A warm bowl of classic French onion soup makes for a comforting starter too.

A well-seasoned roast chicken can easily steal the spotlight. For sides, go all out with potatoes, whether mashed, roasted, baked, or herbed, to complement the main dish. Sautéed seasonal vegetables or a simple cherry tomato and broccoli salad can bring fresh flavours and colours to the table.

For dessert, you may wish to serve warm apple pie served with fresh cream, a yule log cake or a Christmas fruitcake to satisfy sweet cravings.

Don't forget to bake a batch of crisp ginger snaps or gingerbread cookies. End the meal with warm apple cider spiced with cinnamon, and you have a spread that's both indulgent and heart-warming.

By Munira Fidai
Food & Photo: Amari Dhaka





50/50 marriage? More like 90/10 in disguise

Meet Runi, a 33-year-old woman living in the metropolitan of Dhaka. To many, she is a shining beacon of modern success — Runi has a thriving corporate job, a pristine Instagram feed full of #BossLady hashtags, and a dazzling smile that hides the chaos she navigates daily. However, beneath this glittering exterior lies the harrowing tale of a Bangladeshi woman juggling the world's most unreasonable expectations.

Her day starts at 6 AM because that's when the battle begins. Not the one in the boardroom but the one in the kitchen. After all, if her husband's omelettes do not have that perfect crispy edge, the in-laws will start wondering if the family bloodline is doomed.

Runi used to skip breakfast in her single days, but now, she's a one-woman breakfast factory. By 7 AM, the kitchen looks like a battlefield, the only evidence of her triumph being the stuffed lunchboxes she sends off with her family members, while she downs a double shot espresso for herself.

But wait, there's more. Financial independence is the post-feminist woman's armour, so off she goes to her 9-to-5, which is more of a 9-to-9 because Dhaka traffic eats up a third of her life.

At work, she's the queen of presentations, a master of spreadsheets, and a champion of multitasking. That is until she gets a call from home because the rice cooker is not working and she is expected to troubleshoot it over the phone — because clearly, her MBA also included a minor in household appliances.

By the time she returns home, she's not greeted with a "How was your day?" but with a list of things she forgot to do. "Did you call your mother-in-law's second cousin's son about the wedding gift, why didn't you pick up more ketchup, and the curtains need changing because chachi is coming tomorrow."

Let's not forget the pregnancy subplot, which is ever-present in her life. She could be discussing geopolitics, and someone would ask, "But when are you giving us the good news?" As if motherhood is the ultimate promotion she's been striving for. Of course, this comes with unsolicited advice from everyone, including her office peon, who once suggested that eating seven dates daily would guarantee twin boys.

Runi often pondered one of life's great injustices, as she massaged her swollen ankles after a long day: why was the pregnancy burden hers alone while the financial burden had to be 'shared equally'?

Her husband was a perfectly progressive man who championed equality in theory but when it came to the practicalities of biology, nature had handed him a permanent get-out-of-jail-free card.

While Runi dealt with morning sickness,

mood swings, and a belly that made her feel like a human watermelon, his biggest contribution was rubbing her back occasionally, and buying mango pickles when she craved them.

Yet, society had the audacity to expect her to split bills with a man who would never know the joy of waddling to the office at 8 months pregnant or crying over a detergent commercial.

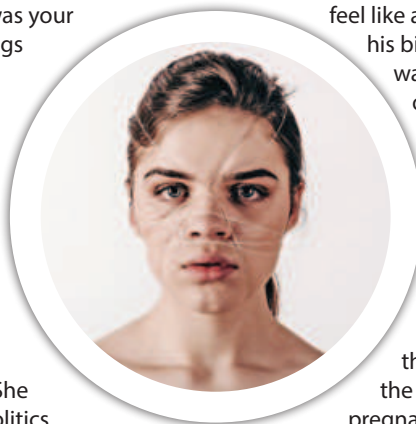
"Partnership, my foot," Runi muttered one day, glaring at her husband as he sat on the couch scrolling through his phone while she Googled "Can pelvic pain make you lose your mind?"

Runi also has her parents to think about, who she left behind when she got married. Her heart aches every time her mother sighs on the phone, subtly reminding her of how the house feels empty without her.

"But don't worry about us," her mother insists. "We are fine."

The guilt would crush a lesser mortal but Runi pushes on, wondering if teleportation is a possibility in her lifetime. Even in modern times, leaving the natal home is a woman's cross to bear and 'adjust' to the home of the man she has partnered with and pour her life force there.

And yet, amidst all this, society expects Runi to remain impeccably dressed, maintain her waistline, and throw Pinterest-perfect dinner parties. She must also take up yoga and Pilates because 'It's good for your shontan!' and watch educational videos about 'how to keep the spark alive' in her marriage.



One evening, after a particularly gruelling day, Runi collapsed on her couch. Her husband — well-meaning but oblivious — asked, "What's wrong? You're just balancing work and home. Women have been doing this for centuries."

The unassumingness of the statement played havoc on her already fraught nervous system. Women were discriminated against, always. A few decades ago, they were privy to being homebodies only, not being allowed to do anything, having nothing, and living as a second-class citizen in their own homes due to the lack of economic identity. Today, we abide by the 'Superwoman Syndrome,' where modern marriage claims to be the epitome of the Dutch phenomenon of 50-50. I struggle to find the male 50.

So, Runi just stared at him, her vision narrowing like a predator spotting its prey. "Oh, really?" she said sweetly. "Would you like to try it for a day?" Maybe then he would be able to scrub out his 50 between the cushions of the sofa of his childhood home, possibly with the help of his doting mother.

The next morning, she handed him an apron and left for work without packing his lunch. By 11 AM, he had managed to burn the eggs, flood the kitchen, and call his mother in desperation. By the time Runi returned, he was sitting in a corner, hugging the rice cooker like it was his last friend on earth. And so, Runi survived another day. She might not have the cape, but she's definitely saving the world — one omelette, spreadsheet, and guilt trip at a time. But it is time society starts asking the other half of the population what 50 they are bringing to the table.

By Noshin Nawal
Photo: Collected

#PERSPECTIVE

FINDING SERENITY BY THE SEA

A meditation retreat to remember

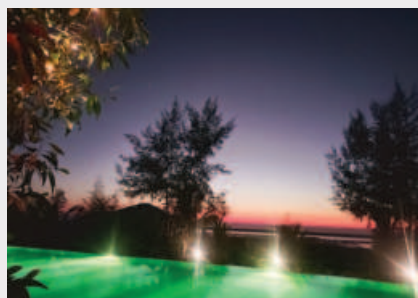
It's hard to imagine while sitting in Dhaka traffic, with horns blaring all around and vehicles both moving and not moving at the same time, that there is a bay out there some 400 kilometres away. Yet, the sea is where I escape to in my mind as I sit through traffic on the way back from work, when my boss says something triggering, or when my co-workers are being judgmental about my life choices.

The sea is my escape. This is all I need and I can hardly relate to friends and colleagues saving up for top-notch destinations. I mean I get the attraction but those places don't pull me like the sea does.

Meditation/yoga/wellness etc. are hot topics in Dhaka right now, and I had heard of these retreats. However, this is the first time I tried something like this. Luckily, I was surrounded by friendly faces, as the retreat was hosted by a place, I frequent — Satori Meditations.

I made it a point not to go on this trip as a tourist but as a traveller or seeker. Sure, I didn't know what I was seeking, maybe it was myself or maybe inner peace. I didn't know, and I considered it a good thing to go in without preconceived notions. Sometimes, we find exactly what we are looking for, only to be disappointed once we get it. On this trip, I was far from disappointed!

We took a morning flight on the first day of the trip. As the plane landed, I got a



great view of the sea and beach, and the stress of city life was already melting away.

The retreat would be taking place at Mermaid Beach Resort and the diet would be vegan. This was a required part of the trip. This doesn't suit everyone as most people want to have barbecued fish at least once on a Cox's Bazar trip.

I am, however, on a journey to discover what I can and can't do without, and I decided that I could do without fish, meat, and dairy for a couple of days. It felt easy but it was not so for everyone, and one participant broke down and had fish on day two. And yes, that, my friends, is a scandalous thing to do on a vegan retreat!

Scandals aside, we had a great time. Old friends joined me on the retreat, and I made new friends too. It's not every day that you get to be surrounded by like-minded people.

On the first day, we didn't do many



activities — we watched the sunset by the pool and participated in a sound bath. I suppose I should try to capture the beauty of the sunset with words, but I don't know if I can. Not that I lack the eloquence or the will to try; it's just that sometimes, words can restrict beauty by trying to define it. And maybe the word limit of this article won't allow a decent attempt. In short, the sunset was breathtaking. At twilight, I sat by the pool and sipped on an orange juice, wondering about the activities of the next day, which did not disappoint.

On the second and main day of the trip, we had a morning meditation. After the meditation, we had breakfast and just relaxed until lunch. Some people relaxed by the pool; others went for a swim, or practiced painting. It was very wholesome.

I, on the other hand, took a nap. I know it sounds a bit boring, but it was

one of the best naps ever and added to my relaxation. After the nap, I joined everyone else for lunch and we headed out on a long drive on the marine drive.

The drive was extremely scenic and as we listened to music and chatted among ourselves, one of the participants commented that it felt like a scene out of the movies and truly, that's exactly how it felt.

After we got back, we had dinner and a short night meditation. A few of us headed to the resort's private beach to sit on swings and do some star gazing while the ocean roared around us. Adding to the magic of the moment was a bonfire set up in a small grove of trees beside us.

On the final day, the day we returned to Dhaka by train, I left the group for a while after breakfast and sat reflecting on the trip. I hadn't gone knowing what I was looking for, but as I sat and pondered, I realised what it was that I had found; acceptance.

The relaxation and meditations by the sea had instilled in me a sense of acceptance towards the world. I found myself accepting the ways of the world, all things good and bad, and this gave me a sense of renewed energy and I looked forward to going back to my ordinary life, feeling quite extraordinary indeed.

By Proma Gulshan



Constant arguments with your partner? Signs you are in the wrong relationship

FYI

Ah, love! The fabled potion that has driven mere mortals to compose sonnets, fight duels, and make cringe-worthy reels on TikTok. And then there are relationships hoping to discover a treasure chest of answers but often ending up with a Bermuda Triangle of compatibility issues. In other words, deciphering the core issues in a relationship is as important as finding out whether it is salvageable or not.

#Soulmate or #Cellmate?

Remember, when you thought your love was written in the stars, only to find out you are actually reading the horoscope section wrong? Ah, classic! If your texts are always on 'delivered' but never on 'read,' or if your most intimate moment is when Google Calendar alerts both of you to pay rent, it might be time

to review terms and conditions.

Sense of humour doesn't match?

Here's the rub. If you can't even share memes because your SO is still stuck in the age of sharing minion quotes on Facebook, you might have a problem bigger than trying to explain what a meme is. Your SO called your jokes bland or unsanitary, whereas the room reacted completely oppositely, which is a clear sign that you and your love are not on the same wavelength.

The Ex-files: Previous partners haunting you still?

If your partner talks about their ex as if they're narrating an epic

trilogy worthy of Peter Jackson's attention, consider this a red flag waving from the peak of Mount Doom. We get it, past is prologue but you don't want to be the subplot in someone else's love saga.

Not having any emotional availability?

Here's a hint: if your beau is more responsive to Instagram stories than your emotional needs, swipe left.

And for the love of all things sacred, don't do that thing where you say, "Oh, they're just not emotionally expressive."

Keeping scores or keeping tabs?
If your relationship feels more like

a Wimbledon final, where each one is keen on keeping score, you're not in a relationship — you're in a tournament. Love is not about tallying points or using Excel sheets to monitor who did what. If that's the case, consider drafting a "break-up agreement" rather than an "exclusive relationship" one.

The Golden Rule: Grow together or grow apart

The linchpin of any successful relationship is growth, and if the only thing growing is your mutual disdain for each other's habits, it's time to call it. If one of you is aiming for the stars while the other is content digging a hole to hide from life's responsibilities, Houston, we have a problem!

By K Tanzeel Zaman



◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

You'll have great insight when dealing with others. Your energy will enable you to lead group functions. Romance will be favourable. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Turn things around and help elders with personal matters. Channel efforts into eliminating bad habits. Get social this week. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Projects may be stalled. You may feel uncertain about your emotions. Avoid neglecting your responsibilities. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



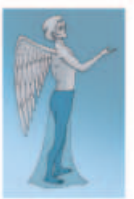
CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Relationships may form through projects. Persuasive skills will win someone's heart. The outcome will be favourable. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Travel will bring great rewards. Spend quality time with your partner. Focus on stimulating, creative activities. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Don't get overly emotional. Dealing with foreigners will bring insights. Depression may strike if you're away from home. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Home comforts will be satisfying. Sudden changes in friendships may be stimulating. Enjoy pleasure trips or intellectual get-togethers. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Uncertainties will linger. Your cultured attitude will mesmerise others. Be diplomatic, but careful with personal giving. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Look for ways to spoil yourself. Tuck money away safely. Handle financial limits on your own. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Stay calm and avoid nagging. Use discipline to achieve your goals. Make amends where possible. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Avoid jumping to conclusions about your partner. Financial gains can come through creative businesses. Your good ideas may be ignored at work. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Break free from your rut. Social activities will be satisfying. Don't let generosity lead to financial strain. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



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Table for two (or more)! A guide to arranging your first dining space

When setting up your first home together, one of the most cherished spaces you will design is the dining room. It's where meals are shared, laughter echoes, and memories are created — making it a cornerstone of your new life. Whether you are envisioning intimate dinners for two or lively gatherings with friends and family, your dining space should reflect your lifestyle, taste, and the beautiful partnership you are building.

Minimalism wins with slim and sleek

For those starting fresh in apartments or compact homes, slim and streamlined designs are a far better choice than traditional bulky furniture. Choose dining tables with clean lines and slender profiles and pair them with lightweight, ergonomic chairs that are easy to move around, allowing for flexibility when entertaining guests or reorganising the space.

If you lean towards a minimalist aesthetic, choose materials like light wood and/or glass. A table with tapered legs can give the illusion of a larger room while adding an airy vibe.

Dining chairs with colourful cushioning are an excellent way to add personality and vibrancy to your dining space. Whether you prefer bold hues like mustard yellow, teal, deep red, or softer tones like pastel blue, the right splash of colour can instantly elevate the overall look of the room.

Cushioned seats, just like sofas, often



serve as a statement allowing you to experiment with textures and patterns that complement the theme of your home. For newlyweds aiming to create a welcoming and cheerful dining area, this is a playful yet practical choice. Pair colourful cushions with neutral dining tables for a striking contrast or match them with accents from other areas of your house. This will tie the space together!

Consider mixing contemporary and traditional elements to strike a balance that represents both your tastes. A sleek table can be paired with antique-inspired chairs or modern lighting can offset rustic wooden flooring. This blend of styles creates a space that feels fresh yet familiar—a perfect metaphor for your new life together.

How many seats?

The seating arrangement depends largely on how you plan to use the dining room.

If it's primarily for the two of you, a smaller table with four seats will suffice while leaving room for occasional guests. A round table works well here, creating an intimate setting that feels cosy yet versatile.

However, if you foresee hosting dinner parties or family get-togethers regularly, it would be wise to invest in a rectangular or extendable table that can accommodate six to eight chairs. You might not use all the seats every day, but having the option to expand keeps you ready to welcome loved ones without feeling cramped.

Set the mood with the right lighting

Lighting is key to creating the perfect ambience in your dining room. A statement pendant or thin chandelier above the table adds a focal point to the room while defining the space.

Look for fixtures with dimmable options, allowing you to adjust the brightness depending on the occasion; a soft glow for romantic dinners and brighter settings for lively gatherings.

Ditch boring white lights. Complement overhead lighting with warm, indirect lighting such as wall sconces or floor lamps in the corners. For a touch of drama, you may also consider using warm fairy lights.

While light arrangement is necessary, nothing beats the charm of natural light filtering into your dining room. Position

your table near a window, or diagonal to it, to make the most of daylight. It will not only brighten the space but also uplift the mood during meals. Sheer curtains add dreaminess to it while blinds allow light to flow in and maintain a sense of seclusion at the same time.

For newlyweds setting up their first home together, the excitement of furnishing their dining room can sometimes be tempered by the challenge of budgeting for quality pieces. This is where EMI (Equated Monthly Installment) payment plans come in.

Instead of making a big one-time payment, EMI options allow you to spread the cost over manageable monthly payments. Many furniture stores and online retailers now offer EMI plans with low or even zero interest rates, making it easier to invest in high-quality, durable dining sets without straining your finances.

This approach not only allows you to prioritise the design and functionality of your dining room but also gives you the flexibility to choose pieces that truly suit your taste and needs.

For couples starting their journey together, it's a smart, stress-free way to create a home where you love every corner of it.

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Hatil



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