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Fashion's *final* word

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MONA MAMA'S HALIM
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ZODIAC PREDICTIONS 2025

PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN
MODEL: TANGIA ZAMAN METHILA
STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
JEWELLERY: SHOILEE BY TAHMINA SHAILY
WARDROBE: JEALOUS TOMATO
MAKEUP AND HAIR: PIASH & SAMIR
LOCATION: LE MERIDIAN HOTEL, DHAKA

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#HUMOUR



Winter morning at a city park

Winter survival guide: Mosquitoes, dust, and dry skin

Winter has arrived and Dhaka has become a hive of activity for late-night tea sessions, pitha feasts, and rooftop barbecue parties. However, in the shadows of this joyous occasion lie Dhaka's most dreaded evildoers: dust, dry skin, and mosquitoes. These three menaces arrive like a rogue gallery from a superhero flick, each with their own diabolical plot to ruin the season. But fear not, for Dhakaites are nothing if not resilient. Armed with lotions, coils, and a questionable amount of enthusiasm, the city fights back against its winter nemeses.

The Mosquito Horde

Superpower: Stealth attacks and an insatiable thirst for human blood.

Modus Operandi: Emerging from every conceivable corner once the sun dips below the horizon.

Winter mosquitoes are a different breed altogether. While summer mosquitoes have the decency to be sluggish and predictable, their winter counterparts are faster, stealthier, and oddly persistent. They laugh in the face of your electric swatter, dodge the smoke from your coil, and somehow still find that one exposed patch of skin through your mosquito net.

How Dhakaites Fight Back

The Coil Ritual: Lighting a coil and placing

it under the table, hoping it works before your tea starts tasting like burnt chemicals.

The Spray Crusade: Emptying half a can of bug spray in the living room while chanting, "Better them than me".

The Mosquito Net Armour: Turning your bed into an anti-mosquito fortress, only to realise you have locked in one mosquito that's now your archenemy for the night.

The Duststorm Duo

Superpower: Infiltrating everything, from your nose to your newly cleaned furniture.

Modus Operandi: Hitching a ride on winter breezes and endless Dhaka construction projects.

Winter in Dhaka brings an unrelenting avalanche of dust. It's on your clothes, in your hair, and somehow even in your tea cup during rooftop gatherings. The sheer audacity of dust is legendary—it settles on freshly wiped furniture within seconds and turns your lungs into its personal playground.

How Dhakaites Fight Back

The Mop and Wipe Alliance: A never-ending cycle of dusting that feels more like a cardio routine than a cleaning task.

Mask Up: Channelling your inner superhero

by wearing a face mask everywhere, even indoors.

Plant Sidekicks: Filling your home with indoor plants that promise to purify the air but mostly just look aesthetically pleasing.

The Dry Skin Bandit

Superpower: Turning the toughest Dhakaite into a human loofah.

Modus Operandi: Sapping all moisture from your skin, leaving you itchy, ashy, and contemplating life.

Dry skin doesn't discriminate—it attacks everyone. You could be in a VIP event in Banani, and your hands will look like they belong to someone who is not aware of the invention of moisturisers. The betrayal is personal and relentless, turning winter into a battle of hydration.

How Dhakaites Fight Back:

The Lotion Arsenal: Stockpiling moisturisers like it's a zombie apocalypse, with every household suddenly owning three types of Nivea.

The Lip Balm Obsession: Carrying lip balm in every pocket, purse, and occasionally tucked into a sock for emergencies.

The Oil Ritual: Rubbing mustard oil into every crevice of your body while pretending it smells like a luxury spa product.

The City Fights Back

Dhakaitees are nothing if not creative in their resistance. While mosquitoes, dust, and dry skin continue their relentless assault, the city's collective resilience transforms the fight into a community event. Neighbours share remedies, colleagues trade tips, and WhatsApp groups light up with debates over the best mosquito repellents.

From rooftop BBQ parties to Mirpur bazaars, Dhaka becomes a battleground of ingenuity:

Grandmas concoct DIY moisturisers with aloe vera and turmeric.

Local kids invent games with mosquito swatters.

Every household becomes a fortress of defence against dust.

Dhaka's winters are a paradox—a season that brings both unparalleled charm and unrelenting chaos. And while mosquitoes, dust, and dry skin continue their reign of terror, the city's real heroes—the people—rise to the occasion with wit, resourcefulness, and a whole lot of *cha*. Because in Dhaka, no villain stands a chance against a well-moisturised, mask-wearing, coil-lighting warrior.

By K Tanzeel Zaman

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed





**ALOE VERA ও
COCOA BUTTER সমৃদ্ধ**

Beautina
SKIN LOTION

১টি ম্যান্ডালিনা সোপ ফ্রী

**HEALTHY ত্বকে
আত্মবিশ্বাসী আমি।
আর আপনি?**

*বিউটিনা বডি লোশন ২০০মিলিঃ এর সাথে স্যান্ডালিনা সোপ ৭৫ গ্রাম এবং বিউটিনা বডি লোশন ১০০মিলিঃ এর সাথে স্যান্ডালিনা সোপ ৫০ গ্রাম ফ্রী।

**KOHINOOR
CHEMICAL**

#PERSPECTIVE



INSIDE BAITUL MUKARRAM MARKET

Dhaka's destination for tasbehs, prayer mats, and attars

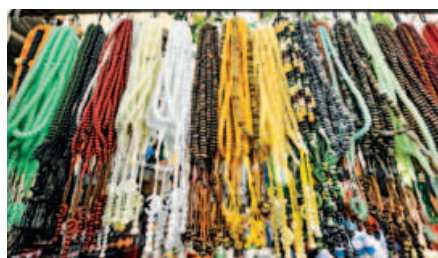
Rows of stalls brimming with the thick fragrance of attars, the gentle gleam of tasbehs, countless varieties of prayer mats and religious caps — this is a scene common at the city's Baitul Mukarram Market. As you wander through its bustling lanes, you encounter sellers who have spent years building their lives around these religious wares. Their stories are as diverse as the goods they sell.

Take Noro Nobi, for example, who arrived in Dhaka in 2018 with little more than faith and determination. With limited resources, he began selling tasbehs (prayer beads) and prayer caps. His goods, sourced from various wholesalers, quickly gained a loyal following.

"At first, I thought I'd sell anything — vegetables, fruits — but when I saw this market, I felt it was calling me. I wanted to sell something that connected people to their faith," Nobi shares, gently arranging an assortment of intricately carved tasbehs.

His collection includes prayer beads made from fragrant sandalwood, polished stones, and even semi-precious gems. Customers also flock to his store for his collection of attars — from the woody warmth of oud to the delicate sweetness of rose, each fragrance is a sensory link to the Islamic heartlands.

For many, a visit to Nobi's stall is not just a shopping experience but a step toward nurturing their spirituality. "It's not just about selling products; it's about understanding what my customers need for their prayers and daily lives," he explains.



Not far from Nobi's shop, Akram Ali has carved a niche selling prayer mats and Qur'an holders. Originally from Chittagong, Akram came to Dhaka a decade ago to pursue a better life. He began as a porter but his keen eye for craftsmanship soon led him to the world of prayer mats.

"I've been here for ten years," he says, carefully unrolling a mat with intricate floral patterns. "I started with only a few items, but now I stock mats from Saudi Arabia, Iran, and India."

For Akram, selling prayer mats is a way to help people create their sacred spaces.

"There was a young couple who came here before their wedding," Akram shares. "They bought matching mats, saying they wanted to start their married life with prayer. Moments like that make all the hard work worth it."

Baitul Mukarram Market draws a diverse crowd. There are devout Muslims seeking items for personal worship, families shopping for gifts during festivals, and even tourists fascinated by the cultural significance of the wares. Fridays see the market at its busiest, as worshippers from the mosque spill into the bazaar to browse

its offerings.

Despite its bustling atmosphere, the market is not without challenges. Sellers face rising costs due to fluctuating exchange rates and import taxes, which affect the affordability of their products. Competition is fierce, as dozens of stalls offer similar wares, forcing sellers to differentiate themselves through personalised service and quality offerings.

"It's not easy," admits Noro. "Sometimes, I have to lower my prices just to make a sale. But at the end of the day, I'm grateful. This market has given me everything."

While tradition remains at the heart of Baitul Mukarram Market, modernity has begun to creep in. Some sellers are experimenting with online sales, offering their goods to customers far beyond Dhaka. "I've started posting pictures of my mats on Facebook," Akram shares. "I even got an order from someone in Chittagong. It's a new way to keep the business going."

Yet, the tactile experience of the market — the feel of a smooth tasbeih or the sight of vibrant stalls — remains irreplaceable.

As Baitul Mukarram Market continues to thrive, it displays the enduring appeal of faith-driven commerce. Sellers embody the spirit of the market, combining hard work with a deep respect for their customers' spiritual needs. Their stories are woven into the fabric of this unique marketplace, where every product tells a tale of devotion and tradition.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Shadab Shahrokh Hai



#FOOD REVIEW

Why everyone's talking about MONA MAMA'S EGG-TOPPED HALEEM

So recently, there has been this haleem on Mohammadpur's Salimullah Road that has taken social media by storm. You know the one I'm talking about—the bowl of thick, aromatic treat, perfectly measured with three pieces of beef and topped with a small, boiled quail egg!

Curious, I decided to see if the hype was real! So, following the buzz, I rushed to Salimullah Road, the street already famous for its kababs and spice-filled air. At the centre of it all was Mona Mama, the man of the moment, serving bowl after bowl to an eager crowd. The excitement in the air was indeed palpable.

The interesting fact I realised after reaching there was that this was not some new craze; Mona Mama has been selling it here for over 30 years! His shop name is Mona Mamar Haleem and Soup, owned by Abdul Mannan, who is basically our Mona Mama.

So, I approached him with a polite smile, hoping to learn more about the

inspiration behind his unique addition of a quail egg in his haleem. However, he quickly dismissed my curiosity with a casual, "Ekhonna mama, pore (Not now, dear, later!)" Slightly embarrassed, I just stopped there and waited until the crowd thinned out. Meanwhile, I asked some of his customers for their opinion.

"Social media brought me here," said Nabila, a university student, snapping photos of her steaming bowl. "But one bite, and I know I'll be back even without the hype. It's actually *that* good."

After taking one spoonful, I realised that she was not exaggerating. One bite of meat and egg in, and I was hooked too. The dish was thick, flavourful, and perfectly spiced, with the quail egg adding a unique touch that made it feel like comfort food fit for a winter evening.

"Honestly, the egg makes all the difference," said Sanchay, a corporate executive who had come straight from work. "It's what takes this from good to

unforgettable." Sanchay almost summed it up perfectly, but for me, it's not just the egg but also that balance of beef. Those three pieces changed the game for me.

Mona Mama's shop is not grand. It's a small, humble roadside shop that cannot accommodate more than 25 people at once! And apart from his famous haleem, Mama also serves a signature chicken soup with wonton that has people coming back for more. But here's the catch: Mama has a quirky rule—he won't serve anyone until he is inside and seated. So, if you are unlucky, you will end up waiting outside, watching people enjoy their meal while you twiddle your thumbs and pray for them to leave. And let me tell you, waiting can get pretty frustrating!

A customer, clearly fed up, shouted, "Why don't you get a bigger shop, Mama? Koto khon daray thaka jay?" (How long do I have to wait?) Mama responded without missing a beat, "Bharar teka den Mama,

dokan baraitasi! (Give me the rent; I'll expand the shop!)"

Mama's response got me choking on my own laughter, and I was about to spill my haleem on me.

Finally, when Mona Mama got some time off from serving, he opened up about the quail egg idea. Well, that was not quite opening up. Honestly, I was expecting some deep, dramatic backstory. But no, Mama just casually dropped it, like it was no big deal: "One fine morning, I just thought—quail egg on my haleem!"

And that was it. No grand speech, no big reveal. Just an idea that popped into his head! Disappointing, right?

But whether it's the flavour, the charm of Mona Mama himself, or the social media frenzy, this haleem is officially a sensation. And if you have not tried it yet, trust me—you are missing out!

By Jannatul Bushra
Photo: Jannatul Bushra



#FASHION & BEAUTY

Pushing the boundaries of conventional designs

Transcending mere adornment, jewellery has become a reflection of personal expression and environmental consciousness. From the revival of sustainable materials to the fusion of futuristic patterns with traditional motifs, today's designers are redefining the art of jewellery making.

The evolving tastes of fashion-forward consumers are pushing the boundaries of conventional designs, leading to a resurgence of quirky, unconventional pieces that reimagine traditional forms.

This legacy of craftsmanship, innovation, and cultural heritage ensures that the charm of jewellery continues to captivate new generations, offering both elegance and meaning in every piece.

Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Tangia Zaman Methila
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Jewellery: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily
Wardrobe: Jealous Tomato
Makeup: Piash & Samir
Location: Le Meridian Hotel, Dhaka



Fantastic JEWELLERY

and where to find them

Jewellery has been an essential part of human culture for millennia, serving as personal adornment, an announcement of social status, and artistic expression. From natural materials like shells and bones to detailed metalwork of ancient civilisations, jewellery has constantly evolved, reflecting technological advancements and cultural shifts in each era.



#COVER STORY

In the Indian subcontinent, the history of jewellery design is especially rich and varied. Thousands of years ago, artisans used materials like glass beads to craft jewels. The enduring appeal of these materials can still be seen even in modern jewellery collections, where sustainable and affordable ingredients are making a comeback, offering a fresh take on heritage-inspired pieces.

Today's consumers are increasingly conscious of their purchases' environmental and social impacts, prompting designers to explore eco-friendly materials and responsible sourcing. This movement has given rise to innovative practices in the art of jewellery making. With the use of recycled metals, lab-grown gemstones, and unconventional materials like reclaimed wood, recycled glass, and even tetra packs, artisans are repurposing old or discarded materials into elegant designs that reduce waste.

It is not only the form of jewellery that is changing but also the way it is worn.

At the Cannes Film Festival in 2023, Tangia Zaman Methila, Miss Universe Bangladesh 2020, captivated the crowd with her choice of accessories. Her back was adorned with golden chains, her hair styled with a traditional khoparkata, and her arms embellished with a bajuband. She completed the look with a thick ratanchur bracelet on her left wrist.



These striking accessories were designed by Lora Khan, the founder of the Bangladeshi online jewellery store 6 Yards Story. The creative designer mentioned that the choice of jewellery reflected the essence of modern adornment — geometric and futuristic patterns — which also honoured traditional elements like the khoparkata and haatphul.

Back in 2021, actress Azmeri Haque Badhan turned heads, also at the Cannes Film Festival, with a halter-neck blouse and bejewelled belts, featuring round and teardrop-shaped embellishments, yet again merging tradition with modern sophistication.

Quirky and unconventional designs

The aesthetic landscape of accessory design is expanding, with a growing appreciation for quirky and unconventional pieces. Designers are pushing the boundaries of traditional jewellery forms, creating items that serve as adornment and art. Playful designs, such as asymmetrical earrings, bold geometric necklaces, and oversized cuffs, are becoming increasingly popular among younger, fashion-forward

consumers. You can find classy statement pieces right along these lines at boutiques, and online jewellery shops at extremely reasonable prices.

Customers are also embracing new-age styles and experimenting with unusual pieces such as tiaras, barrettes, ferretières, and combs — a stylish comeback for items that were once associated with specific

historical periods or traditional attire only. The city has a fair share of artisans that customise pieces according to the wearer's evolving tastes. Some of the popular names are Shoilee and 6 Yards Story, with pages available on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram.

One can choose from their wide range of eclectic offerings or offer their own ideas for their creative designers to work with. Pieces can range from Tk 2,500 to 25,000, depending on the wearer's demands.

By Munira Fidai
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Tangia Zaman Methila
Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Jewellery: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily
Wardrobe: Jealous Tomato
Makeup: Piash & Samir
Location: Le Meridian Hotel, Dhaka



DECODING 2025

Love predictions for 2025: What the stars have in store for your zodiac sign”

Our lives revolve around love, relationships and the bonds we have with other people. Many of us look at our zodiac signs and the stars in hopes of good fortune or to brace for disaster that may await us. Given that every zodiac sign is affected by the stars in their unique ways, there’s something different in store for every sign in 2025. Astrological predictions can say if you will find love this year, if it’s time to advance in your relationship, or if someone from your past will come knocking at your door.

Here are the 2025 predictions for each sign’s romantic endeavours.

**Aries (March 21–April 19)**

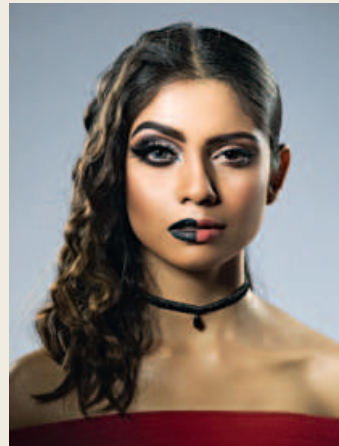
For Aries, 2025 is predicted to be a year of stability and tranquillity. You should take advantage of the calm and gentle energy Venus will bring you and invest that energy into your relationships.

If you are currently in a relationship, you may anticipate a calm year in which you can rest easy as there will not be any major obstacles. In fact, you can expect to strengthen your connection with your partner. If you are single, this year presents great chances to meet someone wonderful and let go of any pretences to meet a potential partner who sees and accepts you as you are.

Taurus (April 20–May 20)

The presence of Saturn in Taurus makes 2025 a bit more challenging in terms of love and relationships. Saturn’s influence may make Taurus less romantic and more job-oriented. At some point, you may catch yourself not paying enough attention to your partner or investing in the relationship itself, which may lead to some distance and disputes.

Similarly, this year may not be the ideal moment for you to meet someone you are not already dating. Rather, the best thing to do is to prioritise your professional and personal development, as they will pay off in the long run even in your love life.

**Gemini (May 21–June 21)**

Gemini might start 2025 with no major changes or improvements but by March they can expect a turn of events in their favour with good things happening in romantic life. You can expect your relationships to become more stable and adventurous as Saturn’s influence starts to decrease. The joy and spontaneity it will bring can strengthen the bond between you and your partner.

May 2025 is perhaps the time when you will start noticing significant improvements, and for those who are currently single, it is a great time to meet someone who shares your energy.

Cancer (June 22–July 22)

Cancer’s sensitive nature might pose a challenging barrier to navigating through difficult issues and they might need to put in the extra effort to make their relationships strong and resolve conflicts. Miscommunication and misunderstandings are a major possibility and it’s important to prioritise open communication with the intention of resolving the problem without letting emotions take full control.

If you are single, self-healing should be your main priority because Jupiter’s impact will assist you in concentrating on friendships and personal development. Who knows, your friend may even play a vital role in meeting someone new and special!

**Leo (July 23–August 22)**

The year 2025 is filled with love and happiness as Leo’s relationships are destined by the stars to improve and maybe even set off fireworks under Saturn’s powerful influence. If your relationship is or has been having problems, 2025 is the time to invest effort and work things through.

Take this time to work closely with your partner and create a stronger, deeper bond. If you are single, you have a great chance of meeting someone new who could play a significant role in your life. You might even entertain rekindling a previous romance or spark fresh feelings.

**Virgo (August 23 - September 22)**

As the stars align for you to rekindle your connection with your partner, it presents the ideal time to foster a deeper intimacy. With promises of harmony and understanding and previous efforts finally starting to pay off, Virgos can anticipate a happy year in love.

This is a time for growth, reflection, and aligning with your heart’s true desires. If you are in a relationship, now is the time to cherish and strengthen your bond, and for the Virgo singles, 2025 holds fresh chances for romance. Your romantic life will mirror the pleasant energy of this period of healing and development.



Libra
(September 23–October 23)

It is possible that for Libra their romantic lives will not make it amongst the top priorities as 2025 will shift their focus on achieving professional and financial success leaving little time for romantic endeavours.

Moments of emotional detachment may occur in a relationship when there is a lack of effort and attention, but not all hope is lost. It is possible to keep your relationship strong if you can make conscious efforts to manage your priorities and find time for them.

With that being said, this may not be the ideal time for Libras to start dating, rather concentrate on your own development and ambitions.



Scorpio (October 24–November 22)

For Scorpios, 2025 will be a year of reflection and you will have a year with work and money being your main priorities. If you are already in a relationship, you may face challenges because of emotional instability. Scorpios are often known for being emotional, so their main focus should be on controlling these feelings and steering clear of confrontations that can strain their bonds with others.

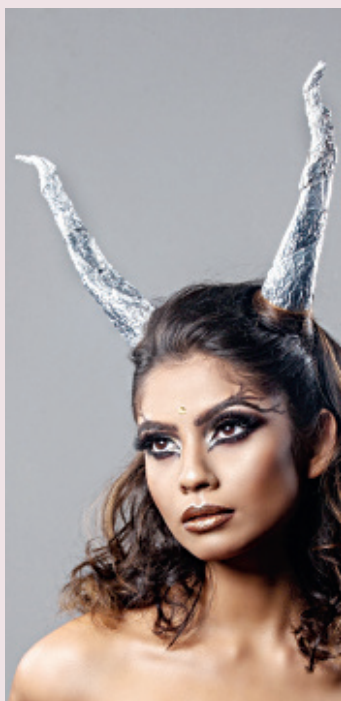
It is not the best time to look for love if you are single because you would be better off investing in your career and personal development. In issues of the heart, this year calls for self-awareness and patience.

Sagittarius
(December 21–November 23)

In 2025, when the Sun and Neptune are in harmony, Sagittarians will have a wonderful year filled with love, harmony, tranquillity, and beautiful memories with their partners.

The year is also perfect for Sagittarians who are single to meet someone special or to take their relationships to the next level (perhaps even bringing a ring into the conversation). In fact, any relationship you enter will be strengthened by the heavenly graces in your love life, guaranteeing its fulfilment and longevity.

The cosmic alignment will not only enhance your romantic connections but also encourage personal growth and emotional well-being, making 2025 a year to remember.



Capricorn
(December 22–January 19)

Due to Saturn's dominance, Capricorns may experience some difficulties in love in 2025. You might end up ignoring your partner and facing many conflicts, disputes, and instabilities, particularly early on during the year.

A sense of emotional detachment may arise, and if you are single, you will not have time for love since you will be too busy with your job. The best thing you can do this year is to work on balancing your personal and professional lives.

It will be crucial to invest time in communication and understanding with your partner to overcome challenges; and for singles, focus on self-care and emotional growth.

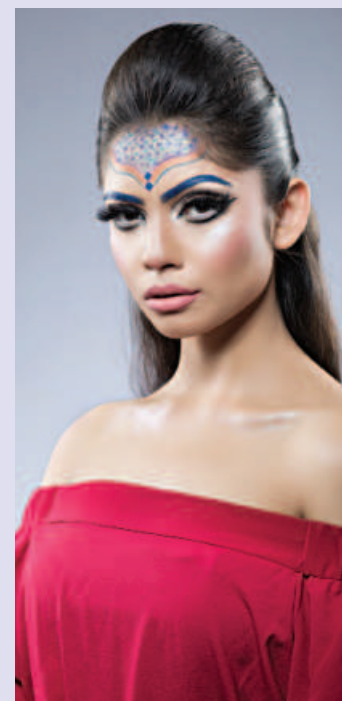


Aquarius
(January 20 - February 18)

The stars denote that 2025 will truly be a romantic and fulfilling year for Aquarians. These heavenly bodies will infuse partnerships with fresh vitality, enabling you to deepen your ties to your significant other.

You will experience love more deeply, and any disagreements or misunderstandings will be resolved with ease, fostering greater harmony in your relationships.

This is a great time for single Aquarians to find genuine love and meaningful partnerships, as the cosmic energy will guide you toward connections that are built on trust, mutual respect, and emotional depth.



Pisces (February 19 - March 20)

It may not be the best year of love for Pisces, especially from March onwards. Your relationships will remain stable, but there can be a feeling of emotional distance or a sense of disconnection.

If you are single, it's not the best time to expect love or embark on romantic endeavours, as the focus will shift more towards inner growth than external connections. Instead, focusing on emotional development and self-awareness is the finest tip for Pisces.

This period will provide an opportunity for self-reflection, helping you build a stronger sense of self before opening up to new relationships in the future.

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



#REVIEW

DHAKA'S "FOKINNI BAZAR"

Where every taka matters

Amid the relentless rhythm of trains rumbling past, a different symphony of life plays out every day near the rail line of Tejkunipara. Here, an unassuming kitchen market, "Fokinni Bazar" has been thriving for years. You may ask, why such a name? It is because the market is a lifeline for many — from day labourers to garment workers — and here, the city's less privileged stretch their hard-earned money in ways unimaginable elsewhere.

The Tk 10 economy

"You can even buy grocery items worth Tk 10," says Md Elias, who owns a shop at Fokinni Bazar and has been a chicken trader for three years. "Sometimes people cannot afford to buy a whole chicken; so, they buy gizzards and livers at a lower price. You can even buy cooking oil and lentils for Tk 10 or 20 too!"

The market's defining feature is its inclusivity. Here, even the smallest of budgets is welcome. With as little as Tk 10, one can walk away with a handful of vegetables, a piece of fish, or even cooking oil. It's a place where even the poorest can shop with dignity, finding ways to feed their families without feeling excluded.

This hyper-affordability creates a sense of community among the buyers. Vendors, many of whom share similar economic struggles, often show leniency, offering a little extra to a familiar face or a known neighbour. Take a walk around the market, it will appear to you like a microcosm where empathy thrives amidst adversity.

Waste not, want not

What sets Fokinni Bazar apart is its unique inventory. Vendors here do not stock

glossy, picture-perfect produce. Instead, they specialise in salvaging the unwanted. They scour stockpiles from larger markets, collecting vegetables deemed unfit

for regular sale — slightly bruised tomatoes or wilted greens that did not meet the

aesthetic standards of upscale shoppers.

Broken eggs, often discarded elsewhere, are sold here by the dozen, their yolks intact and no less nourishing.

"We pick up what others throw away," says Shahana Begum, a vendor who has been selling here for the past year. "These vegetables may not look good, but they cook just fine. My customers know that."

For many vendors, this practice is not just a business model but a mission



Operating along the railway tracks comes with its own set of risks. Trains barrel through the market multiple times every day, their thunderous presence forcing vendors and buyers to halt their activities momentarily and clear the tracks.

Despite the obvious dangers, the market persists. The proximity to the tracks is not just a matter of convenience but a necessity born out of limited options. For many vendors and buyers, moving elsewhere is simply not feasible. The tracks, therefore, become both a lifeline and a tightrope.

With that said, the vendors of Fokinni Bazar are unsung heroes and many of them are women who juggle their roles as breadwinners and caregivers, their resilience etched into their weathered faces.

They rise before dawn, source their goods from various corners of the city, and spend long hours under the



to ensure that nothing goes to waste. Buyers, in turn, embrace this ethos out of necessity and practicality. In a world where food waste runs rampant, Fokinni Bazar emerges as an unlikely hero, proving that one person's discard can be another's treasure.

A market of necessity

Fokinni Bazar is no sprawling, organised grocery hub. Instead, it is a makeshift haven of affordability, operating on the fringes, both literally and metaphorically. Vendors set up their stalls on either side of the railway tracks, their precarious positions mirroring the unstable lives of their patrons.

scorching sun or drenching rain, all to make a modest living. Begum remarks, "For us, every piece of vegetable matter, no matter how bruised or wilted they are. No one here feels any shame in buying them."

In the grand mosaic of Dhaka's urban life, Fokinni Bazar occupies a tiny, unassuming tile. But its impact is immeasurable, feeding not just the bodies but the spirits of those who rely on it. It is a place where waste finds worth, and every Tk 10 carries the weight of survival, resilience, and dignity.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Prabir Das / STAR

#TRAVEL

ALL ABOARD!

Explore Asia's most Instagrammable train stations



They are not just transit points — train stations are captivating landmarks that showcase a city's architectural style, culture, and history. Exploring these stations offers a unique travel experience, combining the beauty of design with the excitement of journeying through picturesque landscapes.

Here are some of the must-see train stations in Asia that will make perfect stops on your next adventure.

Kanazawa Station, Japan

This does not surprise anyone as Japan is one of the leading countries to offer the best railway service. Based in Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan, the Kanazawa Station is a major structure housed within a multifunctional building that includes a hotel, restaurants, and shops. The station is best known as an architectural masterpiece and not just a transportation hub, balancing modern innovation with the city's rich cultural heritage.

Hong Kong West Kowloon Station, Hong Kong

Hong Kong West Kowloon Station is certainly a marvel to see. Located next to the West Kowloon Cultural District, this Hong Kong station highlights a special curved architecture.

Prominent traits of the station include an enormous curtain wall composed of over 4,000 irregular glass panels, designed to optimise natural light and energy efficiency.



Tourists should also climb to the station's rooftop. There, they will find a refreshing space embellished with trees and shrubs, not to mention a mesmerising view of the skyline.

Kuala Lumpur Railway Station, Malaysia

At the centre of Malaysia's thriving capital, the Kuala Lumpur Railway Station remains a landmark of the city's rich history. The station, built in 1910, presents a unique Indo-Saracenic architectural style,

showcasing intricate details, domes, and minarets. However, this station is no longer the main transportation hub but continues to attract visitors eager to admire its gracefulness and enchantment.

Gyeonghwa Station, South Korea

This list will be incomplete without adding Asia's most stunning train station, Gyeonghwa Station in Jinhae, South Korea.

While Gyeonghwa Station has already terminated its railway operations, the station continues to attract tourists, especially during springtime. This is thanks to the enchanting array of cherry blossom trees which is a sight not to be missed, making it one of Jinhae's most popular cherry blossom viewing destinations.

In addition, the station now abodes the Jinhae Publicity Centre, exhibiting trains that once ran on the tracks.

So, the next time you visit one of these countries make sure to roam around these unique rail stations. It will surely make your trip more eventful and memorable!

By Tasnim Kabir
Photo: Collected

স্বপ্নের ছোয়ায়, তোমার উপমায়,
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Small steps, big goals with EBL Women Confidence

Saving money is the cornerstone of financial stability, especially for women across diverse economic backgrounds. Whether it is preparing for unexpected emergencies, securing a child's education, or investing in personal growth, savings give women the confidence to navigate life's challenges with independence and control.

Why savings are crucial for women

Women from lower-income households often face significant financial instability. Savings can act as a safety net for emergencies like healthcare expenses or loss of income. It enables them to pursue small-scale entrepreneurial ventures, improving their economic standing.

For middle-income women, savings allow them to plan for long-term goals such as buying property, funding children's education, or upgrading their lifestyle. Having a disciplined savings plan ensures financial security and helps avoid unnecessary debt.

Even women with higher incomes need to save for wealth management, retirement planning, and investment opportunities. Savings also offer peace of mind, knowing that their financial future is well-organised.

Challenges women face in building savings

Three key points can be identified as major challenges faced by women when it comes



to savings: lack of financial awareness, irregular income, and family obligations.

Firstly, women, particularly in rural areas, often lack familiarity with structured savings products. They may not have access to or awareness of formal, financial tools. Secondly, those working in informal sectors frequently face difficulties with consistent savings due to fluctuating and unpredictable income. Lastly, women often prioritise the financial needs of their families over their own personal savings goals. This tendency to allocate resources to meet the immediate needs of children, spouses, or elderly relatives can leave little

room for them to save.

How EBL Women Confidence Deposit empowers Women's Savings Goals

Eastern Bank PLC understands the unique savings needs of women and offers **EBL Women Confidence Deposit**—a recurring deposit plan designed to make saving simple, disciplined, and rewarding.

The benefits of this scheme include —

Flexible monthly installments: Women can start saving with affordable monthly deposits as low as Tk 500. This makes it accessible for women across all income levels.

Customisable tenure: The deposit

plan offers a flexible tenure ranging from **1 year to 10 years**, allowing women to align savings with their life goals.

Attractive returns: With competitive interest rates, the savings grow significantly over time, making it easier for women to achieve their financial targets.

Encourages discipline: The recurring deposit system instils a habit of regular savings, ensuring that women build a stable financial foundation.

Hassle-free process: Easy account opening and a straightforward savings mechanism ensure a smooth experience for all.

Why choose EBL Women Confidence Deposit?

EBL Women Confidence Deposit is not just a savings product, it's a stepping stone towards financial independence. Whether a woman is planning for her family's future, pursuing personal aspirations, or securing retirement, this product provides a structured, reliable way to save.

Savings empower women to take control of their financial journey, regardless of their economic background. With tailored solutions like **EBL Women Confidence Deposit**, EBL continues to support women in achieving their dreams and securing a brighter future for themselves and their families.

Photo: Star Lifestyle



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এবার সেভিংস মানেই বাড়তি কিছু
পছন্দমতো মাসিক জমা বাছাইয়ের সুবিধা,
সাথে আকর্ষণীয় ইন্টারেস্ট রেট তো থাকছেই







