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ART AND THE ARTIST

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IN FRAME: RAFIQUN NABI ■ PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL

#EVENTS



Stall Number 436-37



Md Monir Hossain



Kureghor Prokashoni at Ekushey Boimela 2025

WHERE BOOKS MEET ART: Kureghor Prokashoni's stunning rickshaw-themed stall

At the Ekushey Book Fair, creativity, heritage, and literature converge every year. Publishers bring something new to the table, not just in terms of books, but also in how they decorate their book stalls and engage with the audience. This year, Kureghor Prokashoni Ltd stood out for merging literary passion with the striking display of rickshaw painting — an art form recognised as an intangible cultural heritage by Unesco.

The founder and current Managing Director of Kureghor Prokashoni Ltd, Engineer Shamim Rahman Abir, who also serves as the publisher and editor, has taken this innovative approach.

"Literature and art go hand in hand," he said. "At Kureghor Prokashoni, we don't just publish books; we promote the cultural and artistic values that define our identity. The Ekushey Book Fair is the perfect platform to celebrate our heritage, and what better way to do so than by incorporating rickshaw painting?"

However, executing this vision was not easy.

Bringing the stall's design to life proved to be more challenging than expected. Abir

initially reached out to two students from the Fine Arts Department to execute the painting. But as the work progressed, he realised they couldn't fully grasp his vision.

That's when he began searching for a rickshaw painter who could rescue the project. In the middle of the night, he finally found a number and made a call.

"Suddenly, at around 2 AM, I found myself in a long phone conversation with Shamim Bhai," recalled Md Monir Hossain, the rickshaw painter who would ultimately bring the stall to life. "He told me, 'I've searched everywhere to find your number — please, I need you to do this work.'"

Hossain was hesitant at first.

"There's only one day left before the fair begins," he told Abir. "How can I possibly complete the work in such a short time?"

Abir then explained the entire situation — how he had been overwhelmed with other responsibilities, how the original artists had fallen through, and how he had no choice but

to make this last-minute request.

Hossain initially declined, but something about the conversation stuck with him.

"I started thinking," Hossain recalled. "It wasn't about money anymore. The man was in genuine trouble. More than that, rickshaw painting is an integral part of our artistic identity. Thousands of people would be coming to the book fair, and this could be a great opportunity to showcase our art to a larger audience."

Realising the potential impact, he decided to take on the challenge. Thanks to Hossain's dedication and skill, Kureghor Prokashoni's stall was completed just in time — and the results were stunning.

Hand-painted in vibrant hues, the stall featured traditional floral patterns, bold typography, and cinematic imagery reminiscent of classic rickshaw art. The vivid visuals transformed the space into a cultural exhibit rather than just a book-selling stall.

Beyond its aesthetic appeal, Kureghor Prokashoni's initiative carries a deeper

message about cultural preservation.

As digital printing replaces hand-painted rickshaw art, traditional artists like Monir Hossain are finding fewer opportunities to showcase their skills. Through this project, Kureghor Prokashoni not only highlighted the rickshaw painting's beauty, but also its importance in Bangladesh's artistic landscape.

The publication house has long been a respected name in the publishing industry. It was originally founded in 1987 as Kureghor Printing Press by the late Mashiur Rahman, but due to health issues, he could not continue his work. His son, Engineer Shamim Rahman Abir, revived the venture in a new form, launching Kureghor Prokashoni Ltd in 2013 with the motto, "Let's Take Pride in Art."

As the 2025 Ekushey Book Fair progresses, it is clear that Kureghor Prokashoni's stall is more than just a decorative choice. Stop by stall number 436-437 to experience Kureghor Prokashoni's artistic tribute to rickshaw painting, while discovering their latest literary offerings.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Khairul Islam Rana



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#EVENTS

Bangladesh Fashion Legacy 2025: A fusion of traditional and modern designs

In a dazzling display of fashion, Dhaka rolled out the red carpet for the Bangladesh Fashion Legacy 2025, marking its second rendition. Celebrating the rich tapestry of the country's heritage and showcasing cutting-edge designs, lights, camera, and glamour awaited the enthusiastic audience!

The grand fashion show was held on 8 February, 2025, at the artistically stunning Alok Convention Hall, brought to life by the creative minds at Bangladesh Fashion Legacy, with Apex as the main sponsor. The show turned into a vibrant hub where fashion entrepreneurs, buyers, and style aficionados came together to celebrate the art of fashion. The night began with a starry red carpet



Fit Elegance on the runway



Actress Nazifa Tushi as showstopper

meet and greet, gearing up for the beautiful fashion show on stage. This year's fashion show mixed in local traditional brands with refreshing elements from exciting new designers and small boutique labels, all creating a vibrant portrayal of the Bangladeshi fashion industry. Apex took centre stage, flaunting their fabulous sub-brands Moochi and Venturini,



Model & Actress Sadia Islam Mou



Maverick by Apex on the runway

and unveiling the much-awaited pre-Eid collections. These were footwear that effortlessly adapted to any occasion with style and grace. In fact, the show also saw the launch of Apex's Gen Z-focused adventurous apparel line, Maverick. "We are excited to bring on a comfortable and trendy clothing range featuring earthy tones that speak to explorers," shared Quazi Jasrin, Brand

Management at Apex Footwear Limited. Shining bright at the Apex fashion show was none other than the fan-favourite actress Nazifa Tushi, fresh off her captivating role in the film Hawa. Moreover, actress Tasnia Farin perfectly added charm to the event as the celebrity guest. The runway was a show-stealer with all the parade of brands that attended the event, including classy heritage from Bishworang, chic elegance from Lusobella, and timelessness from Amira. From AG and Label Imam Hasan's unique touch to the sophistication of Fit Elegance by Niti, audiences could find a style to suit every mood. What was unforgettable was the brilliant Haute Couture by designer Soumin Afrin that had everyone in awe! With her imaginative designs, Soumin quickly won over the hearts of fashion enthusiasts in the industry. Her great jackpot came in 2012 as a costume designer for the film Chorabali, after crafting costumes for numerous top TV commercials. However, Soumin achieved her unrivalled success in 2019 with the launch of her most recent venture, Haute Couture. Soumin fondly remembers the journey and shared her sentiments by expressing, "My clients have been my greatest support because without their love and assistance, I wouldn't be where I am today."

And of course, in honour of Bishworang celebrating their 30 years, the brand unveiled a special collection. Their main highlight was none other than the gorgeous Shampa Reza walking the ramp with the equally talented Sadia Islam Mou, a triple threat of model, dancer, and actress. Needless to say, the Bangladesh Fashion Legacy 2025 set a new benchmark of standards for Bangladeshi fashion. Very soon, people will be hitting the stores to experience this amazing transformation in real life!

By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy
Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel



Peal on the runway



#HERITAGE AND CRAFTS

THE FADING CRAFT:

Can we save Tangail's handloom industry?

For over 40 years, Mohammad Shajahan, a 60-year-old weaver from Balla Union, Tangail, has dedicated his life to the intricate craft of handloom weaving. He learned the trade from his father, who was also a weaver, and in turn, his daughter now works with thread, continuing a generational legacy.

But despite his experience and skill, Shajahan earns no more than Tk 200 a day — a sum that barely covers basic necessities. His earnings depend on how many sarees he weaves, which, on a good day, amounts to two or three sarees. He uses semi-automated looms, while his daughter, like many women in the village, contributes by spinning, dyeing, and preparing the threads. These women, working from home while juggling household responsibilities, earn only Tk 40 to Tk 50 a day.

With visible worry on his face, Shajahan shared his concerns about the future: "Children don't want to take up this work anymore. I keep saying, this craft should continue, but they don't see a future in it."

An industry on the brink of collapse

"At one point, Balla Union was home to around 50,000 weavers, each household buzzing with the sound of handlooms. Today, fewer than 3,000 to 4,000 remain. The rest have abandoned the trade, unable to pay their debts, forced into other forms of labour," informed Abu Talha, President of the Balla Union Traders' Association.

The history of Tangail taant is rooted in the artistic expertise of Bengal's weavers. Tangail sarees have long been celebrated for their lightweight texture, fine weaving, and elegant motifs, and both men and women engaged in the intricate



process, from spinning the yarn to dyeing, designing, and finally, weaving the fabric.

However, this craft is slowly fading and our glorious taant industry is on the brink of collapse.

Handwoven vs power looms: A struggle for fair prices

While the charm of handwoven sarees lies in their craftsmanship, their survival is threatened by cheaper, mass-produced alternatives. When asked about whether they still use traditional handlooms, Abu Taher, a *mahajan*, explains, "Handwoven sarees have greater value. But how much can we even sell them for?"



“Prices have dropped. Yes, some premium sarees fetch higher prices, but they are limited. Most of our sarees — those in the range of Tk 3,000 to 4,000 — are struggling in the market. The demand is declining, and we can’t recover.”

The introduction of power looms and mass-production techniques has allowed sarees to be made at a fraction of the time and cost. Unlike traditional handlooms, which can take days or weeks to complete one saree, power looms can produce dozens in a single day. This shift has led to a major drop in prices, forcing handloom weavers into an unfair competition.

At one time, Tangail sarees were considered an investment piece, passed down through generations. However, the influx of cheap, machine-made alternatives has altered consumer habits. Today, customers opt for lower-cost, synthetic-blended alternatives rather than investing in handwoven sarees.

One weaver informed us that they are now being forced to sell at an unsustainable price of Tk 420 per saree just to compete.

Atyiar Rahman, General Secretary of the Balla Union Traders’ Association, shared his concerns: “Even though we buy raw materials at a high price, we end up selling sarees for less than what they cost to make. At this rate, the handloom industry will collapse. Many weavers have already left the trade, burdened by debt. If the government doesn’t intervene, this entire community will disappear.”

A crisis of costs and debt



Handloom weaving requires high-quality materials such as cotton, silk, and dyes, but the cost of these essentials has skyrocketed. Abdul Malek, a former weaver, who was once successful in the trade but later had to sell his handloom machines, explained the sharp increase in production costs: “Once we used to buy materials for Tk 1,300, and now we have to spend Tk 4,000. Costing is a big factor for the weavers.”

This dramatic rise in prices means that weavers must invest more upfront to continue their craft, but their earnings have not increased proportionally. Moreover, unable to afford new materials, many weavers take loans or buy on credit — only to find themselves trapped in a cycle of debt and loss.

Talha grieved, “You talk about supporting Tangail sarees, but the reality is, there is no real assistance. Our artisans work long hours — four, five, even ten hours a day — to create each saree, yet they earn very little. Meanwhile, Indian and Chinese fabrics flood the market, controlled by powerful syndicates. We need to encourage people to wear our sarees again; otherwise, this craft won’t survive.”

Diversifying for survival

Some weavers believe that expanding beyond sarees could be a solution. They suggest producing shalwar kameez, scarves, or other garments using the same handwoven fabric. However, as a weaver pointed out, “But for that, we need capital, which we don’t have. The losses have pushed us to the edge. We are out of

professionals, prefer ready-to-wear garments and do not wear sarees regularly.

If weavers successfully diversify, Tangail’s heritage can be preserved, while adapting to modern consumer needs. Instead of seeing handloom weaving as a dying tradition, it can be rebranded as a sustainable, eco-friendly craft that caters to both local and global markets.

However, without financial aid, skill-building opportunities, and marketing assistance, weavers cannot make this transition alone, as Rahman stressed, “We need promotion. We need people to know about Tangail’s weavers and their struggles. There’s still demand for authentic, handcrafted textiles, but we must make sure our artisans get the fair price they deserve.”

With the right blend of innovation, policy support, and consumer awareness, Tangail taant can thrive once more, ensuring that the weavers of Balla Union continue their craft for generations to come.

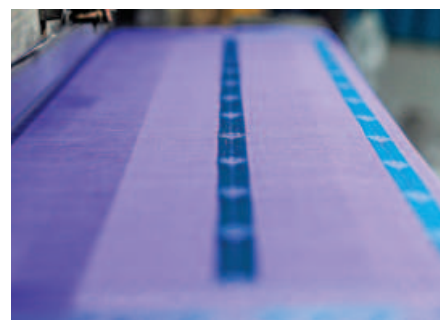
If you want to support authentic Tangail sarees and their weavers, visit the Tangail Saree Mela at Balla Union, held every Saturday, where artisans showcase their hard work.

The choice is in our hands — will we allow Tangail’s handloom tradition to fade into history, or will we stand up to protect and revive this extraordinary craft?

By Ayman Anika

Photo: Shadab Shahrokh Hai

In frame : Weavers of the taant community Balla union, Tangail.



money, unable to reinvest in our craft.”

Currently, almost all Tangail taant production is focused on sarees, but the market for sarees is shrinking due to various reasons — for example, younger generations, particularly urban



◀
Syeda Adiba Hussain, Curator and Co Founder & Safius Sami Alamgir Co Founder Dhaka Storytellers with famed artist Rafiqun Nabi



COVER STORY

RANABI'S REFLECTIONS

A life in art, observation, and legacy

Rafiqun Nabi, or Ranabi as he is also called, needs no introduction. The artist's career spans many decades and mediums which include his iconic cartoon character, Tokai. Star Lifestyle met him at a recently held group exhibition, titled 'The Story of Art', presented by Dhaka Storytellers, where he came to give a talk. From our interview and the talk, we present snippets that will offer glimpses into the life and mind of this legendary artist.



Even today, art is not exactly a "mainstream" field to pursue for studies or as a career. So, one can well imagine what the scenario would have been several decades ago during the time of a young Rafiqun Nabi. However, in this regard, Nabi considers himself lucky. He said that he got the opportunity to study art because even more than him, his father and other family members were very interested and supportive.

Further back in the past, Nabi remembers that in his childhood, when his father used to teach alphabets, he used to pick a word beginning from each letter, and then portray that word in drawing. Seeing his father do that Nabi also used to try and draw.

His father may have been one of the first influences in the artist's journey.

"As a student, I had been very lucky that I got so many big names of Bangladesh as teachers," Nabi recollected, citing legendary maestros like Zainul Abedin. "Learning to draw or paint was one thing — and we did all that

— but we also learned a lot from their mannerisms, attitudes, and personalities."

Even after so many years, he speaks very fondly of them. Fast forward a few decades, he is a Professor Emeritus himself. So, what advice does Nabi have for anyone who aspires to be an artist?

"Your eyes and ears must be open. You have to learn how to see, how to observe. I think these studies are very important for anyone who wants to be an artist. Just learning to draw or paint is not enough. That cannot be all," he said.



Clearly, his paintings are a reflection of that, be it Tokai providing us with a commentary on our society or a beautiful look into our country. Moreover, Nabi's own pursuit as a young artist to balance his passion for art, on one side, and financial stability on the other, is a lesson in itself.

"Everybody will not be Zainul Abedin. Everybody will not be Quamrul Hassan. So what will be the future? How can I provide for my family?" he elaborated. "No chance of denying that there was the agenda of earning money as well! Hence we also pursued activities like book cover design, illustrations in newspapers, etc."

All these are testaments to the height of Nabi's genius. What would be the Ranabi legacy, then? For sure, the word

"Tokai" is now common in our vocabulary. But what would Nabi want people many years from now to remember him as?

The veteran artist chuckled at my question but being the humble man he is, he ventured a reply:

"Paintings go into homes and galleries. General people are often deprived of the chance to view them, compared to a lot of sculptures that are in public spaces. But, there is always a deliberate effort from my side that my works are liked by all, from connoisseurs to general people. At least the usage of the word 'Tokai' is commonplace!"

By M H Haider
Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel and Ratul Paul





#FOOD & RECIPES

RUPSA FOOD AT DHAKA STADIUM

Dine like a king for Tk 100 or less

When we think of the National Stadium Market at Gulistan, we usually imagine a row of shops selling sports equipment and electronics. It's a busy place where you can find great deals on gadgets and gear as well. Little do we know that the market not only satisfies your shopping needs but also your hunger.

As you walk through the market at noon, you will be introduced to the sounds of food sellers shouting their deals and the rhythmic tapping of large pot lids, drawing your attention to the corners of the market that many people miss. The market is filled with a variety of food stalls offering delicious and affordable meals that anyone of any age or profession can enjoy.

One food stall stands out in particular — Rupsa Food, located at 17/A, Swimming Pool Market, National Stadium Market. It's small and might look like any other stall, but it's a hidden gem for anyone looking for good food on a budget.

The menu is simple but delicious, with dishes like egg khichuri priced at Tk 60, chicken khichuri priced at Tk 100, chicken kachchi at Tk 100, and the fan favourite rice-alu bharta-daal combo at a more affordable rate.

What makes this stall special is its price.



In recent times, when eating out can be expensive, this place offers meals that are both delicious and affordable. For the price of unhealthy, oil-soaked items, you can enjoy a filling, comforting dish instead. And the portions are fair, making sure you get great value for your money.

S M Shafi, aged 74, and a resident from Mohammadpur, shared his experience, "This is my second time having their egg khichuri, it's just as tasty and satisfying as I remember. Priced at just Tk 60, this meal is worth it. I'm totally satisfied and wish them the best of luck!"

Before leaving, he recommended, "Anyone visiting Stadium Market should try their egg khichuri. You won't regret it!"

But it's not only the lunch items that are

popular here. "We offer a luchi-daal combo at Tk 35, haleem at Tk 60, and soup at Tk 30 or Tk 50, depending on whether the chicken is added, as part of our afternoon deals. The soups are very popular," shares Mubin, an employee of the shop.

Beyond the food, it's the experience that makes this place special. The space may be small, but you can either start a conversation while eating or enjoy your meal in peace. There's no judgment — no matter who you are or what you do, you're



always welcome to enjoy a good meal.

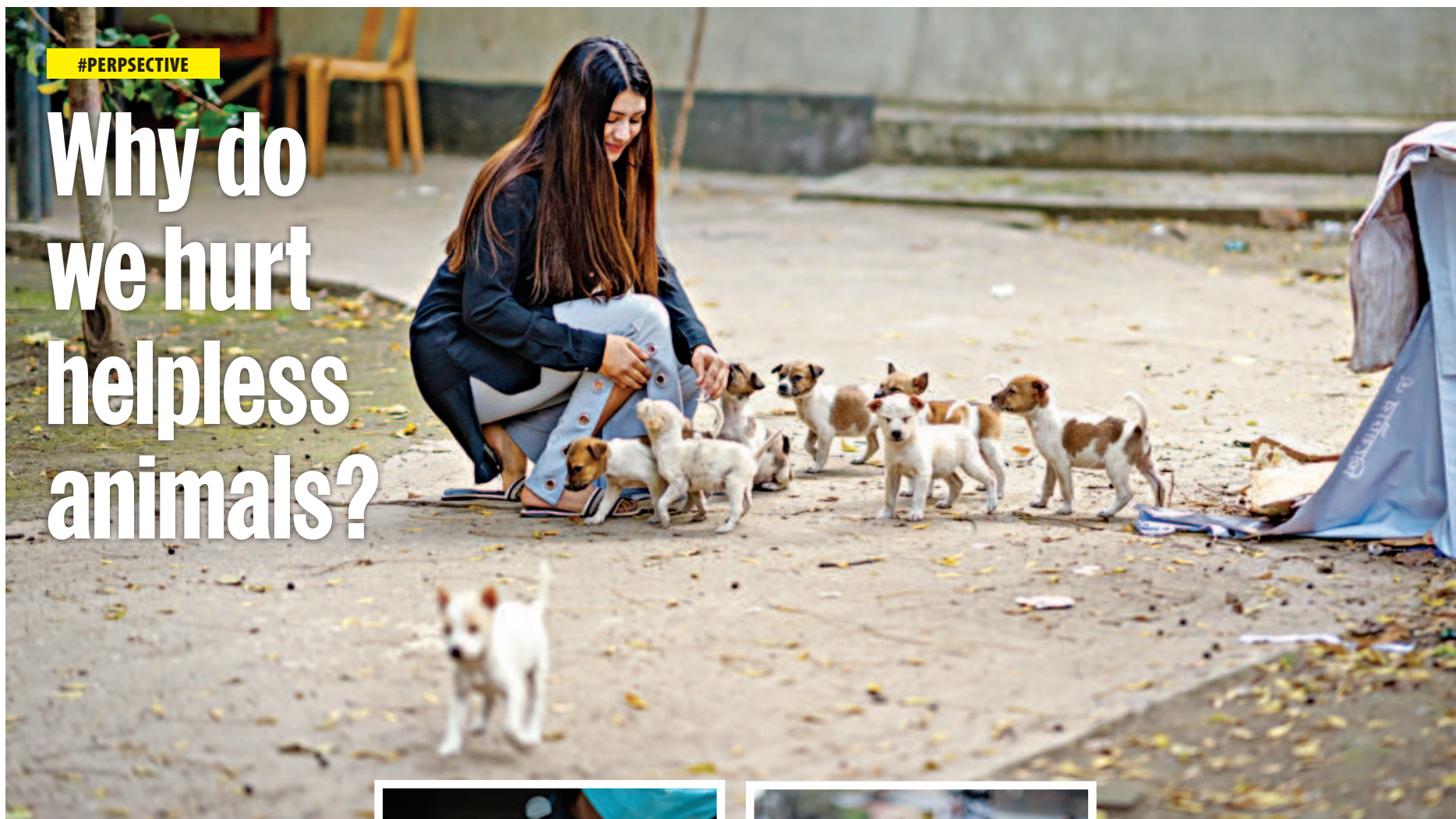
Opened in 2003, the shop's caretaker, Monju, shares more about its story: "Everything you see here is homemade. We prepare the food at home in Khilgaon and bring it here fresh to serve on your plate. Whether you're a hungry service holder or a construction worker, every bite will remind you of home."

In a city where affordable yet good food is hard to find, this small stall proves that you don't need to spend a lot to enjoy a great meal. So, if you're ever in the National Stadium Market, take a seat, enjoy the food and let this hidden gem make your day better.

By Jawwad Sami Neogi
Photo: Jawwad Sami Neogi

#PERPSECTIVE

Why do we hurt helpless animals?



Animal cruelty in Bangladesh stems from learned behaviour, societal norms, and mental disorders. Children mimic abusive environments, societal pressure normalises harm, and psychological issues contribute. Preventing cruelty requires education, legal enforcement, and promoting empathy through media, parenting, and public influence.

Amid Dhaka's chaos, a bruised stray puppy limps across the road, eyes filled with terror. Nearby, teenagers chuckle as one throws a stone, sending the puppy yelping away.

Such cruelty is common, yet rarely makes headlines. From street dogs to cats, countless animals suffer abuse. But what drives people to harm these defenceless creatures for no apparent reason? The answers lie in human psychology, shaped by behaviour, upbringing, and societal norms.

According to Professor Dr Helal Uddin Ahmed, from the Department of Child, Adolescent, and Family Psychiatry at the National Institute of Mental Health, the reasons can be divided into three categories: cognitive learning, societal learning, and mental disorders.

What we see, we do

Children learn behaviours from their surroundings. If a child grows up in a household where animals are treated with cruelty, they may imitate this behaviour, believing it to be normal.

Dr Ahmed explains, "A child's perception of right and wrong is shaped by their immediate environment. If they repeatedly witness cruelty towards animals in their family or community, they are likely to accept it as normal behaviour. Empathy is also vital — if a child is not taught to understand and care for the emotions of others, including animals, they will not develop compassion towards them."



In many Bangladeshi households, stray dogs and cats are treated as nuisances. Some parents even encourage their children to chase them away with sticks or stones. As a result, these children grow up without an understanding of animal welfare, and cruelty becomes second nature.

Conforming to norms

Even those who are naturally empathetic towards animals may suppress their compassion to fit into societal expectations. If a society collectively mistreats animals, individuals may feel pressured to do the same.

"Even an empathetic individual may struggle to act according to their values if societal norms dictate otherwise. If cruelty towards animals is normalised in a community, individuals may participate in it merely to conform or avoid standing out," Dr Ahmed states.

A striking example is the mass culling of street dogs in Dhaka. Many municipalities use poisoning or inhumane methods to reduce the stray population. When the



government normalises cruelty, it sends a message to citizens that harming animals is acceptable.

Mental disorders and trauma

Some individuals harm animals due to deeper psychological issues. Mental disorders such as conduct disorder (in children), borderline personality disorder, and schizophrenia are often linked to acts of cruelty.

Dr Ahmed elaborates: "Childhood trauma can significantly shape a person's behaviour. A child who has suffered violence or neglect often struggles to process their emotions and may project that violence onto others, including animals."

Studies show that many individuals who commit violent crimes against humans first exhibited cruelty towards animals. This connection highlights the importance of early intervention in preventing not only animal abuse but, also future violence towards people.

How can we prevent animal cruelty?

The first step in preventing cruelty is fostering

compassion at home.

"Kindness towards animals begins at home. Parents must set an example by treating animals with respect and encouraging children to develop empathy through positive interactions with pets and strays," Dr Ahmed stresses.

Educational institutions can play a vital role in creating awareness about animal welfare.

Schools should introduce lessons on empathy and responsible pet ownership. Children should also be taught about the connection between cruelty to animals and broader societal violence.

When it comes to shaping public perception, Bangladesh's entertainment industry and social media influencers have a major role to play and their positive storytelling about rescued animals or kind behaviour towards strays can shift attitudes over time.

"Public figures — whether actors, politicians, or business leaders — have an enormous influence on societal attitudes. If they actively promote kindness towards animals, people are likely to follow," Dr Ahmed emphasises.

It is important to note that while Bangladesh has laws against animal cruelty, most of them are outdated and rarely enforced. Stronger legal actions, coupled with community-based reporting mechanisms can deter individuals from harming animals without consequence.

Above all, no being — human or animal — deserves to suffer for someone else's frustration, amusement, or ignorance. As a society, we must take a stand against animal cruelty and ensure that future generations grow up with compassion rather than indifference.

By Ayman Anika

Photos: Joyeeta Trisha

Situationships, breadcrumbing and ghosting – Gen Z lingo unearthed for the millennials

In the grand tapestry of human relationships, we've evolved from cave paintings to cryptic emojis, from love letters sealed with wax to disappearing messages on Snapchat. Yet, nothing has prepared us millennials for the labyrinthine lexicon of Gen Z dating. It's as if Cupid traded his bow and arrow for a smartphone and a proclivity for ambiguity.

Take *breadcrumbing*, for instance. In our carb-loving days, breadcrumbs led to deep-fried chicken cutlets, not ghosting. Breadcrumbing, dear fellow millennials, is not the charming Hansel-and-Gretel trail of carbs we once knew. No, it's the act of dropping vague flirtatious crumbs to keep you emotionally malnourished but still interested. Hooked but not cooked. Think of it as the Diet Coke of modern romance: all fizz, no substance, but equally lethal.

As a millennial woman who once thought relationships were defined by "Do you want to be my girlfriend?" scribbled on a napkin, with only YES/NO routes, I am baffled by Gen Z's romantic lexicon. Back in my day — yes, I've become the auntie who says "Back in my day" leave me alone — dating had structure. Sure, it was messy, but at least we knew the terms of engagement. Now? It's like being tossed into a group project where nobody knows their role, but everyone wants credit.

Take *situationships*, for example. If you've been wondering what that means, allow me to enlighten you. Back in simpler times, we had "friends," "boyfriends," and "people we avoid at reunions." A situationship is when two people like each other enough to text incessantly, binge-watch shows together, and maybe even cuddle — but not enough



to, you know, define anything. It's basically commitment phobia wrapped in vibes and anxiety.

"Why ruin it with labels?" they say, as if labels were the relationship equivalent of polyester. Spoiler alert: labels *are* important. Without labels, everything falls apart. Imagine a world where ketchup and toothpaste come in the same unmarked tube. Exactly. Absolute chaos.

Then there are *friends with benefits*. Now, this one's been around since the Neanderthal days, but Gen Z has repackaged it with a sprinkle of Instagram gloss. It's all about casual fun, no strings attached, and — this is crucial — emotional detachment. Except it's never *really* detached, is it?

One person always catches feelings, and

suddenly, you're knee-deep in awkward brunches where one half is dying inside while the other is dissecting the latest Marvel film. Friends with benefits? More like friends with beneficial therapy bills.

Speaking of emotional detachment, let's talk about *no strings attached* relationships. This is where two people mutually agree to avoid commitment. You'd think this would simplify things, right? Wrong. It's essentially a ticking time bomb where one party inevitably starts overanalysing text messages like it's a GCSE literature exam.

"What did he mean by 'K lol'?"

Answer: Nothing. He's emotionally unavailable and probably playing FIFA. Move on. Have a sandwich.

Now, let's not forget *being exclusive*. This used to be the warm-up lap before officially

dating. Today, it's the Olympics of modern romance. If someone says, "We're exclusive," it doesn't mean you're in a relationship — it means you're both deleting Bumble, but keeping Instagram DM requests open for emergencies. Hedging. Exclusive is like renting a flat: it's temporary, has no long-term security, and you can be kicked out at any moment.

And finally, we come to *ghosting*, the greatest invention of this century. A convenient way to avoid conflict, ghosting is when someone disappears from your life faster than my willpower in front of biryani. In a way, it's almost poetic — like the romance version of Avengers: Infinity War. One moment they're there, the next: *snap*. Gone.

So, what's a millennial to do in this dizzying landscape? How do we keep up with Gen Z, who somehow make everything — dating, skincare, plant care — seem so effortless? Well, my advice is simple: don't try. Instead, channel your inner granny. When someone says, "I'm in a situationship," nod wisely and reply, "*Baba, dui nouka ay paa diye karo bhalo hoi na.*"

Navigating this new world requires a dictionary and a therapist. But fear not fellow millennials. When faced with the perplexities of Gen Z dating, remember when someone offers breadcrumbs, ask for the whole loaf. Life's too short for crumbs. Or you're not into it then simply respond with, "Sorry, I'm keto." Cause, you know, fitness is the ultimate passion.

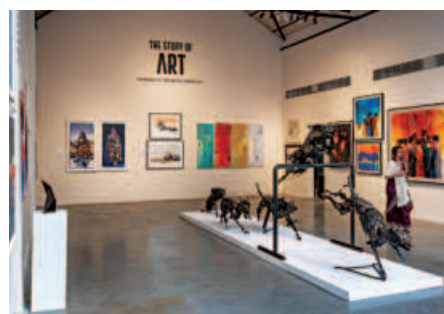
By Noshin Nawal
Illustration: LS Desk

"Story of Art" brings Bangladesh's artistic legacy to life

Dhaka Storytellers is a platform that curates exhibitions showcasing diverse artistic forms and preserving cultural heritage. With a keen focus on storytelling through visual expression, it brings together artists, collectors, and art lovers, fostering a deeper dialogue on creativity. Through endeavours like the recently concluded "Story of Art" exhibition, it raises awareness about the significance of art and aesthetics in our lives. It also works to cultivate a deeper appreciation for art, serving as a driving force behind creative growth and appreciation.

The country's art scene is now more dynamic than ever, with both emerging and established artists finding new audiences. Over the decades, people have learned to appreciate the finer aspects of paintings and other art forms. There is a significant number of collectors who do not hesitate to make large investments, as artworks by some of the leading names have reached great heights. This growing enthusiasm has also led to an increase in the number of exhibitions.

"The primary thought behind "Story



of Art" was to offer art enthusiasts an unforgettable experience while contributing to a meaningful cause," said Syeda Adiba Hussain, Curator and Co-founder, Dhaka Storytellers.

Proceeds from the exhibition will directly support rural education in Bangladesh as the organisers believe the best way to help the community is through education. By intertwining artistic appreciation with philanthropy, the event highlighted how art can be a vehicle for social change.

The exhibition attempted to bring to the forefront the vibrant and diverse art scene of Bangladesh. It aimed to showcase

the richness of Bangladeshi art, featuring some of the most celebrated names. Each artwork told a unique story, reflecting themes ranging from heritage and identity to contemporary struggles and aspirations.

Story of Art also served as a testament to how the visual art scene has evolved in Bangladesh. From Rafiqun Nabi to Jamal Ahmed, Kanak Chanpa Chakma to Azmeer Hossain — the organisers successfully brought together some of the most eminent artists from different generations under one roof.

"The exhibition has received exceptional response and appreciation from art enthusiasts and collectors. A large number of visitors, which includes visits by multiple educational institutions, explored a diverse collection of artworks that capture the depth and richness of contemporary artistic expressions," said Safius Sami Alamgir, Co-founder, Dhaka Storytellers.

The artist's talk that featured Rafiqun Nabi gave attendees a glimpse into the life of the maestro as he participated in a candid discussion on art, his work, and how he sees life in general.

Including some of the biggest names in the Bangladeshi art scene for a group exhibition is no mean feat. The exhibition gave viewers a rare opportunity to witness the signature style of prominent local artists. For many, it was an immersive experience — one that deepened their connection with Bangladeshi art and its powerful narratives. And perhaps this was their biggest achievement. Students and young creatives, in particular, found inspiration in the curated collection, making the exhibition an enriching experience beyond just viewing art.

With almost a hundred artworks on display, the setting added a magical touch to the experience. At night, under the starlit sky, the paintings appeared ethereal, while the interplay of light and shadow accentuated the details of each piece, creating an almost theatrical viewing experience.

The "*Story of Art*" exhibition took place at the Alok Greenhouse, 211 Gulshan-Tejgaon Link Road, Dhaka, from 8 to 13 February 2025.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif
Photo: Ratul Paul

#HEALTH & FITNESS

Hot vs cold showers: Which one boosts your health?

After a hard day at work, nothing beats a hot shower to relax and recharge. However, a chilly shower can be exactly what your body needs to wake up in the morning. Irrespective of your shower style, you are sure to feel better afterwards. If your mind has ever curiously wondered about the benefits of cold and hot showers, keep reading to learn which temperature is best for you and how it affects your health and well-being.

Hydration

A cold shower will temporarily close your pores making it easier to keep your hair and skin's natural oils in place and because of this, you may sometimes rinse with cold water if you have dry skin or worry about brittle hair.

Hot showers, on the other hand, cause our pores to open. Therefore, you might consider taking a hot shower if you feel that your skin

needs a thorough cleansing or if you are having breakouts.

Circulation

When you submerge yourself in cold water, your cardiovascular system goes into overdrive, enhancing blood circulation and making your heart beat more effectively. As your blood flow increases, you can notice your skin gradually become healthier and less prone to blemishes.

The flip side is that a hot shower might help relax and soothe your body if you are feeling rigid after a long day. Hot water can dilate blood vessels, which in turn improves blood circulation and reduces blood pressure.

Metabolism

An adjustment to the cooler settings on the tap might be good for your metabolism! To maintain a comfortable core temperature

in cold showers, your body's response will temporarily increase your metabolic rate, aiding your weight loss efforts. On top of that, you can also burn some calories as you relax in a hot bath. The soothing effects of a hot tub force your heart to work harder, increasing blood flow to the skin so that it remains cold.

That being said, no amount of alternating hot or cold showers will cause you to burn more calories than you would with regular exercise as well.

Bones

Because warm water is gentler on bones and promotes more movement, people with arthritis may find that a warm shower first thing in the morning is more beneficial than a cold one.

Yet, the anti-inflammatory effects of a

cold shower may be helpful for athletes who have suffered injuries while playing sports or people who have hurt themselves during workouts.

Keep in mind

All that being said, it is crucial to know whether to take a cold or hot shower at certain times, depending on your body's requirements. Despite their differences, both could improve your health in remarkable ways but they could also harm you if you are not careful enough.

Extreme temperatures of hot or cold showers may be dangerous to your health internally as well as externally, so try to avoid such extremes.

By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy

Photo: Collected

◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES (MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Avoid letting others take credit for your work. Romantic infatuations could lead to lasting connections. Think carefully before pursuing unrealistic goals. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



TAURUS (APR. 21-MAY 21)

Honesty is key to avoiding disputes. Opportunities arise, but the price may be high. Review outdated documents to prevent issues. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



GEMINI (MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Time management may be tough this week. Investigate new ventures carefully before committing. Creative pursuits will pay off, but avoid extravagant spending. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CANCER (JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Check your car before travelling. Romantic encounters may happen through travel or education. Avoid conflicts with your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



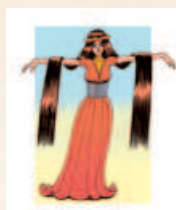
LEO (JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Your affectionate nature will attract attention. A clear conversation is needed to resolve misunderstandings. Stay focused on work to avoid temper flare-ups. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



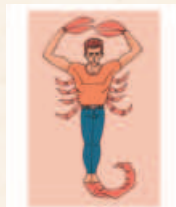
VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Avoid acting impulsively. Protect yourself from superiors taking advantage. Financial confusion will clear up. Changes at home may not be well-received. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



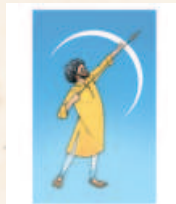
LIBRA (SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Go with the flow at work. Share ideas with colleagues and clarify personal intentions. Reading on self-awareness will benefit you. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



SCORPIO (OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Be cautious with investments and protect your interests. Get all facts before acting. Rewarding connections can be made through organised groups. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Avoid being pressured into going somewhere you don't want. Address any medical concerns. Travel opportunities will be favourable this week. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Expect a busy domestic week. Do something that boosts your confidence. Recognition is possible if you stand behind your beliefs. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS (JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Family demands will take up your time. Use your willpower to balance everything. Enjoy quality time with a loved one. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



PISCES (FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Avoid sharing personal matters with others. Real estate deals will prove profitable. Discuss your intentions with your partner. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

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

অ্যান্ডালিনা

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KOHINOOR CHEMICAL



#PERSPECTIVE

A peek into Dhaka's FLOWER MARKETS

With Valentine's Day, Pahela Falgun, and Ekushey February in the same month, Dhaka's flower markets come alive. Even before dawn, the air is filled with the scent of fresh blooms and a sense of excitement. From the shops at Shahbagh to the bustling stalls of Agargaon, these hubs of the city's floral trade offer everything from classic roses to exotic chrysanthemums. By 3 AM, the once-quiet spaces transform into vibrant scenes of activity. Whether for arrangements, celebrations, rituals, or simply to brighten someone's day, these early morning markets ensure that Dhaka awakens in a burst of rich, vivid colours.

The flowers that rule the market

"Roses, gladiolus, gerbera, chrysanthemum, calendula, tuberose, marigold, China rose and gypsy flowers are the most common. Marigolds and tuberoses are the most sold items all year round, but when it's Valentine's Day or Falgun — the days we wait for all year — nothing tops roses. Those days are the best days for our business," adds Sujon.

When business starts between 2 and 3 AM, the area gets crowded and chaotic. The farmers and vendors arrive, unloading fresh flowers, while shopkeepers slowly set up their stalls. Once everything's in place, sales go on all day.

At the Shahbagh flower market, the streets turn into a red field as the temporary shops on the streets overflow with roses, looking like a red carpet welcoming the morning. As you step inside the market, the vibrant yellow marigolds instantly capture your attention. The sweet smell of tuberoses fills the air, mixing with the fresh scent of countless other flowers. You will find gerberas in vivid orange, red, pink, and white next to calendulas and chrysanthemums. Every corner looks like a garden in full bloom.

A shop in the market stands out with its unique little flowers — button poms — wrapped in paper. Md Parvez Akbar from Mayer Doa Pushpalay explains, "Button



poms are not always in high demand, but when it comes to elegant decorations, they're pretty demandable. High-starred hotels often request them."

The shop displays button poms in different colours including green, along with a variety of chrysanthemums, or as the locals call it "mums", making it a vibrant spot in the market. "These flowers were originally imported, but now we grow them right here in the country," Akbar shares.

From fields to markets

"The flowers are mostly sourced from Godkhali in Jashore and Birulia in Savar," replies Moyna Begum, a temporary rose shop owner. Other sellers also mention that flowers are sourced from places like Jhenidah, Chuadanga, and Narayanganj.

Md Mamunur Rashid, who has been running Mamun Phul Ghar for nearly 22 years, explains, "There are two types of marigolds — the yellow one, called bashanti ganda, and the orange one, which we call lal ganda. The orange ones sell for Tk 150 per string, while the yellow ones cost between Tk 250 and Tk 350."

Roses can be priced anywhere from as

low as Tk 50 for 100 pieces to as high as Tk 3000, depending on the occasion and demand.

Imrul from Mayer Doa Flower Shop shares, "Generally, I sell roses at Tk 200 for 100 pieces. However, during special occasions like International Mother Language Day, Rose Day, or Valentine's Day, the price can rise to as much as Tk 2000 per 100 pieces."

Samirul Islam, a farmer and seller, has been growing roses in his fields in Birulia, Savar, for 14 years. He explains, "Wholesale market sellers buy flowers directly from farmers. If they can purchase them at a lower price, they can sell them at more affordable rates.

"The farmers sell their flowers and they're done for the day. But sometimes, like myself, the farmer can also be the seller.



I pick the flowers myself, bring them with a pick-up truck, and sell them directly at this temporary shop here at Shahbagh."

About the pricing, Islam shares an interesting insight into flower production: "Garden flower production rises when there's plenty of sunlight. But when there's fog, production drops significantly, and the prices go up."

Voices from the Agargaon market

Another major wholesale flower market in Dhaka is located in Agargaon. The market originally began at Khamarbari but was

later moved to Agargaon. It begins as early as 3 AM and finishes by 9 or 10 AM.

Md Wazed Ali, who has been in the flower business for nearly 20 years, shares, "I started my business in Sadullapur, Birulia, then moved to Khamarbari. Later, the wholesale market moved from Khamarbari to Agargaon, probably 10-12 years back."

He continues, "I mainly sell roses, offering 50 pieces for just Tk 50. On different occasions, the roses are sold at higher prices."

A beautiful, though temporary, shop in front of the Agargaon flower market is sure to grab anyone's attention.

Taslina, a 60-year-old woman, has decorated her shop with great care. Her stall is filled with vibrant Easter lilies, mum flowers, and button poms. It's a family business — her son sells white roses on the other side of the market. He handles the buying, while Taslima manages the shop.

"My shop was originally in Shahbagh, but I moved here," she shares.

Shopkeepers look forward to special days like Valentine's Day or Falgun, as sales on these occasions are significantly higher compared to regular days. However, Taslima shares that sales might be lower this year.

Sohan, a gerbera seller, explains, "Due to the current situation in the country, sales are usually not very good on normal days. Even though we don't expect sales to be as high as before, we can still hope for a good turnout."

Despite the challenges, flower sellers stay hopeful, managing the ups and downs with determination. From the hands of the farmers who grow the flowers, to the journey through the market, and finally reaching the hands of your favourite person, these markets reflect the hard work and passion of those who bring beauty to the city. Let's just hope the city continues to appreciate them in return.

By Jawwad Sami Neogi
Photo: Jawwad Sami Neogi