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RISING STARS

FOR YOUNG MINDS ON THE RISE

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ILLUSTRATION: **NATASHA JAHAN**

DID YOU KNOW?

THEETYMOLOGYOFSHEMAI

PHOTO: **FARIHA AMBER**

Through Linguist Suniti Kumar Chatterji's findings, it may be claimed that the word '*shemai*" was derived from the Greek work "semidalis" which refers to the finest quality of wheat flour. However, the derivation did not happen directly. "Semidalis" entered the cultural lexicon by first transforming into "samida". It is through the word "*samida*" that words such as "*shemai*" and "semiya" were formed to refer to this category of sweet dishes.

The encounter between Greece and the subcontinent transpired during Alexander the Great's attack in India. During that period of time, it was not surprising that India came into contact with semidal or flour as a food item.

Although the word "*shemai*" has Greek roots, the dish itself originated in the subcontinent. Across Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India, *shemai* is prepared and consumed in many different ways. The practice of cooking it during festivals and celebrations is also prevalent. In fact, *shemai* has become a staple for Muslims, traditionally eaten on Eid day.

In an interview with the BBC Historian Professor Muntassir Mamoon said, "In my search for history, I have found that the tradition of eating *shemai* during Eid is not very old. It started around the 19th century as the main sweet dish for Eid."

"Shemai became popular in the subcontinent around the 30s-40s. Initially, handmade *shemai* was made somewhat commercially to be sold. The *shemai* produced in the 50s is essentially the *shemai* that we recognise today," he said.

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MOVIESTOENJOYTHISEIDWITHYOURFAMILY

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

Eid is a time of spirituality, gratitude, and mindfulness. However, given how hectic life has become for many of us, it is also one of the only times when the whole family can come together, spend time, and celebrate the festivities with each other.

To make this time somewhat more enjoyable, here are a few movies you can watch with your family.

Sonar Kella

Sonar Kella first introduced us to Feluda, Satyajit Roy's famous detective, on the silver screen, and needless to say, we instantly fell in love.

The story focuses on Feluda as he attempts to rescue Mukul, a young boy plagued by memories of his past life, from a band of kidnappers. What follows is a sprawling adventure that involves a lost treasure, a camel chase, and some brilliant sleuthing.

In typical Satyajit Roy fashion, the direction of the film is masterful. Every aspect of the filmmaking process — from the placement of the cameras to the exquisite blend of music and cinematography — is utilised to convey the story, in its full glory, to the audience.

The storytelling is aided by various comic elements, including the presence of Feluda's sidekicks Topshe and Jatayu, making *Sonar Kella* a wonderful combination of thriller and comedy that can be a perfect movie to watch with your family on Eid.

Makdee

Chunni, a mischievous young girl in a small Indian village, feels no qualms about impersonating her twin sister to get out of trouble. However, when her antics land her sister in a haunted witch's mansion and cursed into the form of a hen, Chunni embarks on a quest to reverse her mistakes that leads to her uncovering an elaborate criminal ruse.

Shabana Azmi is equal parts terrifying and mesmerising in her role as the witch and Shweta Prasad Basu portrays the roles of the twin sisters with heartwarming, child-like sincerity. Even though it is supposed to be a horror-comedy for children, *Makdee* also provides a moving social commentary on the dark underbelly of superstition in rural societies.

Coco

Coco was perhaps the first Disney film released in a very long time that managed to capture me in the same way films like *The Lion King*, *Little Mermaid*, or *Hercules* did. I saw the poignancy, emotional depth, and the moving portrayal of familial relationships that had first drawn me to animated films.

Punctuated with enrapturing music numbers, filled with beautifully fleshed out characters, complete with impossibly breathtaking visuals, *Coco* will make you and your family laugh, cry, and feel grateful for each other's company should you choose to watch it this Eid.

Heerok Rajar Deshe

Goopi Gain and Bhaga Bain, Satyajit Roy's superheroes-turned-princes who can entrance anyone with their singing abilities, return in this sequel to free the people of Herrok Rajar Desh from their tyrannical ruler.

Cruel, dictatorial, and so deeply entrenched in his own lust for wealth and power that he is entirely desensitised to the sufferings of his subjects, the Heerok Raja embodies tyranny. Satyajit Roy utilises songs, rhymed verses, and satirical storytelling to provide a witty critique of the censorship, political propaganda, and greed that characterises non-democratic governments.

However, even though it is packed with heavy political underpinnings, the movie is also a charming and fun experience for audience of all ages.

Saving your Eid salami for the future

PUNOMI RAHMAN TITIR

Musing over the boundless joy of receiving *eidi* or *salami* is one of my favourite moments of Eid, and even more so back when I was little. As a child, however, I could never really figure out what to do with my Eid *salami*. So, I would usually end up treasuring the *salami* I had received inside my palm-shaped clay (or '*matir*')bank, listening to the jangle of coins and the rustle of crisp banknotes for years on end.

Much later, when I eventually cracked open the money jar, I was stirred by the overwhelming decision of how to spend my savings. Rather than spending it all on fleeting indulgences, my parents suggested I invest the amount purchasing gold jewellery. At the time, I might not have fully grasped the significance of such advice, but looking back, it was undoubtedly a wise financial decision.

As Ramadan comes to an end and the Eid celebrations await, the time of the year, when scents of freshly minted banknotes stacked in glossy bundles fill the air (and our pockets) returns. Compulsive rituals of collectively tallying our monetary delights, stashing them away in excitement, and endless contemplations about future expenditures before pouring it all on momentary infatuations are all too familiar.

But what if this year, and maybe going forward, you don't indulge in such expenditure? What if you were to save your Eid *salami* for later and also learn about saving money and managing finances from an early age?

School banking accounts can be a gateway into the world of financial literacy for young savers. These saving accounts, designed specifically for school-going students, offer enticing interest rates – often higher than conventional saving accounts – that allow your savings to grow reasonably over time.

Besides, the minimum initial deposit requirement is comparatively low – BDT 100 in most cases – making it accessible to start saving with any portion of your *salami*. It further allows kids from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds to open and maintain school banking accounts, fostering financial inclusion and education from an early age. Several banking services in Bangladesh offer saving schemes to students under 18 with multiple benefits tailored to their needs, including zero charges for account maintenance and no minimum balance fee.

Apart from the usual student or school banking accounts, you should also explore banking schemes like fixed or double deposit schemes or any other option that allows you to save and receive interest on a one-time deposit amount. Be sure to consult your parents or guardians before you opt for such banking accounts or schemes.

Beyond just saving money, such banking services serve as a bridge between financial freedom and parental guidance. While students can access their funds and make their own decisions by availing debit card facilities and free ATM withdrawals, parents can monitor transactions and set withdrawal limits, ensuring spending remains responsible and aligned with necessary expenses. This balance allows young savers like you to cultivate independence while still having a safety net – a crucial step towards preparing them for future financial responsibilities.

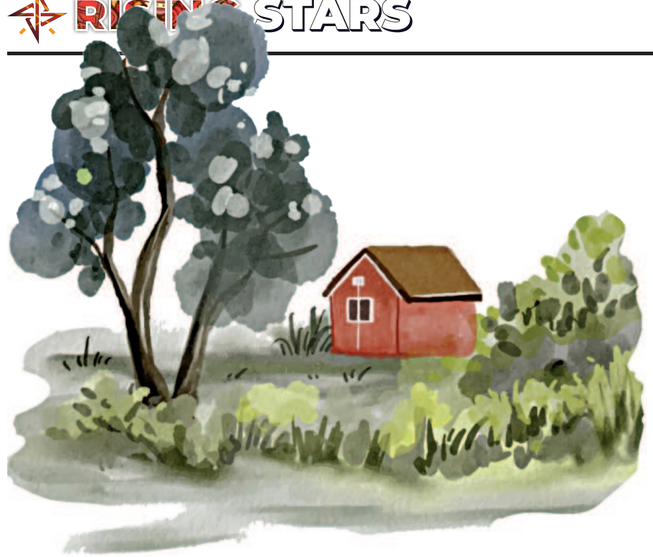
Saving your Eid *salami* instead of spending it on short-term purchases comes with plenty of advantages, the biggest of which is that it instils the habit of financial discipline from a young age. Setting aside money and watching it accumulate over time builds patience and an understanding of delayed gratification, which is an essential skill in handling finances as an adult. The earlier children are introduced to the practice of saving, the more likely they are to develop responsible financial behaviours that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Saving up over the years can also help accumulate funds for larger investments. A child's first major purchase, such as a bicycle, a gadget, or a special gift for a loved one, can be financed through the careful saving of your Eid *salami* over the years.

As the years go by, these early habits can pave the way for larger financial goals, such as funding educational expenses, travelling, or even starting a small business. The discipline of saving small amounts regularly leads to a mindset that values financial independence and long-term planning.

Eid is a time of joy, generosity, and celebration, but it can also be an opportunity to reflect on the value of financial responsibility. Instead of viewing your Eid *salami* as mere pocket money to be spent impulsively, it can be seen as the foundation for a secure and financially independent future.

Titir is currently drowning under the weight of exams. Send her virtual(actual) Salami at punomirahman@gmail.com



Eid never changed, I may have

AZRA HUMAYRA

Eid always was the best time of the year; I counted down the days like my life depended on it. The moon sighting felt like a sacred thrill. Once it appeared, I commandeered my mother's button phone, texting "Eid Mubarak" with far too many exclamation marks to every number I could find. Eid still feels like it did when I was a child – a jampacked day consisting of new clothes, *shemai*, and a happiness so overwhelming I can barely contain it. Now, I am older, taller, and more measured, but the giddy anticipation remains, as if time forgot to age that part of me. My father still wakes up early, still nudges me to get ready, and my mother still makes *shemai* in more variations than I once knew to appreciate – now I do. Now, I may get restless to return to Dhaka with so many things tied to my name, which little me would be so annoyed with.

It's about keeping our loved ones closer

ADRIN SARWAR

When I was a kid, Eid was all about new outfits, new shoes, *mehendi*, and a fresh hairstyle. Eid day meant hanging out with my cousins all day, enjoying *chotpoti*, and spending a chunk of the day in one of the corners of my granny's home with my favourite cousin. For a long time, that was Eid for me.

But as I grew up, I realised Eid wasn't just about the clothes, *salami*, or sneaking a peek at the new pair of shoes in the middle of the night. In fact, Eid changed when that cousin of mine left for her education. It changed when we all stopped gathering at granny's. It changed as we fondly thought of those who were with us last Eid but not this one.

With time, I've realised, Eid is about being surrounded by loved ones – and missing the ones who once held us close. It's about finding ways to keep them close to our hearts, even if they're no longer by our side.

The changing colour of Eid

FARIHA LAMISA

Eid has always been described to me as the biggest and most joyous festival one can experience. For most of my life, this was my truth. However, since last year's Eid, my understanding of it has been unsettled by the life-altering pain of losing my father in an untimely death. Suddenly, Eid is no longer just about wearing new clothes, collecting *salami*, and enjoying a break from academic pressure. Instead, it has become about watching my teenage brother go to the mosque alone for his Eid prayer, seeing my aging mother manage everything single-handedly, and feeling the unspoken longing for a loved one within my family. Yes, it is mostly unspoken, the grief is too extreme to be translated in words. Yet, within this melancholy, I find a glimpse of hope, hope in my own survival. If I can endure the excruciating pain of losing a parent, maybe I can overcome anything. Now, Eid is not only about celebrating with my loved ones but also about missing one of them, adjusting to my father's absence, and embracing reality. It is about finding the courage to be happy despite the hurdles and holding on to the hope that life will be great.

Leaf that held my sky

OHONA ANJUM

The sky roared as the sun peeked through the clouds, Eid morning drenched in rain. The veranda, slick with water and the kitchen thick with the scent of *shemai* simmering on the stove. Our hearts were fixed outside, beyond the curtain of rain, Billu waited. Curled up on the tin shed. We clutched our bowls of *shemai*, how could we reach him in such a downpour? But waiting wasn't enough. We plucked the biggest leaf we could find, giggling, we darted out into the rain, holding the leaf above our heads, feet splashing against the soaked earth. Billu blinked in surprise as we placed the bowl beside him. A deep purr, he lapped up the sweet treat.

Mission accomplished.

We raced back, hearts pounding. Our mothers couldn't know. We remained pressed against the wall, biting back laughter, pretending our dresses weren't damp, that our adventure had never happened. But the smiles. Those, we couldn't hide.

Years later, on clear Eid mornings, I still search the sky for rain, still hear the rustle of a leaf, the splash of our tiny feet and those laughter dissolving into the wind, like childhood, that became clouds beyond reach.

Attar and perfume

RAFID KHANDAKER

For as long as I can remember, Eid has started with me waking up to the aroma of *ma's* handmade *shemai*. Baba always made a point to wake us up three hours ahead of the Eid prayers, just so there was not even an inkling of a possibility of missing it. It didn't matter much, though, as I spent those three hours dozing off anyway. So instead of crinkling my pajamas, I crinkled my Eid clothes. My brother somehow managed to stay awake the whole time, despite both of us spending the entire night fighting over who would get to play *World of Warcraft* on the computer.

As prayer time approached, all the men in our family would gather under our building, and we would set off for the Baitul Mukarram Mosque. The smell of *attar* and perfume adorning everyone's colorful *panjabis* was certain to jolt me out of my drowsiness.

And with that, Eid had begun.

The rest of the day would be filled with *dawats*; hopping from one house to another and filling up on enough *jorda* for the rest of the year. And it would all end with an uncharacteristically early bedtime.

The woes and charms and remaining crumbs

PUNOMI RAHMAN TITIR

The familiar scents of cardamom, glossy bundles and store-bought *attar*. The first light of the sun slants through the sheer curtains, pooling in the folds of an untouched prayer mat and beaded *tasbeeh*. The old microphone hanging from the four-storied minaret balcony of the local *masjid* summons at early six, crackling with a listlessness that does not quite reach the bones. *Muazzin shaheb*, holding the receiver a little too close as always, delivers the muffled sound of a repeated message most people do not clearly understand.

We sleep through consecutive alarm slots before we rush to miss the early congregation. 'Eid Mubarak, *dadijaan!*' greetings exchanged at breakfast, while stretching an arm halfway across the dining table to scoop out another spoonful of *mistipayesh* and *lachcha shemai*. From counting the smell of freshly minted bills, now counting heads and how many 100 taka notes your bare, tattered wallet could afford to spare, because *Eider khushi* evolves in ways that makes growing up feel just a little more dreadful. We still do visit friends and next-door neighbours, squashing spaces in our already-full stomachs to stuff room for another bowl of dessert. And our *mehedi* dries, new dresses lose their crisp lingered in sweat and bellies wobble with content. Somewhere, we still chase the night sky to catch fleeting glimpses of the barely hung *Eid-er-Chand*, disappearing through shifting clouds before we rush to bid the first *salam*. Somewhere else, the smog-filled haze swallows the crescent moon before we even think to look.

Shemai and other love languages

TINATH ZAEBA

Eid always arrived like the perfect guest – on time and bringing a flurry of sweet chaos. It began with *henna*-stained hands, milk thick enough to hold dreams, and cardamom whispering promises of something delicious. The kitchen was home to bubbling pots of *shemai* – made in abundance – not just for ourselves, but for the many hands that would reach for it, for the family that filled my home like the warmth of a sunlit morning. As a child, I stood beside my mother, stirring carefully, watching as the golden strands softened into something familiar, something shared.

Now, just one pot simmers on the stove. Fewer bowls are set on the table, even fewer hands reach out, but the love remains the same. In the swirls of thickened milk and softened vermicelli, I still hear them – the murmured conversations, the greetings, the gentle clinking of spoons against porcelain. Time moves forward, carrying some away and leaving others behind, but in these small rituals of sweet nostalgia, they return, even if the people don't.

Eid has changed, but perhaps its magic never truly leaves us. After all, every Eid, I spend so much time making *shemai*, a dessert I don't even like to eat.

EASY EID RECIPESTO PREPARE FOR YOUR LOVEDONES

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

TINATH ZAEBA

There's something magical about Eid mornings — the sound of laughter in the kitchen, the smell of something sweet bubbling on the stove, and the sight of everyone getting involved, even just to stir a spoon or set the table. Helping out at home during Eid isn't just about easing the load — it's about being part of the joy. And nothing brings people together quite like a shared meal.

If you've been thinking of pitching in this year, here are five easy and familiar recipes that are always a hit on Eid. They're simple to prepare, perfect for beginners, and can be adjusted with ingredients you already have at home.

Coconut pudding

Cool, creamy, and full of flavour, this pudding is perfect for a hot Eid afternoon, especially after a heavy meal. It's light on the stomach but still feels festive. The base is usually made with coconut water, sugar, and a setting agent like agar-agar or gelatin.

To make it a little more creative, you can pour the mixture into a funky-shaped mould or silicone tray (I would recommend a crescent shaped mould for the perfect Eid-themed look). Once chilled and firm, pop them out and serve right before setting the dessert table after meals. It looks beautiful on the plate and is the perfect refreshing addition on a humid day.

Additionally, you can top it off with coconut milk if you're opting for a richer flavour.

Stuffed dates

Dates are already special during Eid, but stuffing them with various treats turns them into bite-sized treats that everyone loves. A classic version includes stuffing with roasted almonds or pistachios, either chopped or finely grinded.

Another delicious option is stuffing dates with thickened milk (usually known as *mawa* or *khoya*) and rolling them in coconut. You can also mix crushed nuts with honey or add a small spoon of cream inside. If you're looking for a fragrant kick, add a pinch of cardamom powder. Another fun version is melting chocolate and coating the dates in it before rolling them over chopped nuts for added texture.

Chill them before serving — they taste better cold and can easily be prepped the night before Eid.

Chocolate mousse

Chocolate mousse is rich, creamy, and always popular with younger guests. While the basic version uses whipped cream and melted chocolate, you can give it a fancier spin and make it a star.

Try layering it with crushed Marie or Parle-G biscuits for a pudding-like texture. You can also add a hint of instant coffee for a mocha flavour or use Bournvita or Milo powder for more of a malt chocolate taste. A light sprinkle of crushed cashews or grated chocolate on top makes it look beautiful without much effort.

Serve it in small glasses or mousse cups if you have them at home.

Fruit custard

Fruit custard is a colourful classic — cool, creamy, and easy to make in bulk. Start with making the custard base with milk and custard powder, then add your favourite fruits.

Bananas, apples, grapes, and pomegranate are always safe choices, but mangoes and lychees add a more festive flavour. Many households like to add colourful jelly cubes or canned fruit cocktails. For a richer version, mix in a bit of condensed milk or a spoon of fresh cream.

Some families even add a layer of chopped *shemai* (vermicelli) or sponge cake at the bottom, turning it into a deshi-style trifle.

Chickpea salad

As a savoury option, this is a quick and easy dish that can pack a punch of flavour. All you need is chickpeas and, while you can definitely bring variation to the ingredients, the basic ones would be tomatoes, potatoes, cucumber, and the greens (coriander, onions, and if you want a that fresh bite, mint leaves). If you don't have all of these ingredients, then don't worry; just add whatever you have with a dressing of olive oil.

My favourite addition to this recipe is lemon juice and garnishing it with sliced paneer. This recipe always gets compliments for being fresh and crunchy. And the best part is that it is compatible with whatever Eid spread is going on for lunch or dinner.

Helping out at home during Eid doesn't have to mean spending hours in the kitchen. Even simple tasks like chopping fruit, arranging dates, or garnishing pudding can bring joy — and lighten someone else's load.

Tinath Zaeba is an optimistic daydreamer, a cat mom of 5, and a student of Economics at North South University. Get in touch via mailing to tinathzaeba25@gmail.com

HAIR

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

The different textures of hair never fail to fascinate me.
I have my father's hair, not the dash of salt-and-pepper that seems to wipe away the lines on his forehead, but the smooth flatness that remains unfazed even under the most blazing summer sun.
My mother's hair is like hay — it jolts me every time I see it because it is so unlike mine when so much of me is simply taken from her, stolen and carved right out of her body against her will.
But I didn't start this poem to continue the tradition of coddling blameless mothers and antagonising cruel fathers that we have gotten so comfortable with:
I love the texture of your hair and I wanted to tell you about it in far too many words than either you or I are comfortable with.
I love the texture of your hair because it is the texture of my hair and it is the texture of my father's hair.
I know
just what it would feel like to run my fingers through the invisible knots in it;
I also know what I would experience while touching the jagged ends of your hair —
the remnants of the cool surgery table will coat the bottom of my tongue with a barely bearable tang.
I love the texture of your hair because I am familiar with it,
I love the texture of your hair because I can ragefully throw it into the shallow depths of the Baltic Sea and not say goodbye,
I love the texture of your hair because I am unable to love my own.

ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

FALLING ABOVE

SABIL SADAT ZAHIR

I kept falling, within my own reverie,
Like a chasm with no end
I kept falling, with no hope to be free –
Surrounded with memories that make my heart bend.
I knew not, where this darkness would take me
With a tenebrosity so comforting.
I knew not, why this darkness had taken me
With a contrition ever unending.
I kept falling, within my own reverie
But the darkness now waned;
I kept falling, with a light ensuing suddenly
The walls were no longer dark, but now inflamed.
Like one of the Malaikah, she caught me there
I fell no more, abated by a lustre.
My soul remained still, but my heart went everywhere
No longer alone, I absconded towards an everafter.
We kept flying, with every inch a new tomorrow
Towards a horizon between love and hope
We kept flying, through the pain and sorrow
The darkness now joy and wonder as an allotrope.
Every dark orifice slowly being rewoven,
We flew together, our hearts intertwined
With every word through her eyes as they close and open
She saved me, from a sadness confined.

ILLUSTRATION: **ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM**

Little Birdie

SHAIKH SABIK KAMAL

Little Birdie,
Tell me, is there anyone who's not afraid of a little change
In the weather, in the seasons, or in the asymmetry of a daybreak?
If not on these winds, do you believe our wings do thrive
Off of the weight of love brought to us by such little a life?
Well, I do believe when we're together, our hearts are just as good
Following the trails of cotton in lake blue, holding on to such youth
Because I love how my windswept feathers are soft like our gentle whims
And though yours are ruffled, they smell of flowers from the proudest of springs
But it's not the feather, the weather, nor a grassy glide's sweater that completes you
It's the way when you're alive, the hums line up in a perfect tune
And it's not my words of love nor the steady songs of hearth that they're worth
It's the idea of something real, something truly ours to hold
But sometimes the storm and the thunder drinks away our bleeding faith
And the shadow of larger purpose leaves a mark on luck's gates
Sometimes, it just gets so hard to not look down below
To realise that the gambit of the wind is not at all slow
But, just for now, just till we make it, don't look away
Till my wings are just flesh and bones, hold on to this love
Hold on to my love, my love. I'm holding on to yours
We are just birds of the sky, but we can be so much more.

Shaikh Sabik Kamal isn't actually a bird. Convince him otherwise at wolvesandwaffles77@gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

HANDMADE WITH LOVE

DIY Eid gifts for your loved ones

NUSRAT MEHERIN FAIZA

Ramadan went by fast, and Eid is just around the corner. While it may sometimes not seem like that, Eid is not just about new clothes and food. Above all else, perhaps, Eid is a celebration of friends and family. And what better way to celebrate the ones close to you than to make them handmade gifts with a personal touch. Here are a few ideas for thoughtful presents that you can craft to make your loved one's Eid even more special.

Eid greeting cards

You can never go wrong with handmade Eid cards. If you are a '90s kid, you probably remember exchanging tiny, colourful Eid cards with friends and family. Eid felt incomplete without those! A handmade card is even more special because of the effort and thought that goes into it. Grab some good quality paper (card paper/poster paper) in festive colours, shape the card as you like, and decorate it with crescents, stars, or floral patterns, using markers, stickers or drawings, that reflect the spirit of Eid. Add a heartfelt note or a wish for a blessed year ahead. And the best part? No matter how simple or fancy your Eid cards are, they will always be cherished keepsakes that speak volumes.

Resin jewellery

As Eid is approaching, everyone is rushing with their last-minute preparations. So what could be better at this time than gifting them a handmade piece of jewellery made by you with love? Handmade resin jewellery can be the perfect finishing touch for your loved ones' Eid looks, giving them a stylish boost. To make your own, you will need some clear resin, dye colour, small keepsakes like dried flowers, glitter, or tiny charms, silicone mould (crescent moon, stars, or any shape you like), and sandpaper. Start by mixing the resin with a few drops of dye and gently stir. Pour the mixture into the moulds and let it dry for at least 24 hours until fully hardened. Once set, carefully remove the resin piece, sand any rough edges, and later attach it to a chain, ring, or bracelet using glue. This will not only add a stylish touch but also will be remembered as a thoughtful gift every time it is worn, making it even more special.

Scented candles

Nothing sets the mood for Eid like a warm, soothing fragrance filling the air on Eid morning. A handmade scented candle is your way to add a relaxing touch to your loved ones' homes. You only need soy or beeswax, a wick, a glass jar, and essential oils (lavender, rosemary, or vanilla) for a calming aroma. Melt in the wax, mix a few drops of essential oils, place the wick in the jar first, and then pour the melted wax. Let it harden for two to three hours, and just like that, you will have your very own beautifully crafted scented candle. To add a special touch, tie any festive coloured ribbon or an Eid tag with a small note to the jar. That's it! After all the Eid celebrations, a soft, soothing scent is just what one needs to unwind. And the best part? They'll think of you whenever they catch a whiff of the fragrance.

Mini coaster or canvas painting

A mini canvas or coaster painting can be the perfect way to create something special for your loved ones. It's incredibly easy to make, and you don't have to be an artist to make it! All you need is a blank canvas or plain coaster, acrylic paints, and a fine brush. You can do calligraphy and paint crescent moon, stars, or even mosques to bring the spirit of Eid to life. Add colours to it to convey the spirit of Eid. Once painted, seal the artwork with sealer or varnish to ensure durability. These tiny pieces, even though they look small, carry love and effort in every stroke.

Handmade gifts are the perfect way to make your loved ones feel extra special. But remember, it's not how beautiful the gifts look but the effort and love you put into each one that truly matters.

Nusrat Meherin Faiza is a writer, tutor, and chronic overthinker. Reach out to fuel her overthinking at nmfaiza15@gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: **ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM**