VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1, TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025
JAISHTHA 20, 1432 BS

# Star LIFE Style

E-mail: lifestyleds@yahoo.com
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. A publication of The Daily Star

# Eid Mubarak!

SWEET MEETS HEAT IN UNEXPECTED WAYS
BOLD TWISTS ON CLASSIC EID RECIPES P5, 6-7, 8
NOT ALL ABUSE LEAVES SCARS
ABUSIVE MARRIAGES P9
MIRPUR KATAN GETS ITS GI TAG
STILL NO THREAD OF REAL CHANGE P12

RECIPE: SALINA PARVIN
PHOTO: SHAHREAR KABIR HEEMEL
FOOD & PLATING: RAFFAT BINTE RASHID

#PRESS RELEASES

# DEVOTION:
# Le Reve's unique Eid collection

There is a serene joy in surrendering to the colours, simplicity, and beauty of nature. At the end of the day, it is nature that teaches us to live anew and embrace positivity. Inspired by this simple yet profound thought, the country's leading fashion brand Le Reve has unveiled a stunning Eid-ul-Adha 2025 collection titled "Devotion."

To suit the season, the collection features light and breathable fabrics such as cotton, linen, muslin, and chiffon. Additionally, the brand has curated exclusive materials such as jacquard stretch, silk-viscose, zoom, and jacquard viscose to enhance the festive feel while remaining season-friendly. The designs emphasize ease with relaxed cuts, flowy silhouettes, and comfortable movement. The colour palette is grounded in earthy and neutral tones like beige and navy, complemented by organic shades such as 'scuffed lemon' and 'washed black' — offering a harmonious blend of light and deep hues. Key colours include army green, black, light grey, off-white, cocoa brown, etc.

This year's print story draws from trending international motifs. Heirloom Bloom celebrates tradition with vivid floral and vine prints inspired by classic tapestry, while Ornamental Meadow presents vintage florals. Veiled Verdure captures the quiet beauty of dry leaves, and Geometric Relic introduces structured block-style patterns. The collection also includes bold ethnic prints and understated monochromatic beige options.

Le Reve's women's collection for Eid-ul-Adha 2025 spans ethnic, casual, and Western-fusion wear, including long kameez, shalwar kameez, gowns, abayas, skirt sets, shrugs, cape tops, and cotton or half-silk sarees. The exclusive party line 'Nargisus' showcases muslin gowns, intricately embroidered ensembles, and stylish kaftans. For cozy Eid mornings, there are versatile tunics, shirt-tops, coordinated sets, and comfortable lowers.

Men can choose from a versatile range of panjabis, alongside shirts, polos, t-shirts, easy pants, and pajamas. Teens can explore a lively, trend-forward line perfect for festive gatherings. The kids' collection features adorable shalwar kameez, frocks, tunics, lehenga-choli, panjabis, polos, and comfy bottoms for a cheerful and fuss-free Eid.

To bring families closer this festive season, Le Reve introduces Mini-Me collections — matching mom-daughter and dad-son outfits crafted with comfort, emotion, and celebration in mind.

Le Reve's Eid-ul-Adha 2025 collection is available at all Le Reve outlets in Dhaka, Narayanganj, Chattogram, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Cumilla, Mymensingh, and Barishal. Customers can also enjoy a seamless shopping experience from home by visiting www.lerevecraze.com, downloading the Le Reve app, or placing orders via Messenger at facebook.com/lerevecraze.

#RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY

# Rethinking Screen Time and Teen Mental Health

*A popular narrative has emerged in recent years, suggesting that smartphones and social media are primarily responsible for declining teen mental health. Headlines warn of "digital addiction" and "rewired brains," creating widespread anxiety among parents, educators, and policymakers. However, the scientific evidence paints a more nuanced picture, challenging many of these assumptions.*

**What Research Shows**

"For such a long time, we have heard how detrimental screen time is for our children," said Maisha Sarwar, a thirty-three-year-old banker. "My son is three and the way he devours Coco Melon frankly has me very worried."

Maisha is one of the many hundreds and thousands of parents who feel guilty about giving their children screen time, ridden with apprehensions about their social lives and mental health as a consequence of this quick fix.

It may be time for some of that guilt to be put to rest, however.

Despite extensive concerns, researchers have consistently failed to find convincing evidence that digital technology use contributes to adolescent depression and other mental health symptoms, despite decades of research on adolescents and their usage of technology.

Multiple studies and comprehensive reviews have indicated that social media is among the least influential factors when it comes to predicting adolescent mental health. Similar, perhaps, to the effects of regularly eating potatoes and less impactful than wearing glasses or bicycling!

Research consistently identifies a family history of mental disorders, offline factors such as sleep duration, early exposure to adversity (violence/discrimination), school-related and family-related stressors, economic insecurity, and access to mental

health resources to have much stronger associations with adolescent mental health outcomes than technology use.

**A Critical Dilemma**

"My friends and I have had this conversation. Strangely, we all feel that when we are sad or upset, we mostly turn to screen time to make us feel better," shares Samiha Manar, a 14-year-old student. "We turn to Netflix, or Instagram for mindless distraction or just pick up the phone and video call each other. I know several articles will probably prove me wrong, but this is our reality."

Most studies on social media and mental health are correlational, meaning they are unable to determine whether social media causes mental health problems or vice versa. Interestingly, recent research suggests that early mental health symptoms may predict later social media use, but not the other way around.

Another longitudinal study in 2020 followed adolescents over six years. It found no evidence that social media use predicted depression over time. Instead, they found some evidence for the reverse — that depression might predict subsequent social media use, explaining Samiha's feelings.

**How teens actually use technology**

When researchers connect with adolescents directly, they find young people using digital technologies for developmentally appropriate activities such as connecting with peers from their offline life, consuming music and media, playing games with friends, seeking health information, and

finding supportive communities, especially for those with marginalised identities.

"It's impossible to avoid it," says Jawad Shah, 17. "From catching up on news to keeping in touch with peers, placing food orders to picking up new abilities, tech is ingrained into our lives."

Another teenager, Anfaas Karim, 18, talks about how he has never seen technology and screen time as anything but a friend.

"I was exposed to it ever since I was born," he says. "It's done nothing but help me; with assignments, with establishing and maintaining connections with friends. It's taken me through Covid," he shrugs.

Karim admits, however, that this "friend" might sometimes seem a little clingy, with its alluring distractions but over time he's learned to strike a balance between his screen and real time.

**A more balanced approach**

Dr Abdul Hamid, a psychotherapist from the Monobikash Foundation mentions, "Technology, in itself, is not a villain. If anything, it has been quite the blessing, training our mind to work better, respond faster and generally keep up with whatever the machine can do for us."

The real problem, he feels is the complacency it has created in doing so. "Imagine going on foot to deliver a letter and the physical effort it took to get the job done, only 20 or 30-odd years ago. Fast forward to now, when one ping on social media is all it takes.

"It has cut down physical work by so much, that people have become quite lethargic, forgetting to strike a reasonable balance between working the mind and body."

He finds this to be a disastrous consequence of technology and one that gives rise to all sorts of psychological problems. "People who can effectively strike that balance, go on to conquer space!"

According to the expert, the instant gratification that social media or games offer is also something one can get hooked on fairly quickly.

"Teens become so focussed on temporary pleasures that working for the real pleasures of life such as saving up for something or nurturing a passion begins to seem like a towering ask." This too, Hamid says, is a major disadvantage of screens, in a world that is increasingly grateful to technology. "Again, it's all about striking the right balance."

Rather than panic-mongering and restrictive approaches, existing evidence and expert advice suggest that parents understand both the benefits and risks of technology, based on its usage and individual circumstances. Focussing on digital literacy and teaching critical evaluation skills can be beneficial for teens rather than restrictive approaches. Parents should go through the content their children consume and observe how they use technology, promoting "connected parenting".

While glaring concerns about technology remain undeniable, blindly demonising technology and concentrating exclusively on screen time as the primary cause of teen mental health challenges may divert attention away from the real risk factors.

**By Munira Fidai**
**Photo: Collected**

#REVIEW

# LIFE ON A PLATE

## Shaheda Yesmin's fusion food philosophy

When you hear the phrase "fusion food," your mind might wander to avocado sushi or kimchi tacos. But in the hands of Shaheda Yesmin, fusion is not a gimmick — it's a carefully considered act of cultural conversation.

Her debut cookbook, "Life on a Plate" is not just a collection of recipes, it's a manual for reimagining what it means to preserve tradition while responding to the hunger of a global palate.

That said, Yesmin does not believe in blindly guarding tradition.

"It is possible to preserve the basic elements of traditional Bangladeshi dishes without compromising the basics beyond certain limits," she says. And in her kitchen, that philosophy translates into subtle, thoughtful adjustments rather than wholesale reinvention.

Her take on Mera Pitha, a traditional Sylheti rice flour cake, for example,

incorporates Dhaka's iconic cottage cheese — a quiet regional handshake between two culinary cultures. Similarly, she transforms Morog Musallam by replacing the chicken with a deboned pigeon stuffed with rice, showing how a small shift in protein can elevate a familiar dish into something new without discarding its core.

But what makes Life on a Plate stand out is not its modernity — it's the memory. The recipes are stitched together with family, nostalgia, and love. One of the most intimate examples is Daddy's Favourite Lamb Shank, a dish dedicated to her father. She does not just replicate his favourite mutton preparation; she expands on it, enriching the flavour with Worcestershire sauce and red grape juice. It's a subtle nod to how personal taste and collective memory can intersect at the dinner table.

In a market where cookbooks often feel like glossy objects of aspiration, Yesmin's work reads more like a dialogue with her past, her land, and her audience. Her approach to fusion is not about diluting identity; it's about placing Bangladeshi flavours into a global narrative.

"The main principle," she explains, "Was presenting Bangladeshi cuisine to the outside world to meet the global diversity of palates. I had to preserve the fundamentals of our cuisine and at the same time, create permutations and combinations that would suit the diversity."

This balancing act is nowhere more evident than in her chapter on vegetarian food — a space often neglected in traditional, meat-heavy Bangladeshi menus. But for Yesmin, plant-based dishes are more than just dietary choices; they're ecological and ethical statements.

"At a time when our natural environment is facing an existential threat, it is heartening to note that plant-based eating is slowly gaining popularity amongst the new generation," she reflects. In her home, jackfruit isn't just a fruit, it's the main ingredient in her homemade kababs.

Her salads and bhartas are crafted not only for taste but with ingredients from her own kitchen garden. It's food that starts with dirt under your nails and ends in a dish that tastes like home.

Recognition came when Yesmin was named Country President by the World Association of Master Chefs, a title that validates her journey.

"It is undoubtedly a great sense of satisfaction that my humble efforts have found such recognition," she remarks with characteristic modesty. But the award is more than symbolic. It's a nudge to keep going, to keep telling Bangladesh's culinary story in bold, unexpected ways.

As for what comes next, she's not in a hurry. "It has taken me five years to bring Life on a Plate into the public domain. I do not wish to rule out working on another book, maybe some time down the road," she admits. For now, her focus is on nurturing what she's already seeded — recipes, relationships, and a reinvention of the Bangladeshi culinary identity.

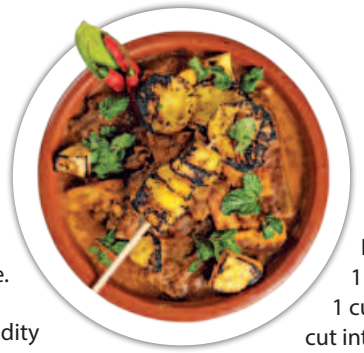
Shaheda Yesmin's cookbook may sit neatly on a kitchen shelf, but its pages carry the weight of years of practice, experimentation, and heritage. In a world overwhelmed by culinary trends and clickbait food hacks, Life on a Plate invites us to slow down and ask: What are we really tasting when we eat? And whose stories are we carrying forward?

In Yesmin's world, a plate is not just a place for food — it's a stage for history, memory, and the quiet evolution of culture.

**By Ayman Anika**
**Photo: Courtesy**

#FOOD & RECIPES

# Celebrate Eid *with* these unique fruit-meat recipes



While many home cooks may hesitate to pair fruit with meat, thinking the flavours might clash, the truth is quite the opposite. When done right, the natural sweetness and acidity of fruits can enhance savoury dishes, adding layers of complexity, tenderness, and seasonal charm.

As Eid-ul-Azha approaches and kitchens come alive with the sizzle of hearty meat dishes, why not take a detour from the usual and explore something refreshingly different?

**SWEET AND SPICY PINEAPPLE BEEF CURRY**

**Ingredients**

1 kg beef
1 cup fresh pineapple, cut into pieces
1 cup pineapple juice
2 slices lightly caramelised pineapple chunks, for garnishing
2 medium onions, finely chopped
1 tbsp garlic paste
1 tbsp ginger paste
5-6 green chillies, slit
2 tsp red chilli powder
1 tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp cumin powder
½ garam masala powder
1 tbsp soy sauce, optional for a fusion twist
1 tsp sugar or honey
3 tbsp oil
2 bay leaves
3 tbsp oil
4 cardamoms
1 cinnamon stick
2 cloves
Salt, to taste
Water – as needed

**Method**

Marinate the beef with turmeric, red chilli powder, a little salt, and half of the pineapple juice for 30 minutes. Heat oil in a pan and add bay leaves and whole spices, sautéing them for a few seconds until aromatic. Add chopped onions and fry until golden brown, then add ginger-garlic paste and cook for 2–3 minutes. Add the marinated beef and cook on medium heat until it begins to brown and release its juices. Stir in cumin powder, extra red chilli powder (if needed), salt, and soy sauce.

Continue cooking until the oil starts to separate from the mixture.

Add green chillies and a touch of sugar or honey, then pour in 1 cup of water and cook until the beef is tender. Add the pineapple chunks along with the remaining pineapple juice, stir well, and cook covered for a few more minutes. Once the meat is tender and the flavours have blended, sprinkle garam masala powder, mix gently, and switch off the heat. Cover and let it rest for 5 minutes. Garnish with caramelised pineapple chunks and serve hot with plain rice, polao, or paratha.

CONTINUED TO CENTRE

# Cooking with MEAT and fruit

## LAMB WITH APPLES

**Ingredients**

1 kg lamb (bone-in pieces, preferably shoulder or leg)
4 medium apples, peeled and sliced (preferably green apples)
3 large onions, thinly sliced
1 tbsp ginger paste
1 tsp garlic paste
½ cup yoghurt, whisked
½ tsp turmeric powder
1 tsp red chilli powder (adjust to taste)
1 tsp fennel powder
1 tsp dry ginger powder
2-3 green cardamoms
2 black cardamoms
1-inch cinnamon stick
3-4 cloves
½ tsp cumin seeds
½ tsp garam masala powder
Salt to taste
4 tbsp mustard oil (or any oil)
Fresh coriander leaves, chopped (for garnish)

**Method**

Heat mustard oil in a heavy-bottomed pan until it begins to smoke slightly, then reduce the heat to medium.

Add cumin seeds, cinnamon, cloves, and both green and black cardamoms, and sauté until aromatic. Add the sliced onions and cook until golden brown. Stir in the ginger-garlic paste and sauté for 2–3 minutes until the raw smell disappears. Add the lamb pieces and sear them on high heat until they are browned on all sides.

Lower the heat and add turmeric, red chilli powder, fennel powder, dry ginger powder, and salt, mixing well to coat the meat evenly with the spices. Gradually add the whisked yoghurt, stirring continuously to prevent curdling. Cover and cook the lamb on low heat for 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring occasionally and adding a little water if necessary to keep the mixture moist.

When the meat is nearly tender, add the sliced apples and let them cook for another 10–15 minutes, until they soften and absorb the flavours while still holding their shape. Finish with a sprinkle of garam masala and garnish with fresh coriander leaves. Serve hot with steamed basmati rice or naan.

## MUTTON WITH COCONUT AND TAMARIND

**Ingredients**

1 kg mutton (bone-in or boneless)
1 cup coconut, freshly grated
1 cup coconut milk
2 tbsp tamarind paste or tamarind pulp (soaked in warm water)
3 large onions, chopped
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
1 tbsp ginger-garlic paste
2 green chillies, slit
A few sprigs of curry leaves
1 tsp mustard seeds
1 tsp cumin seeds
½ tbsp turmeric powder
1 tbsp red chilli powder (adjust to taste)
1 tbsp coriander powder
1 tbsp garam masala powder
½ cup coconut milk
2-3 tbsp tamarind extract (adjust for tanginess)
Salt, to taste
2 tbsp oil
Water as needed
A handful of fresh cilantros, chopped (for garnish)

**Method**

Heat a large pan with oil and sear the mutton pieces until browned on all sides. Remove them from the pan and set aside.

In the same pan, add mustard seeds, cumin seeds, and curry leaves, allowing them to splutter and release their aroma. Add the chopped onions and sauté until golden brown, then add the ginger-garlic paste and cook until the raw smell disappears. Stir in the chopped tomatoes, turmeric powder, red chilli powder, coriander powder, and garam masala powder. Cook until the tomatoes soften and the oil begins to separate from the masala. Return the browned mutton to the pan and mix well, allowing it to cook for 5–7 minutes so the flavours can blend.

Now, add the grated coconut and tamarind paste, then pour in enough water and simmer for about 30 minutes, checking for tenderness and adding more water, if needed. Once the mutton is cooked through and tender, stir in the coconut milk and simmer for another 5–10 minutes. Adjust salt and tamarind to taste. Garnish with freshly chopped cilantro and serve hot with rice, naan, or roti.

## ORANGE AND SOY BRAISED BEEF

**Ingredients**

1 kg beef brisket or chuck, cut into large chunks
½ cup orange juice
1 tbsp orange zest
3 tbsp dark soy sauce
1 tbsp white vinegar
1 tbsp brown sugar
1 tbsp ginger, sliced
4 cloves garlic, crushed
1 star anise (optional, for depth of flavour)

2 tbsp oil
1½ cups water or beef stock
Spring onions, chopped, for garnish
Salt to taste

**Method**

Heat oil in a large pot and brown the beef pieces on all sides. Add garlic, ginger, and star anise, and sauté for a minute. Pour in orange juice, soy sauce, vinegar, sugar, and orange zest. Add water or stock, cover, and simmer on low heat for about 2 hours or until the beef is tender and the sauce has reduced to a sticky glaze. Adjust salt and sugar to balance sweetness and saltiness. Garnish with chopped spring onions and serve.

## THAI CHICKEN & MANGO STIR-FRY

**Ingredients**

2 chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch pieces
2 tbsp fish sauce
2 tbsp lime juice
1½ tbsp cornstarch
1-2 tsp brown sugar
4 tsp oil
2 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp minced fresh ginger
2 fresh chilli papers, stemmed and sliced
2 cups bite-size capsicum
¼ cup water
2 mangoes, peeled and sliced
¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
¼ cup chopped fresh basil
¼ cup chopped fresh mint
4 tbsp oiled

**Method**

Combine fish sauce, lime juice, cornstarch, and brown sugar in a small bowl. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a wok or large skillet over high heat. Add chicken, and cook, stirring, until just cooked through, 5-6 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add the remaining oil, garlic, ginger and chillis to the pan. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 15 seconds. Add capsicum and mango and cook for 1 minute. Add the reserved sauce and chicken, and cook, stirring, until the sauce is thickened and the chicken is heated through about 1 minute. Stir in cilantro, basil and mint. Remove from heat and serve.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 8

# LAMB *and* POMEGRANATE KEBAB SKEWERS

**Ingredients**:
1 kg boneless lamb, cut into cubes
½ cup fresh pomegranate seeds (plus extra for garnish)
2 tbsp pomegranate molasses
½ cup thick yoghurt
1 tbsp garlic paste
½ tsp coriander powder
1 tsp black pepper
½ tsp cinnamon powder
Salt to taste
1 tbsp oil
Skewers, soaked if wooden

**Method**
Blend yoghurt, pomegranate molasses, garlic paste, coriander powder, cinnamon, salt, and pepper into a marinade. Mix the lamb cubes and pomegranate seeds into this mixture. Let it marinate for at least 4 hours in the refrigerator. Thread lamb onto skewers and grill on high heat or roast in the oven until cooked and slightly charred.

Garnish with fresh pomegranate seeds and chopped mint before serving.

**By Salina Parvin**
**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**
**Food & Plating: RBR**

#RELATIONSHIPS AND FAMILY

# CHOOSING FREEDOM
## Rebuilding a life after marital abuse

Trapped in an abusive marriage, Sadia's journey from fear to freedom reveals the hidden scars of emotional abuse. Sabrina N Bhuiyan tells a poignant story of resilience and the quiet strength it takes to reclaim one's life.

"When we first met, he was everything I could dream of. Warm, intuitive, kind. Slowly he became my whole world and everything, everyone else faded in the background, paled in comparison to the love and affection he showed me.

"I was madly in love…to the point that it blinded me to his flaws. Were the signs there from before? Perhaps. But that is love, right? You focus on the good and overlook the bad? And then it started very, very slowly, especially after our marriage," recounts Sadia (not her real name), a survivor of an abusive marriage.

It's a pretty self-explanatory term at this point, but what is truly intriguing are the things that it entails. Abuse in itself means many different things — using cruel behaviour or words towards a person with malicious intent, using something to bad effect, or violent conduct towards someone. It is interesting how all these aspects apply directly in a marital relationship where one comes bare to the other, guards down, to love and to be loved but is mistreated gravely.

**The subtle erosion of self**

Words often go unnoticed in their impact, yet they possess the quiet power to build or destroy. For Sadia, it began subtly — with comments about her appearance.

Her husband would make casual, seemingly offhand remarks: how jeans didn't suit her "massive" hips, or how black made her look "skinnier." Without realising it, she started dressing more conservatively — not out of personal preference, but because his voice had begun to shape her perception.

The influence didn't stop there. Her circle of friends soon came under his scrutiny. These were the people Sadia had known her whole life, yet his disapproval planted seeds of doubt. One by one, she pulled away from them, choosing instead to spend time with his acquaintances.

Slowly, visits to her own parents and relatives dwindled, replaced by time spent solely with his side of the family. Her husband had, over time, convinced her that her loved ones were a "bad influence". Looking back, Sadia can't help but feel bewildered at how methodically and quietly her world had been altered — until nothing of her own seemed to remain.

Dr Abdul Hamid, a renowned psychiatrist at Monobikash Foundation, considers such behaviour as narcissistic where a spouse intends to gain control over his or her better half through constant criticism. With the intent of exploitation via manipulation and emotional control, narcissistic individuals have little to no empathy towards their victims. In a marriage where two people's lives are intertwined such form of abuse encompasses all aspects of life and can be extremely damaging for the victim.

**The turning point**

By the time they had been married for two years, following a year of courtship, Sadia had already begun to feel flickers of doubt about her husband's behaviour. But major life events kept those doubts buried. The birth of their child, a move to another country, and her decision to give up a promising career had made her increasingly dependent on him, both emotionally and financially.

When their daughter was around three months old, things began to unravel quickly. The warmth and affection that once defined their relationship had vanished. In its place came relentless criticism — an unending stream of complaints that left Sadia emotionally drained and physically exhausted.

Then came the COVID-19 pandemic. Her husband lost his job, and the family had to rely entirely on his parents for support. As their financial situation worsened, his demeanour grew more volatile.

What hurt the most wasn't just the words — though they were cruel and cutting — but the psychological toll they took. To the outside world, he appeared charming and polite, always ready with a pleasant smile. Behind closed doors, however, he was a man transformed — aggressive, temperamental, and frightening.

Sadia, physically smaller than him, began to feel the looming threat of his physicality. Intimidation became part of her daily life.

Small disagreements over household matters would quickly escalate. His temper was unpredictable, his emotions entirely unchecked. Sadia remembers the breaking point vividly — One night, as she was gently putting their eleven-month-old daughter to sleep, he stormed into the room without warning. He flipped on all the lights and started yelling at her. The baby, startled awake, clung to her in silent terror, her tiny eyes wide with fear.

The sight of her daughter's frightened face shattered whatever resolve she had left. She knew then that they were not safe — not anymore. Her husband's towering frame blocked the door, but she managed to slip past him in panic, rushed to another room, and locked the door behind her. Shaking, she called their elderly neighbour.

The woman responded immediately. Calm and composed, she arrived at their door and reminded Sadia's husband, in no uncertain terms, that the police were only a phone call away. She then gently led Sadia and her baby to her house, where they spent the night in safety.

Even as she retells the incident, Sadia's voice trembles — the fear and trauma still fresh in her memory.

**Reclaiming life**

Sadia returned to her parents' home two weeks later. Her husband kept trying to erode her confidence, but she stayed firm. She filed for divorce, revived her career, and created a safe life for herself and her daughter, now three.

When asked why she stayed, she explains: "Leaving a relationship is never easy… But the signs — they're always there. You just need to open your eyes and see them."

Her voice is no longer shaped by fear but by strength.

**A broken system**

While this is one incident where the victim turned her life around in the best possible way, others are not so lucky. Without a shadow of a doubt, our society is still patriarchal at large, women are facing grave challenges. Abuse can take many different shapes and forms and it can range from mild to extreme, even more so in a marriage where the abuser is in close proximity to the victim.

It gets especially complicated when children are involved; financial matters are also to be considered with a level head. Most women are incapable of providing for themselves and their children as they take on the role of primary caregivers following the birth of children while their careers fall by the wayside. In Sadia's case, the husband had the upper hand financially which he had used to perpetuate his abuse as his wife was dependent on him.

According to Dr Hamid the entire "system" is to be blamed for this. Women in general are conditioned in our society to be docile, and the onus to keep a family together almost always falls on them.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11

# Smartphones should mirror your pace, personality, and purpose

## "Designed for You: The Case for Purpose-Driven Smartphones"

Back in the day, a wristwatch told time. Today, it tells so much more—your taste, your tempo, your status. Much like the evolution of watches, smartphones have transformed far beyond their original purpose. No longer just devices for calls and texts, they now act as mirrors—reflecting who we are, how we live, and what we aspire to become.

In a world where everything moves at the speed of a swipe, our gadgets are expected to keep up. Whether you're switching between classes and freelance gigs, capturing moments for your socials, or gaming on the go—your smartphone has to match your pace. At the same time, it should reflect your personality. Bold or minimal, vibrant or sleek design is no longer just aesthetic, it's expressive. And then there's purpose. A phone that aligns with your mission, whether it's creativity, productivity, or staying connected with the people who matter.
This evolution is exactly what brands like Infinix are embracing with their latest Note 50 Series. Designed for dynamic young users who demand more from their devices, these smartphones combine style, speed, and smart features to fit right into modern lifestyles. From a 144Hz display that looks and feels premium, to performance powerhouses built for multitasking—the tech shouldn't just work for you; it should works like you.

**Pace: Made for Momentum**

Life moves fast, and the modern user doesn't wait. Whether it's students juggling back-to-back classes and content creation, or young professionals managing work calls while navigating city traffic—everyone needs a phone that can keep pace without faltering. That's where smart features, seamless performance, and efficient charging come into play.

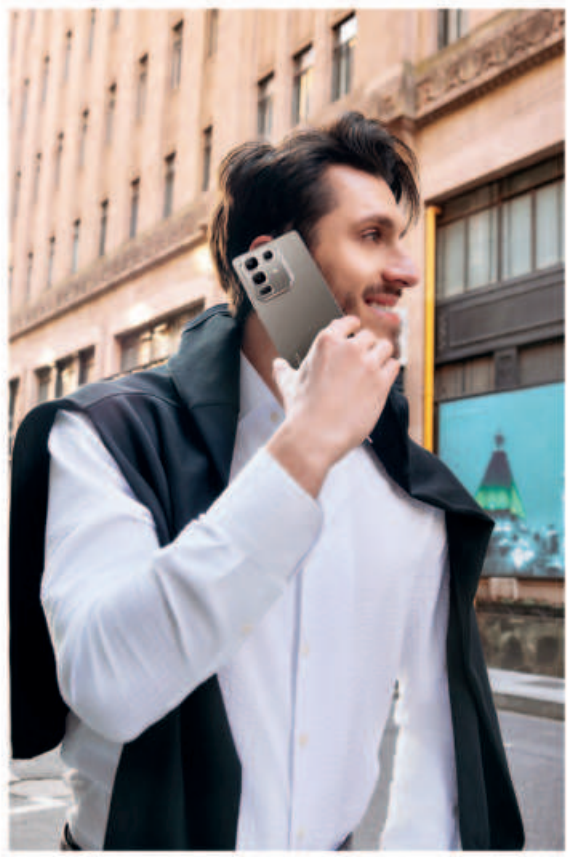
The Infinix Note 50 Series is built with this reality in mind. With ultra-fast processors and AI-assisted multitasking, users can effortlessly switch between editing reels, responding to emails, and gaming—all in the same breath. The phone's intelligent battery management system and wireless MagCharge solution ensure that power is always within reach, keeping up with users who don't stop, even when on the move. It's the kind of device that understands the tempo of your day—and never lags behind.

**Personality: A Reflection of You**

What you carry says a lot about you—and smartphones have quietly become one of the most visible accessories in daily life. As such, their design language is now just as important as their software. For a generation that thrives on self-expression, a phone isn't just a tool; it's an extension of personality.
The Note 50 Series delivers with its striking 144Hz AMOLED display and sleek silhouette. It's not just a phone you use—it's one you show off. Available in bold, trend-forward finishes that match both fashion sensibilities and personal flair, it aligns with the Gen-Z and young millennial spirit of individuality. Just like choosing the right pair of sneakers or sunglasses, choosing the right phone is about curating your look—and Infinix gets that.

**Purpose: Powering What Matters**

Everyone has a mission—some want to create, others want to connect, and some simply want to live more efficiently. Your device should be tailored to support your goals, not get in the way of them. Whether you're capturing memories, building a brand, or crushing deadlines, your smartphone should be a purposeful partner.



The Note 50 Series recognizes these diverse needs. Its 108MP ultra-clear camera empowers creators and storytellers to produce vivid, pro-level content straight from their pocket. For gamers and entertainment lovers, the immersive display and responsive touch make every moment more engaging. And for those balancing work and wellness, the Note 50's Smart AI Assistant and customizable settings ensure every feature serves a function—enhancing your daily journey, not distracting from it.

**The Future Is Now, and It's Personal**

Smartphones are no longer just about specs; they're about syncing with the user's lifestyle. In a world where people seek meaning in every choice—from fashion to food—tech is no different. The Infinix Note 50 Series stands out not just because of what it can do, but because of how intuitively it fits into the lives of those who use it.

# Sleeping with the Enemy- Why Women stay in Abusive Marriages

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

And in pursuit of this goal they endure, for their strength is measured by their ability to endure abuse that causes them significant emotional and psychological distress.

**Choosing freedom**

Marriage should offer love and support, not emotional devastation. If you are suffering in silence, know that you're not alone — and you deserve better. Seek support from trusted people and mental health professionals; while some problems can be resolved, abuse should never be tolerated.

Leaving a marriage is hard, especially with children, but staying in a harmful environment can have lasting damage. Your safety and your children's well-being matter most. You have the right to choose freedom, rebuild your life, and show your children strength. Your identity is far greater than your marital status— choose happiness and healing.

**By Sabrina N. Bhuiyan**
**Photo: Collected**
**Name has been changed for anonymity.*

Star LIFE Style

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 1, TUESDAY, JUNE 3, 2025, *JAISHTHA 20, 1432 BS*
A publication of The Daily Star
E-mail: lifestyleds@yahoo.com, 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215

Punch Card Master, Md Nasim

Taant Designer, Sarwar Ahmed

Weaver from Mirpur Benarasi Palli at work

Md Rafiq, Senior Weaver and former President of the Benarasi Primary Taant Samity, Mirpur

Md Nizam, Senior Weaver

# Mirpur Katan saree: GI recognition, but for whom?

In the heart of Mirpur's Benarasi Polli, decades-old looms still clatter, but the promises of protection and prosperity have yet to reach the artisans. This story traces the threads of history, hope, and hardship, asking: 'When will recognition turn into real change?'

The air grew heavier as Md Rafiq led us through a narrow, crumbling alley into a dimly lit tin-shade house in Benarasi Polli. Two half-broken ceiling fans whirred above the heads of four weavers, who worked tirelessly in a room barely large enough to stretch their legs. Their feet pushed the treadles, hands tossed the shuttle, and the loom clattered on. It was the sound of survival, not celebration.

The Mirpur Katan saree, once referred to simply as 'Benarasi' by older generations, was recently granted Geographical Indication (GI) status. The recognition, at least in theory, protects its identity and promotes the preservation of local craftsmanship. But in the alleys of Mirpur, the excitement has not trickled down to the looms.

"We have heard of the recognition, but haven't received any practical benefits yet," answered 70-year-old Md Rafiq, former president of the Benarasi Primary Taant Samiti in Mirpur. His hands are weathered by decades of weaving, and his eyes quietly reflect the economic struggles he still endures.

"We used to call it Benarasi, now we call it Mirpur Katan. It's from here, made by us. But what has changed for us?" asked Rafiq, his voice equal parts pride and resignation.

**A name woven from migration**

The roots of Mirpur Katan trace back to post-partition Dhaka, when master weavers migrated from Varanasi, India, bringing with them the secrets of Benarasi weaving. They eventually blended Indian patterns with local threads, creating a new textile language that is distinct, dignified, and dazzling. The silk was heavier, the motifs more detailed, and the finish unmistakably Mirpur.

But over the years, the "Benarasi" tag remained, confusing buyers and conflating regional identities. The GI status should have cleared the air. It should have allowed the artisans to brand their work confidently and demand fair pricing. What it has done instead is serve as another layer of prestige with no clear distribution of benefits.

**The cost of making a masterpiece**

All weavers interviewed spoke of a common adversary: cheap imports from neighbouring countries. Rafiq said it plainly, "They bring sarees from India and sell them, saying they're Bangladeshi. That destroys our industry.

Md Sarwar Ahamad, a taant designer working in the area,added, "The syndicates control the material market. Prices rise there, and we're forced to pay here. We even buy from China now, but with dollar prices rising, it's killing us."

The import channels have created a two-headed crisis: weavers are unable to compete with cheaper products, and they are paying more for the raw materials needed to maintain the quality of their sarees are known for.

"Each Mirpur Katan saree costs around Tk 70,000 to 80,000 to produce. That's the real cost —wages, silk, dyes, labour. If one thread breaks or one mistake is made, you lose hundreds of takas immediately," Ahamad said.

**Invisible architects of beauty**

Mohammad Nasim, a "Punch Card Master" with 45 years of experience, works silently and precisely. His job is to punch holes into cardboard sheets that control the loom's motion, determining how each motif will appear. He is a living archive of design methodology.

"I still do night shifts to survive," he said. "Then I come and work during the day. All for Tk 200. No one wants to do this after me. There's no training programme, no stipend, no apprentice. If I die tomorrow, the knowledge dies with me."

His presence is a reminder that a saree isn't just woven – it's planned, designed, and engineered. Yet, the Punch Card artists are never celebrated. They aren't invited to exhibitions or interviewed by fashion magazines. They are like the footnotes to an award-winning novel — vital, but ignored.

Even designers like Sharmin Rahman agree this is tragic. "Of course, artisans need exposure. However, in this ecosystem, designers get recognition because they create visibility and take risks. For artisans to be seen, the work has to reach the stage first."

**A simple demand: Let us work**

Interestingly, none of the weavers ask for donations. "We don't need handouts," said Rafiq. "We just want our sarees to sell at the price they deserve."

What they are asking for is infrastructure, not charity. Rafiq spoke of a vision where dedicated multi-storey buildings could house power looms on one floor, a training centre on another, a showroom on the top, and working spaces for women throughout. "Our women are ready to work. We just need the space."

But his vision did not end with trained weavers or textile graduates. He pointed to a more ignored section of society: the street children.

"There are many street children who get caught up in the wrong things — drugs, petty theft," Rafiq said. "If we could bring them in, teach them this craft, give them a skill, we wouldn't just save the taant industry. We'd be creating employment too. We'd be giving them a future.

In a country where the gap between recognition and redistribution remains wide, this kind of practical thinking from within the community could change more than just an industry — it could shift lives. All it needs is someone to listen.

**A growing rift**

Unlike boutique owners and retailers who simply buy and resell, Ahamad still uses design concepts passed down from Indian masters and refined locally over decades. "But now, many so-called 'designers' don't know what they are doing. They mix Manipuri, Jamdani, and Katan motifs without understanding where one ends and the other begins. It's disrespectful to the craft."

His concern was not just about design dilution, it was also about vanishing collaboration.

"Not a single graduate from any textile institute has come to us yet. They don't visit the loom, don't talk to the weaver. Their knowledge is digital; ours is manual. If these two don't meet, how will the art evolve?"

Sharmin Rahman, a well-known designer who has worked with artisans across Bangladesh, offered a layered explanation when asked why young designers seem to avoid working with traditional weavers.

"People are travelling to Jessore, Rangpur, and even hilly regions to collaborate with artisans, so why not Mirpur, which is right in the heart of Dhaka?" she asked.

"It's not about distance or access. The reality is, working with the weavers in Mirpur is not easy. Most work through middlemen or shopkeepers. It's difficult to locate the artisans directly, and even harder to understand their design language, once you do."

She acknowledged the perception gap from both sides. "Designers want smoother collaboration. But from my own experience, communicating with weavers directly can be complicated — and let's not forget, the shopkeepers aren't eager to make those connections easier either," she elaborated.

Rahman's point raises a deeper question: if collaboration isn't easy, should it be abandoned, or made easier? The weavers believe it's the latter.

**Beyond a certificate**

Everyone interviewed agreed on one thing: GI recognition alone means little if nothing changes. Weavers need infrastructure, stable pricing, designer collaboration, and media visibility.

"We love our craft," said Rafiq. "But we don't want to die with it."

Rahman agrees that things need to evolve, but from both sides. "It can't just be about designers coming in and rescuing the craft. The weavers have to meet us halfway, too."

Until that happens,Mirpur Katan will remain a name on paper, not a promise delivered. And the people who made it worth protecting will continue to weave in silence, unheard and unseen.

**By Ayman Anika**
**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**