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LIFE

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ONE *with* nature

PUPPETS! P3
EDUCATION THROUGH PUPPETRY
MID-LIFE CLARITY NOT CRISIS P4
EMBRACING 40S
JERSEYS AND MORE P10
SPOTLIGHT ON WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN
MODEL: JOLY
WARDROBE: TENZING CHAKMA
JEWELLERY: SHOILEE BY TAHMINA SHAILY
MUA: SUMON RAHAT AND TEAM

In a city where high humidity wears us down every day and the scarcity of greenery makes us more exhausted than ever, creating a green corner of your own becomes more than a luxury. Whether it is your small lawn, a modest terrace, or a sun-drenched rooftop, having a beautiful garden can become your personal sanctuary.



#DECOR

JAZZ UP YOUR GARDEN this summer with these simple tricks!

As more and more of us are now leaning towards adding greenery in our open spaces, it is important to know a few tips and tricks. With proper care and some thoughtful additions, you can turn your garden into a getaway to nature!

Don't just sow, grow!

If you are truly committed to your green friends to grow and thrive, you have to nurture them every step of the way. Pick your plants differently, according to the space.

Start with easy, rewarding plants. Hibiscus, jasmine, and marigold are perfect for beginners and grow well on your rooftop or balcony.

Use creepers, Boston Ivy, bougainvillea and other dense plants on your balcony to get rid of the harsh sun.

For indoor use, money plant, pothos, and snake plants are charmers.

Vegetable gardens thrive in both rooftop and balcony settings.

Plant ornamental trees on your lawn to make your open space more welcoming and attractive.

You can add thyme, peppermint, tulsi, and basil to your balcony garden — they will produce a pleasant natural aroma.

To enrich the fertility of your soil, use leftover tea leaves, crushed eggshells, and vegetable peels. A little compost goes a long way toward healthy, happy roots.

Be consistent with watering, especially in our scorching summers. Beware of overwatering, as it is as harmful as neglect; feel the soil before you pour. Make sure to give your plants sunlight, and not sunburn. Use jute or bamboo screens to diffuse intense midday rays.



Lit up the ambience

When the sun sets and the city lights flicker in the distance, your garden can come alive in a completely new way. A thoughtfully lit garden does not just let you use the space at night; it creates an atmosphere of serenity and warmth.

Use fairy lights around balcony grills, railings, or tree branches.

Drape them over an overhead bamboo frame or let them hang loosely across your rooftop. Battery or solar-powered options are also becoming widely popular, and they are energy-efficient.

If you want to create a truly balmy atmosphere in your rooftop or backyard for social gatherings, there are fantastic online services that provide landscape and gardening solutions. Not only do they take care of your plants, but also set up the whole scene for you with outdoor lighting.

Create a soothing soundscape

Designing a soundscape in your garden can block off the chaos; a gentle blend of natural and ambient sounds that mask the chaos beyond your walls.

A small water fountain can create a soft, continuous flow that soothes the senses. Wind chimes can bring in shifting

tones whenever a breeze passes. Another great trick is to create a more layered and textured planting, which will help diffuse external noise.

Consider adding ambient sound options: a discreet Bluetooth speaker playing low-volume nature sounds — rainfall, forest, or soft classical music. It can enhance the space further.

By layering these sound elements, your garden transforms into more than just a visual retreat; a calming space to truly r-e-l-a-x!

A place for your pastime activities

Turn your garden into a place where you can spend time doing things you love. Feel free to display some sculptures and your favourite souvenirs in your garden.

Adding a cute reading nook can go a long way in keeping up with your yearly reading challenge. Make a sweet home for your birds in the corner. Not only will they keep you company, but also create a more natural environment.

Throw in a floor rug and add a few plush cushions to it, and voila! You have your sunset and coffee moments.

Lastly, remember to take good care of your plants — they are not just pretty to look at but also healers!

By Tasmiah Rahman

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



Typhoon

Fabric Care

প্রথম ওয়াশেই কাপড়ের কঠিন থেকে
কঠিনতম দাগ দূর করে।

টাইফুন... লাগে কম, তাই সশ্রয় বেশী।



Fabric Care -এর
সুপার পাওয়ার

KOHINOOR
CHEMICAL



#REVIEW

A PUPPET'S TALE: Making a positive impression with Kaktarua

Growing up, most children develop a certain fondness towards fictional characters. Cartoons, puppets or comics — they serve the same purpose. To entertain, to teach, and to play a vital role in the psychological development of the children. Presently, puppets may not be as popular as they used to be. And puppet shows are a dying art to some extent. Standing against such challenging odds, 'Kaktarua Puppet Theater' is doing some commendable work.

What is Kaktarua?

A kaktarua or scarecrow is an effigy created in human form made out of hay or straw, dressed in old clothes, and often a hat. A scarecrow is erected in order to scare away birds from a farmland and to protect crops.

"Similarly, Kaktarua Puppet Theater aims to work by driving away all the negatives and superstitions from society. Hence, the symbolic name," said Asaduzzaman Ashik, the founder who started working with puppets in 2016, but it wasn't until 2019 that he established the theatre.

The Puppets

There are at least 30 different puppet characters that are used in different shows. Some of these are original characters, created by the members of the theatre. Some of them are based on mythical stories and used to recreate those tales. Others are based on the stories from the Bangla book of primary school, created in order to play out the stories from the books, so the children can learn by watching the puppet shows.

"It's one thing to just read. But if you can integrate the lesson in a show, children love



that, and this can be a way of teaching. Apu and Dipu'r Golpo is one of our most popular shows, and it teaches children about the demerits of fighting and quarrelling," said Ashik after one of his shows where his team had just performed.

The team is ten members strong, with MD Aminul Islam Rasel making most of the puppets. The puppet and sound designs are done by Pronoy Sarker. The rest of the members work together to bring a show to reality.

The puppet designs are sometimes inspired by the stories. Sometimes they are created based on the need of the story and show, and sometimes the team members just brainstorm and create a new look.



Puppets for Palliative care and teaching

"The reason I am still working with puppets is to bring joy to the children. I have had a few shows at CRP, NICRH, and Dhaka Medical College. There were these children who were in so much pain and suffering. And I made them smile for a little while. By the end of the show, they wanted to shake hands with the puppets. This little girl, who



had a cannula in her hand, reached out to me. And that is the moment that stuck with me," recalled Ashik when asked what his greatest achievement with the puppets was.

"A lot of people are not aware of this, but puppets can be used as a palliative care and a tool to teach children. Their responses are amazing, and with more efforts into puppets, a lot more can be done for the children. Everyone is so engrossed in screens these days. We can use puppets to entertain them in a different way that is not confined to a screen," observed Ashik, pointing out that, as rewarding as the response is, the funding is very limited. The theatre can barely finance itself.

Taking this as a full-time job would be next to impossible. With the rent for the studio, the expenses that go into the creation and maintenance of the puppets and the expenses of travel and others, it makes it a very difficult job to carry on, but Ashik has not given up.

Impression

As observed during a live show, young children are not only fond of but also interactive with puppets. And throughout the lesson delivered by the show, they remained interactive. This is a credit to the puppeteers as well as the fact that puppets are interesting to children. These shows can be a teaching mechanism, especially for children with special needs.

With positive response from the children during different shows as well as organisations who work with children, Ashik and his team can see the potential for more elaborate shows and says he is just a phone call away for those who are interested in working with puppets or puppet shows.

Nineties children grew up with puppets, and now those are little more than nostalgic elements. Similarly, bioscopes have gone extinct too.

Kaktarua Puppet Theater has revived both of these things and is working to not only popularise them but also use them as teaching mediums. This deserves recognition and perhaps some attention from people so they can carry on the show. Because the show must go on.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Kaktarua Puppet Theater

Fabulous forties: Midlife clarity

"You've become so unfiltered lately," an acquaintance recently teased me. My initial reaction might have been to shrink, but then, perhaps unexpectedly, I found myself quietly celebrating. It seems that being "frank, open, and speaking my mind" now feels not just acceptable, but wonderfully liberating. Maybe, as my acquaintance suggested, it's becoming a new kind of strength.

For years, the big 4-0 carried whispers of impending challenges. Yet, for me, and for many incredible women I observe, it's a time when life truly begins to show its brighter side.

That infamous "midlife crisis"? It feels more like a profound "midlife awakening", a personal evolution much like the self-discovery explored in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*. The constant hum of external expectations seems to recede, creating space for what genuinely matters.

In this decade, we find ourselves gently shedding layers of what society once defined a woman should be, embracing Simone de Beauvoir's profound truth: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."

As the visionary Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain urged, "You have neglected the duty you owe to yourselves and you have lost your natural rights by shutting your eyes to your own interests."

In our forties, we're humbly finding our way to author our own unique stories.

Little joys and big dreams

Amidst life's daily rhythm, a surprising inner peace often settles in. Joy can be found in small moments: a refreshing walk, comforting green tea, or simply gazing from my tiny balcony. This appreciation also extends to quietly conquering long-held, seemingly small desires.

I recall writing a note to myself at 18: "Learn to ride a bicycle after college." Fast forward 25 years – indeed, 25 years! – and that goal remained

untouched. So, at 43, I finally learned. It was a simple, yet profound experience, gently affirming that it's never too late to embrace joy, even in unexpected (and yes, sometimes wobbly!) ways.

This feels like "our" time to "spread our wings", to cautiously pursue aspirations, and to explore new territories. The world presents intriguing opportunities to consider. While we sometimes reflect on whether similar ambitions from a man might draw less subtle questioning – "Haven't you achieved enough already?!" – we're learning to quiet that external noise and listen to our own inner promptings.

It's a continuous act of self-definition, as Nancy Qualls-Corbett articulated, "The moment a woman dares to be herself, the moment she ceases to be a replication of another, is the moment she is truly alive."

And truly alive, we aspire to be.

Our village!

Our inner circle in the forties? More than just friends, they are truly our "village", our supportive tribe. A group of kindred spirits and mentors who genuinely understand, who cheer us on, and who gently remind us that dreaming bigger now is perfectly natural. I make an effort to connect with at least one girlfriend daily – a valuable ritual to destress, debrief, and to ensure my experiences feel genuinely shared.

My mentors are invaluable voices of reason within this village. I recently chatted with one, a wonderfully unconventional activist, seeking her wisdom on life's complexities. I admitted feeling a bit "off" when sharing my narratives. Her simple, yet profound advice was quite clarifying:

"When you feel that way, think that you are the normal one and they are the aliens".

That truly shifted my perspective. Now, I find myself operating with that thought, and it brings a sense of lightness.

Funding our future

The fabulous forties can also bring a powerful, often exhilarating, sense of financial freedom. It's a time when many of us feel empowered to make considered, strategic moves. Just before 30 June this year, for instance, I managed to create a savings scheme to secure an investment rebate.

A notable personal milestone? In my forties, I acquired my first piece of land. I didn't embark on this alone; I gently encouraged close friends to explore investing alongside me.

A stay-at-home mum friend secured her own land with funds from her spouse, recognising the value of her independent financial stake. Taking my son to show him the plot of land was a moment of deep satisfaction, helping him to understand that his financial security stems from both parents.

This experience even sparked deeper insights. I once mentioned to my son that if I were to have a daughter, I'd divide my property equally. When he responded, "That's how it should be", I was grateful to raise a son who took equality for granted. What if we could raise generations of boys and girls with a mindset to question the inherent inequities in traditional inheritance? Future policies might be informed by their evolving perspectives, letting

progressive thinking gently take precedence over existing practices.

Embracing all of it, gently!

Our bodies, of course, have delightfully quirky ways of

keeping us on our toes. Hot flashes arrive unbidden, sometimes demanding *immediate* thermostat adjustments.

We've been known to blast the car AC to arctic levels even when cool, only to still break into a sweat!

A brisk walk might lead to unexpected joint protests; our hair might be a tad thinner, lines between our brows subtly making themselves known. Yet, when we look in the mirror, those are mere delightful details. What we truly see are eyes bright with dreams, conviction, and an unwavering spirit.

When my girlfriends and I gather for Korean dinner, we are often amusingly "self-deprecating". We will share a laugh about our deepening laugh lines, thinning hair, sketchy memories, blurry eyesight, and even our wonderfully "dysfunctional hormones".

We discuss our gentle apprehension about becoming empty nesters, and grapple with profound losses – of parents, in-laws, even friends our age, to sudden heart attacks or accidents. It's heavy, but sharing makes the load feel a little lighter.

This collective conviction? It's a powerful, shared spark reflecting in the eyes of countless women navigating this vibrant chapter. While society might not always extend the same kindness, the compassion and understanding we show each other are boundless. An unspoken "I see you" communicates everything.

We feel seen, believed, and uplifted by each other with genuine grace. This chapter is about getting out of our comfort zones, pushing boundaries and cultivating dreams for ourselves, and for women who will follow, honouring the legacies of those who came before us. This is our time to expand our collective world.

By Zareen Mahmud Hosein

The writer is a partner at Shehasish Mahmud & Co., Chartered Accountants, and Founder, HerStory Foundation and CholPori.

Photo: Collected



#FYI



Recharging in a city that never slows down

In a city like Dhaka, where the roads scream noises of busyness at daylight, the alleys reverberate with honks of frustration, it is hard to find solace from the chaos of everyday life. In the treadmill of urban life, slowing down is a long-awaited dream, but just like every other thing, we Dhakaites can make that possible as well.

Even when the city around you revolves in its constant motion, you can choose to be still in a rickshaw ride across the narrow lanes, letting the cacophony fade in with the roadside bushes. Visit a book cafe, grab a cup of cappuccino, plug in your earphones, and dive into reading a fantasy book—there you go, an ultimate escape from the real world.

Remember when you were lazily swiping past stories on Instagram and suddenly you stumbled upon a picture of your friend from back in 5th grade? Knock that friend of yours. Even if the conversation might initially start with hi, hello, you will soon find yourself gossiping about some forgotten tales from your childhood.



Dedicating even as little as 30 minutes a week to Facetime with your buddies will not do much harm. You cannot give yourself excuses for being “busy” when you spend two hours daily on doomscrolling.

Nothing is better than sitting on a shital pati and listening to stories from your

grandmother while she meticulously applies coconut oil to your hair. In today’s era of reels and Netflix series, we all miss those lazy afternoons, lying on the divan watching a family favourite show. You should not just trap yourself by the thread of reminiscence, but also strive to bring these moments back to your grown-up life.

No matter how stressful your 9-to-5 work life can be, coming to your relative’s house to be greeted at a family get-together is honestly the best feeling you will ever have.

Even we teens are stuck in the merry-go-round of classes, tuitions, exams, and whatnot. Nevertheless, we all somehow



manage to make time for Friday family get-togethers twice or thrice a month. By that time, life had drained often be followed by a Saturday day out to the outskirts of Dhaka.

For those whose family members live out of Dhaka, get-togethers are way less frequent, maybe twice or thrice a year, only during vacations. One thing that we Bengalis are a pro at is making everyone feel at home. So, what are you waiting for? Invite neighbourhood children to your house and have a round of playing Uno, or for even more fun, throw a summer picnic on your terrace. Make this a habit once a week and prioritise it as much as you prioritise surviving the ebb and tide of deadlines.

Instead of just admiring the children playing cricket in front of your house, go join them too. No one is too grown-up to bring on their athletic spirit.

Dhaka might seem stressful, but when you are surrounded by lively people who match your vibe, you need not worry about recharging your life’s battery.

If you yearn for a Pinterest life, vibing to songs on Spotify, lifting your mood up

after any minor inconvenience in your chaotic life, this is your sign to gifting yourself musical playlists tailored to your feelings. It can be for a festive occasion, a particular emotion, your favourite band or artist — just tune the songs in when cleaning dishes, doing laundry, or watering the plants. For introverts like me who feel frequently drained, these songs can take you back to your vibe and bring harmony to your messed-up daily life.

Now, we come to the basics of relaxation: yoga, sauna, and meditation. We all have that one New Year’s resolution for a healthy life, but never end up fulfilling it. Well, start now, it’s better late than never.

Set goals on your taskbar or reminders on apps that will push you to keep practising these habits, just like your phone’s alerts remind you to check every single notification. Either enjoy it as a “me-time” or join in with a friend of yours, trust me, the healing process will eradicate all negativities and stress from your mind.

The problem with us urbanites is that we blame urban life to be robotic, while it is our fault that we cannot make enough time for these arriving at these little recharging stations of life. So, next time you find your fussy life throwing tantrums at you, escape the urban maze to unwind yourself and refuel your mind’s battery.

By Labiba Tasnim
Photo: Collected

#MUSING

A letter to my future self in 2035

Hello old friend,

I write today to my future self, the person I will become ten years from now.

I know things have not been easy for you. They never are. But I hope that you overcame all that crossed your path. I hope that you are standing tall over all obstacles and disadvantages. We have worked hard so far in our lives, and I know that you have had to work even harder to get from here to where you are now.

I write this in hopes that you have finally achieved something worth cherishing. I hope that you don’t have to work so hard anymore. I hope that you can finally afford to let loose and enjoy life. As I write this, I know I am exhausted, and I would like a few days off, but as things stand, I cannot afford that. I pray that things are different for you.

Today, I am in my late 20s and by the time you read this, you will be in your late 30s. I know that our priorities and goals are different. Whatever your priorities are, I

implore you not to forget who you are and where you came from.

It’s easy to forget. The surroundings make it easier to give in. But please, remember your roots. It might seem like it is the better option to forget and forsake, and I am afraid that with all the goals we have set for ourselves, with all that we have convinced ourselves are important for us and with all the challenges in front of us, it will be easier to just forsake. But please do not abandon your roots.

By the time you read this, I know you have gained much more experience than I have at the moment, so I trust you to make the right choices.

I don’t know what your routine will be like ten years from now. But I know this — there are a few things that we never wanted to give up. The first one on that list is reading. We have always wanted a neat little library, and if you are still on the path that I have been travelling, we should have

a nice little library by now.

Please do not be complacent about having a collection of books only. Please read and continue to read.

We never planned on stopping reading,

not till our eyes gave in, and I hope you are still continuing this odyssey.

I pray that you have not lost your

compassion and conviction. It is easy to lose compassion when you live in a rude city, but that is no excuse. That is the city’s real face, and we should not stoop to that level. Politeness is an invaluable blessing. I remember when we were only ten.

CONTINUED TO PAGE 11



#FASHION & BEAUTY



From handloom saris to fusion wear, local designers are reimagining heritage weaves into everyday chic. Explore stylish, sustainable outfits perfect for the contemporary Bangladeshi woman and discover how Bangladeshi fashion is blending tradition with modernity.



Reinventing BANGLADESHI Fashion

For decades, fashion in Bangladesh moved at its own slow pace. Drawing ideas from tradition and culture that is uniquely our own, it was not much influenced by global trends. Catching up with international runways was not the most important aspect in local designers' minds. They preferred to remain in their own lanes and grow steadily. This strong sense of individuality gave birth to a style that is uniquely Bangladeshi in nature, form, and function.

While the saree remains our beloved attire of choice and always will be, wearing it on a daily basis can be a tad difficult. In an effort to make the lives of women easier, local designers very cleverly reimagined traditional wear. Crafted from handloom fabrics, these designs are chic, practical, and wholeheartedly Bangladeshi!

Giving ethnic wear a decidedly fusion twist, designers have created a unique style perfect for Bangladeshi women who wear many different hats with aplomb. Handloom weaves are perfect for everyday wear while still looking stylish in a deshi way.

What's really interesting is that heritage weaves, so steeped in history and culture, feel remarkably modern and elegant when reimagined in a newer silhouette.

For instance, kota — a fabric always associated with traditional saris — worn and preferred by elderly ladies, has been reimagined into a stunning dress, with fabulous embellishments and trimmings. This outfit is perfect for a day at the office, then going off to a friend's dinner party.

And who does not love a good skirt set? An embroidered cotton top paired with a layered striped skirt is just the outfit for a day out with the kids. What's more, it's rendered entirely in deshi handloom weaves, making it sustainably stylish. For skirt-loving women who also love checks, a funky yellow blouse paired with a black and brown grameen check skirt is fun and flirty.

A cheeky little butterfly embroidered on the blouse is a happy nod to the free spirit of the Bangladeshi woman who is indomitable in every aspect of life, clad in her deshi weaves, rising above all adversities with style and grace.

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Joly
Fashion Direction and Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Tenzing Chakma
Jewelry: Shoilee by Tahmina Shaily
MUA: Sumon Rahat and Team



Dermatologist warns of MONSOON SKIN DISEASES

Once monsoon begins, no one escapes the almost every day struggles while navigating Dhaka. It's not just the roads and shoes that suffer; your skin and feet do too — and perhaps the most. The constant dampness, dirty water, humid air, and wet clothes create the perfect environment for infections, rashes, breakouts, and even hair fall. These seasonal troubles often go unnoticed until they become serious enough to require medical attention.

To understand how to manage them, we spoke to Dr Sifat Saba — aesthetic dermatologist and laser expert, at 'Digilab Aesthetic and Laser Center' and at 'PHC Aesthetic & Derma Care' — who has observed a sudden rise in weather-related cases this season.

"When the streets are flooded and people have to walk through them," says Dr Saba, "this prolonged exposure to dirty water causes fungal infections like athlete's foot. When your skin remains damp and soft for too long, its natural barrier weakens. This makes it easier for fungi and bacteria to enter and grow."

She also explains that peeling skin between the toes, itching, cracks, and even a foul smell are signs that something is wrong. In some cases, especially among diabetics or people with small cuts, bacterial infections such as cellulitis can also develop. "I often see a lot of cases like this," she adds.

To avoid these issues, Dr Saba recommends wearing open or quick-drying footwear when you expect to walk through water. She also advises washing your feet with gentle soap and water and drying them thoroughly, especially between the toes.

People who are prone to fungal infections can use an antifungal powder or cream for added protection. It is also important, she stresses, not to reuse wet shoes the next day.

Dr Saba discussed the importance of sunscreen when we asked about another common skincare concern. One of the most frequent monsoon skincare mistakes, she says, is skipping sunscreen.

"People think clouds protect them from sun damage, but that's not true," she explains. "Around 80 per cent of UV rays still reach your skin despite the clouds. UVA rays are especially harmful as they contribute to pigmentation, ageing and, in the long run, skin cancer."

She recommends using a

broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and PA+++ protection. Even if you are mostly indoors, she notes, you still need protection near windows or screens.

The monsoon season also tends to cause oilier skin and more breakouts, particularly in those who are already acne-prone. On this matter, Dr Saba says, "The humidity stimulates oil glands. The combination of sweat and dirt clogs your pores."

To manage this, she

suggests sticking to a simple skincare routine. Use a face wash with salicylic acid, apply a non-comedogenic moisturiser, and finish with a lightweight sunscreen.

However, not all acne during the monsoon is actually acne, she cautions. "Many people come in with small, itchy bumps on their forehead, chest or back. These do not respond to regular acne treatments. That is fungal acne, or Malassezia folliculitis," she says.

"The cause is yeast, not bacteria, so the treatment is different. Topical antifungal creams such as ketoconazole work well. In stubborn cases,

we prescribe oral antifungals. It is important to get the diagnosis right early on before trying random products."

Hair fall is another common complaint dermatologists face during this season. "It is real and it is seasonal," says Dr Saba. "Humidity leads to scalp inflammation and triggers temporary shedding known as telogen effluvium. This becomes worse if you shampoo too often, tie wet hair, or use harsh styling tools."

To control it, she recommends using a mild anti-dandruff shampoo twice a week and maintaining a balanced diet rich in protein. Supplements such as biotin or zinc may also help. However, if the shedding continues for more than six weeks, she advises a scalp evaluation.

Fabric choices also make a difference. "Tight synthetic clothes trap sweat and heat, which causes skin rashes or fungal infections. Choose breathable fabrics such as cotton or linen and change out of wet clothes as soon as possible."

She adds that many people unknowingly worsen their skin condition during the monsoon. "Over-washing oily skin, skipping sunscreen, using heavy creams or makeup, not drying off properly, or staying in wet shoes for hours are all common mistakes. These can easily be avoided."

And what about home remedies? "Some can help mildly," Dr Saba says. "Boiled neem water, a bit of coconut oil for dry areas, or diluted apple cider vinegar for itchy skin may work. But I always caution against raw garlic or lemon as they can cause burns. Just because something is natural does not mean it is always safe."

Her final advice is simple. "Dhaka's monsoon can be tough on your skin and your patience. But a few small daily habits can save you from weeks of discomfort. Listen to your skin. It usually tells you when something is wrong," Dr Saba ends with a smile.

By Jannatul Bushra
Photo: LS Archive / Sazzad Ibne Sayed



#PERSPECTIVE

Witnessing a revolution through my window

In this gripping first-person account, a resident of an 11th-floor apartment in Rampura recounted witnessing the July Revolution. The narrative captured the chaos, courage, and hope of a nation in rebirth — all seen from a window high above Dhaka.

The only good thing about the building I lived in was the view afforded by my room's two windows. The position of the 11-story building gave me a unique view of the sky — sunrise from one window and sunset from the other. On clear and quiet nights, one could see a sky full of stars. During winter, the entire horizon looked like someone from the heavens had dropped cotton, and on New Year's, it offered a mini-Sydney-harbour-esque fireworks show.

I sometimes looked down upon the people on the streets and watched what they did — children playing cricket in the rain on rooftops, people going about their daily chores, and of course, Dhaka's notorious traffic. However, what I never expected to witness through those windows — not in my lifetime — was the bloody rebirth of a nation.

Located near Rampura, the building stood close to the BTV Centre, BRAC University, and, if one kept up with the news, just a stone's throw away from Better Life Hospital. In short, one of the hot spots of the entire revolt.

To be honest, at the start of July, when the demonstrations were only just beginning, I had mixed emotions. On one hand, like millions in the country, I too was tired of the regime, but also knew how quickly things fizzled out or were stamped out. I was old enough to have seen countless demonstrations get squashed, either through false promises or through shows of force.

On the other hand, I had just lost my mother in June, and deadly protests in the city meant our access to the Azimpur graveyard was closed. So, the movement

felt, at the time, both predictable and painfully inconvenient. The media had covered the events widely, and even a simple look through the window suggested ordinary protests on the streets, albeit with long tailbacks. However, 18 July was when everything unravelled.

I was home that day and woke up to phone calls from concerned friends and family regarding shootings in my area. I opened Facebook. The pictures, the videos, the live feeds — it seemed a war had broken out.

In the midst of it all, BRAC University students took on the fight from public university students who had been vacated the night before. I was baffled by the absolute show of force — these were students demanding what seemed like legitimate rights. The blood, the tears, the screaming, the ambulances, the dead — it became immediately evident that this was different from previous protests I had seen.

By noon, the chaos had started moving closer to Rampura, culminating in the torching of the state-owned BTV station. One could argue that the anger stemmed from it being a propaganda tool, talking of 'bumper crop yields' when half the city burned.

As I saw the big plume of smoke rising from BTV, a helicopter shirled into view before quickly heading back toward BRAC and hovering for a few minutes before, presumably, returning to base.

Soon enough, I could hear the sounds of gunshots, bomb blasts, and trails of smoke rising from all corners. Through those windows, I bore witness to a horrific tragedy as it unfolded.

By 6 PM, protesters had moved south from Rampura, reaching near Abul Hotel, which had been poorly barricaded by law enforcement. Now, I saw the human-on-human violence first-hand.

Pretty soon, armoured personnel carriers, crowd control units, and urban warfare vehicles had shown up. Sadly, there was little protesters could do about it, so students and demonstrators resorted to guerrilla-style resistance — ducking into alleys when the vehicles were in play and rejoining after law enforcers were back on foot.

Around 8 PM, I noticed internet speeds plummeting, and before any of us could get our bearings, the internet was gone. Through phone calls, I learned that a blackout was in effect to curb information spread on the internet, alongside a curfew being announced at midnight.

By 11 PM, all street lights and shop signs had been extinguished, throwing the entire neighbourhood into pitch-black darkness. Every ambulance, police car, or bike drove without headlights, and the urban warfare vehicles rolled up and down Rampura Road, firing explosives as they went by.

Perhaps it was the darkness, or the sounds of explosions, gunfire, and screams, but the entire ordeal left me depressed at my utter helplessness. This was real life. And it was far more real and terrifying for the students and protesters facing it head-on. At that moment, I wished with all my heart that their efforts and sacrifice would pay off, and that this would not be swept under the rug.

By morning, the city awoke not to birdsong or azaan, but to the thunderous roar of helicopters slicing through the sky. They

weren't just circling — they were engaging. One chopper hovered so close to my 11th-floor window that, for a surreal moment, I locked eyes with the pilot. He saw me. I saw him. And in that frozen second, I realised just how far things had escalated. These weren't isolated incidents. These were coordinated, city-wide 'operations' unfolding in real time, turning Dhaka into a warzone.

Meanwhile, ruling party men also joined law enforcement to tackle protesters, and unlike the latter, these men were ruthless, to say the least. But the spirit of protesters was not one that broke easily.

To tackle the vehicles, they tore down lampposts and brought out steel lane dividers to use as shields from explosions. All the while, there was no internet to share these moments with the outside world.

As the days progressed, the rhythm of resistance became the city's new pulse. Although things began to ease up a little in my locality, in other corners of the city, countless faces joined in. The battle lines had blurred — this was no longer just a student movement; it had become the voice of a people long silenced.

And then came 5 August. Word spread first in whispers, then in roars. The prime minister had fled the country. That evening, I stood at my window once again. No explosions. No helicopters. Just a breeze. The streets were alive in a different way — not with tension, but with relief.

It has been a year now. The smoke has cleared. The barricades are gone. But the view from my window has changed forever. I no longer see just the skyline or the sunset. I see the flashes of a generation that refused to kneel. I see the blood-stained courage of students, the defiant songs of a crowd, and the flicker of torches raised high against tyranny.

Whether Bangladesh 2.0 lives up to its promise remains to be seen. But from where I stood — from the eleventh floor, between sky and street — I bore witness to a nation reborn. And no matter how much time passes, that revolution will always live on, through my window.

By Intisab Shahriyar
Photo: Intisab Shahriyar



ROOTED IN RED AND GREEN

The Story Behind the Women's Team Jersey

When Tasmit Afiyat Arny was approached by the Bangladesh Football Federation to design the women's team jersey, she saw it as more than a design project; it was a chance to tell a story.

As founder of *Stride* and a designer known for blending heritage with modern identity, Arny set out to create a jersey rooted in pride, purpose, and cultural symbolism.

Designing for a national team is not just about aesthetics, it's about identity, performance, and pride. From studying the players' backgrounds to developing original motifs, every element had to be intentional. It demanded long hours, deep cultural research, and a clear creative direction.

"This wasn't something you just put together," she says. "It had to mean something to them, and to the country as a whole."

A jersey that carries the country

Arny began where she always does — with research.

She studied the team: girls from different districts, varied backgrounds, each bringing their own story to the field.

"They came from different corners of the

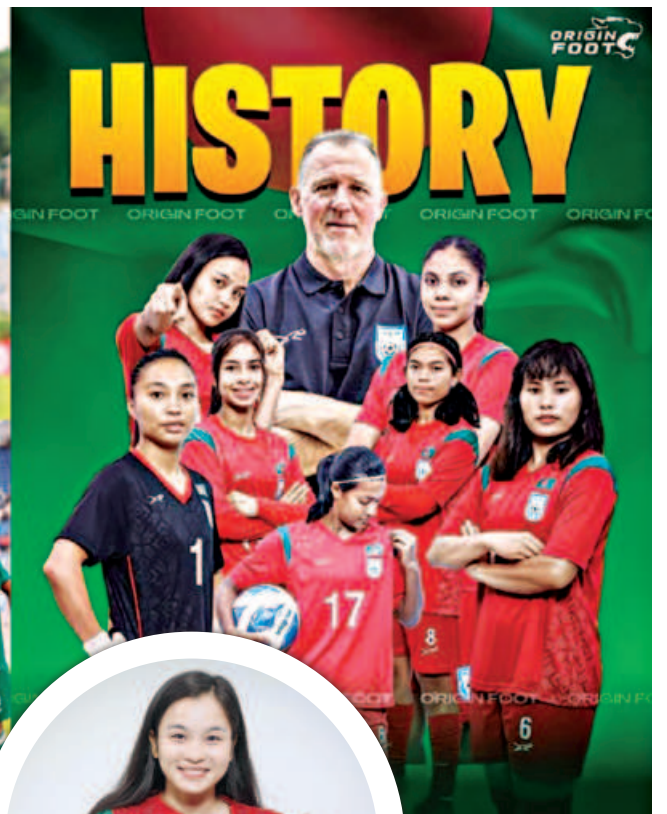


country. But they had one goal. That was the core of my concept," she shares.

This inspired her to design a bespoke Jamdani motif, symbolising unity in diversity.

"Jamdani is something we can claim entirely as our own, from start to finish. If you're creating something that represents a country, it must be rooted in something undeniably ours. The arrows come into the centre of the motif, symbolising how they have come together as a team," she adds.

With her signature focus on folk art



forms, Arny ensured that every detail of the jersey held meaning. The jersey's bold red, seen from a bird-eye view on a green pitch, becomes a living version of the national flag.

Although this was not the first of her designs, it was one of the earliest she created for the national teams. In fact, she completed the women's jersey before the men's. Yet, when the men's kit was finally revealed, it came with far more fanfare and media attention.

The women's jersey, in comparison, entered the spotlight quietly, despite the depth of thought and symbolism woven into it. For Arny, this contrast reflects a larger truth: women athletes often work just as hard, if not harder, yet continue to be overlooked.

Designing with purpose

Arny's work is never just about surface appeal. Her designs carry layered meanings, requiring the viewer to pause and connect. That's what she's been doing through *Stride* and events like Arka Fashion Week — initiatives aimed at helping the youth stay

rooted while they stride forward.

"The purpose is to make this path easier," she explains. "To show that fashion can be grounded in culture without being weighed down by it."

That balance of past and present is what earned her international recognition. Named one of four influential American-South Asian fashion designers by the North America-based platform Anokhi Media, Arny continues to push boundaries while holding space for her heritage.

She's also clear about what kind of feedback she's open to.

"I've been working for 13 years. I will only take healthy feedback," she states firmly. And this is not arrogance, it's conviction. She's faced enough noise to know the difference between critique and condescension.

More than just merchandise

What truly sets this jersey apart is Arny's

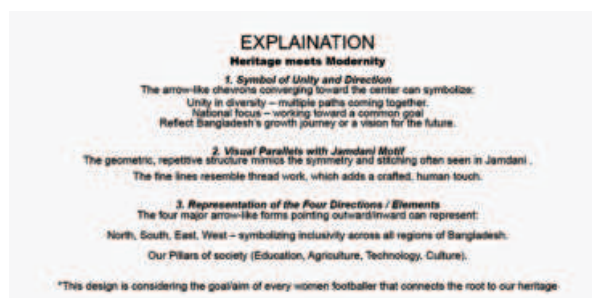
refusal to let it be reduced to just another kit.

"Design something people all over the world would want to buy. You don't need to give it away as a gift, just to let your work be displayed. No matter who that is," she emphasises.

The Bangladesh women's football jersey is a statement in itself. Every thread, motif, and colour choice reflect the stories of the players who wear it and the roots they come from.

For Tasmit Afiyat Arny, it was never about designing something for the sake of it. It was about crafting a piece that players could wear with pride. In a space where women's efforts are too often sidelined, this jersey stands tall as proof that their stories deserve to be seen, celebrated, and remembered; loud and clear, in bold red on green.

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Courtesy



A letter to my future self in 2035

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

We used to look at all those loud and rude people, and we vowed that we would never become one of those people. Please do not be one of those people.

I know life can be hard, I know life can be exhausting, but that is no excuse to just give in and become a terrible person. Be kind. To people and animals. If it's too much to ask for, at least don't be unkind.

I imagine you have changed a lot. Hopefully, you are probably more sagacious, more patient, well-read and well off. You might even be complacent, comparing yourself to your old school or university friends. And it may be true that you are in a better position than our friends X and Y.

But honestly, I don't care that you are

better than X and Y, because X and Y were never even in our thoughts. After all, it is an irrelevant comparison. What I care about is this: Are you a better person than I am? Have you achieved more than I have? Are you happier than I am?

These are the only three questions that matter to me, and if all the answers are "yes", then my friend, you should be satisfied with yourself. Because here in 2025, that is all I am hoping for. Things are chaotic here. And challenging. Physically, mentally, morally, and I am struggling.

I am healthy and alive, but there are

a lot of things on my mind. I don't have to explain them to you because by the time you read this, you will have resolved every single one of those issues. But

I will say this, I hope you are less confounded by life and its drama than I am. Because I am utterly and completely confused. And it terrifies me. I know what my goals are, I know how to get there, but I don't know how to start getting there. I am lost, I am scared, and I really could use a mentor.

But there's also the issue that a mentor will not be able to help me unless I can help myself, which makes me think that I should start this hustle all

by myself, and whatever the outcomes are, either I will win or I will learn some lessons. I do not know how many lessons you had to learn in ten years, but I do hope that you never gave up.

I do wish I could tell you all about my life in more detail, and a magic mirror that connects us through time would be amazing. But since we don't have that, I am using the second-best thing — a letter through the ages, in hopes that you, too, will write to your future self.

And on that note, I bid you farewell for today.

Live long and prosper.

Sincerely,

Your past self from 2025.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro

Photo: Collected



◆ HOROSCOPE ◆



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Be direct with home matters. Avoid being frivolous. Fitness clubs may lead to romantic encounters. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Join interest-based groups. Visit an unwell friend or relative. Avoid taking sides in disputes. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Focus on home renovations. Share your ideas wisely. Avoid forcing opinions on others. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Avoid being upset by criticism. Handle delays calmly. Make your partner feel appreciated. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Postpone any surgery. Make creative changes at home. Choose conservative investments. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



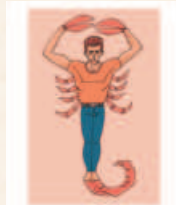
VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Stay away from unfavourable groups. Don't lend money to friends. You'll inspire confidence in others. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Control irritability to avoid family disputes. Keep pushy people distant. Avoid overspending on fun. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Try not to take everything so seriously. Focus on household tasks. Find your answers from within. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Avoid coworkers' emotional drama. Spend time with family. Focus on small details. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Prioritise loved ones. Expect introductions to exciting people. You might be on to something. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Say no to unwanted outings. Focus on moneymaking ideas. Update your living space. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Prioritise self-improvement. Treat your partner with care. Explore creative future trends. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

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

অ্যান্ডালিনা সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আন্ডিজাত্য...

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THE MENTALIST IN DHAKA

Farhanul Islam's mission to redefine magic

When Farhanul Islam casually corrected someone's comment from "black magic" to "brown magic" on Facebook, he was not expecting it to define the rest of his career. But it got stuck and became more than a name. It became a brand, a persona, and a challenge to perceptions, especially in a country where magic is still often viewed as stage gimmickry or childhood fantasy.

Today, Islam – aka Brown Magic – is one of Bangladesh's few contemporary mentalists blending psychology and body language into a form of immersive illusion that feels closer to a psychological experiment than a theatrical performance.

"I don't like people saying 'wow,'" he says. His magic is designed to interrupt, disorient, and most importantly, make you feel.

ORIGINS: FROM CARD TRICKS TO COGNITIVE PLAY

Islam's first creative outlet was music. However, when guitar lessons did not quite resonate, a televised David Blaine special changed the course of his life.

"He was using coins and cards. That made sense to me – portable magic," he recalls.

As a teenager, he carried cheap playing cards to local weddings, using them to impress friends.

"Everyone in Bangladesh plays cards. So, when I did tricks, they'd try to figure them out. That taught me how to design magic that is not just clever, but unpredictable."

After moving to Canada, he quickly immersed himself in the university scene, landing his own magic series on student television. But it was not until people began mistaking his name for "black magic" in online comments that "Brown Magic" emerged.

The name, though tongue-in-cheek, now anchors a career spanning over two decades.

MENTALISM: WHERE MAGIC GETS PERSONAL

Islam's transition from sleight-of-hand to

mentalism was not a pivot but an evolution.

"Street magic impresses. Mentalism connects," he explains. The form, which draws on subtle psychological cues to reveal thoughts or memories, allows him to break through people's defences.

"You touch on a memory no one else knows, and suddenly, the wall is down. They're not just watching a show – they're in it."

His signature event, The Brown Magic Experience: The Mentalist, being held at the KIB Auditorium on 18 July 2025, is less about illusion and more about emotional immersion.



"You're not just seeing the emotion! You're feeling it," he explains. "Mentalism can do that in ways no other magic form can."

REINVENTING THE STAGE IN BANGLADESH

Back in Bangladesh after over a decade abroad, Islam finds himself in unfamiliar territory.

"People here still associate magic with clowns, flowers, or pulling rabbits out of hats," he says. "Not their fault. Most magicians didn't have the opportunity to

push the form forward." Now he's trying to change that narrative with a Netflix-style magic series set to air soon.

But the reception has been mixed.

"We're still creating the market here," he says. "People are curious, but they're not sure if it's real or fake. That scepticism is healthy, but it also shows how disconnected we are from contemporary magic."

Even so, his performances in Bangladesh are steadily gaining traction. From high-profile appearances on *Ityadi* to introducing magic at cricket stadiums during BPL matches, Islam is



embedding Brown Magic into the country's mainstream cultural psyche.

GLOBAL STAGE, LOCAL ROOTS

His international resume is impressive: Burning Man, Flying Circus, and the holy grail of music festivals — Tomorrowland. The Tomorrowland booking was a fluke of fate.

"I was just warming up backstage at a gig in Mexico, showed a trick to someone, and they turned out to be the organisers. They booked me on the spot. I cried for

six hours afterwards. That adrenaline, that emotion – you can't script that."

Despite the global stage, Islam feels a moral responsibility to his country. "I'm a Bangladeshi, born and raised. I've seen how underfunded, misunderstood, and underappreciated this art form is here. If I can raise the bar, I have to."

BEYOND THE MAGIC

Islam isn't just a performer — he's an educator and philanthropist. He once ran a crash course company in Canada, teaching thousands of university students in business courses. He also spearheaded the \$1 Initiative, a charity that raised over \$60,000 for causes ranging from cancer treatment to menstrual health in rural Bangladesh.

He reflects on this work with deep emotion. "Empathy is a form of wealth people don't talk about enough," he says. "Richness is having life inside you, not just in your wallet."

THE LEGACY PLAN

For the next five years, Islam's goal is clear: elevate magic in Bangladesh. Not to be remembered, but to create infrastructure for those who come next.

"I want a kid in Rangpur to be able to say, 'I want to be a mentalist,' and have that dream mean something," he says. "They don't have to remember me – just that someone made it possible."

Even as he plans more international performances, he sees Bangladesh as the foundation of his legacy. "Brown Magic is a character I built over 14 years. It's not something you can teach – it has to become you."

But he does mentor young magicians, helping them shape their performance from a simple "wow" to something unforgettable. "Magic isn't in the trick – it's in the experience," he says.

And with that, Brown Magic continues.

By Ayman Anika
 Photo: Courtesy