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Photo: Adnan Rahman ◆ Model: Mridula ◆ Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha ◆ Makeup: Sumon Rahat & Team

THINKING ALOUD

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JEJU ISLAND
Where nature, myth, and resilience meet

Earlier this April, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the World Journalism Conference in Seoul, joining journalists from across the globe to explore new ideas and share stories.

After the conference, we travelled to South Korea's famous Jeju Island — a place that immediately captivated my heart and imagination. Known locally as "Samdado," or the "Island of Three Manys",Jeju is celebrated for its abundance of three natural and cultural elements: the rocks that shape its landscape, the strong women who define its spirit, and the ever-present winds that sweep across its shores.

Jeju's dramatic volcanic origins are visible everywhere. Millions of years ago, eruptions formed the island's unique terrain — dark basalt stones, craters, and towering cliffs.

One of the most fascinating places we visited to witness this legacy was the Jeju Stone Park. Spanning a vast area, it is home to the famous *Dol Hareubang*, or "stone grandfathers," statues carved from volcanic rock. These figures, with their serene, wise expressions, have long been believed to protect Jeju's people and land.

Walking among these silent guardians, I was struck by the deep sense of stillness and history they carry. The stones aren't just relics—they tell stories of resilience, spirituality, and an unbreakable connection to the earth.

The park also features tranquil walking trails and a carefully reconstructed traditional village, built from reclaimed materials of old Jeju homes with their iconic thatched roofs. This village is more than a museum — it's a living reminder of the island's past and was even a filming location for acclaimed productions like the award-winning film *Jiseul* and the Netflix series *When Life Gives You Tangerines*. In fact, the show's connection to Jeju was clear, as many scenes were shot not only at the Stone Park but also at other breathtaking island spots like the Gimnyeong Coast, Hado Fishing Village, and Seongsan Ilchulbong peak.

One of the most serene experiences on the island was walking the Handam Coastal Trail, a gentle 1.2-kilometre path stretching from Gwakji Beach to Handam Beach. This trail is thoughtfully paved and wheelchair-accessible, making it welcoming for visitors of all ages and abilities.

As I walked, the ocean stretched endlessly beside me, waves crashing softly against jagged black volcanic rocks. The sea breeze mixed with the subtle fragrance of wildflowers, creating a soothing atmosphere that made it easy to forget the chaos of daily life.

Many fellow travellers paused to sip coffee from nearby cafés or simply sit quietly, soaking in the peaceful solitude. The intimacy and calm of this trail are what set it apart from other more crowded coastal walks I have visited around the world.

Jeju's cultural richness, however, goes far beyond its stunning landscapes. One of the island's most remarkable legacies is the story of the Haenyeo, the legendary female free-divers who have, for centuries, harvested the sea without modern diving equipment.

Although I didn't meet them personally, learning about their history and way of life left a lasting impression on me. These women, many in their sixties and beyond, dive for hours in cold waters, gathering seaweed, abalone, clams, and other marine life that sustain Jeju's economy and traditions.

The *Haenyeo* live in a matriarchal society that deeply respects nature's limits and practices sustainable harvesting. Their signature *sumbisori* — a sharp whistle they release upon surfacing — is both a practical signal to fellow divers and a haunting melody that lingers in the mind. UNESCO has recognised their unique culture as an Intangible Cultural Heritage, highlighting their importance not only to Jeju but to the world.

The Netflix series *When Life Gives You Tangerines* beautifully portrays their lives, struggles, and contributions, bringing global awareness to these resilient women who embody strength, wisdom, and harmony with the ocean.

Jeju Island is not just a travel destination; it's a place where nature, culture, and history meet in ways that invite reflection and connection. For those of us from Asia, where tradition and modernity often coexist in complex ways, Jeju offers a chance to witness a community that honours its past while embracing the present. Walking among ancient stones, breathing the salty ocean air along the Handam Trail, and hearing stories of the *Haenyeo's* quiet bravery — these experiences stay with you long after you leave.

Whether you seek adventure, serenity, or cultural insight, Jeju Island calls out as a destination rich in meaning and beauty. It is a reminder that strength often lies in resilience, that stories can be told through stone and sea, and that sometimes, slowing down is the most powerful way to move forward.

Photo: Elita Karim

#WOMENEMPOWERMENT

She was told BASKETBALL wasn't for girls, Ashreen Mridha proved otherwise

Ashreen Mridha never dreamed of basketball. It found her in the echo of bouncing balls on concrete, in the rustle of jerseys worn by senior girls at school.

"I never saw the game on TV," she recalls. "All we saw back then was cricket." But what Mridha saw on the sidelines of the school court was more powerful: women leading, playing, commanding space.

She didn't want to be famous. She wanted jersey number 8.

That number belonged to a girl, the team captain, whom Ashreen idolised as a fourth grader. "I used to watch her play and think – when she retires, I want to wear her jersey." Years later, when she finally made it into the school team, jersey number 8 was hers. It still is – tattooed on her leg.

But Ashreen's story doesn't follow the polished arc of underdog-athlete-turned-champion. It moves differently. At times, it limps along due to ankle injuries and federation politics. It stalls –when budget excuses and marriage became reasons to push her off the court. It fights back through Deshi Ballers, a movement she co-founded with Gulnahar Mahbub Monika, not for branding or buzz, but because the system left her no other option.

"Wrong sport," they told her

Ashreen was around 18 when she was called into Bangladesh's first women's national basketball team. "People told me I'd picked the wrong sport," she says. "Cricket or football – they'd at least heard of those. But basketball? Who plays that here?"

Still, she stayed. Not because it was easy, but because no one else was staying.

At the height of her playing years, she wasn't paid. Not once. "Ten years on the national team –no salary, no allowance. We paid entry fees ourselves. We rented fields to train. The federation just didn't care."

And they didn't hide it either. There were no women's leagues. No dedicated coaches for girls. No physios, no doctors, no recovery plans. When she got married at 26 – still in peak form – she saw it happen in real time. "The moment you're married or have a child, they treat you like you've expired. Like your body belongs to someone else now."

The discrimination wasn't just systemic; it was personal. She was outspoken, and that made her a problem. In 2019, just ahead of the South Asian Games, both she and her teammate Monika were dropped. "Because we asked about salaries," she says, dryly. "Because we asked for fairness."

Starting Deshi Ballers

You could call Deshi Ballers a rebellion, but it's not loud or flashy. It's a steady reclaiming.

Founded in 2018 by Ashreen and Monika, Deshi Ballers wasn't meant to rival the federation – it was meant to compensate for it. "There were no games for girls throughout the year, so we made our own. Tournaments, training camps, and an academy with female coaches. We kept the girls playing."

Their mission was never just about winning. It was about unlearning silence. "I wanted to prove that you could be married, over 30, even a mother and still play," she says. "I didn't have children because I feared the system wouldn't take me back. That's the kind of fear we live with."

In 2023, after years of advocacy, Bangladesh saw its first women's basketball league. Eight clubs participated. For the first time, women were paid to play.

"We made our team. We paid salaries to twelve players. We didn't wait for permission."

A seat at the table

In 2024, a government-led reform led to the creation of an ad-hoc basketball federation committee. Out of 16 members, 15 were men. The 16th was Ashreen.

"It's hard," she admits. "These men are decades older than I. Convincing them to prioritise girls' issues is like pushing boulders uphill. But I'm there. And I won't be quiet."

Being on the board hasn't softened her. If anything, it's sharpened her resolve. "Now that I have a seat at the table, I speak not just for me. I speak for every girl who was told to shut up or sit out."

Not just players, leaders

Ashreen doesn't see success in medals anymore. "You retire, and all you're left with are trophies. That's not enough. I want people. Lives changed."

Her vision for the future of Deshi Ballers goes beyond tournaments. She wants more female coaches. More female referees. More girls who aren't afraid to ask why.

"I used to be scared to speak," she says. "Now, there are 50 others ready to speak if one of us is silenced. That's the legacy. Not me. Not even Deshi Ballers. But the idea that girls can take up space and not apologise for it."

What's next?

She still plays. She still coaches. She's earned local and international coaching certifications. One day, she hopes to coach the national team—maybe even the men's.

And Deshi Ballers? "It should be like a virus," she smiles. "Even if I die, it should live on in every girl it touched."

No brand campaigns. No glorified PR tale. Just a number 8 jersey. A woman who stayed. And a sport that learned to make space.

By Ayman Anika
Photos: Courtesy

Style your home WITH AARONG'S HANDCRAFTED DÉCOR

Your home is a window to your soul. And to bring your inner vision to life, you don't need to follow fleeting trends or splurge on luxury. It simply needs to feel like you. And Aarong's latest home décor line captures exactly that.

Think soft, hand-dyed textiles, warm, earthy tones, and textures you want to touch, all coming together to celebrate the inner artist who often doesn't get the recognition they deserve. It's a collection that invites you to breathe new life into the spaces you love, season after season.

Here's a guide that will help you decorate every corner of your home, just the way you want.

The bedroom: A soft reset

This season, Aarong's bedroom collection invites you into a world of gentle textures and delicate layers. Think hand-stitched quilts in muted tones, wall-mounted Nakshi Kantha frames, and block-printed cushion covers that add quiet charm without overwhelming the space.

Blending different textures is essential in this case. Layer a bright maroon silk bedspread with soft cotton cushions or contrast it with a textured quilt in earthy hues. The interplay of textures and colours instantly enlivens the space.

If you prefer a more soothing look for your bedroom, choose a calming colour scheme featuring lavender and off-white and build upon that foundation. To complete the look, place a pair of stand lights near the bed with printed shades. Don't forget to keep functionality in mind.

Aarong's cotton bed linens are airy and soft against the skin, especially suited for a weather like ours. It remains sturdy over the years, indicating that you are investing in comfort and durability while maintaining aesthetics.

The living room: Stories in every corner

Your living room does not need a complete makeover to stand out; just a few smart swaps and additions can make a big difference. Aarong's carved wooden trays, hand-made candles, and bright eclectic cushions bring a quiet elegance to the room.

Start with picking a corner that will be the focus area, such as a one-tone textured floor cushion or a light colour rug under the centre table. Next, add smaller details around it — a vase made of clay on the side table, and a wooden wall hanging frame will help create a chic look.

It's a type of layering that conveys a narrative, one strongly connected to tradition, yet designed to capture the essence of your style.

Natural materials like wood, brass, clay, and cotton help create a welcoming ambience, bringing warmth to even the most minimalist corners.

Stick to one colour family, and play with varying shades and textures to create harmony. Soft blues, clay tones, and woven fibres work beautifully to maintain an earthy, grounded vibe while still feeling fresh and modern.

The dining area: Everyday rituals, elevated

No matter the menu, with the right setting, every meal feels like a fine dining experience.

Aarong's tableware, ceramic dishes, handwoven mats, and printed tablecloths bring the perfect touch of charm to everyday meals. Begin with a thoughtfully designed runner as the centrepiece, consider stoneware in brushed bronze colour or napkins in solid colours and wrap the napkin in a ring that matches the shades of the cutlery. The aim is not to achieve perfection, it's to create the right ambience. These materials are not only visually appealing, but also practical.

Beyond beauty, Aarong's tableware is practical: cotton runners are washable, ceramics retain heat, and wooden accents lend a homely, grounded touch. Many of these items are eco-friendly, benefiting both local craftsmen and the planet.

Small touches, big mood

It's the smallest details that leave the most lasting impression. A sculpted terracotta vase beside the bed, the warm flicker of hand-crafted candles near the window, a brightly painted wooden tray that gathers your everyday essentials with grace. These are not just accessories; they are quiet reflections of who you are.

Aarong's home collection represents more than just home decor. It brings symmetry, among practicality and aesthetics, heritage and contemporary design, ease and trend. Each item is handcrafted, ensuring that no two pieces are identical. That's the charm of it. Enrich your home with the stories and textures of Bangladeshi craftsmanship.

By Maisha Tarannum Iqbal
Photo: Aarong

With mercury levels soaring high like never before, we are bringing brazen back. Gone are the times when soft and subtle would cut it — now is the time to elevate your makeup game to higher plains.

BRING THE HEAT

Summer's wild makeup mood

International runways are drawing inspiration from the blazing heat waves that are scorching the skies everywhere, and makeup is getting wild and funky to match summer's high energy. Dewy skin and soft lips are pretty, but this season demands bright colours that will capture attention and hold it!

The very first hues to conjure the image of summer in one's mind are shades of blue. Scorching skies make our minds, bodies, and souls yearn for a blissful dip in the pool, to cool off in style! And what better way to enjoy your time by the pool than jazzing up your look with a teal eyeliner?

Matching your vibrant sarong with azure blue eye makeup will look fantastic. And while we are at it, turquoise is another amazing shade that will bring the coolness of the ocean to your lovely face. A swipe of turquoise eyeliner, or a full-on eye done with shades of turquoise, will turn you into a summer nymph!

Summertime means bounty is abundant in nature. From fruits to flowers to foliage, everything abounds. Luscious leaves sparkle following a sudden shower of rain, and various hues of green deck the earth. Take inspiration from nature and choose green for your eyes in all its glory.

Sparkling leaf green eyeshadow will look fantastic against our rich skin tone, with loads of mascara and oodles of oomph. A deep green eyeliner will jazz up your lovely peepers, making them mesmerising! And while we are at it, why should we shy away from other summery colours? Mango yellow is fun and fabulous, so why not wear it on your eyes? Lychee pink is another sweet shade for us to play around with. A glossy lychee pink lip is the ultimate summertime treat for your soul and style!

A hot tip: Keep the rest of the face bare when going bold with your eyes to maximise your summer glam. Swipe on some sheer highlighter and keep your lips glossy and glowing, and let your inner summer diva take on the world.

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Mridula
Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Mua: Sumon Rahat & Team

#PERSPECTIVE

How a country fought back with slogans

On a rain-soaked evening in Dhaka, a young woman stood on a traffic divider, megaphone trembling in her hand, as tear gas loomed in the air. Around her, others chanted. Not just slogans. Incantations. Echoes. Shrapnel disguised as sound. That was July 2024. What began as an outrage over a tragic death quickly morphed into one of the most powerful youth-led uprisings in recent Bangladeshi history. It was not just the numbers on the streets. It was the language. Let's call them what they were: weapons made of words!

"Quota na medha? Medha, medha!"

This was the heartbeat. The chant that lit the match. At its core, the slogan was a plea not to be reduced to a statistic. It spoke not just to students but to a national anxiety: Who really deserves opportunity in a country built on sacrifice?

"We weren't just fighting quotas," says Dibbo, a 24-year-old protester from a private university. "We were fighting the feeling of being invisible in our own meritocracy. That chant? It gave me back my name."

For many like Dibbo, "Quota na medha? " wasn't just a slogan. It was an existential assertion: I earned my place here.

"Ami ke? Tumi ke? Razakar, Razakar!"

The former prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, referred to the protestors as "Razakars" — the historical traitors of 1971. For many, it was a rupture, and it stung. It rewrote their love for the country as betrayal. But the response wasn't retreat.

"When the PM called us Razakars, we felt infuriated," says Neela, a law student. "But also something clicked. We realised shame can't touch you if you don't accept its terms. We shouted it back. Louder."

What began as a slur became a chant. What was meant to shame became armour. In reclaiming the insult, they neutralised it.

"Amar Khay, Amar Pore, Amar Boke Guli Kore."

The line was raw, unfiltered. And it had a face.

According to reports, this slogan was born in the aftermath of the death of Abu Sayeed, who was killed by police gunfire during the quota reform demonstrations. His death – brutal, senseless, and state-sanctioned – became a wound the country could not ignore. The slogan quickly transcended its origin, becoming a symbol for the anguish and fury of an entire generation.

Nevertheless, it wasn't aimed at just the state but rather was aimed at the parasitic intimacy of the state. A government that took your taxes, your labour, your love, and paid you back in bullets. It described betrayal not as an anomaly, but as an everyday arrangement. The horror was not just that the state killed; it was that the dead had funded their own murder!

"Lakho Shohider Rokte Kena, Deshta Karo Baaper Na!"

Why did a hundred thousand martyrs bleed? The country doesn't belong to your father.

It cut deeper than any chant. It shook the myth that has long held Bangladesh together. Not by desecrating the past, but by reclaiming it from political monopolies. This was no rejection of the Liberation War. It was a rejection of the idea that one family, one dynasty, or one party gets to own that history forever.

Shahjahan, a small grocery store owner who joined the march after seeing the videos online, said he had never shouted anything louder in his life. "My father and uncle died in the war," he said. "But now people like me are told to stay silent. Like my blood doesn't count."

For many, this slogan was the moral compass of the movement. Not anti-national — but anti-appropriation. Not anti-history, but anti-hijacking.

Yet, as arrests piled up and tear gas made the headlines, the question remained: how do you persist when your lungs burn and your fear multiplies?

That's when the final blow to the head of state began.

"One Two Three Four, Sheikh Hasina is a Dictator!"

As batons swung and sirens drowned out voices, fear began to thread its way through the crowds like smoke. A new slogan surged forward: fierce, accusatory, and impossible to misinterpret, directly addressing the ousted PM.

The government's response had abandoned all pretence of democratic negotiation. Streets were flooded with tear gas, students dragged into vans, journalists threatened, and, perhaps most tellingly, the entire country was digitally gagged – its internet blacked out, as if truth itself had become contraband.

In response, the slogan didn't just echo; it thundered. It took what the government wanted to hide and carved it into public memory. In a country being choked into silence, the chant became the country's pulse. You could stop the Wi-Fi, but not the rhythm of revolt.

"Bhoy pele tumi shesh, rukhe daraley Bangladesh."

This was the chant people repeated in holding cells. In rickshaw rides back home after dispersals. It reminded everyone that courage was not just for the stage. It was for the quiet moments. The moments between being seen and being silenced.

There was something fascinating about how these slogans functioned. Not just as protest tools, but as cultural texts. They gave people a script to reclaim identity, rewrite citizenship, and reframe grief.

They also refused to segregate. In the slogans, the elite university student and the slum-born gig worker stood on equal footing. Language, for once, did not discriminate. That unity, however brief, is what frightened the establishment most.

Now, months later, the slogans are gone from the walls. Scrubbed clean. Replaced with advertisements and warnings. But they have migrated elsewhere. Into songs, memes, and footnotes in journals. Into a sixth-grader's memory.

Perhaps, that's the real legacy of the July Movement. Not just what it demanded, but how it spoke. How it forged a new dialect of dissent. How it reminded us that revolutions don't always begin with riots — sometimes, they begin with rhyme. With slogans!

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Collected

#WOMENEMPOWERMENT

NO AGE LIMIT!
How Arthy Ahmed is rewriting dance norms

When Arthy Ahmed launched her Bharatanatyam class in Dhaka, many in the classical dance circuit saw it as a side project at best, and a waste of time at worst. "They told me, don't spend your energy on adults," she recalls. "They said, they'll never take it seriously. It's just another form of weight loss therapy for them."

Three years later, that "weight loss batch" has evolved into a community of nearly 600 students across 13 different groups, with several of her adult learners performing on international stages, at corporate events, and on TV programmes. The whispers have changed, too! Now, teachers from the UK, Australia, and even within Bangladesh are asking for her teaching template.

However, Ahmed didn't set out to prove anyone wrong. She set out to give people something they were long denied: a space to dance without shame.

Reclaiming joy through movement

"A lot of my students tell me the same story," Ahmed explains. "They wanted to dance as kids, but were never allowed. Or, they were pulled out once they hit a certain age. Some lived in towns where there weren't any dance classes at all."

The result? Adults in their 30s, 40s, and even 70s returning to a dream they never got to live. But Ahmed knew that if she was inviting them back to the stage, she had to build a stage that felt safe.

"No one gets selected or rejected in our productions. Whether you're struggling or soaring, you're welcome. The audience can tell it's real. That's why they connect."

Her inclusive classes welcome people of all genders, body types, and backgrounds. The curriculum is slow, layered, and non-judgmental. Progress is not measured in pirouettes, but in joy.

Dance as therapy, not performance

Although Ahmed is academically trained, with a BA Honours and Master's degree in Bharatanatyam from India, her work is far from elitist. In fact, it's grounded in something far more accessible: emotional healing.

She also holds a diploma in dance psychology, which informs her approach to running her classes.

"People come in hating their bodies, doubting themselves, thinking they're too late," she says. "But over time, they start shedding that. Some have come out of depression, insecurity, and anxiety. It's not just about learning to dance. It's about learning to feel alive again."

This philosophy was evident in her 2023 production Sakhi, where nearly 90 women danced together in an unapologetically raw, unsensitised performance. Some swayed offbeat. Some hesitated. No one hid. And that honesty resonated more than perfection ever could.

The cultural catch

Ahmed's work is not without pushback.

"Some people message us after every show, saying women dancing on stage is destroying families," she says, matter-of-factly. "This is the reality in Bangladesh. There's always a group that will reduce dance to something religiously or culturally 'foreign' – something to be feared."

She's also aware of the layered challenges her students face, particularly women.

"Fitness levels among Bangladeshi girls are worryingly low. They grow up with little outdoor activity. So, they come to class with back pain, fatigue, vitamin D deficiency, and zero confidence in their bodies. We can't undo all that in a few months."

Still, she doesn't let that stop her. Her goal is to start early, not just with kids, but with their parents. "We need to shift mindsets about girls and physical movement from childhood."

Bridging two worlds: Classical and local

Trained in India, Ahmed understands the nuances and mythology embedded in Bharatanatyam. But bringing it to a Bangladeshi audience, she admits, is complex. "The language of Bharatanatyam is deeply rooted in Indian religious stories — tales many of us here didn't grow up with. That gap can make the form feel distant or inaccessible."

Her solution? Ground the training in tradition, but let the performances adapt.

"When my students are beginners, we never dilute the basics. They learn pure Bharatanatyam. But in productions, we may use Bharatanatyam movements to interpret Tagore songs or local compositions. It creates a cultural bridge. The audience understands, the dancers relate," she says.

But she's clear on one thing: Bharatanatyam isn't a trend. "You don't get to perform it on stage after three months. You earn that right through years of training. I don't compromise on that."

Building audiences, not just dancers

To Ahmed, Bangladesh doesn't just need more dancers – it needs more people willing to sit in the audience. "So many dance shows are attended only by friends and family of the performers. We need a culture where someone goes to Shilpakala or Chhayanaut just to see a dance performance. Even if they don't know anyone on stage."

That's why she emphasises marketing and communication as core skills for dancers today. "If the public never hears about a beautiful production, how will they show up? Dancers need to learn how to present, promote, and even fund their own art."

What's next?

In five years, Ahmed hopes to see both her children and adult students perform confidently alongside professionals. "If I can train even ten strong classical dancers, just ten, that's enough. Because from zero, ten is everything."

She's also dreaming of more productions, more classrooms, and maybe even more cities. But most of all, she wants to keep the door open for every person who thinks they've missed their chance.

"I started with 25 students. Now I have 600. And I haven't taken new ones in a year because no one's leaving. That says something. People don't just come here to dance. They come here to belong."

By Ayman Anika
Photos: Courtesy

#FYI

Thoughtful ways to pamper your parents

There comes a point in life when the roles within a family begin to shift. The ones who once showered you with affection, wisdom, and maybe an extra scoop of ice cream now deserve to be on the receiving end. Here's your guide to bringing a little extra joy into their lives — because if anyone has earned a bit more happiness, it's your parents.

Rooftop tea date
If you have a leafy rooftop and beautiful pair of chairs, a table filled with baked perfection and tea are perfect. Rabindra Sangeet would add a bit of that old school charm to the atmosphere. If it is barren, beautiful fairy lights and other decorations of your parent's liking will do too.

Board game night
Your parents and their friends circling a board of ludo, carrom, or chess —imagine the absolute laughter and chaos! A game night with their friends means more than just being childlike, it will become a space where they share their life's afflictions as they used to, after a long radio silence.

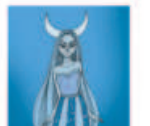
Scenic retreat
A faraway visit within the nature heals the unyielding scars of city life, a medicine even more for the ones who raised us. You can turn their thoughts into reality with booking a weekend in an eco-resort or a day trip to their favourite place with necessary arrangements, and surprise them with a day(s) respite from daily duties!

Sweetmeat assortment box
Food is the faultless way to a person's heart, and seeing it swell like a laddu at the sight of their best liked sweetmeats is priceless. In old days, having an assorted bundle was unlikely, but now with social media and food delivery options, it is super easy. There are many shops to choose from, and you can instruct them on the types and any decoration if available.

Spa package
A couple package is a nice way for you to give them a nudge towards the care they are missing out on. There are different sorts of offers, and with consideration, the right ones will do a world of good. Be it a facial, shoulder or waist massage or manicure and pedicure, they get to enjoy the relaxation and calm, away from the hustle and bustle. The refreshment it gives is something you will thank yourself for after the smiles on their faces.

By Tasneem Azim
Photo: Collected

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Emotional deception is evident. Write beautiful love letters. Relationships will be emotional. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Put extra work into your house. Join a health club. Travel may be rewarding. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

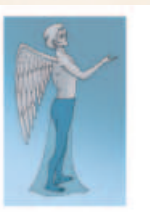
Educational pursuits attract helpful people. Expressing beliefs can bring popularity. Get in good with the boss. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Call contacts to close a deal. Use your creativity for money. Real estate looks lucrative. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.

LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Expect problems with your partner. There may be deception at home. Don't beat around the bush. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

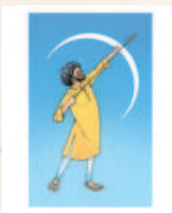
Original ideas will get recognition. Don't dwell on past regrets. Avoid being overly agreeable. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.

LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Put money into your living quarters. Home improvements will pay off. Put in some overtime. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Mix a little business with pleasure. Higher-ups notice your unique approach. Don't offer directions, just support. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

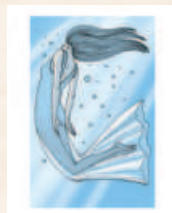
Don't risk your professional image. Be there for unlucky friends. Keep an open mind with kids. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.

CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Make changes in your home. Hold off on new ventures. Focus on hobbies for emotional relief. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Invest in something safe. Stay organized to prevent temper flare-ups. Think rationally. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Don't share personal details. Plan an adventure. New people and places bring excitement. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.

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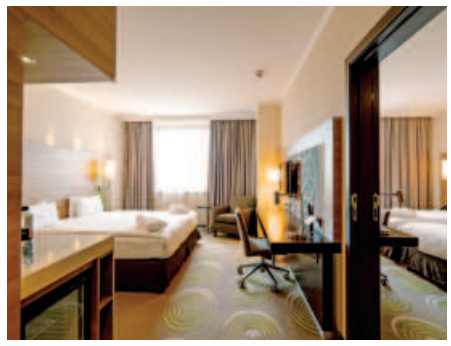
EBL Mastercard World Elite Biometric Metal Credit Card: A GLOBAL FIRST LAUNCHED IN BANGLADESH

Luxurious voyages with Royal Caribbean, Disney Cruises, Oceania, Resorts World, and more with the card

Free access to some of the world's finest golfing destinations



One-night complimentary stay at premium hotels worldwide

A touch of tomorrow, today

It's not often that a product comes along to redefine an entire category, let alone one that emerges from Bangladesh to claim a global first. Yet, that's precisely what Eastern Bank (EBL), in partnership with Mastercard, has achieved with the launch of the EBL Mastercard World Elite Biometric Metal Credit Card — the world's first biometric metal credit card.

No, it is not a piece of plastic. It's metal. It is a bold leap forward in the world of premium banking, blending unmatched security, exquisite design, and indulgent experiences. And yes, it hails proudly from Bangladesh.

Fingerprint, not PIN

The true marvel of this card lies in its simplicity and sophistication: your fingerprint is your password. Gone are the days of remembering PINs or signing receipts — each transaction is uniquely yours.

A biometric sensor embedded into the card ensures top-tier security while adding a layer of elegance to the user experience. With each tap, it speaks the language of futuristic convenience and personalised finance.

"Biometric authentication not only enhances security but defines a new standard for high-end financial products," says Ali Reza Iftekhar, Managing Director of EBL. "This card is designed for those who live beyond the ordinary—it is not just a financial tool, but a lifestyle companion."

Privileges, not just perks

Luxury isn't just about things — it's about how the world treats you. The EBL Mastercard World Elite card transforms ordinary interactions into exceptional moments. Imagine being picked up from your doorstep in Dhaka or Chattogram and chauffeured to the airport in comfort, every time. Or checking into a premium hotel for a free night's stay as part of your global travels.

Travellers enjoy complimentary access to airport lounges across continents—for themselves and a guest. Frequent fliers also benefit from exclusive discounts on airport limousine services, eliminating the hassle of international commutes.

Flexiroam's global data roaming ensures that even on the move, you're always connected—seamlessly and smartly.

A culinary passport

To satisfy the gourmand in you, the card opens doors to rooftop dining at CE LA VI in Marina Bay Sands, Singapore—complete with a SG$100 voucher. But this is only the beginning. Cardholders are treated to priority reservations at Michelin-starred restaurants and world-renowned dining establishments via Mastercard's Held Table platform. Dining benefits also include the One Dine Free proposition and buy-one-get-one offers across luxury hotels globally.

The art of leisure

From river cruises to premium golf courses, the EBL Mastercard World Elite caters to connoisseurs of refined relaxation. Cardholders enjoy exclusive discounts and free access to some of the world's finest golfing destinations—ideal for unwinding, networking, or just basking in the green serenity of championship courses.

Concierge at your fingertips

Time is the greatest luxury—and this card understands that. With 24/7 Mastercard Concierge Service, everything from securing sold-out concert tickets to planning spontaneous escapes becomes effortlessly possible. A team of experts stands by to transform every whim into well-executed reality.

A card unlike any other

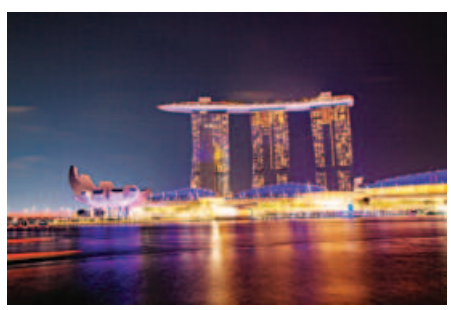
Perhaps, the most compelling aspect of the EBL Mastercard World Elite is its exclusivity. Reserved for a select few, it promises bespoke service and distinction for those who value discretion, taste, and true excellence.

Ahsan H Mansur, Governor of the Bangladesh Bank, along with Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank PLC, formally launched biometric metal credit cards recently. Ambassadors of the Republic of Korea and Kosovo and leaders from Mastercard, IDEX Biometrics, Kona I, and Infineon Technologies were also present at the launching ceremony.

Where innovation meets lifestyle

The EBL Mastercard World Elite Biometric Metal Credit Card is more than a technological marvel — it is the result of a deep understanding of what today's affluent customers value most: seamless security, exclusive experiences, and sophisticated service.

It is the result of years of vision, effort, and global collaboration among technology leaders and EBL's own forward-thinking team. At the core of this pioneering innovation are IDEX Biometrics, a Norway-based firm specialising in cutting-edge biometric solutions, and KONA I, a South Korean fintech enabler known for its secure card personalisation technology. IDEX brought ultra-fast, field-proven biometric authentication to the table, while KONA I ensured seamless integration and global compatibility —turning a futuristic concept into an everyday reality.



Savour gourmet experiences at Cé La Vi, Marina Bay Sands, Singapore

Driven by purpose, defined by excellence

EBL has always dared to go beyond the conventional—introducing wearable banking devices, redefining lounge experiences, and championing digital transformation. The launch of this biometric metal card is a continuation of that spirit—a bold statement that Bangladesh can lead, not just follow, in global banking innovation.

For details on exclusive propositions on biometric metal credit cards visit:

https://www.ebl.com.bd/metal-biometric/

Photo: Courtesy