

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 15, TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

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Star

Life

Style

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# Femme fierce

A RETREAT TO ONE'S OWN **P4-5**

INSIDE A MANCAVE

FASHION REVIVAL **C**

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BY THE SOMESWARI

PHOTO: ADNAN RAHMAN

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STYLING & FASHION DIRECTION: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA

WARDROBE: BREASTPLATES FROM SURREAL FOREST

BY HIBA SHARAFUDDIN

JEWELLERY: 6 YARDS STORY BY LORA KHAN

MAKEUP: SUMON RAHAT

HAIRSTYLE: PROBINA

LOCATION: STUDIO EVF

# Styling guide for the LADIES

It's time to briefly take a step back from over-the-top, fashionable attire this unpredictable season and steer back into comfortable classics. Rainy summer days, followed by immediate heatwaves, are tricky to deal with when it comes to fashion. You should stick to fabrics that do not feel sticky to your body. Cotton, khadi, and linen are good options to pick from.

## The classic combo

Whenever we think of casual wear, our mind automatically thinks of khaki pants and a white shirt, and rightfully so. Nothing says casual more than a clean white shirt. Your top does not have to be limited to a white button-down shirt. Vintage-look blouses are quite fit for the casual look, as are any white flowy tops.

## Dress it up

Long summer dresses are a breakthrough in the fashion world, keeping it classy and casual. They are comfortable and flattering to all body types. There is no added tension in matching your top and bottom! Dresses come in all kinds of designs as per your preference. Go sleeveless or wear long ones. This gives you versatility. Lastly, they are very low-maintenance without compromising your style.

## Co-ords the day

Co-ords are in current demand for both daily wear and parties. The relaxed fit of the co-ord sets allows for ease of movement, making them perfect for those who are as busy as a bee. Additionally, with zero hassle of matching different pieces of clothing, you can just slip on a co-ord set and go about your day feeling light and relaxed. You have multiple options to choose from, notably bold and printed sets, monotone sets, tie-dyes, and stylish tailored sets.

## Skirt my way

It is essential to have a skirt in your wardrobe this season. Skirts, just like dresses, can be very versatile. They offer limitless pattern choices. Also, go for your preferred length and shape, as well as wrap, tiered, high waist, and pleated skirts, to name a few. A summer-friendly skirt will make going out in the glaring sun tolerable.

Skirts can be your friend in the monsoon too. Anytime you wear pants on a rainy day, it is unavoidable to have ankle-deep mud stains. Skirts over pants also mean you have better freedom to move around with your legs not constricted by fabric.

## Just kurtis

If you opt for a more traditional classic look, you need a pretty kurti and pants which match your comfort. Kurtis are typically made from summer-friendly fabrics such as cotton, khadi, or linen, which provide comfort, even during the monsoon. The loose and relaxed fit of kurtis allows for ease of movement, giving you enough breathing space. This makes them suitable for casual wear while being classic.

If you want to spare yourself the hassle of going the extra mile to think of new outfits for your day-to-day activities, just pick a classic casual outfit. This is your cheat code to look effortlessly stylish every day!

By Tasnim Kabir

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



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#HEALTH & FITNESS

# Why skipping sleep is slowly breaking your health

As our days become hectic, we find ourselves clutching at minutes for ourselves. And when daylight hours are no longer enough, we turn to stealing time from the night. In this race to do it "all," we accumulate what is known as "sleep debt."

Sleep debt, or sleep deficit, is nothing but the difference between the amount of sleep you need and what you actually get. The "debt" occurs when you consistently get less sleep than you are supposed to.

It is, perhaps, one of the most important aspects of good health and well-being. Yet, sleep remains one of the most overlooked and undervalued parts of our lives. We often forgo our night hours for work, social life, hobbies, or simply to unwind. While these activities may seem rewarding in the short run, this forgone sleep has a cost.

According to nutrition and lifestyle coach Nayma Hasan, "Sleep debt is just like financial debt. If you keep borrowing hours from your rest, the interest shows up as fatigue, poor focus, and weakened immunity over time."

Some people here might object, stating that they do not feel tired

after a short night's sleep. Well, this does not necessarily make them sleepless elites; it may just be the body's way of adapting to consistently less sleep. Perhaps, all the more dangerous, as the negative effects are not evident right away.

Regular sleep deprivation has negative effects, such as increased risk of diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and stroke. It also leads to metabolic dysregulation and chronic weight gain. Prolonged sleep deficit leads to dull memory and hinders the brain's ability to process and store new information.

While some people truly need less sleep than others, scientists have concluded that every adult needs at least seven hours of sleep every night. The number of hours is slightly higher for children and teens.

How then can we ensure that we can avoid sleep debt and keep our sleep routine hygienic? Sleep journaling is one of the easiest ways

one can keep track of their sleep and prioritise it over other activities. It also allows you to be flexible with your sleep routine without losing track of it altogether.

## Ways to fight sleep debt

"To ensure good sleep, dim your lights in the evening or at least an hour before bedtime,"

advises Nayma. "Try to avoid screens 1–2 hours before bed. Even if you end up watching something, at least put the device in sleep mode."

Alternatively, one can create a relaxing nighttime routine to make them look forward to winding down for the day. This could mean a hot shower or bath, a relaxing skincare routine, some soft lighting and aromatherapy diffusers. For some bibliophiles, this would be the time to catch up with their reading.

Revisit your day to understand which habits might be costing you your sleep. It could be caffeine after 5 o'clock, lack of exercise, or even

eating too late.

"Avoid eating too close to bedtime. After a busy day of work, many of us end up having dinner at 10 or 11 PM, which can be tough to change," warns Nayma. "My suggestion is to eat in smaller portions and balance your foods throughout the day."

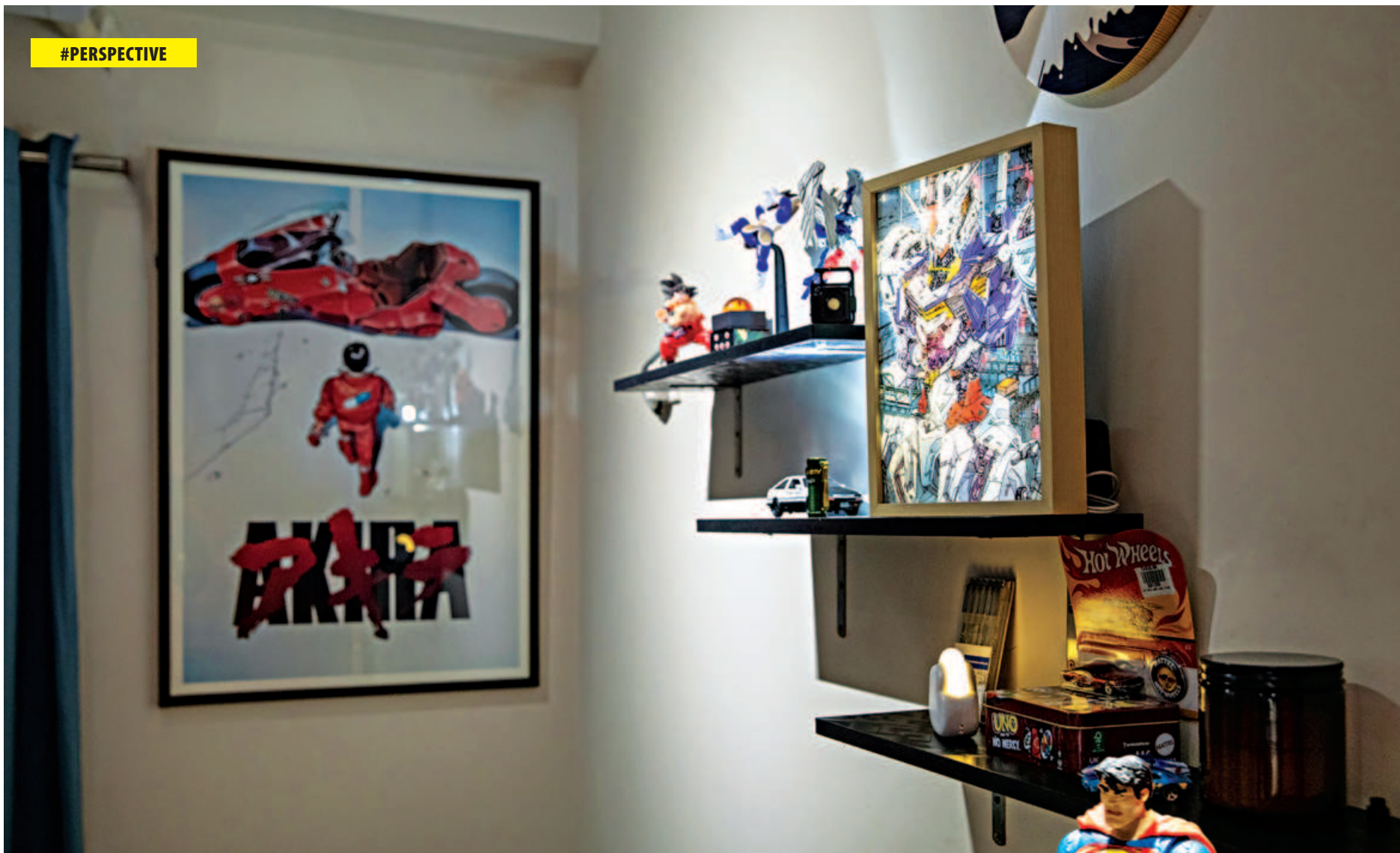
Your bed must solely be used for sleeping. Working or eating on the bed can lead the brain into believing that it is a multipurpose space. Get rid of all things that may hinder your sleep from your bedroom, including work paraphernalia, devices, noise machines, music systems, even night lights and uncomfortable pillows or scratchy sheets.

Scientifically speaking, sleep debt is not recoverable. Having said that, short naps during the day to make up for lost sleep and sleeping in on weekends all work their bit to make us feel more alert and energetic, so catching up is never a bad idea. As the Irish say, a good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures for anything!

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



#PERSPECTIVE



# How a man cave becomes a time capsule of memories

It often gets reduced to clichés: dim lights, a hi-fi, and a couch that doubles as a bed. In reality, a man cave can be something much deeper. For me, it is less about masculinity and more about memory. The space is an incubator for my inner child who once clung to comic books, daydreamed about piloting mecha suits, and spent hours tracing sketches of anime characters in the back of exercise books.

#### The man cave as a sanctuary

I remember watching *Friends*, and how Joey and Chandler's fabled La-Z-Boy chair

became a character of its own. I am sure there was a never-ending list of shows that shaped our imagination and personality but such an impact often led me to daydream about having a room that reflected my passions. A space, if someone were to walk in, would instantly know who I was and what I stood for.

Today, you step inside my room, and it is not merely décor. On one of my shelves sits a LED Gundam frame, mechanical details etched with



precision waiting to be lit up, while right beside it stands a stoic Gundam model. This pairing was, obviously, not random. It is my feeble attempt at forming a bridge between art and craft, between the worlds I watched, got lost in, and the worlds I built with my hands.

Next to it hangs the unmistakable framed posters of the red motorbike of Akira, symbolising the chaos and beauty of dystopian imagination. And then, a shelf higher, you see Goku pose against Vegeta, two figurines forever locked in their iconic rivalry, with a Dragon Ball displayed between them as if the skirmish never truly ended.

Every item in the room carries a fragment of memory. The miniature Toyota AE86, for instance, is more than a die-cast car. You do not need to be a petrolhead to feel the pulse it represents. It's about the speed of youth, the reckless innocence of wanting to go faster than life itself.

On the back of the door, The First Slam Dunk poster adds another layer. Basketball never needed to be part of my reality for it to become a part of my fantasy. Watching Shohoku fight for every point was not about sport. It was about grit, friendship, and the rhythm of adolescence.

And tucked into corners are the comics and graphic novels I still read, stacked like guilty pleasures but worn enough to prove their place. They



remind me that while others may have outgrown illustrated pages, I never really did.

#### **The man cave as an evolution**

"Are you not too old for superheroes? Stop wasting time on drawing cartoons and stop obsessing over toys" — we were told!

Some might see this as clinging to

childhood, but to me, it is an evolution. There was a time when game nights meant going over to a cousin's place, where you could collectively get lost in the world of pixels and interactive storytelling. Time moved on, and so did the others. And now, the PlayStation 5 sits by the television, flanked by towering speakers, waiting for nights where the

room transforms into a private theatre and maybe recaptures the nostalgia with family and friends.

Whether it's gaming, anime marathons, or simply letting vinyl-like basslines shake the walls, it all becomes a reminder that I've finally built what younger me always wanted.

A man cave is a safe place for my inner child to flourish and run wild. Each poster, figure, and collectible are less about who owns it, and more about coming to terms with the child who once felt limited and wished for their own space to play was never really gone. He was just waiting.

Some pieces of our youth are buried under bills and responsibilities, while others have been polished into nostalgia that we look at when no one is looking. It's not a getaway for me; it's a get-together. A quiet shake of hands between the boy who wanted everything and the man who could finally make it happen.

Maybe the real luxury is not the fancy chair that Joey and Chandler loved, but a place where your past and present can sit next to each other and watch, remember, and remind you of who you are.

**By K Tanzeel Zaman**

**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**



SAY GOODBYE TO SUBTLE

# Breastplates making a bold fashion comeback

They are a powerful statement in this body-positive era, when a woman is not shying away from showing off her feminine form, but embracing it. And is there anything more beautiful, more empowering than a woman coming into her own? Throughout the course of history, women have held positions of power and carried out their responsibilities with aplomb. As heads of state, as sovereigns and in all her forms and functions, women have risen above the forces that tried to curb her might and proven over and over again that she is indeed all-powerful.

Modern fashion is moving forward while drawing page after page from yesteryear's playbooks. What's interesting is that, at large, fashion is becoming increasingly dynamic, evolving in a positive, inclusive direction.

In ancient Greece, breastplates were invented to shield the wearer on the battlefield. Fashioned for the human physique from the strongest metals, it safeguarded the wearer from severe attacks and blows on the battlefield. It went on to become an essential component in military armour, and the modern-day bulletproof vest is its descendant.

Sartorially, the great maestro — Yves Saint Laurent — first noticed that breastplates highlight the female form magnificently and celebrated its divine power and beauty. For his trailblazing collection in 1969, when the whole world was moving in a different new direction, Saint Laurent used a gold breastplate with a fluid azure long dress to usher in the '70s, a decade of heady freedom in all aspects of life and society. This power move marked a significant departure from the stiff

shapes of the '60s and yet retained the control of feminine form and power in all its glory.

Not for the faint of heart, a breastplate will make a fantastic statement when worn with a metallic, fluid saree. Reminiscent of the voluptuous apsaras of Ajanta and Ellora caves, this attire will surely elevate you to godly heights where women are depicted in their most natural yet strong, feminine forms.

Corsets are another rendition of breastplates that look stunning. Although a Western innovation, they pair surprisingly well with sarees. They have been all the rage for the past few seasons, and fashionistas everywhere are here for it! Very high fashion and chic, this is a look you would want to reserve for that one night in the festive season when all stars align and your entire person is elevated to another level as you dress as a deity!

Choose a statement, making one that you can base your entire outfit on. Being the building block, your whole look will hinge on it, so if you choose an embellished piece, then go easy on the accoutrements.

A simple gold breastplate will go well with an embellished saree, with the anchal draped over one arm. Statuesque and elegant, it will surely make you appear like a goddess. Jewellery should be minimal, letting the breastplate take centre stage. Hair and makeup should be in accordance with the whole look.

They say clothes maketh a woman. Not true since fashion guru Coco Chanel insisted that one's clothes should not wear her but vice versa. So, unleash your inner goddess, choose the best breastplate or corset this festive season and celebrate your divine feminine beauty in style.

**By Sabrina N Bhuiyan**  
**Photo: Adnan Rahman**  
**Model: Surjo**  
**Styling & Fashion Direction: Sonia Yeasmin Isha**  
**Wardrobe: Breastplates from Surreal Forest by Hilba Sharafuddin**  
**Jewellery: 6 Yards Story by Lora Khan**  
**Makeup: Sumon Rahat**  
**Hairstyle: Probina**  
**Location: Studio EVF**



**KUNDALINI RISING****SHAZIA OMAR**Writer, activist and yogini  
www.shaziaomar.com

# Beat stress & hypertension: Yoga for heart health matters

As we approach World Heart Day on 29 September, it's a timely reminder to prioritise your heart health, particularly in Bangladesh, where cardiovascular diseases are on the rise.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), heart disease is the leading cause of death in the world. Sedentary lifestyles, poor diet, and stress are major contributing factors to this growing public health issue. One holistic practice that offers hope is yoga, which not only strengthens the body but also significantly benefits cardiovascular health.

Yoga is a practice that combines physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation — all of which play a crucial role in maintaining a healthy heart. Research has shown that yoga helps lower blood pressure, improve circulation, reduce stress, and boost overall heart function. It enhances circulation by promoting oxygenation in the blood, improving arterial flexibility and encouraging better



blood flow, helping to reduce the risk of atherosclerosis and heart disease. Regular practice also helps in managing hypertension, a key factor in heart attacks.

Stress is one of the major contributors to heart disease. Yoga practices, especially pranayama (breath control) and meditation, activate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and reducing the harmful effects of chronic stress on the heart.

When combined with a healthy diet, yoga helps maintain a healthy weight and balance cholesterol levels. Sequences like Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation) offer a cardiovascular workout while being gentle on the body, aiding in weight loss and fat reduction.

**Shazia Omar is an author, a yogini, and the founder of The Flow Fest.**  
[www.theflowfest.com](http://www.theflowfest.com)

**Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed**

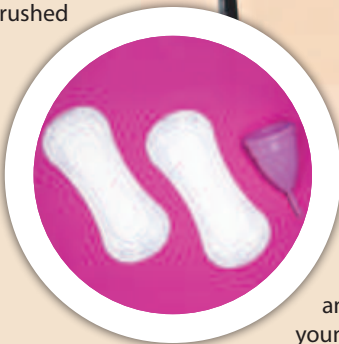


# From adolescent cramps to chronic pain in adulthood

Period cramps are anything but harmless. In fact, according to a study conducted by the University of Oxford, these may be indicators of chronic body pain later in life. The Oxford study, published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health, was an investigative piece into how painful period cramps, dysmenorrhoea, in adolescence may lead to body pains in young adults. Not only is this pain long-lived, but it may even extend to areas such as the head, the back, and the joints.

Menstrual pains have been known to disrupt the lives of young women and, more often than not, are brushed aside as a "natural" part of growing up. Women now understand that it did not have to be like this if the condition had been taken seriously from the very beginning.

Professor Katy Vincent, a gynaecologist and senior author of the study, noted that it is high



time we recognised the seriousness of the ailment. Considering that there is an indisputable connection between menstrual pains and chronic body pain in young adults, Vincent feels

that this is a very late wake-up call for everyone associated.

Immediate attention must be turned to improving education and awareness on menstruation, reducing stigma and ensuring that young women have access to proper support and treatment early on.

There are plenty of ways that one can

reduce menstrual pain. Out of these, heat therapy, or using hot water bottles on the abdomen and lower back, is proven to be immensely helpful. Eating anti-inflammatory foods such as pineapples, tomatoes, and garlic can all do their bit to reduce pain, and, as enticing as it feels to reach out for sugar or sodium-heavy snacks, both can work against you, making you more inflamed and bloated. Over-the-counter medicines can help with mild pain, as can massages.

However, what can work more than any of this, what can truly be beneficial, is the support of doctors and professionals who accept that menstrual pains are a real form of discomfort that must be eased for young women, and not something that should simply be tolerated. Once menstrual pain is recognised as an actual ailment, more and more girls will feel empowered to discuss their predicament and benefit from proper diagnosis.

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

#HEALTH & FITNESS

# BOOST YOUR MENTAL HEALTH with just 10 minutes of exercise

Did you know that physical exercise can actually improve your mental health by changing your brain chemistry and making you more resilient to negative emotions? This correlation between physical movement and mental well-being goes far deeper than most people realise. You have probably heard that exercise is good for mental health, but understanding the how and the why can motivate you to give it a higher priority — even when you don't feel like it.

Contrary to popular belief, you do not need to spend hours at the gym or marathon training to see results. Since the goal is your mental well-being, it's better to start small and build up gradually than to overdo it and burn out. Even a ten-minute walk or some light stretching in the morning can make a difference.

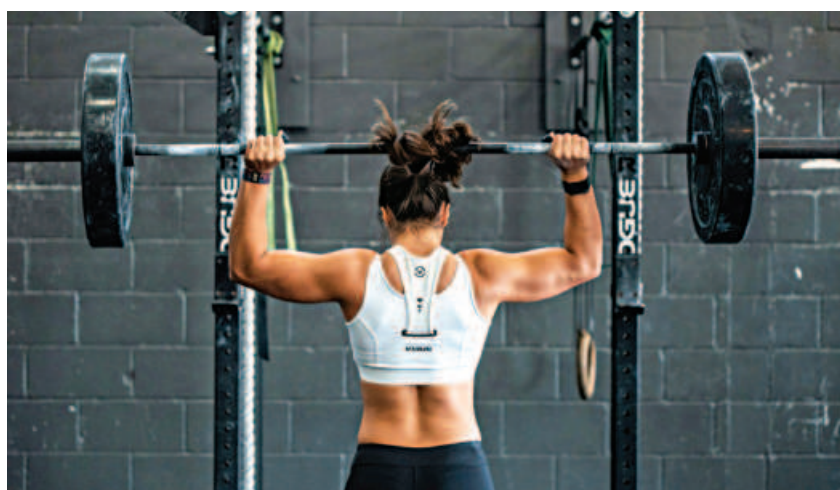
## Here is how — Sharpen your focus

Exercise may have immediate effects on your brain's focus. Even a single workout session can sharpen your attention and help you stay focused for at least two hours. It also enhances your reflexes, allowing you to respond more quickly and efficiently to your surroundings.

Neurologically speaking, within just a few hours, a brief exercise boosts blood flow to the brain, increases oxygen delivery to brain cells, and causes a temporary rise in BDNF — a protein that plays a key part in brain growth.

When you stick with a certain course of exercise for a few weeks, it makes a lasting change in your brain by starting to make new neurons, strengthening existing ones,

and building more blood vessels. The changes brought by a consistent exercise routine can strengthen the prefrontal cortex — your brain's control centre responsible for planning and decision-making. Eventually, you gain better concentration, more self-control, and improved emotional balance, thanks to a consistent and non-negotiable routine for exercise.



## Manage depression and stress

Studies have shown that depression, a common phenomenon found among young adults today, is associated with a shrinking hippocampus, an integral part of your brain that supports the core of who you are: your memory and learning.

A study by Harvard Health found that exercise can actually help counteract this shrinkage by stimulating new neuron growth, keeping your brain sharper and more resilient. Additionally, exercise can

reduce levels of stress hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, and stimulate the production of endorphins, which are natural mood elevators.

Due to your routine exercise, the increased blood flow also improves communication between two very important regions of your brain — the prefrontal cortex and the amygdala —

responsible for your brain's control and fight-or-flight response, respectively. This allows you stronger emotional control and stress management.

Besides, there's that feeling we all know — the euphoria after a good workout caused by a spike in endorphins, hormones that naturally relieve stress.

Another study by Harvard Health found that serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine are the key brain chemicals that are targeted in our body by

antidepressant drugs that are designed to relieve us from depression.

Interestingly, exercise happens to boost that same set of chemicals in our body, meaning it helps fight depression, elevating our mood. Simply put, you can seek control of relieving your depression by getting quick and easy exercises such as the plank, squat, or push-up. However, it is always recommended to consult with an expert psychologist or a doctor for severe cases of depression.

## Supercharge your mind and confidence

Morning workouts can set you up with energy and focus for the day, while midday movement can help reset stress and rejuvenate your brain. If you exercise every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of your day. It will give you a sense of pride and fulfilment, making you want to cross off the next task on your to-do list.

On the other hand, even a single workout can instantly elevate your mood by increasing neurotransmitters in your body, i.e., dopamine, serotonin, and noradrenaline, the very chemicals that make you feel happier and more motivated.

As a highly effective person, you should focus on the things within your purview and let go of the rest. Allocating just 10 or 20 minutes for exercise as you start your day should be your priority. Also, a highly effective person would start their day with the end in mind. It is a simple yet powerful way to improve both our self-esteem and overall mental well-being.

**By Minhazur Rahman Alvee**  
**Photo: Collected**

#PERSPECTIVE

# Why are we hurting the cats that need us most?

Imagine a cat sleeping peacefully on one quiet corner by your staircase and the very next moment, someone chases and starts to kick it? Yes, these are the day-to-day life stories of the cats whom you think live a very peaceful life, meowing all day.

The craze about cats of foreign breed is similar to the amount of disgust some feel about strays. In the past, according to stories from my grandmother, they and their friends fondly took care of stray cats, fed them and spent time with them, and considered these stray animals to be their friends.

But recently, the amount of animal cruelty prevalent in our so-called "religious" society is inhumane. Every now and then, there comes an Instagram story which shows a picture of a cat in horrible condition, either beaten or severely injured by other means. You will see people who

express their disgust about the litter of stray cats, but then fawning over the wagging tail of a Persian cat.

The story does not end here. Coming back to what stories loom in our neighbourhoods, I have heard people spreading salt (salt is toxic to cats) on their doormats to prevent cats from coming. Nowadays, people cannot even tolerate a stray cat sitting beside their doors; they start taking a broom or a stick and start chasing after the cat. And the heart-breaking fact is that these cats tend to behave like this is when it needs help — maybe it is pregnant and needs some special care — or maybe it got stranded by

its owner and is struggling to find food or any safe shelter.

The most vulnerable of these stray cats are those who are left stranded by their owners

Owners who abandon their cats do not do so on their own. It's either a family pressure, inability to care for the cat, or even because their houseowners or neighbours do not like it.

Most of them might have tried through different Facebook groups to give these cats for adoption, but things don't always work out, mostly because people would rather have fancy foreign breeds than adopting cats that desperately need a home.



There are some people who cannot always adopt strays due to personal problems, but still try their best to help them by providing them food and really caring for these cats.

These stray cats when in danger consider your building to be a safe zone, a shelter they can always rely upon, but given the merciless attitude of some people, lives of stray cats are becoming a tough battle for survival. There are many organisations in Bangladesh that work for animal welfare, but the majority of the population still remains ignorant, so progress is hard. We can only hope that the Bangladeshi mindset sees a dramatic change, so we can embrace every animal as something precious.

**By Labiba Tasnim**  
**Photo: Collected**



Gulshan 2 junction simply refuses the mundaneness of life. I was assigned to cover the place once again due to a new trend: people opening up shops out of the trunks of their cars. The street, which once was known for its kebabs, has now evolved into something that feels bigger,

louder, and stranger, something that might just earn it the nickname: Mini Bangkok Street.

#### **The old and the new**

For some time now, “Raater Kebab er Goli” or “Lavender er Goli”, as many fondly call it, has been the go-to spot for kebabs, fuchka, and other quick street eats. I myself once wrote about the place, focusing solely on those staples, the skewers sizzling and the fuchka stalls buzzing. However, that was then. This time, as I walked through, I realised it had transformed into a carnival of experimentation.

Where once your options were kebab rolls and soda, now you are just as likely to find bite-sized burgers, plates of French fries, even sushi being served under the glow of tiny LED lights and fairy bulbs. I’ll admit, I hesitated before trying roadside sushi, wondering if my stomach would forgive me. But I survived, and to my surprise, enjoyed it.

#### **Trunks turned shops**

The most fascinating addition is the emergence of trunk shops. People have

#### **People’s street**

It’s not simply the food or the impressive makeshift stalls that stand out to you; it’s the people. Families taking their children for a night out, young adults forming core memories with their friends, couples out for a walk, and even people who work late at night and want a snack are a common sight here. The crowd is diverse, and for once, it feels like a place in Dhaka that really is for everyone.

Some people also come to enjoy the novelty of sushi or sandwiches on the side of the road, while others just relax and talk into the night while eating chips and chaats. An unsaid understanding exists here: it’s more about blending in with the mayhem than it is about enjoying exquisite food.

#### **The good, the bad, and the chaotic**

Hygiene remains a matter of personal judgment, and whether you trust a pizza oven on a cart or sushi rolls on the side of a dusty road is something each person has to decide. That’s the gamble of street food anywhere, whether in Bangkok, Delhi, or here in Dhaka.

In my eyes, a few safety issues were highlighted. As the crowds of people stroll, munch, and explore, some owners of cars and motorcycles, believing that they are “smart”, squeeze through the narrow stretch, just inches away from pedestrians. Making the area pedestrian-only during certain hours could easily prevent the constant tension it creates. The place could breathe and become the night market it seems destined to be, free from the constant weaving of vehicles.

#### **Mini Bangkok?**

So, is Gulshan 2 really becoming mini-

# GULSHAN 2’S MIDNIGHT street food scene feels like Bangkok



literally popped open the backs of their cars and set up shop, turning sedans and SUVs into makeshift stalls. From varieties of chips chaat to perfumes and footwear, these micro-entrepreneurs are doing business from the boot of their vehicles.

The creativity is remarkable; the back of one car might be lined with packets of Lays and jars of spices, shredded chicken, beef and chopped sausages, while another could be serving cold drinks, pizzas, and even full-on plated snacks.

The vibe of the street gives a distinctly foreign feel, or at least it’s something that I am not familiar with on the streets of Dhaka. If you have been out on a stroll in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, or any other Southeast Asian night market, you would recognise the buzz, the vibrancy, and the sense that the street is alive.

Bangkok? In parts, yes. It has that buzzing mix of street vendors, food experiments, and trunk shops that give off a distinctly night-market vibe. It has the noise, the people, and the eclectic energy despite not being polished or curated. It’s rough, crowded, and it seems like it just happened because people needed a place to eat, connect, and hustle.

And maybe that’s the charm. It does not need to be a copy of Bangkok or anywhere else. It is our own messy, exciting version of a night street, where kebabs still hold their ground, but sushi rolls, bite-sized burgers, fries, and kulfi have muscled their way in. Where car trunks double as stalls and where, at midnight, you can’t help but feel that the city is refusing to sleep, daring you to join in.

**By K Tanzeel Zaman**

**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**





#LS EDITOR'S NOTE

# BY THE SOMESHWARI

## A River of Dreams

We reached the riverbank when the sun was about to set. The reddish hue of the sinking sun was about to disappear behind the hills of the neighbouring land. It created a magical ambience with the last play of light for the day.

The river starts as the Simsang in Meghalaya, carrying with it the coolness of the hills, and becomes the Someshwari as it enters our plainland through Durgapur, Netrokona. It is as if the river itself were shifting between identities to suit the lands it sustains.

We tried negotiating a fair price for the ride across the shallow waters. The young boatman admitted, "Tourists are sparse this season, Sir. I will give you a good deal. Just pay for the fuel!"

The roar of the engine marked the start of our short journey, and as we were carried across the river's quiet surface, the ferryman pointed to the distant hills: "You cannot go there."

We smiled in response, knowing fully that the hills are strictly off limits.

People were busying themselves as the day prepared to fold into night. The boy, seeking to appear older than his years, lit a Biri and remarked, "The sand grabbing has spoiled the river." His words were heavy for someone so young.

In the monsoon, the Someshwari still swells up. In the dry season, it shrinks, revealing sandbars and narrow channels, yet it never truly vanishes. Even in the scorching heat of Baishakh, its presence reminded the pulse of the villages that it has sustained for centuries.

We reached the bank opposite the paved ghat. As we stepped

onto the loose sand, the water lapped at our feet, pulling grains away. To us urban wanderers, it felt like quicksand. The boatman, watching our careful manoeuvring, drew on his Biri and smiled. He was no stranger to the scene.

We stayed until the sun sank. The Someshwari River is no mere metaphor, yet she often feels like one. Flowing between borders, bridging hills and plains, the Goddess of the Moon embodies the passage of

time itself. To walk by her banks is to step into a living song.

As we returned, the sun had already disappeared, but an afterglow lingered in the western sky. The engine roared once more, overpowering the murmur of the waters. And yet, over the machine's noise, we could catch the river's song, singing

still.

**By Mannan Mashhur Zarif**  
**Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel**

