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DRESS to Lead

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SARTORIAL STRATEGIST

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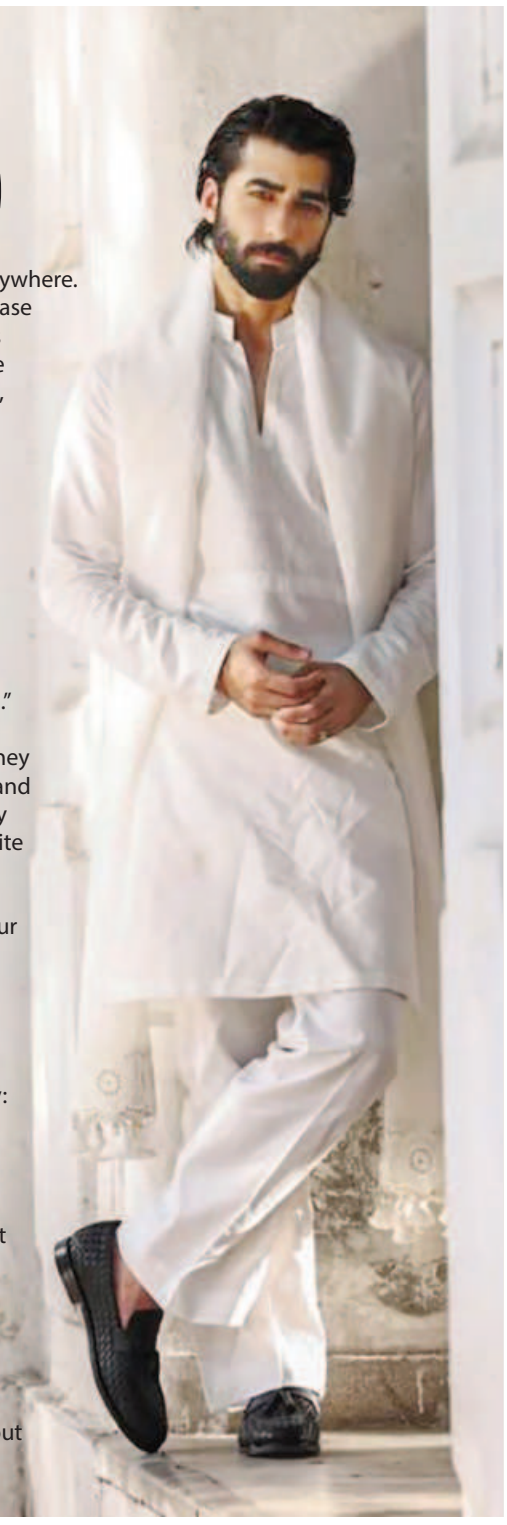
OLD MONEY STYLE THE MYTH WE'RE BUYING INTO



In 2023, a seller from Karachi spray-painted an ordinary chicken to look like an exotic bird. He listed it online as a "rare parrot with unique wings and tail" for 23 dollars. People laughed, the internet exploded, and the whole thing became a harmless joke. But lately, that story keeps returning to me for a different reason.

The more I observe fashion trends today, the more I realise how often we fall for similar illusions. You can change colours, outfits, silhouettes, even aesthetics, but you cannot spray-paint your way into another identity. And that is exactly what is happening with the rise of items marketed as "old money". The label is slapped onto anything beige, simple, or neutral, as if the right colour palette could claim a heritage it does not have.

Old money is not a style category. It is a way of living shaped by generational comfort, inherited privilege, and a world where confidence does not need decoration. That is why the modern "old money look" feels so hollow. It is a trend imitating a life it does not understand.

To begin with, old money means inherited wealth. Period. In Bangla, we call it "*bonedi poribar,*" families who have lived through generations of prosperity, privilege, and quiet power. And people born into that world have nothing to prove. Their simplicity is their elegance, because confidence comes naturally when you have seen it all.

However, social media has twisted this into a formula. Wear beige trousers, a tucked-in polo, maybe throw on loafers, and suddenly you are "old money." The irony is that we are not buying style, we are buying a performance — a borrowed feeling dressed up as an outfit.

The distortions run deeper. Take pants, for example. A well-cut regular fit has always been timeless. But after a decade of skin-tight trousers, influencers are now swinging to the opposite extreme, promoting flared and wide-legged pants and calling them "old money." That is not heritage, that is just trend-hopping.

This obsession shows up everywhere. On one side, college students chase shirts with oversized Gucci logos as if the logo itself could become their identity. On the other hand, a mature gentleman strolls in a classic khadi panjabi stitched by his neighbourhood tailor. One is acting the part. The other is simply living his truth. And only one of them will look timeless ten years from now.

And that is the core issue; trends are being force-fed. Influencers keep telling you, "Buy this, and you will look good." However, they rarely understand what they are recommending. They distort tailoring, they distort fit, and they distort meaning. Old money is not about beige pants and white shirts. It is about freedom from needing validation.

So, here is my takeaway as your Sartorial Strategist:

Do not chase aesthetics; find your style: A style you can carry for decades will always outlast a hashtag.

Focus on quality, not quantity: A regular-fit pant with proper tailoring will serve you far better than a dozen trendy pairs.

Wear it like it is yours: Clothes look confident only when they fit naturally into your life.

In the end, old money is not stitched into your shirt; it is stitched into history. For the rest of us, style begins and ends with authenticity. And authenticity, paired with quality, never goes out of fashion.

WHEN STYLE FEELS LIKE YOU: HERSTORY by Aarong's quiet confidence

There's a moment every woman knows—that pause before stepping out the door, looking at the mirror and thinking, "Does this feel like me today?" In a country where we juggle work, family, expectations, and the constant pressure to "look presentable," what we wear becomes less about impressing people and more about keeping our footing.

HERSTORY by Aarong fits into that space without trying too hard. It does not sell a fantasy. It simply brings Bangladeshi craft into clothing that respects the person wearing it. The pieces do not demand attention; they earn it quietly, which is probably why Jaya Ahsan carries them so naturally in this editorial. Her elegance is not theatrical; her presence does not strain to be seen; it sits with the clothes the way confidence sits with someone who knows themselves. She mirrors the brand's values without announcement, reflecting the same steady beauty, assured grace and unforced power that build the foundation of HERSTORY by Aarong.

HERSTORY by Aarong is a special brand, a luxury womenswear line shaped by our cultural heritage and refined by craftsmanship, blending modernity and time-honoured artistry into couture that feels relevant rather than ornamental, where each piece quietly holds emotion and meaning and becomes a symbol of lasting style. Nothing feels staged. It's the kind of confidence that is not borrowed. HERSTORY by Aarong designs do not overpower the woman; they elevate her, reinforcing individuality, poise and a confidence that does not need volume to be heard.

Look at the magenta katan jacket. The colour is bold, but the attitude is not loud. The embroidery is intricate but not decorative for the sake of it. It works the way a good habit does: present, reliable, and adding something to your day without making a scene. Paired with wide-leg trousers, it lands somewhere between festive and functional—the sort of outfit you could actually wear without feeling like you are pretending to be someone else. It speaks for itself without excess, a look that works across moments rather than occasions.

The brush-painted and hand-embroidered silk saree is similarly honest. It does not follow a colour palette, but the colours work together. The brushwork is deliberate, like someone took their time rather than rushing through it, which is rare these days. You are wrapped in talent, patience and effort rather than drama. It reads soft but certain, expressive without demanding attention, much like Jaya herself.

And then the hand-embroidered, sculpted jacket—structured but not rigid. It has shape, but it's not policing you into standing straight like some couture pieces do. The detailing is there if you want to notice it; it will not jump out at you otherwise. It mirrors the kind of woman who does not need to perform confidence; she just has it, even on the days she does not feel like talking much. It completes the third look with intention—sculpted, refined and aware of its presence, yet never forceful.

What HERSTORY by Aarong gets right is simple: Bangladeshi craftsmanship does not need gloss. It needs honesty, space, and good design. These pieces do not try to transform the woman. They adjust to her instead. And in a world that is constantly telling women who to be, clothing that lets you remain yourself feels like a relief. It is where Jaya Ahsan and HERSTORY by Aarong meet effortlessly—strength without noise, beauty without performance, tradition carried forward without losing itself.

By K Tanzeel Zaman
Photo: Courtedy

YOUR HOLIDAY STARTS HERE

Discover the escape you've been waiting for

Some of us think vacation starts when you land in a foreign country, connect to the Wi-Fi there, and immediately announce your arrival by sending blurry airport selfies to six different group chats. The truth is far less glamorous. If your journey begins with stiff necks, dried-out cabin air, and the emotional damage of being reclined upon repeatedly, then your holiday has already lost its head start.

Real luxury travel isn't just about the destination or the passport stamp. It's about how early in the process you allow yourself to exhale. It is the subtle alchemy of comfort, calm, and small mercies that gently whisper, *"Relax. You're off-duty now."*

The calm only good design can buy

If there is one thing that separates a premium experience from the rest of the metal tube, it's design. Not the "Instagrammable" kind — the functional kind that saves your spine and your sanity. A true luxury cabin gives you space: lie-flat beds, privacy doors, and enough room to stretch without apologising to three passengers and their extended families.

But the real magic lies in the ambience — the temperature that does not make you feel like refrigerated produce, the lighting that soothes instead of interrogates, and noise levels that resemble civilisation rather than a wholesale bazaar. When design is done well, you don't just sit; you settle.

Service that knows when to look at you and when to leave you alone

Luxury service isn't bubbly smiles or excessive fussing. It's a discretion. It's the quiet confidence of a crew that appears with your favourite drink before you ask and disappears with the same elegance when you want to be alone with your movie, your thoughts, or your mid-air existential crisis.

The human touch matters, being addressed by name, having your meals adjusted to your body clock, or simply being left in peace because you have declared a personal treaty with sleep. Premium cabins elevate service into an art of anticipation without intrusion.

Eating like you deserve to be here

Let's be honest, airplane food didn't exactly have a glorious reputation. For years, it was something you endured. But premium travel has rewritten the menu. Now, dining is chef-curated, plated with intention, and served with actual cutlery rather than flimsy utensils that question your life choices.

Think tasting menus, high-quality wines/champagnes, all day meals — food designed for altitude, not compromise. This isn't extravagance; it's acknowledgement. Your taste buds matter. Your mood matters. And somewhere between the appetiser and dessert, your holiday mindset quietly switches on.

Entertainment that doesn't make you miss the ground

Even the most scenic view from the window lasts about ten minutes before it becomes a cloud documentary. That's when in-flight entertainment steps in. A luxurious flight offers more than idle distraction — it offers escape.

Large screens, extensive IFE libraries, noise-cancelling headphones, and fast Wi-Fi create a tiny world within the cabin where you can work, unwind, binge a series, or broadcast your journey to every cousin group chat in real time. The best flights do not just keep you occupied; they keep you content.

Luxury that travels with you — airport to airport

The real test of premium travel is whether the comfort begins before take-off and continues after landing. Airport-to-airport luxury is where an airline's philosophy reveals itself.

Premium lounges with quiet zones, gourmet dining, showers, and spa services make waiting feel like part of the reward. Chauffeur services, where available, let you skip the taxi lottery entirely. Dedicated check-in counters and immigration assistance reduce stress levels by a shocking percentage. With the right setup, you don't transit — you glide.

Privacy: the ultimate currency

At 35,000 feet, the greatest luxury is the one thing Dhaka rarely grants you: privacy. A calm cabin with fewer seats, elegant dividers, and layouts that do not force eye contact with strangers is what separates genuine premium travel from "slightly larger economy".

This privacy is not about isolation; it's about peace. The kind that allows you to read, sleep, work, or simply exist without participating in unsolicited social interactions. It is comfort measured not in inches, but in breathing room.

The value test

One of the biggest myths in air travel is that luxury equals extravagance. It doesn't. Luxury equals ease. It is the ability to sit, stretch, sleep, eat, watch, and just *be* without negotiating peace treaties with your surroundings.

Choosing a premium airline is not about bragging rights. It's about investing in a stress-free beginning to your journey — buying back comfort, time, and sanity. When you evaluate airlines through that lens, the answer becomes surprisingly simple.

The only name that comes to mind

If luxury is the art of making your holiday begin the moment you step on board, then Emirates airlines has perfected that art! Their design, service, food, entertainment, and airport experience are not just better; they are consistently in a league of their own.

So, when you think of premium luxury air travel, you really only need to think of just one name: Emirates — where your escape begins long before landing.

By Jannatul Bushra
Photo: Courtesy

Products and services may vary by aircraft type.

#FASHION & BEAUTY

Power dressing is BACK and BOLDER than ever

Power dressing today is not only about authority, but also expression. It's the quiet confidence that comes from knowing your clothes reflect your voice, your ambitions, and your identity. We dress ourselves in the ways we want the world to view and treat us. Dress a woman in the right clothes, and she can conquer the world!

Power suits

What is great about a power suit these days is that they are incredibly relevant far beyond the boardroom. Jackets have become a staple for every woman with style and substance, and when paired with the perfect pair of pants, it is a match made in sartorial heaven. Now, this modern power suit is a far cry from the boring blacks and browns of yore.

The year 2025 has been remarkable, sartorially speaking, and the power suit has received an amazing, much-needed facelift. Other pieces that were formerly regarded only as boring workwear have now been reimagined as bold and beautiful, making them staples for casual as well as formal wear.

Discussing designs

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when thinking of a suit? Puffy shoulders, straight, shapeless silhouette that makes one look boxy and boyish? Well, brush those disturbing thoughts aside because women's suits of today are a far cry from their foremothers!

Chic cuts have elevated them from being just workwear to high fashion ensembles, and unique fabrics like silk, brocade, or linen have even upped the style quotient by miles.

A pink and white printed two-piece — a short jacket and vest combo — will look absolutely stunning when worn with wide-legged tan pants. Perfect for those days when one has back-to-back meetings in the morning followed by lunch with friends. It's a feminine, yet powerful outfit to saunter around town in.

Prints galore

Are you one of those ladies who shy away from pairing print on print, lest it make you look outlandish? Embrace the colourful chaos that is a printed coordinated pantsuit!

Funky and bold, printed pantsuits are all the rage everywhere in the world and are totally enjoying their moment in the sun. Choose an elegant yet playful print and break it up by juxtaposing a solid-coloured top. It will totally change the mood and make you look and feel like a million bucks!

Paint me bold and basic

Co-ords in solid colours are a crowd favourite that looks great on everyone.

A deep emerald green set with a Chinese collar is perfect for the office as well as for attending an art exhibition in the evening. Jewel tones like emerald, ruby, sapphire and amethyst exude richness and imbue their wearer with power and purpose.

Blouses in indigo, maroon and teal look fabulous on all skin tones and lend a subtle sophistication to one's appearance, empowering the wearer instantly.

So, there you have it! Embrace the modern ways to elevate your style repertoire by introducing pantsuits in your wardrobe and revel in the feminine yet fierce aura of power dressing!

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Anonna Fashion
Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Safiya Sathi
Location: InterContinental Dhaka

#PERSPECTIVE

What Bangladesh's Forgotten Trees Tell Us About Nature's Fragility

For Swedish-American designer Jacob Thomas, Bangladesh has been home for decades. It has been long enough for the country's landscapes, monsoons, and forests to shape the rhythm of his life. Although widely known for his work in graphic design and Bangla typeface development for major brands, Jacob's most unexpected contribution is something entirely different: a vast, accessible field guide titled "Plants of Bangladesh."

His relationship with nature began early. Growing up in Ishwardi, Kushtia, and other towns outside Dhaka, Thomas was surrounded by open fields, dense trees, and unplanned greenery. Years later, when his son developed a passion for birding, their travels across forests and wetlands reawakened that early familiarity.

While his son scanned the skies and surroundings for any of Thomas's attention shifted to the undergrowth, to leaves he could not name, flowers he wanted to identify, and patterns he could not quite decode.

Looking for a beginner-friendly plant guide, he discovered a glaring gap. "There are scholarly works, certainly, but nothing that helped ordinary people recognise what they were seeing," explains Thomas, "So I decided to create what I could not find."

As a designer, the idea immediately resonated with him. Visual communication, his everyday craft, seemed like the perfect bridge between scientific information and general readers. He wanted something simple, direct, and usable. "The aim," he states simply, "was twofold: helping people identify what grows around them, and reminding them that recognition is the first step toward conservation."

Fieldwork across Bangladesh offered Thomas far more than photographs. It exposed him to both the beauty and the vulnerability of the country's ecosystems.

During the height of the Rohingya crisis, he visited an area he had heard was lush with wildlife. Instead, Thomas arrived to find the forest gone; cleared entirely to make way for the refugee camps.

The shock of that moment stayed with him; the disappearance of something so large, so alive, revealed how quickly natural heritage can vanish.

There were lighter challenges, too.

"Wandering through unfamiliar villages while taking close-up photographs of plants often invited confusion," Thomas adds with a laugh, "People would stop, curious about my intentions, occasionally suspicious. However, once they understood my purpose, the interactions almost always unfolded with friendliness."

Some species are very difficult to distinguish, and Thomas humbly admits to the possibility of mistakes in his book. However, he also explains that conversations with locals sometimes offered insights that textbooks did not, reinforcing the importance of human knowledge in plant identification.

Jacob's years of travel across Bangladesh also shaped how he thinks about his own personality. Having lived between cultures, he experiences introversion and extroversion differently depending on where he is.

"In the West," he reflects, "people generally prefer more individual time. By comparison, I feel like an extrovert there because I want more time with people."

Bangladesh, however, operates on the opposite rhythm: social and constantly intersecting.

"Here, I feel more introverted," he says, "I need more time alone. And I love to have alone time out in nature whenever possible."

Although Bangladesh has rich documentation of its flora, most existing resources lean heavily on taxonomy, medicinal properties, and scientific classification. These are invaluable but not accessible to someone simply trying to identify a shrub on the roadside.

Jacob Thomas needed something practical — a tool that focused on what the eye sees first.

He was aware of the temptation to turn the guide into another academic text, but he resisted.

"Identification, I believe, has to come before deeper study," he stresses. That meant clear photographs, clean layouts, and straightforward captions.

He spoke to people, cross-checked with experts, and approached the project not as a botanist, but as a communicator.

The result is a sweeping visual guide featuring nearly 4,000 vascular plants of Bangladesh, with photographs of over 1,500 species documented in recent years. It is comprehensive without being overwhelming, and scientific without being inaccessible.

At its heart, Thomas's project is about shaping a culture of appreciation. His message is simple: learn about the plants around you, enjoy them and pass that appreciation to the next generation.

"People will not conserve what they do not know," he says, "it is only through connecting with nature that we can expect our future generation to have a stronger voice for conservation of it."

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Courtesy

#TRAVEL

A breath-taking early winter ride on the Marine Drive

Winter is gently knocking at our doors, while the traces of monsoon still linger in nature's embrace. Last week, I travelled to Teknaf through the Marine Drive on my scooter with one of my friends.

We set out early in the morning to savour the cool, solitary beach and the rhythm of fishing boats. The experience feels deeply fulfilling. Cox's Bazar has been my home for years, and countless journeys along the Marine Drive have become part of my life. Yet, the magic of the endless stretch of sea meeting the emerald hills never fades and still leaves me in awe every single time. I believe no soul can remain untouched by such raw beauty, as it's a sight that refreshes the spirit and pulls you in with an irresistible charm.

To be specific, two things along this coast have always captured my heart. One, the vibrant fishing boats and two, the raw beauty of live fishing on the beach. The boats, with their bold colours and graceful curves, line the shore like strokes of an artist's brush. While locals call them "nao," tourists often call them "moon boats," a name inspired by their moon-like shape.

In December and January, tourists rush, and crowds spill everywhere, leaving hardly a breath of space. The serenity fades, and even nature begins to lose its vibrant hues, turning pale under the grip of the dry season.

November, in my eyes, is the perfect season to embrace the splendour of Marine Drive. The paddy fields along it shimmer in golden hues, trees stand lush and green, the hills rise like emerald guardians, and the gentle waves on the beach stretch endlessly in shades of blue.

The beach lies pristine, various sea fish being dried up along the way, while the air carries a soothing balance. A slow, unhurried scooter ride, pausing wherever the heart desires, becomes more than a journey; it turns into a memory etched in time.

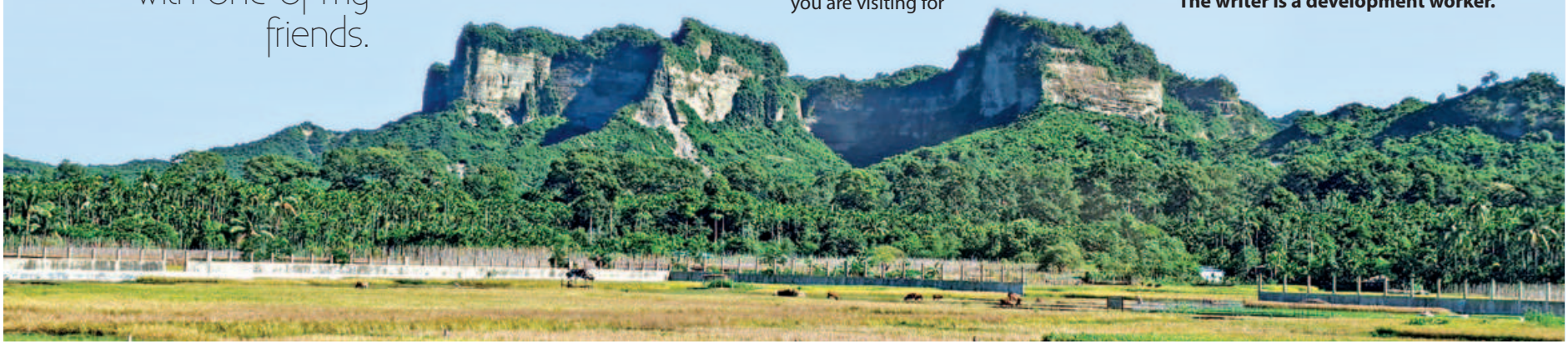
From Shamlapur to Teknaf, at many beach points, fishing by seine net is commonly seen every morning in the winter season. The smaller waves crashing at the shore create a breath-taking scene for visitors on the beach. It is very exciting to see live sea fish being caught. Many saltwater fish that are rarely seen alive can be observed at Teknaf beach, making it a unique experience for onlookers.

Cox's Bazar beach points remain often crowded, but Teknaf beach looks like a solitary private place. It is perhaps the quietest and brightest, cleanest of all natural beaches in the country. On top of it all, what makes it unique is the buzzing beach fishing and the colourful moon-boats.

Apart from the fishing, Teknaf has many natural wonders. It is surrounded by many beautiful natural landscapes, from lush green lofty hills in the north to the sandy beach and aqua sea in the west, the pristine Naf River in the east, and Saint Martin's, the only coral island of the country, in the south.

November unveils the finest face of nature along Marine Drive. It's a time when the beach feels secluded and refreshingly serene. If you are visiting for the first time, the journey will be nothing short of thrilling. The road runs like an endless ribbon, weaving between sea and hills, inviting you to lose yourself in its beauty.

By Parvez Uddin Chowdhury
Photo: Parvez Uddin Chowdhury
The writer is a development worker.



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#PERSPECTIVE

When Everyone Watches, No One Helps: Breaking the Bystander Effect

In cases of emergency, we like to believe we would step forward to help someone in danger. Yet, far too often, most people just stare or look away, while many even record the moment on their phones instead of helping, driven by a silent psychological chain reaction they may not even realise they are part of.

This behaviour is a common sight in an accident-prone, and often violent, Dhaka city. Whether it was the cocktail explosion near a university area or the arson attack on a running bus, videos surfaced online showing people filming the victims instead of rushing to pull them to safety. This shocking act of morbid curiosity captures a grim reality of human behaviour.

Dr Ashique Selim, a consultant psychiatrist based in the UK, shared in an interview with The Daily Star, "In most cases, people simply do not want to get involved mainly because they think their intervention will be uncalled for."

In the Bangladeshi context, the reluctance to help often stems from complicated concerns. Many onlookers say that they hesitate, fearing legal trouble and assuming law enforcement might badger them for being at the scene. Some avoid intervening because they do not want to be late for work or class. Many hesitate, fearing the misconduct might either be politically motivated or that they may not know the full context or background story.

Dr Selim highlighted a deeper issue and said that we need some kind of law and order in our country to prevent this kind of misdemeanour; if we want to stand against this, we need acute awareness and a clear sense of right and wrong.

Then there are victims, like people going through an epileptic seizure, a heart attack, an accident, or even a mob attack, lying unattended because everyone assumes someone else will step in. Psychologists have coined the term "bystander effect."

Referring to this social dynamic, Dr Selim pointed out, "Oftentimes, all it requires is just one person who initiates the help, and another person who follows."

If someone else needs urgent help, stay at a distance while making the emergency call to 999 or alerting nearby security, as your own safety is a valid concern. If you see someone else helping, join them.

The bystander effect works both ways. Just as apathy creates a chain reaction, so does taking action. Research suggests that once one person acts, others are far more likely to follow.

If you ever find yourself on the receiving end of this bystander treatment, you cannot always count on strangers. What you can do is keep your loved ones on speed dial and have a basic plan for emergencies. If possible, keep a note with your medical details and emergency contacts in your wallet. The rule of thumb is to single out one person from the crowd and mention a specific task. For example: "You in the black shirt, this is a medical emergency. Please call 999."

Small measures like these give bystanders clarity about their role, increasing the likelihood that someone will step forward.

Now, let's understand the perspective of a bystander. It is important to note that the hesitation is actually a part of the social dynamic. When others around them ignore the situation, it gives the bystander a silent signal that "everything must be fine." In social psychology, this is also known as pluralistic ignorance —when people spot a crime or medical emergency and do nothing.

Research shows that most bystanders do not come forward to help precisely because of the crowd itself.

The "Smoke-Filled Room" experiment, conducted by American social psychologists Darley and Latané, revealed that when a person was alone at the scene of an emergency, they helped someone 85 per cent of the time. But when they were in a crowd of five other people, the helping rate dropped to just 31 per cent.

The more witnesses there are, the more each person feels the responsibility is shared — and not theirs alone — assuming that others will step in, a phenomenon otherwise known as diffusion of responsibility. This suggests an important social dynamic: people are less likely to help when other bystanders are present.

While psychology clearly explains our behaviour, that does not justify it. Now that you know better, you should act differently as a responsible individual.

By Minhazur Rahman Alvee
Photo: Star Archives