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BORN

to run free!

PHOTO: APU JAMAN

#CHECK IT OUT

Winter Sunlight, Flags, and the Memory

It was never just another occasion on the annual calendar. We felt a deeper connection to Victory Day, and to all days of national significance, not because it was imposed by the powers that be, but because of the atmosphere that prevailed around us.

In early December, schools would arrange essay competitions. True, it felt unexciting and quite a chore at the time, but all our friends taking part made us feel united in our efforts. There would be special poetry and music sessions during assembly, sometimes followed by drawing competitions. The flags, flowers, rifles, and sunrises we drew were simple attempts to translate our patriotic feelings into colour.

December 16 was inevitably a morning soaked in winter sunlight. As red-green flags fluttered from bamboo poles, one could smell the unmistakable coat of fresh paint as neighbourhood youth hurriedly touched up makeshift gates in patriotic colours.

The day would begin with the sounds of gun salutes echoing through the morning air. There would be a military parade which, although we understood little of it, remained one of the highlights.

BTV aired patriotic programmes, but the primary attraction was always the war-themed films. Back in the day, families planned their entire afternoon around these screenings. Bangladesh Betar broadcast special programmes too, featuring speeches, recitations, and interviews with freedom fighters. Even the Victory Day advertisement campaigns

became part of the season's soundscape.

In the evenings, families would venture out. Children ran about comparing who had the bigger flag, while local clubs hung banners with hand-painted slogans that looked slightly uneven but were full of heart.

There were special melas showcasing handicrafts and local products. One still fondly remembers roaming the fair wearing a bandana in patriotic colours, a large cotton candy in hand.

We could not comprehend the complexities of the war, yet we understood the pride that was 1971. It came from watching our parents stand up at the theatre before the movie began — every single time.

It came from the softness in our teachers' voices as they narrated the bravery of the martyrs, or from the stories our grandmother whispered in the evenings before we fell asleep. Her stories often blurred fact and feeling, but they shaped our earliest understanding of courage and love for the country.

None of it was imposed, none of it curated through social media algorithms — all "organic," as one would say in today's lingo.

Back then, the experience felt slower, warmer, and more personal, making the recollections feel more authentic. At the time, Victory Day was less about spectacle and more about belonging, stitched together by simple rituals that quietly taught us what freedom truly meant.

By Mannan Mashhur Zarif
Photo: Sheikh Mehedi Morshed



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

অ্যান্ডালিনা
সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আন্ডিজাত্য...

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL us on f /Sandalina

#RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY

Why are your kids leaving Bangladesh? The answer is in your hands!

There are two things that happen very commonly around us. First, in almost any conversation about Bangladesh, be it at a family gathering or just the dinner table, we are quick to point out how unfavourable this country has always been and how other countries have done so much in the meantime. Second, when the children around us grow up hearing this and decide to leave “for a better life” in almost any country except the one they were born in, we are also quick to point out how they’re “forgetting the roots.”

Stop. Take a breath. Think again.

A child will not just wake up one day feeling connected to Bangladesh. They learn it from us. Children absorb the way adults talk long before they form opinions of their own. So, when they hear that Bangladesh is too messy, too chaotic, too hopeless, they internalise that feeling. At the same time, they are surrounded by the idea that “success” automatically means leaving home.

How do we raise children who love their country? Well, the answer is multidimensional and not quite simple.



Make history personal, not textbook heavy

Patriotism begins with knowing where we come from. And children connect a lot better when the stories feel human.

Instead of lecturing them about 1971, tell them about the teenage girl who smuggled grenades to freedom fighters, or the boy who carried secret messages across checkpoints. Watch documentaries together. Introduce books that make our history come alive. These help younger children connect visually without overwhelming them.

Bring culture into everyday life

Children feel rooted when culture becomes part of



their everyday rhythm. It does not have to be grand but consistent.

Play Bangla folk songs during drives. Make pitha together in winter. Visit Baishakhi fairs. Read stories by celebrated Bengali writers. Watch films like “Amar Bondhu Rashed” or short children’s festivals films available on YouTube.

When Bangladeshi culture feels warm and joyful, children grow into adults who do not feel disconnected from their roots.

Let them see the country’s strengths and struggles

There’s no need to pretend that everything is perfect. Today’s children are smart; they notice traffic, pollution, injustice, and inequality. Ignoring their questions only makes them see it in a negative light.

Be honest. Explain that Bangladesh has problems, just like every country in the world, but also explain that change happens when people stay committed, not when they give up.

Show them that patriotism is not blind pride. Rather, it’s hope with responsibility.

Encourage small acts of service

Nothing roots a child more deeply than helping another Bangladeshi.

Take them to donate winter blankets. Let them help the hardships up close. Yes, it will be difficult. However, the moment they shed a drop of tear, is also the moment resilience finds a new place in their hearts.

Children who experience the joy of giving back develop a natural emotional connection to their country.

Teach them to stay connected to home

In many Bangladeshi households, there is an unspoken plan from early childhood: finish school, then go abroad. Obviously, they mean well by wanting opportunities, safety, and world-class education for their children.

There is nothing wrong with encouraging global ambition. In fact, studying abroad can expand a child’s confidence and worldview in incredible ways. However, we often forget the second half of the message. Children also need to hear that bringing back what they learn is just as important. Every developed nation grew because its brightest minds returned home to contribute. They built industries, led research, improved systems, and pushed their countries forward.

If we want Bangladesh to grow, we must raise children who believe Bangladesh is worth coming back to, or at least worth investing in, collaborating with, and uplifting from wherever they are.

Raise children who believe they can help build the future

Patriotism is not about waving flags on one day of the year. It is about identity. It is about children believing that they are part of Bangladesh’s future, not just observers of its problems.

When they know their history, enjoy their culture, hear balanced conversations at home, serve their community, and see themselves as future contributors — patriotism grows naturally.

If we want a Bangladesh to be proud of, we must raise a generation that believes this country is worth building.

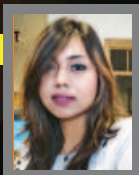
By Nusrath Jahan

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed/ Unsplash

LIFE AS IT IS

WARA KARIM

Writer, painter, gardener, content creator
Website: <http://www.scratchingout.com>



What is the ultimate cure for homesickness? Food, of course!

I tell my friends and family all the time that I may be physically present in the US, but in my heart and head, I live in Dhaka, most days and nights. Ask around, and you will see that I am not the only one who feels this way. It is quite a common emotion among us, non-resident Bangladeshis.

I get homesick in all seasons of the year. For instance, it is winter now, and friends and family who live in Bangladesh are posting photos of cold-season festivities from fairs to pitha utshobs.

The photos of winter foods and festivals on social media are pushing me deeper into nostalgia. No matter how much I wish, I cannot return home at this time to be part of all the merrymaking, so I find my own ways to comfort my homesick heart.

Two places in the US that feel closest to home are Jamaica and Jackson Heights in Queens, New York City (NYC). These are the two neighbourhoods where Bangladeshis from all over America come to experience the country they have left behind.

During the upcoming Christmas break, I am planning to visit Jamaica for the nth time. Why? Because I have been craving fuchka for the last three months. I will visit Tong, America's first fuchka cart, to relish one or maybe two plates of fuchka, and a bowl of green mango or guava bharta.

As I write this, I see seven crispy semolina shells filled with seasoned potato, yellow peas, onion, green chilli, and cilantro dancing before my eyes. The shells are topped with grated boiled egg, just like how they do it back home. The sauce cup in the centre is almost full to the brim with a lip-smacking tamarind water. I firmly believe that anyone who has not tasted

fuchka is missing out on one of the best foods in the world!

Queens is where I feel as if I am in Dhaka. When we become tired of hearing English all around us, my husband and I plan trips to NYC. We love Manhattan, but Manhattan does not comfort me. For this homesick heart to feel a bit less homesick, I need to spend several hours in places like Jamaica and Jackson Heights. There, I can see 'deshi'



men and women in panjabi, pyjama, and shalwar kameez, speaking Bangla in public places, streets lined with Bangladeshi-owned grocery stores and restaurants selling my favourite 'deshi' vegetables, halal meats, and foods ranging from shingara-samosa to kachchi biriyani.

Jamaica and Jackson Heights instantly remind me of Dhaka.

To us Bengalis, food is an integral part of our lives. We are foodies without any qualms. We miss the taste of "ma er haat er ranna" every day, and feel thankful when someone cooks us bhat-mach-mangsho-bhorta in a foreign country.

I am a genuine fan of traditional Bengali cuisine, and I am always eager to try new



Bangladeshi restaurants. During a trip to London in 2019, I paid a visit to East London solely because I had always heard that Tower Hamlets, Brick Lane, White Chapel, and Green Street remind one of Bangladesh. At Kolapata Restaurant in White Chapel, I enjoyed a deshi dinner over khichuri, hilsa fry, daal, beef bhuna, and shutki bhorta.

I have been to more than a dozen Bangladeshi restaurants here in New York City and one in London, and one common thing about these places that has always bothered me is their lack of hygiene. I would have visited these restaurants more often and even recommended them to my non-Bangladeshi friends, only if these restaurants practised proper hygiene. Our Bangladeshi restaurateurs must prioritise hygiene if they want to attract diners from diverse nationalities.

Jamaica or Jackson Heights is a 2.5-

hour ride from Delaware, and therefore, we cannot go there frequently to enjoy deshi food. However, there is a Bangladeshi grocery store here which sells frozen curries that come all the way from Bangladesh.

You will find everything from shutki, chingri, and taki mach bhorta to ilish polao. Cumilla's famous roshmalai and Bogura's mishti doi are also exported to the US, keeping in mind forever-homesick Bangladeshis like me. In addition, one will find kotbel, boroi, chalta, and aamra bhorta and different kinds of pitha that come all the way from Bangladesh.

On those occasions when we crave deshi food but cannot go to NYC, we go to our local Bangladeshi grocery store to get frozen ilish polao, chingri bhorta, or kochu shaak. Frozen curries never taste as good, but there is a saying: half a loaf is better than no bread. While I enjoy cuisines from around the world, it is only Bengali cuisine that comforts my heart when I am particularly homesick.

We try to visit Jamaica or Jackson Heights a few times a year. Whether it is for breakfast at Sagar Restaurant, a plate of fuchka from Tong, a box of sandesh from Premium Sweets, or a frozen Bangladeshi hilsa from Mannan Supermarket, these places transport me back to my home country, its people, and its delightful cuisine.



Photo: Collected/ Unsplash



Travel Bangladesh!

Our country is still an underrated treasure trove when it comes to tourism. Beyond what often meets the eye, there are myriad attractions that one can go to on a short notice, and with a small budget. This week, on the joyous occasion of Victory Day, we urge our readers to travel around the country, especially those who are in their youth. Travelling through Bangladesh is an eye-opener where you get to learn more about the country and its people and their behaviour — all while having a lot of fun! Still not convinced? Flip to the Centre and discover the joys and perks of travelling through Bangladesh!

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed



How exploring Bangladesh *in* *your* 20s changes you!



Is there a good age for travelling? Surely one can pack their bags anytime, at any age. But there is something magical, and reasonable, about exploring Bangladesh when you are in your 20s! Why am I saying that? Let this boro bhai explain.

IT'S BUDGET-FRIENDLY

As students or fresh graduates, it is likely that one of your biggest constraints is the money needed for travelling. A couple of home tuitions, freelancing gigs, or an entry-level job will probably suffice, and on top of that, you may have to contribute to your family, or pay your own bills.

But the good news is that travelling in Bangladesh can be really, really cheap! For example, my friend and I once stayed at a hotel in Dinajpur for just Tk 500 per night.

As a student, I did not care much about comfort, luxury, or convenience, as I do now.

You should indeed travel around the world (may be not in 80 days), but at this age, you can easily start with your own country, since it has plenty of budget-friendly options students can easily afford.

BANGLADESH IS ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL!

One dreams of backpacking through Europe, going on a road trip in the Americas, exploring the cool Asian metropolises, or trekking in exotic mountains. Fair enough, but our own country is brimming with beauty as well.

From the common touristy places to the off beaten paths, there are plenty of gems. Hiking through the majestic hill

tracts, rejoicing in the waterfalls, boat rides in haors, idle time on the beaches of Cox's Bazar, exploring nature and wildlife in the Sundarbans — the options are seemingly endless!

Furthermore, you will have an appreciation of our heritage, food, dialects, etc.

Perhaps, the problem is with lack of awareness and proper promotional activities. Otherwise, take any random district in Bangladesh, and you will have a few fun things to do in that district.

IT TEACHES YOU THINGS NO CLASSROOM CAN

The first two reasons should be enough for you to start planning a trip! But here is another: travelling gives you life lessons your structured university syllabus or dull trainings at your job can never teach. And it is best that you take in those lessons early in life.

Let travelling Bangladesh shape you as a person.

I used to engross myself in conversations with rickshaw-pullers or local bus drivers during my travels. It told me how surprisingly common human lives are — in terms of priorities, views, etc.

I had made friends with farmers and shared meals together, and discovered how their lives are not as “simple and peaceful” the way we city folks



sometimes imagine it to be.

I sometimes became pleasantly surprised how kind and hospitable people are. There were also a few instances when I found myself in ugly skirmishes and dealt with aggressive people looking to intimidate or swindle.

Exposure to human behaviour is important, and Bangladesh can give you that in bold, unexpected ways. Travelling across the country promises to be an eye-opener!

IT LEAVES YOU WITH MEMORIES YOU'LL CHERISH FOREVER

For most people, the early to mid-20s is an interesting time — you are an adult, but nobody bats an eye unless you severely goof up! You are an adult but “adulting” is not fully expected out of you yet. You are energetic, and “real” life troubles have (hopefully) not settled in.

These call for some magical times spent. When I look back, I do not necessarily think of the splendour or beauty of a place. I cherish the simplest things.

I cherish how my friends and I got on an Easy Bike and went from one village to the next aimlessly, only to end up in a different division where we had to spend the night because it was too late to return. I remember the extreme darkness one night at a hill station when electricity went off for a while. I still get angry when I recall that I missed a bus back to Dhaka because my friend was too absorbed in eating chui jhal mutton curry. I remember being stranded in the rain as me and my friends took shelter at a tong er dokan in a random, unfamiliar village, with not a care in the world.

My 20s are behind me, but I wonder, would those years be so magical if I had not travelled across Bangladesh?

By M H Haider

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed/ STAR



#FOOD & RECIPES

A TASTE OF WINTER: 5 classic pithas and kheers to warm the season

Winter in Bengal is inseparable from the tradition of pitha-making, a craft passed down through generations, where simple ingredients like rice flour, coconut, milk, and molasses transform into delicacies that define our culinary heritage.

From the luxurious richness of zafrani kheer patishapta to the earthy simplicity of chhita pitha, these recipes celebrate both nostalgia and flavour.

Here are 5 beloved winter treats that continue to bring families together.

ZAFRANI KHEER PATISHAPTA

Ingredients

For the batter —

1 cup rice flour

¼ cup all-purpose flour

½ cup liquid molasses

1 cup liquid milk

For the stuffing —

2 litres milk

2 tbsp rice flour

Saffron, soaked in milk

Sugar to taste

Chopped dried nuts, pistachios, almonds, walnuts, and raisins

Method

Prepare a thin, smooth batter using all the batter ingredients. It should be neither too runny nor too thick. Cover and rest for at least 1½ hours.

To make the stuffing, heat the milk with sugar and stir continuously until it reduces by half. Soak the saffron in a little warm milk. Add the sugar and the rice-flour-mixed milk to the pan. Keep stirring until the mixture thickens. Add the chopped nuts and raisins, mix well, and remove from heat. Allow it to cool.



Heat a non-stick pan and lightly grease the surface. Pour a small amount of batter and spread it into a thin circle. Place two spoonfuls of stuffing on one side and roll the pitha into a cylindrical shape. Arrange on a plate and serve.

BHAPA PULI

Ingredients

1 cup rice flour

¾ cup water

Salt to taste

For the filling —

2 cup grated coconut

1 cup date palm

jaggery

Method

Prepare the filling by cooking the grated coconut and jaggery together, stirring continuously until the mixture turns sticky.

To make the dough, boil ¾ cup water with salt. Once it comes to a boil, add the rice flour and mix well. Allow it to cool slightly, then knead into a smooth dough.

Roll the dough into a medium-thick roti on a rice-flour-dusted surface. Cut into small circles using any round cutter. Place a portion of the filling in the centre and seal the edges with your fingertips.

Steam the pithas for 3–4 minutes. Lightly grease the steaming tray beforehand to prevent sticking. Serve hot.



CHAK-HAO KHEER (BLACK RICE KHEER)

Ingredients

¼ cup black rice

1½ kg milk (full fat)

¼ tsp cardamom

powder

Sugar, to taste

Method

Rinse and soak the rice for 5–6 hours. Drain and transfer to a pot with the milk. Cook on very low heat, stirring occasionally, until the rice becomes soft. Adjust the amount of milk based on the kheer consistency you prefer.

Add sugar, raisins, and cardamom powder. Cook for another 5 minutes on low heat. Remove from heat when done. Serve either hot or chilled.

DUDH CHITOI PITHA

Ingredients

1 cup rice flour (parboiled rice)

½ cup white rice flour (atop chaal)

1½ cup lukewarm water

Salt to taste

½ cup date jaggery

2–3 cardamoms

2 cinnamon sticks

3 litres of milk

Method

Mix the rice flours with lukewarm water and a pinch of salt to make a smooth, thin batter. Achieving the right consistency is essential for perfect chittoi pithas.

Heat a clay pot or iron wok until very hot, then lightly grease it with oil. Pour a small amount of batter, cover, and cook on low heat for about 3 minutes. Cook only one side. Loosen the edges with a knife and gently remove the pitha.

In a separate pot, heat the milk with jaggery, cardamom, and cinnamon. When it reduces to half, turn off the heat and immediately add the warm pithas. Cover and let them soak for at least 4–5 hours. Serve afterwards.

KHEJUR PITHA

Ingredients

1 cup semolina
½ cup flour
1 egg
¼ cup sugar
1 tbsp ghee
¼ tsp baking powder
4 tbsp warm milk
Oil for deep fry
A pinch of salt

Method

In a large bowl, combine semolina, flour, sugar, salt, baking powder, and ghee. Mix well. Add the egg and knead into a dough — it should be firm but not dry, soft but not sticky.



Shape the dough into small balls. Take one ball, shape it like an egg, and flatten it thinly over the back of a colander. Roll it from one end to the other and seal securely. Repeat with the remaining dough.

Heat oil in a pan and fry the pithas until golden brown. Remove and drain on paper towels. Fry the rest in the same way. These pithas can be stored in an airtight container for 2–3 weeks.

CHHITA PITHA

Ingredients

1 cup rice flour
¼ cup plain flour
2 cup water
Salt to taste
Oil

Method

Place the rice flour in a bowl. Add water and salt, and whisk to make a smooth,

light batter. Set aside.

Brush a pan with oil and heat over medium flame. Sprinkle or flick the batter onto the pan using your hand. After a few seconds, gently lift and remove the pitha. Stir the batter each time before spraying it.

Serve with jaggery or meat curry.

— LS Desk

Photo: LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed





#PERSPECTIVE

Why every Bangladeshi abroad feels that quiet strangeness in their heart

It is that time of the year when nostalgia hits, reminding us of school days when Victory Day meant a holiday, watching cultural performances on TV, waving the flag at the mela, on the rooftop, or even over the car hood. These small rituals made us feel connected, made us feel part of something shared. Around this time, people living away from their country feel a quiet strangeness in their heart, knowing they cannot be part of this shared experience with their friends and family the way they used to, now that they are miles away from home.

Md Kaushik, a Bangladeshi migrant worker living in Australia and currently working as a cashier at a convenience store, said, "I miss the chaos of Bangladesh — the madness and the rush of it all."

Even in Australia's orderly efficiency, he finds himself craving the unpredictability of Dhaka's streets, where plans change on a whim, and somehow, things still work out. Kaushik also shared that he misses going to New Market to haggle and hates how he has to do everything on his own.

For others, their taste buds yearn for a real Bangladeshi grub.

Sadia Rahman, a resident of Toronto, says she misses the food of Bangladesh. She remarked, "It's not that we do not have Bengali food here. But even the Bengali dishes here are not the same as what you get back home. I miss the variety, the quantity, and the touch of the food. That is why I eat as much deshi food as I can whenever I visit Bangladesh."

It could be said that food abroad is only consumed, but food back home is experienced and shared. For most non-resident Bangladeshis, each visit back home becomes a mission to eat as much Bengali food as possible, to make up for the lost chance.

Upon arriving home, Janifar Kamal, an international student currently pursuing her master's in the US, plans to make the most of her time by catching up with friends and family and eating all the food she has been missing.

Whereas, for others, the homemade food symbolises love. Mahbub Hasan,

an international master's student in the UK, said, "More than anything, I missed the handmade food cooked by my mum, especially her chicken curry with potatoes. No matter how many times I try to replicate her recipe, I cannot recreate the touch of my mother's love."

People miss their country with all their senses. Interestingly, for Mahbub, it was not a familiar sound but the absence of particular sounds that made him miss home even more.

"The next thing I missed was the sound of the Azan," he noted. "I never realised



its significance until it disappeared from my daily life. At one point, I would play the Azan on my phone just to feel that assurance and inner strength."

Something he had rarely paid much attention to before suddenly felt like an anchor when it disappeared from his routine.

In a bizarre turn, he mentioned that he actually misses the cacophony of car horns in Dhaka city, a sound most people are known to despise, let alone imagine missing. "Despite its flaws, the noise becomes part of your senses. And you notice this deadly silence only when you

move abroad," Mahbub expressed.

In the quiet of his UK flat, that absence feels daunting. The constant hustle of Dhaka city — the traffic, the street vendors, the chatter — became something he longed for in the silence of abroad.

For many, they miss the warmth they felt with the people they were connected with, sharing memories that are even more intimate.

Reminiscing the closeness, Ifthaul Islam Muzahid, an international student currently studying in Japan, shared, "I miss the two Eids the most, especially during Qurbani Eid — from buying the cattle at the haat to taking care of them until the sacrifice."

Muzahid lamented, "Now, my family does everything, and I only see our cattle

pointed this out, saying, "There are so many things I miss: my family, culture, festivals, the weather."

He highlighted, "But what I miss the most is the reduced load of responsibility and a simple life back home."

Back home, life came with a lighter load with family nearby, and even the burdens got shared. In a foreign country, everything becomes individual, calculated and scheduled.

Chowdhury says he also misses the comfort of hanging out with friends without planning a week.

Many miss their country for the people they left behind. Tarazi Mohammed Sheikh, an international law student in the US, shared in this regard, "I miss my teachers



just before qurbani through pictures." He added, "I miss visiting the relatives' houses and distributing the meat. I miss the togetherness of that ritual."

What once felt like a burden, like waking up early, the meat, and the mess, is now something he yearns for but can only witness second-hand.

Abu Taher, a construction worker in Malaysia, also shared that he misses the bonding he shared with his relatives, friends and people from his village, where everyone knows everyone.

The sense of responsibility also shifts drastically once someone moves out of their own country.

Muntakim Chowdhury, an international student, currently working as a sales associate at Home Depot in Canada,

in Bangladesh because they shaped the most important phase of my growth. Their guidance played a crucial role in my academic, personal, and professional journey."

These stories should remind us to feel grateful and fortunate to be home, among our loved ones who have seen us through every stage of life, and in a community where everybody knows our name. Challenges exist everywhere, whether at home or abroad, but being able to share them with others makes us feel connected and gives life a deeper sense of belonging.

**Certain names have been changed upon request*

By Minhazur Rahman Alvee
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed / STAR

#HOROSCOPE

How Pluto shapes human generations Eagle, Scorpion, and Grey Lizard

When the planet Pluto enters any zodiac sign, it takes three powerful forms based on its degree. Pluto at 0°-5° creates the Eagle Avatar, Pluto at 8°-15° creates the Grey Lizard Avatar, and Pluto at 22°-27° forms the Scorpion Avatar. These forms shape three special human generations. They rise through struggle and become forces of change.

Pluto Eagle Generation: The Visionary Leaders

Birth years: 1901-1902, 1929-1931, 1950-1956, 1970-1971, 1980-1982, 1989-1995, 2006-2007, 2019-2025 (partial)

People born in these years often grow up misunderstood, because they think differently and refuse to follow the crowd. Like an eagle watching from above, they learn silently, observe everything, and strike at the perfect moment. They become leaders, inventors, thinkers, and powerful influencers.

Their strength comes from clear vision and patience. They do not rush. They know how to wait for the right time, and when they act, they change entire systems.

Pluto Scorpion Generation: The Silent Fighters

Birth years: 1926-1929, 1946-1949, 1963-1969, 1976-1980, 1986-1989 (Partial), 2000-2005, 2014-2018.

The Pluto Scorpion Generation is born in times of personal or social struggle. Their lives often begin with emotional pain, financial hardship, or deep insecurity. But instead of collapsing, they grow stronger. They transform their pain into success, just like a scorpion that attacks only when necessary.

Their power comes from endurance, discipline, and powerful inner energy. They

turn failures into victories and rise through self-belief.

Pluto Grey Lizard Generation: Revolutionaries Who Pay the Price

Birth years: 1914-1920, 1939-1945, 1958-1962, 1972-1975, 1983-1985, 1996-1999, 2009-2013, 2025-2030 (Ongoing)

This generation is born into war, political conflict, and national crisis. They do not just fight for their own lives; they fight for society. But their journey is painful. They often face betrayal, loss, or even death. Yet, they create revolutions and inspire millions.

Their strength is sacrifice and courage. They change nations and cultures, even if they must pay a heavy personal price.

Final reflection —

The Pluto Eagle, Scorpion, and Grey Lizard Generations show us one truth:

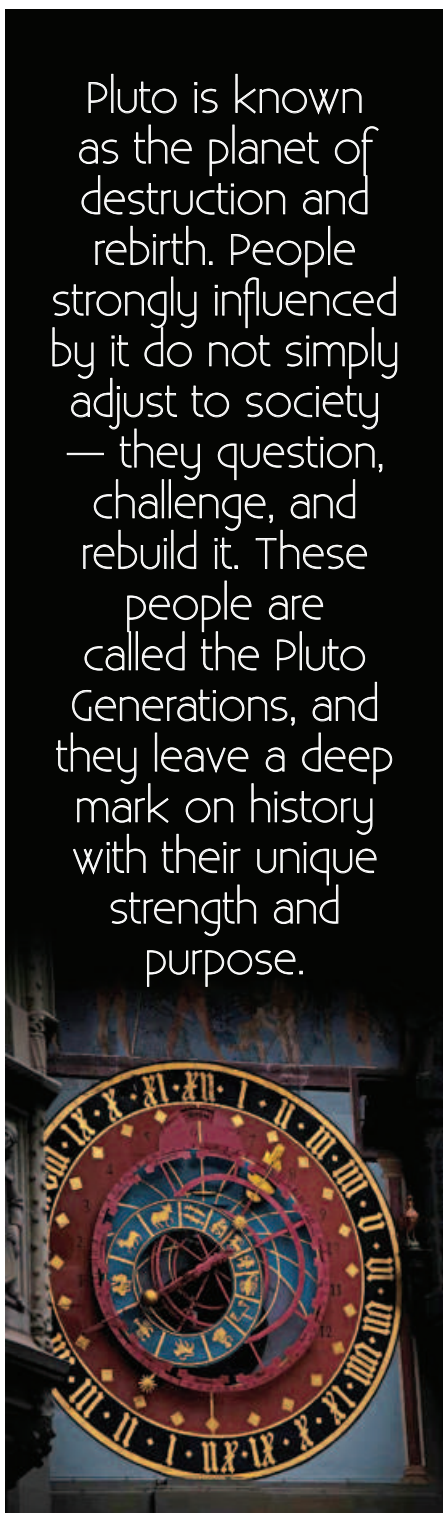
Strength grows from struggle.

Some transform the world through ideas and leadership, some fight quietly through personal hardship, and some change history through sacrifice. Each generation carries a different kind of power, but all are born to transform society. They do not fear darkness. They grow from it. And by growing from it, they change the world.

The author is an astrologer

By Chinmoy Barua

Photo: Collected







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KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

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A diasporic plate

Sabina Khan's vision for Bangladeshi food

If you ask Sabina Khan where her cooking began, she starts with her mother's kitchen. It's a place where Bangladeshi "shorshe ilish" sat comfortably next to pizzas and Chinese stir-fries.

"My earliest memories of food are of my mum cooking all kinds of different dishes," she says. "My friends would come over just to eat her food. I believe my exposure began with her and my grandmother. They were fabulous cooks who never limited themselves to one cuisine."

That said, her life did not follow a predictable cultural arc. She has lived in Dhaka, India, the US, Nova Scotia, and now England.

"I've experienced a lot of different types of food from moving around," she explains. "But I do not see that as fusion. I am not interested in fusing things. I want to see how different flavours can co-exist on a plate and still tell a story."

Her explanation is firm: "People confuse what I do with fusion, and I always correct them. I am more interested in flavour than identifying labels."

Redefining Bangladeshi food in a diasporic context

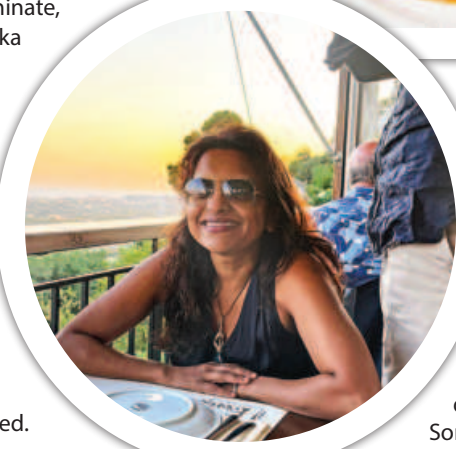
Living abroad has shown her how often Bangladeshi food is misunderstood.

"In England, the idea of Bangladeshi food is mistakenly tied to Indian restaurant menus," she says.

Dishes that dominate, such as chicken tikka and vindaloo, can overshadow the complexity of Bengali cooking.

"A lot of Bangladeshi immigrants had to set up restaurants serving Indian food because that is what the British public wanted. Our own flavours never got space. Mustard, fish, panch phoron — they are barely represented in fine dining. There's a lot of scope for Bangladeshi cuisine abroad," she insists.

And adds, "I'm sure that if people had a chance to taste our ingredients, they'd be amazed."



A laboratory, not a kitchen

Khan does not describe her work as recipe development. She calls it experimentation.

"In my lab," she laughs, "I have my spices, and I create different experiments."

Some work. Some do not.

Sometimes they look beautiful but do not taste good. Other times they look terrible and taste incredible."

She always begins with a traditional recipe, then follows her instinct rather than the rules. Her recent rethink of a standard

fish curry captures this approach.

"Usually, we cook fish in the curry until everything becomes one," she says, "But sometimes the ingredient gets lost."

So, she bought fresh fish with her father, filleted it, pan-fried it separately, and served it over the curry. "I didn't tell him anything. He ate it and said, 'Oh, this fish is so fresh!' That said everything."

She is not abandoning Bangladeshi flavours. She's rethinking how they behave.

a traditional one. "It would not be a 'Bangladeshi cookbook.' It would be a Flavour Lab cookbook — something that lets people see food outside categories."

She also wants to explore professional kitchens in Bangladesh, perhaps as part of a show. "We do not see behind-the-scenes journeys of chefs here, especially female chefs. It would be a new avenue, and a way to show how much Bangladeshi cuisine has evolved."



"What vegetables could we use that we don't have? Could a Baba Ganoush work with our flavours? Maybe. Why not try?"

The birth of Sabina's Flavour Lab

Despite cooking for two decades, Sabina only recently considered turning her curiosity into a brand.

"I realised this is something I'm passionate about," she says. Her vision for Sabina's Flavour Lab is not to teach people recipes, but to invite them into her experimentation.

She imagines supper clubs that bring unlikely cuisines together: "Mexican with Bangladeshi influences, or Italian with Asian twists."

A cookbook may follow, though not

What she wants next

Khan's hopes for the future centre around one idea: giving Bangladeshi cuisine global legitimacy without diluting it.

"There's so much our food can offer that the world hasn't tasted yet," she says.

She wants to rethink bhortas, salads, and mishti.

"Healthy Bangladeshi food exists. We eat it every day," she smiles.

Her flavours are steady but with surprises folded in, like the simmer of a curry being tested in the Flavour Lab, the place where Sabina Khan keeps turning ingredients into possibilities.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Courtesy