



VOLUME 25, ISSUE 33, TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 2026  
MAGH 6, 1432 BS

Star  
**LIFE**  
*Style*

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64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. A publication of *The Daily Star*

# POP Fizz and COLOUR

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#FYI

Honey has become a beloved family member in Bangladeshi households once again this unusually chilly winter.

Temperatures have fallen well below what is typical for this season, and the drop has had a real impact on people's health and daily life.



# How honey helps Bangladeshis fight winter coughs and cold

Dense fog cloaks the country, blocking out the sunshine and making the cold feel more persistent and penetrating than previous winters.

With respiratory illnesses rising and people of all ages spending more time wrapped in blankets and warm clothing, simple, widely available home remedies are coming to the fore once again. Honey, a natural food with a long history in winter care, and something that general wisdom, and research suggest can offer practical support right now. Here are some time-tested ways to make this bitterly cold winter a sweet experience.

#### Eases Throat problems

As cold weather sets in, coughs and throat irritation become more common. Clinical studies show that honey can reduce the frequency and severity of coughs linked to upper respiratory infections such as the common cold, in some cases performing as well as or better than over-the-counter cough medicines. Its thick, sticky texture coats the throat, easing irritation caused by dry air and frequent coughing. This coating effect helps reduce pain when swallowing or speaking, and calms the cough reflex, which is often triggered more easily during winter.

Honey also contains plant-derived compounds with anti-inflammatory properties. Inflammation is a natural response to infection and irritation, but

during winter, it can worsen symptoms such as sore throats and persistent coughs. Honey's bioactive components help soothe this response, making respiratory discomfort more manageable during cold spells.

#### Supports Immunity and Clears Congestion

Winter puts extra strain on the immune system, as cold, dry air and seasonal infections spread far and wide. Honey's antioxidant and bioactive content may assist in



boosting overall immune responses when taken as part of a balanced diet. It is not a cure-all, but it can supplement an overall winter health regimen. Honey is also naturally high in antioxidants, which protect against oxidative stress, a process associated with inflammation and disease. These chemicals help honey maintain its status as a winter health essential. Colder weather also causes thicker mucus and congestion. Honey may assist in loosening and thinning mucus, making it easier to clear the airways and relieving the strain from persistent coughing and nasal congestion.

#### Helps Improve Sleep and Provide Instant Energy

Nighttime coughing is a typical winter problem that may interfere with sleep. Honey's calming impact on the throat and ability to lower cough frequency may result in more comfortable evenings, which are critical for healing during seasonal illnesses. Better sleep also improves immunological function and general well-being.

Honey can also serve as a quick source of energy in chilly conditions. Its natural sugars, glucose and fructose, are easily absorbed by the body, helping to fulfil the slightly higher energy requirements of staying warm this season. A teaspoon or two in warm water or tea might provide a mild energy boost without the abrupt slump associated with refined sugar.

#### Moisturise Dry Skin and Daily Care

Winter dryness is not limited to the throat and airways. Cold air and low humidity may result in cracked skin, chapped lips, and dry cuticles. Honey's antimicrobial and wound-healing characteristics make it ideal for soothing and protecting these delicate regions. Honey, whether used topically or in simple moisturising masks, may assist the skin in retaining moisture and repair itself.

Honey is best for regular usage when paired with warm liquids like water, lemon, or herbal tea, which enhances its relaxing properties and helps reduce congestion. Honey, when used strategically and in moderation, remains one of the easiest and most accessible methods to bring comfort and care into everyday routines throughout this particularly chilly winter.

By Zawad Arif Arian  
Photo: Collected

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## #HEALTH &amp; FITNESS

# Yoga beyond fitness: Eza Chowdhury on healing and trauma

At one point, Eza Chowdhury was trusted with other people's futures in the most literal sense. As a financial planner in Canada, she had full authority over clients' life savings — the power to move money, reshape portfolios, and make decisions that could alter entire financial trajectories.

But somewhere between managing capital and managing expectations, something stopped aligning.

"I would walk out of yoga classes and feel a shift," she recalls. "Something was happening to me, but I didn't understand what it was." That question became more urgent after personal losses that money, status, or structure could not absorb. What followed was not a dramatic exit, but a slow unravelling of certainty.

## The body has a memory

Today, Chowdhury is a certified yoga teacher, trauma-informed facilitator, and energy healer based in Bangladesh. She's also the founder of Samadi Wellness, and host of the widely-followed podcast 'Flow with Eza'. But her understanding of yoga is grounded in both lineage and realism.

"Yoga didn't begin as a fitness routine," she explains. "In our part of the world, it was always a spiritual discipline. The West picked it up, filtered it through the gym lens, and made it physical. But even if you start with the body, it's a start. That's fine."

She views the physical movements of yoga (asana) as doorways, not destinations. "When the body moves, energy moves," she says. "Stuck emotions begin to shift. The body has a memory — of pain, of trauma. You can't override it with logic."

This isn't theory. It's practice, something she saw play out in her own life after the loss of her father and a divorce that followed. "There was a mismatch between what I was doing and what I truly wanted. That dissonance became impossible to ignore."

So, she followed the curiosity. It led her to teacher training in Thailand. Then to Rishikesh. Then to trauma studies, breathwork, Reiki, and the kind of slow transformation that doesn't show up on a résumé but changes everything.

## The real practice begins off the mat

In a wellness industry increasingly defined by aesthetics, Chowdhury's approach is quiet but cutting. She doesn't romanticise yoga, nor does she oversimplify it. "If you want abs or long limbs, join a gym," she says. "Yoga is about your relationship with yourself — your thoughts, your habits, your healing."

She walks students through the full eight limbs of yoga — starting with Yama and Niyama (ethical principles) before even

touching physical postures. "Asana is just one part. The rest — breathwork, focus, meditation, inner discipline — that's where the real shift happens."

But she also knows you can't sell spiritual work in abstract terms. That's why she plans to launch a 10-minute yoga series on her YouTube channel. "No more excuses," she says. "Everyone has ten minutes. These videos cover everything from back pain to strength building, from kids to beginners. Just start."

## When unhealed people run the world

Chowdhury's recent podcast episodes and her growing social commentary reflect her concern for a society 'full of unprocessed grief, rage, and pain.'

"Why are we seeing so much public anger?" she asks. "Because we're not well. We're spiritually and emotionally unwell, and it's spilling into everything — our politics, our homes, our online behaviour."

She sees mindfulness not as a luxury but a survival skill. "We've normalised doomsrolling. My mother does it. Everyone's anxious, but no one's healing. You don't need to call it yoga. Call it whatever you want. But do something mindfully. Drink your tea with presence. Sit with your food. Just stop splitting your attention."

## Holding space in a noisy world

Her podcast, Flow with Eza, wasn't intended to be a spiritual archive. It evolved into one. "I kept meeting people with incredible stories — trauma, resilience, transformation," she says. "They needed a space to be heard."

The podcast has hosted everyone from startup founders to spiritual seekers. She recounts one guest — a woman from Barishal who grew up orphaned and today, runs one of Bangladesh's fastest-growing startups. "People like her deserve to be seen," Chowdhury says. "It's not just about 'success'. It's about who you became to get there."

## No five-year plan

Ask Chowdhury what's next, and the answer is unscripted. "I just want to live as clean a karmic life as I can," she says. "If I'm learning something, I want to share it. That's it. No grand strategy."

She knows she could scale Samadi Wellness. She knows she could monetise more. But she's not interested in empire-building. She's interested in transmission.

"Sometimes you're angry, you fight with your spouse, you yell at your kids. Then maybe one day, you do five minutes of breathwork. And you don't yell. That's change. That's yoga."

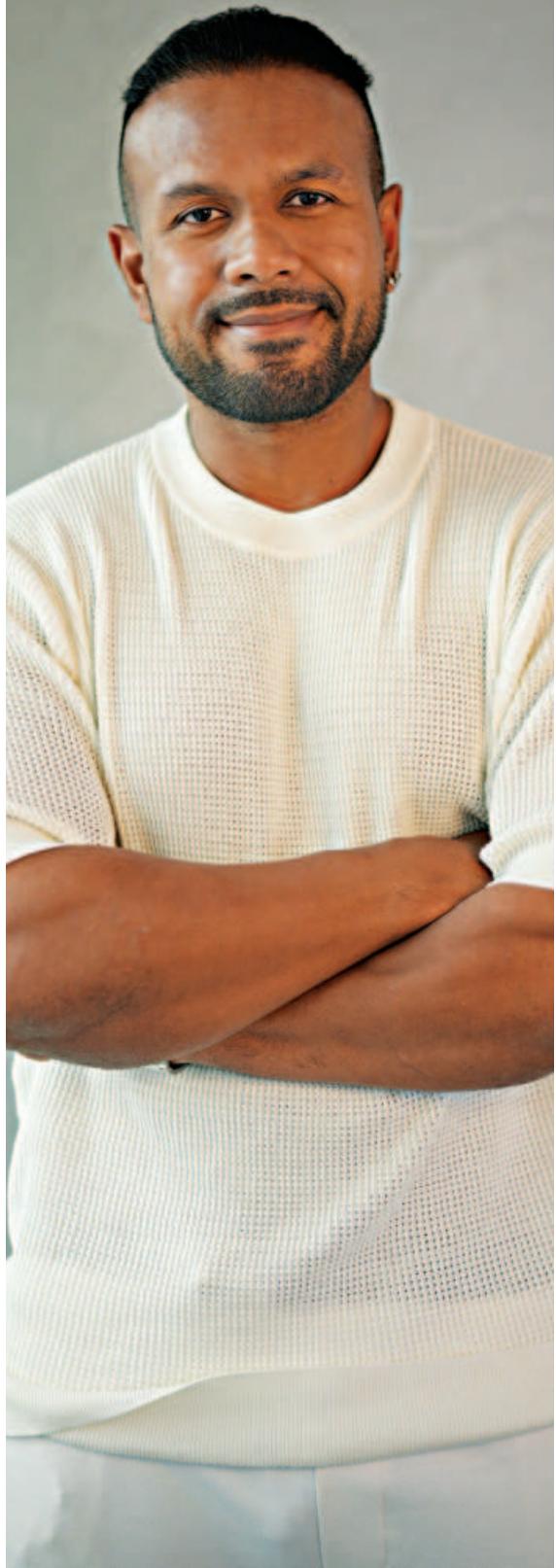
By Ayman Anika

Photo: Courtesy



## #PROFILE

# How Ruslan Hossain revolutionized fitness in Bangladesh



An ordinary teenager with a desire to get fit, Ruslan was just 17 when he joined the local gym. From there to owning one of the biggest fitness centres in the country, Ruslan Hossain's journey is a story of hard work, discipline, and a never-say-die attitude that awes and inspires in turn.

A motivated, young Ruslan realised that he was out of shape and needed to become fitter and healthier. He entered a gym with some trepidation and a whole lot of inexperience. While he did find himself a fairly capable gym trainer, his slow progress soon showed him that exercise alone was not going to award him the six-pack abs and chiselled physique that he so coveted; proper diet and nutrition would have to be part of the deal too. This realisation encouraged him to learn more about dietary habits, ultimately allowing him to reconstruct his own body within six months.

#### From the Basics

As Ruslan's physique changed, he began attracting positive interest from his friends and acquaintances. They approached him with questions about his routine and dietary practices, seeking counsel on how to achieve similar results. Enthusiastically, Ruslan began sharing what he had learned. His simple advice was effective, and many around him began to achieve their fitness goals too. By 2009, Ruslan knew he was onto something. As positive reviews poured in, he realised something profound; while Bangladesh had gyms, there was a screaming absence of personalised workout plans and holistic fitness approaches in the country. Recognising a gap in the fitness landscape of Bangladesh, he decided to make a career out of bodybuilding.

"I started small," he shares. "It was an 800 square feet room inside my own house where I started to train clients one-on-one."

Combining personal attention with a safe and welcoming environment, he attracted clients, including women who had, until then, been hesitant to engage in weight training due to societal norms and did not have the right environment to do so in public gyms which primarily received male clients.

As Ruslan attracted more and more fame, his client base continued to grow. His success soon outgrew the small home set up, and he realised

that he would need a bigger space to reach more people. "It was a leap of faith — taking the risk of moving to a commercial space. It meant more overheads, more expenses."

With no prior experience in managing a large-scale facility, he stepped into uncertainty — but with conviction. His first major step up was a 3,500 square feet gym in Banani, which quickly gained massive traction. Within a year, overwhelming demand led to an expansion into a 6,500 square feet facility in the same area. Momentum didn't slow down there. Eventually, a second branch was launched at Dhanmondi Shimanto Shambhar, spanning 8,500 square feet.

Today, the brand operates successfully across two prime locations, scaling not just in size — but in impact.

#### More Than Just a Fitness Coach

Ruslan's training continues to be a

#### A Challenging World for Fitness Coaches

Keeping up a high morale for clients and sustaining training commitments has always been an uphill battle for gyms, but when it comes to this coach, this is not so. "Establishing personal connection is key to maintaining client motivation," he feels. "It is difficult to meet and encourage everyone in the gym, but I am confident that the clients who meet me and speak to me regularly continue to work out religiously, even those that are not as genetically gifted."

Delivering extra value to customers has long been a guiding mantra for Ruslan. "I always try to deliver more to my clients than what I get from them," says the expert. "This retains their interest for longer periods of time."

In today's fast-paced world, the allure of instant gratification often weakens the appeal of long-term consistent training. Ruslan knows this all too well,



healthy mix of resistance training, cardiovascular exercises, and a balanced diet. "I am a great believer of traditional methods," shares the fitness guru. "I like to keep my trainings pretty simple, even if the premium equipment at my gym tells you otherwise!"

According to Ruslan, if one truly wishes to fulfil their fitness goals, their commitment needs to transcend physical fitness; therefore, understanding the emotional and mental states of his clients is crucial for him to yield results from them. "I try to understand their work schedules — what time they eat, sleep, how many hours they rest." He emphasises lifestyle adjustments that promote better overall health and sets goals and expects results accordingly.

Ruslan serves a clientele with diverse goals. For aspiring bodybuilding competitors, his trainings are more strenuous and time sensitive. For celebrities, he goes along with their pace and demanding schedules, training them to achieve role-specific looks, and for athletes such as cricketers, he chalks out training regimes that build their stamina and strength, allowing for better gameplay.

and therefore aims to demonstrate early improvements to his clients.

"You have to give them something," he insists. "If I can show them that they are getting better at lifting or running, or getting the desired results on the weighing scale, they feel instantly stimulated." However, setting realistic expectations is equally important, and he informs his clients of the same and prepares them accordingly.

"My advice to current and aspiring trainees is the same: training requires discipline, a proper nutritious diet, sufficient hydration, adequate sleep, and rest. If one maintains this, training becomes much easier and yields lasting results."

As Ruslan continues to evolve as a coach and businessman, his unwavering commitment to improving the lives of his clients remains at the forefront of his mission. Having all but pioneered the industry almost 15 years ago, he now looks to continue shaping and moulding the fitness landscape of the country through his resilience and dedication, inspiring individuals to reach their full potential — one rep at a time.

**By Munira Fidai**  
**Photo: Sourav Kabir**

#FASHION &amp; BEAUTY

# BLAZERS ARE TRENDING THIS WINTER

## here's how to style them

Winter is currently in full swing here in Dhaka. Whatever flimsy summer outfits and flip-flops may still be hanging in our closets, the time has come to put the vibes of summer dressing away for another year.

Fortunately, winter styling can be quite a lot of fun, and this year, blazers are all the rage! There are many simple ways to incorporate a blazer into your winter wardrobe with just a few strategic layers and style inspiration. And, you will be pleased to know that it can be worn with a variety of clothes beyond jeans or leggings!

### Loose shirts and baggy jeans

A traditional tailored blazer sheds its business overtones when combined with a breezy shirt, preferably used in the summer, and layered over a white top or tank. For the "throw on



and go" dressers among us, this one is easy to follow, yet a little put-together.

Adding a pair of light-coloured, baggy jeans to the ensemble should make it more refined and simpler to replicate for any occasion.

Next, put on some sunglasses and sneakers to protect yourself from the cold while staying stylish and warm!

### Suedes and classics

The suede blazer embodies classic elegance, making it an ideal choice for channelling your fierce side. Black pants, loafers, and a black, thin knit turtleneck would work well if you want to embrace the formal vibe of a blazer without wearing a complete suit.

Keep the colour scheme of your outfits and shoes consistent, and add a burgundy or brown suede jacket as the showstopper. Fashion enthusiasts are also styling this classic fabric for a more modern look through a variety of accessories, such as rose-gold earrings and statement pendants.

### Kurtis and flared shalwars

Nowadays, blazers are not only for the usual Western look. In fact, more fashionistas have begun adding traditional garments with blazers. So, when wearing blazers with a kurti in the winter, choose a thick black blazer for cosiness, or a fitted beige blazer over a straight-cut kurti for a polished appearance.

For an urban, multi-layered ethnic

look, you can end the get-up with closed-toe heels. Using structured blazers in subdued colours, matching them with flared jeans or shalwars, and accessorising with scarves are some creative ways to elevate the whole look.

### Pinstripes and vibes

With slimmer silhouettes and surprising colour combinations, classic pinstripes are making a comeback. The result? A blazer that feels modern but nods to tradition. Although a pinstripe blazer is perfect for business attire, it may also be worn casually with denim.

If you are also someone who wants to wear dresses in winter, contrast your dress of choice with tights or choose a ribbed knit dress and wear it with pants for a cute, coordinated look. Then put on the pinstripe blazer, and you will have a remarkable winter look!

### Tweeds and formals

Blazer's formal aesthetic is timeless. Because of this, tweed is a sophisticated and long-lasting material that works well for winter blazer styling. This material's silky texture makes it seem quite stylish in simple block colours or as a striking checkered blazer for sophisticated men.

Any regular winter ensemble is enhanced by a casual brown tweed jacket, particularly when paired with bulky knitwear and suede boots or loafers. For a more retro appearance, you could also wrap a knitted scarf over the neck!

So, whether you go for a chic outfit or a formal ensemble, these small tips and tricks will help elevate your look as you go about weathering the winter in Dhaka!

**By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy**  
**Photo: Collected/ LS Archive**



# Dhaka gets a mood boost with bold colours

Winter is here on her winged silver chariot at long last! Us Dhakaites are here for her, and how! Following an unusually sweltering summer, we are embracing winter with arms wide open by dressing up for it with style and panache befitting us fashionable ladies of Dhaka. Bundling up is the order of the day when temperatures are low, but make it fashionable!

Gone are the days of heavy, bulky winter wear that bored one to death with its staid, utilitarian form. Modern warm clothing is light yet warm, stylish, and comfortable. And when they come in sets — even better!

Coords have been the greatest sartorial invention since jeans, and here's why. They are, well, coordinated, so no hassle of pairing one's top with bottoms. This, in itself, makes dressing so much easier, as there is zero decision making fatigue involved. When in doubt, choose a set. When in rush, coords are one's best friend. Which is why sweater sets are genius in that regard, for who wants to waste time on a cold, chilly morning pairing one's sweater with one's pants?

So, let's talk about colours. On a dull winter day when spirits are low and all one wants is to stay cozy under wraps, boring clothes that one must put on to get on with one's day makes everything even duller. Why not bring bright bursts of colour to liven things up? What's more, it is a well-known fact that happy colours have an immediate impact on one's mood and behaviour. A lovely fuchsia pink sweater set with matching pants is a fantastic choice for a day at work and meeting friends for coffee afterwards. Cozy yet chic, it's bound to make your day fun and exciting.

Emerald green, a beautiful jewel tone, is said to have a positive, powerful impact on one's mood. Highly flattering on our rich, warm complexion, this is a hue that's worth noting if you haven't already.

Then comes the hue everyone loves! Yellow in all shades is a definite crowd pleaser that's flattering on all, and transitions wonderfully from day to night. Yellow pants on its own sounds a bit much, but not when paired with an elegant yellow sweater!

For those with a lifelong love affair with blues of all kinds, a sweater set is a dream come true! Dressing in your favourite shade of blue from head to toe is fun and fabulous, especially in winter, when such a colour pops even more.

In terms of styling, coords in solid colours make quite a statement on its own, so minimal accessories are enough. A simple pair of golden earrings or a chunky bangle in a contrasting colour is all you need. Shoes and bags should also be in neutral tones to let the sweater set truly shine this winter!



By Sabrina N Bhuiyan  
Photo: Adnan Rahman  
Model: Suhি  
Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia  
Yeasmin Isha  
Mua: Masum  
Hair: Probina



# Emotionally illiterate? What we teach when we tell boys not to cry

In many Bangladeshi households, the instruction comes early and often. A boy falls, scrapes his knee, and starts to cry. Before the pain is addressed, the correction arrives; "Boys don't cry." Sometimes it's said gently, sometimes sharply, often jokingly. Rarely is it questioned. Yet, according to child and adolescent psychiatrists, this single sentence can quietly shape a child's emotional, cognitive, and social development in ways that last a lifetime.

Dr Halal Uddin Ahmed, Professor of Child, Adolescent and Family Psychiatry at Faridpur Medical College, explains that childhood development is never just physical. "We usually give importance to physical growth," he says, "But emotional, cognitive, and social development are equally important." When one is disrupted, the others do not remain untouched.

**Emotional suppression starts early**  
From a psychiatric perspective, emotional development depends on one simple but crucial skill: recognising emotions and responding to them appropriately.

"A child needs to understand which feeling is sadness, which is fear, which is joy," Dr Ahmed explains. "If they feel sad, they



should cry. If they feel pain, they should cry." The problem begins when that natural response is blocked.

When a boy is told that crying is 'girly' or weak, he learns to suppress his emotions rather than process them. "At that moment," Dr Ahmed elaborates, "his emotional development is hindered, and along with it, his emotional intelligence is hampered."

This doesn't mean the emotion disappears. It simply goes underground. Over time, suppressed feelings accumulate as unresolved stress. As neuroscience confirms, the brain learns emotional regulation through use. When boys are discouraged from naming or expressing emotions, the brain doesn't develop the pathways needed to manage them healthily.

**When emotions turn into aggression**  
One of the most visible consequences of this suppression is anger. Dr Ahmed notes a clear pattern in his clinical work: "Boys who couldn't express emotions in childhood often have those emotions turn into

aggression in adult life."

Because they were never taught how to express sadness, fear, or vulnerability, these emotions reappear in distorted forms. "They get angry easily, speak dismissively, sometimes resort to physical violence," he says.

This aggression shows up across personal, family, social, and professional spaces. What looks like a "temper problem" in adulthood is often a childhood lesson left unfinished.

## The hidden impact on how boys see the world

The damage doesn't stop at emotional health. Dr Ahmed points out that repeated phrases like "Why are you crying like a girl?" shape a boy's thinking patterns. "A sense of masculinity develops where women are seen as weak," he explains. "As a result, mutual respect for women does not develop properly."

This is where emotional suppression intersects with cognitive development. The

child's understanding of gender, strength, and empathy becomes distorted.

"His cognitive development gets hindered," Dr Ahmed says plainly. These errors in thinking then affect social behaviour. The boy may mock others for showing grief, belittle emotional responses, or fail to empathise in situations that demand it.

In a society already struggling with intolerance and public anger, these patterns matter. Emotional illiteracy doesn't remain personal; it becomes cultural.

## From suppression to depression

As these boys grow older, another risk emerges: depression and anxiety. "When cognitive errors form and social development is hindered," Dr Ahmed explains, "Interpersonal relationships start to deteriorate."

Unable to understand himself or practise self-compassion, the individual's self-esteem erodes. Frustration builds. "A frustrated person becomes aggressive," he says, referring to the frustration-aggression hypothesis. When that frustration persists, it often turns inward. "That long-term frustration takes the form of depression, and one of the primary symptoms of depression is anxiety."

This explains why many Bangladeshi men struggle silently. They may not recognise sadness as sadness. They may only feel restlessness, anger, or exhaustion.

## Can the damage be undone?

The answer, thankfully, is not hopeless. Dr Ahmed stresses that recovery is possible, though not absolute. Psychotherapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT), and

Transactional Analysis can help individuals identify and correct distorted thinking patterns.

"For someone whose emotional development was hindered in childhood, a 100 per cent turnaround may not be possible," he says honestly. "But it is possible to overcome depression, manage difficulties, and lead a quality life."

The earlier the intervention, the better the outcome.

## A message to parents and caregivers

Dr Ahmed's advice to parents is direct and urgent. "A single word, a single tone, even a non-verbal gesture can influence a child's emotional and cognitive development," he says.

He emphasises two things above all. First, recognise that development is not just physical. Emotional and social growth are equally vital. Second, allow children — especially boys — to express emotions freely and appropriately. "They must be allowed to express their emotions correctly," he says, "so they can grow into acceptable people in the outer world."

Letting boys cry does not weaken them. It equips them. Strength is not the absence of feeling; it is the ability to understand and manage feeling without fear or shame. If we want a future generation of men who are emotionally steady, respectful, and resilient, we need to start by changing the sentences we say today, especially the ones we've repeated without thinking.

Sometimes, the most radical act of care is simply allowing a boy to cry and saying, "It's okay."

**By Ayman Anika**  
**Photo: Collected**



# Why living alone for a few months could change your life forever

Solitude is not something typically sought-after. People who prefer to be left to their own devices are often called antisocial, lone wolf, and many other names that are sometimes not very nice. And the thought of living all by oneself is often considered a miserable condition and most people do not desire to try such a feat.

It is true that while almost everyone likes to have company, many people do well just by themselves. And while we are not suggesting that you should live alone forever, there are many things to learn from living alone for a few months.

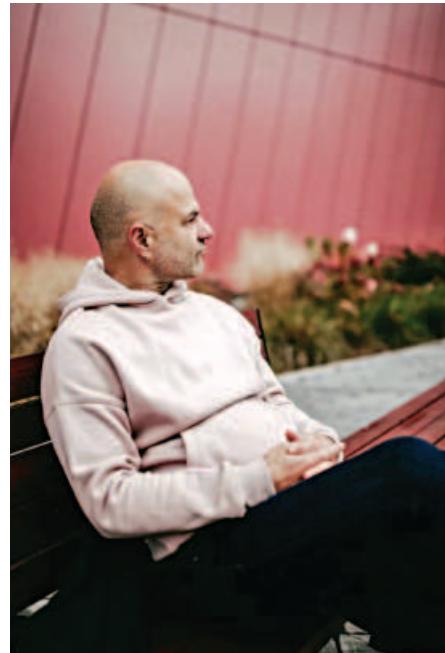
#### What time is it?

Living with your family, you might not realise how precious every second is. But when you are on your own, you need to plan your daily tasks and execute them by the clock. Within a few weeks, you develop a schedule and you realise how valuable time really is and the importance of having a plan for your day. Even your weekends are filled with tasks that you just cannot postpone. The importance of doing everything by the clock is one of the first things you learn while living alone.

"Sometimes I wonder where did the weekends go? Then I realise I was so busy taking care of the chores that I didn't have time to relax," said one Anik, who has recently started a job and now lives alone, renting a small room.

#### Finances are tough

Budgeting and maintaining that budget is a challenge even when you have plenty. It becomes a herculean task when you are on your own and on a limited budget. Soon, you learn to prioritise and make logical decisions. This teaches you valuable life lessons that



you would never learn from any books or classes. You will be surprised how difficult it is to live on a budget, and even more surprised when you learn to make it work. At the end of the month, if you manage to save a few thousand, you will be quite elated with yourself. And this life lesson of properly managing your money will help you for the rest of your life.

#### So much to learn

When you start living all by yourself, you will discover that there's so much to learn, especially chores. You will have to learn to do laundry by yourself, which to be honest,

is just as tedious as it sounds but you will have no choice but to do it anyway. You will have to learn to cook and clean, which is a basic life skill and everyone should learn sooner rather than later.

You will learn that cleaning is more difficult than you have imagined and you will be extra careful not to get things dirty. Menial tasks such as grocery run and cleaning the window panels will bore you out of your mind, but you will learn them regardless.

#### The confidence boosts

With all the challenges and hardship of living alone, there is also a very important reward. It comes with a confidence boost that you just can't find in any other way.

The more you learn to do different and new things, the better you will be feeling about yourself. Besides, whatever situation is thrown at you, you will have to deal with them all by yourself. This teaches confrontation, handling pressure, standing up for oneself, taking care of oneself, and all that accumulates to confidence that simply



makes you a better person who is well-equipped for whatever challenge is thrown at him.

#### The ultimate self-discovery

The most important reason to live alone is that it drives through a path that leads to absolute self-discovery. "The growth I had that time has changed me forever," said one Kashfia Kaba, who was recalling her time in Prague during her studies. "Starting from scratch, I have lived alone, travelled alone. There was a language barrier, different system and way of life. In the end, the growth I had that time has changed me forever," she recounted, stating that living alone makes you see yourself as who you are exactly.

And it makes sense. Being on your own, one has to fight every single day, survive the challenges, take care of your own self and whatever time is left at the end of the day, you get them with your literal self. You discover your strengths and weakness, and you get to know your true nature. Then you wake up and you do it all over again, only better. This self-discovery cannot be achieved in any other way.

Even if you do not need to, one should live all by themselves for a few months just to learn the basic life skills. But what really should be sought after is that self-discovery. It sounds like a stolen line from a philosophy book, but ask anyone who has lived alone. The journey of self-discovery is never easy and living alone is probably the easiest first step.

**By Ashif Ahmed Rudro**

**Photo: Collected**

# When did colour become 'outdated'? A deep dive into changing trends

What lies behind the idea that the world is losing colours? Is the world truly losing its colours? These questions may almost feel poetic, but beyond poetry echoes a cultural truth; we are quietly, collectively draining colour out of our lives. This "loss of colours" did not happen overnight — it is the result of a bunch of decades of shifting tastes, technologies, and psychological influences that have slowly guided us away from the world our predecessors knew.

## The change that sneaked in and the cause that sparked it

Over the past few years, almost every corner of our lives has quietly shifted toward a muted sameness.

Homes have opted for beige rooms and minimalist furniture that promise calm but often feel identical. Even our cityscapes have dulled. Building exteriors are wrapped in cement-grey blocks and glass, monochrome steel, and matte modernism.

Our wardrobes reflect the same transformation. Today, neutrals dominate closets across the world, shaped by the rise of "safe fashion" on social media. As people are more cautious economically and environmentally, they choose clothes that are reusable, multifunctional, and timeless.

Weddings, once vibrant explosions of reds, marigolds, emeralds, and intricate motifs, are now gradually adopting



Western-influenced pastel palettes.

The most visible changes are our streets. Cars now move almost uniformly in shades of white, black, and silver, turning streets even more monochrome.

Even cafes and restaurants have succumbed by monotone interiors, concrete walls, and warm lighting, designed purely for social media aesthetics.

Technology intensified this shift. Digital screens favour soft tones that reduce eye strain, gradually training our preferences



toward desaturated palettes in real life.

Branding and product design followed suit; logos lost colour, packaging became simpler, and public spaces leaned into greys and metallics.

From within to beyond, from personal to public, the world's visual identity has inaudibly drifted toward uniform neutrality. And so, it seems true to say "the world lost its hue."

**The vibrant past fades into muted reality**  
In the early 1900s, colour was a language of

excitement and modernity.

In the decades between the 1920s and the 1970s, colour enjoyed a golden age. Everyday life looked like a festival of shades.

From the 1900s to today, a decline in colour usage is clearly visible across industries. Researchers call this shift "Colour Depletion" or "Chromatic Decline."

Between the '20s to '50s, society embraced vibrant hues everywhere. After World War II, the world entered a wave of vibrancy. Cars, posters, fashion, and interiors showcased bright and cheerful colours, reflecting post-war optimism.

Post '50s bought maximal colour to its peak as synthetic dyes became cheap and growing economies encouraged expressive consumption.

By the '80s and '90s, subtle shifts began. Though the '80s still celebrated neon and pop cultural vibrance, the influence of early digital technology introduced a preference for limited, stable colour palettes.

The 2000s marked a decisive shift in how we experienced colour and design. It may not have stolen all the saturation, but gently set the tone for a more muted era.

From 2010s onwards, the world entered the era of saturation disappearance. Minimalism became not just a design philosophy but a lifestyle statement.

**Nostalgic how colours slipped through our fingers**

Walk into a house before the wave of minimalism and you're greeted with walls in cheerful shades of spring green,

mustard yellow, or candy pink, kitchens alive with turquoise cabinets.

Beds were draped in big, bold bedsheets in reds, yellows, greens, and blues, often patterned with sprawling florals. Sofas had cushions in stripes, checks, or vibrant floral prints, sometimes matching patterned mattresses. Curtains swung with intricate all-over designs or floral motifs, and rugs layered the floors in bright, cheerful patterns that brought the room alive.

Fashion too, was fearless. Men in patterned shirts, women in vivid sarees, scarves and bangles in every hue imaginable.

Even the streets reflected vividness. Cars in cherry red, mint green, sunflower yellow, or sky blue lined the roads, and public buildings featured colourful frontages and tiled exteriors.

## Is a comeback brewing?

Culture is never one directional. Every trend creates its own rebellion. Generation Z is already experimenting with maximalist decor, retro graphics, and vivid wardrobes. The fading mirrors who we are, digitally tired, socially exposed, economically cautious and environmentally aware. Minimalism gave us calmness, but monotony may soon exhaust us. So, the pendulum may swing again from pale minimalism to bold expression.

**By Farhana Faiza**  
**Photo: Collected**

## #LIFEHACKS

# Easy, low-cost ways to beat winter cold at home

Winter in Bangladesh is short-lived, but it surely leaves its mark on everyone, and every household has their own unique way of dealing with it. Unlike Western countries, the houses here do not have heaters, which serves as the perfect catalyst for people to try out quick and effective methods to keep themselves warm.

#### Utilising the kitchen in every way

Who says the kitchen can only be used for cooking? During the winter season, the kitchen turns out to be one of the warmest spots inside the house and it is ideal to harness that warmth and spread it to other rooms as much as possible.

Cooking during the coldest parts of the day, such as the morning or the evening can release much needed moisture and heat into the house.

Simple activities such as boiling water, making tea, or baking can increase the amount of heat released and keep the



overall temperature inside the house higher.

While cooking, or even when the cooking is done, the kitchen door can be left open so that the residual warmth and humidity can spread to neighbouring rooms and warm them up.

#### Curtains and rugs are your best friends

When it comes to keeping a home warm in winter, curtains and rugs do not get enough credit.

The simple trick of covering your windows with thick curtain will help keep the room warmer, as it will stop the cold air entering the room, especially during night-time.

It also helps to trap the warm air inside the house and prevent it from escaping, making it a win win situation on both ends.

The best way to use them is to leave the curtains open during daytime, letting the

sunlight come in, and close them during the evening, trapping all the heat inside, leaving the room nice and warm.

Another game changer is thick rugs covering the floor.

Most homes in Bangladesh have tiled floors, and tiles tend to absorb and retain cold, making the rooms feel much colder than they actually are.

Laying down thick rugs, layered mats or even our traditional quilts can significantly reduce the amount of heat lost and can constantly keep our feet warm, acting as an affordable insulator.

#### Closing the sneaky gaps in our homes

The cold winter air has a tendency to find every small gap. These gaps might be tiny, but can let in large amounts of cold air, making the room temperature fall drastically.

After finding out these pesky openings, whether it be windows, doors, or even



ventilators, simple household items can be used to cover them up. Rolled towels, old fabrics, or old doormats placed below door entrances can help block cold air from coming in.

For ventilators that do not have covers or sliding glass panels, they can be covered by a cloth or a piece of cardboard, especially during the night to prevent cold air from entering into the house.

Winter seems to cause a debate; some people love it, others not so much. But while it is brief, it sure has a way of bringing people closer together.

By relying on these simple and natural methods, the winter season can be turned into a warm and comfortable one. In the end winter is not about fighting the cold but rather adapting to it.

By Mehdi Islam Mahi  
Photo: Collected

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# Why Bangladeshi homes are turning back to heritage décor

Home is supposed to be filled and ornamented with things that not only soothe the eyes, soul, and body, but also reflect the owner's creative and ethical choices.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, a resurgence of using domestic and culturally significant home decor items has been seen in Bangladesh; albeit with a bit of modern twist and flare.

Reason? Soulless, mass-produced minimalism without ethical or sustainable grounding is not cutting it any more! Regardless, choosing heritage pieces for contemporary homes is not easy.

This is especially true in 2026, when most of us live in tiny flats, and grandma's traditional but heavy wooden almiras or iron-castboxes give us the heebie-jeebies! So, how do we blend culture with relevance, while also satisfying the growing ethical consumerism that defines our time?

#### Folk Style Rickshaw Artwork

Tulips, lilies, peacocks, elephants, birds, trees, human faces, and Poth Chitros (special art form of Bangladesh) drawn on the back of rickshaws with bold brush strokes using bright and intriguing colours like red, yellow, orange, or blue is a common and old sight in Bangladesh.

This art form got revamped in recent times, and is now being used in decorating furniture and other showpieces. Hand-painted Jolchoki (small stools), tissue

boxes, sunglasses, vases, etc. can be used as decorative pieces in any room or sitting space, giving it a vibrant touch.

Rickshaw painting on mirrors mounted to the entrance wall would surely draw attention of the home dwellers and guests. You can find the stools, vases, and other showpieces in Jatra, e-commerce platform called BeshiDeshi, etc.

Beyond that, regular use items like trays, coaster sets, table mats, pots, mugs are also featured with this unique art style. Patachitra, or different patterns and designs drawn over cabinets, almiras, and shoe racks are also gaining popularity, contending with modern alternatives!

#### Bamboo and Cane

Shelved for decades due to the minimalistic choices and cost-cutting, cane-made furniture, especially the swings, have made a strong comeback in Bangladesh's homes, offices, and restaurants.

Durable, sustainable, and exquisite craftsmanship makes them both ethically just and environmentally friendly. Cane-made lightweight sofas and tables can be a great choice for a cosy sitting space in your

living room or lawn.

Trays, lamps, flowerpots, baskets, and vases made with a fusion of cane and bamboo can add an artistic touch to your daily life. Curtains made from bamboo are also getting quite famous for its convenient and traditional look.

Cane and bamboo made furniture and accessories are widely available in well-known cane hubs found in Panthapath,

the skilful eye-catching embroidery patterns and designs.

Both Nakshi Kantha and old Jamdani sarees can be used as sofa or bed throws, or simply mounted to the walls.

#### Terracotta and Clay

If you want to bring the earthy touch to your home, terracotta dolls, vases, small or medium statues, pots, or wall hangings carved with intricate details, and designs are sure to get the job done.

Clay made showpieces like miniature Hari Patils (toys), or animal figurines can



Green Road, DCC market Gulshan 1, Mohammadpur Townhall market, etc.

#### Jute Accessories

Shouldering most of the country's handicraft industry, jute has been a great sustainable solution both at home and abroad. Doormats and table mats made with complex but extraordinary looking braided patterns can give your place a cosy, yet artistic touch.

Often painted, and decorated with colourful beads and jewels, jute made baskets, jewellery boxes, swings, wall hanging decors will surely express your superior taste if used adequately. Aarong outlets, BeshiDeshi, and several shops in Doel Chattar have different types of jute made items available.

#### Nakshi Kantha and Jamdani

Nakshi Kantha, once used only as quilts made from love and necessity by Bengali mothers and grandmothers, now also gets used as decorative wall hanging pieces for

beautify small corners in the house, shelves, or tabletops. Apart from that, crockery items made with clay can be used during special occasions or simply as decorative pieces!

Clay made items are easily found in Dhaka, like Doel Chattar.

Bangladesh is filled with such unique items made with domestic raw materials. Small miniature replicas of rickshaws, vans, bicycles, baby taxis, etc. are used in different places quite commonly. Although the popularity has been declining, copper and brass made boxes, lamps, and showpieces carved with marvellous designs are still being used by some aesthetes.

This sudden revival does not only bring individuality and uniqueness, but also hints at potential positive economic and cultural shift. When it comes to heritage, you can't go wrong with Bangladeshi handicrafts, with their wide range of offerings.



By Nabila Chowdhury Momo  
LS Archive/ Sazzad Ibne Sayed