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In *Full* Bloom

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FYI

RAMADAN IS ABOUT HEALING HEARTS

Ramadan often arrives when most of our hearts are worn out by the constant struggle to cling and climb to the ladder of survival and success.

In this rush, we drift away from some people who always made us feel at home. Unanswered calls and messages, misunderstandings left unsorted due to stubbornness, end up fading dearly prized bonds and ties.

Ramdan not only reminds us to fast, and pray, but also to let go of our long-held resentments, pride, and ego. It reminds us how short our life is to carry around a hardened and spiteful heart and how sinful, meek, and fragile we all are in front of our Lord.

Reach out to that friend you often went to Masjid with or that friend who'd always shop for Eid clothing with you for hours. Make plans to watch Ramadan special shows and series airing on TV.

Make it up to your parents as well, if like most of us, life has forced you to cut their calls short. Tell them how much you appreciate their care and efforts. Try to do something special for them. Help them in preparing for iftar and sehri.

So, this Ramadan, reach out to your loved ones. Pick up the phone and convey those due apologies, *"I'm sorry it took this long, but I missed you."* Instead of going on about, *they should have knocked me first*, call them and say, "*Let bygones be bygones and meet over iftar for the old times sake!"*

By Nabila Chowdhury Momo

#PROFILE

ADORNING THE RUNWAYS OF MILAN

In Conversation with Tonmoyee Mokaddes Syeda

"I have been doing this for 15 years now, ever since 2011," Tonmoyee Mokaddes Syeda begins. What started as a passion project, designing for cousins and experimenting with fabric in a modest operation, soon became a practice that has taken Tonmoyee's traditional artistic flair to contemporary New York and more recently, to the runways of Milan.

Small Steps

"When my sister moved back to Dhaka, she pushed me to pursue this professionally," she recalls. Before fashion, Tonmoyee was an artist. "I had been an artist all my life, I loved working with paint." However, her relationship with paint was short-lived, prompting her to redirect her creative energy. "My relationship with art could only continue through designing." Who would have thought that what she had took to be a second-best alternative to paint would take her to the pinnacles of success?

In the early years of the brand, she was running a modest shop: "I had a storefront, a small space under my home, with 2 tailors, 4 karchupi craftsmen and 2 embroidery craftsmen." Even after returning to Dhaka in 2018, she balanced design with family business responsibilities, not going all in.

In 2021 however, Tonmoyee's father's passing marked a turning point in her life. "Regardless of how busy my father was, he would always attend my art competitions; he always had time. After him, I felt that I had to restart my designing — it was my way of grieving and keeping him close." That same year, she relaunched her brand on a larger scale and expanded her base, splitting time between New York and Dhaka.

New York's Fashion Collective

Tonmoyee's prefers her work to speak for itself. "I don't publicise myself too much. I like to maintain a low profile here." Still, she networked among like-minded designers in New York, which led to a membership in Flying Solo, a fashion collective with a storefront in SoHo.

Milan Fashion Week

Her Milan appearance was presented in association with Flying Solo. The moment carried an additional feather to her cap: "I also found out that I was the only Bangladeshi designer to ever have participated in Milan Fashion Week and it felt incredible." But the run-up to the show was not without obstacles. "I had issues with visa as queues were very long at the Bangladesh Italian Embassy. They only let me know in early August and the show was in Sept. That was the only hiccup."

Once in Milan, Tonmoyee was swept up in the energy of a global fashion capital. "It was amazing to be in Milan, the fashion capital of the world, with international designers, fashion models, and just the vibe of the entire city. It's different from any other time you visit." Rather than intimidation, she felt immersion: "Surprisingly, I was not nervous. I was taking everything in, I was learning, I never second-guessed, or compared myself to the other designers. From walking the runways as a designer to meeting buyers from around the world, I'm at a loss for words to explain how it was. Backstage chaos, fitting and rehearsal night, all left a lasting impression."

"One takeaway from Milan to NY for me is that NY is dynamic, one of the biggest cities in the world, a melting pot of cultures, a city of immigrants. Milan on the other hand, or European fashion in general, while still changing, has managed to hold on to their roots and values. They are very traditional in many ways, but they still dictate fashion around the world."

She uses that contrast to clarify her own intent: "I make it a point to stay true to everything Bangladesh, especially Dhaka, while incorporating fashion from all over the world."

Her Milan collection explicitly showcased Bangladeshi materials and techniques. "I did dresses and bubble hemmed skirts, a gown, all with jamdani. I used Rajshahi silk for a peplum dress, and muslin skirts from Rajshahi. All the raw materials were sourced and made in Bangladesh." Making and sourcing locally wasn't merely a marketing choice but a statement of cultural stewardship: she kept craft, weavers and artisans at the heart of production.

The Non-Negotiables of Designing

Tonmoyee frames design as an extension of her artistry rather than the product of formal schooling: "I don't have a training or formal education in designing. I'm an artist." From that perspective, her core values are clear: authenticity, information, and sustainability.

She is critical of superficial sustainability gestures. A garment's value, to her, lies in versatility and longevity. "A good piece of clothing should be something you can repeat often and be able to style in 6 different ways. "Even a pair of earrings!" Originality is non-negotiable for Tonmoyee. "Being inspired by someone is one thing, making a cheap copy of someone else's work is unacceptable."

The Evolution of Bangladeshi Fashion

When asked whether fashion has evolved in Bangladesh, Tonmoyee paints a dismal picture of snail-paced change mixed with deep structural problems. "It has evolved but very little. We don't know how to use or value our own resources."

Part of the problem, she says, is the marketplace and the perceptions of buyers. "The mindset has also changed for us — people buy so many clothes which are foreign and overpriced, but they don't want to spend the same amount for locally produced clothes - in their minds, if it is locally produced, it should be cheaper." That misconception undermines artisanal labour: "A karchupi craftsman or a jamdani weaver can only produce so much work in a set amount of time and that makes it expensive. Our buyers need to be better informed. I try to educate them as much as possible."

Way Forward

As she continues to split her time between Dhaka and New York, Tonmoyee Mokaddes Syeda remains committed to a practice that is artistic, ethical, and rooted in place. "I make it a point to stay true to everything Bangladesh, especially Dhaka, while incorporating fashion from all over the world." Her work — the garments, the artisans, and the stories woven into each piece — are, in her view, the true ambassadors. "I don't want to be the face of the brand — I want my work to be the face of the brand."

By Munira Fidai
Photo: Courtesy

#PERSPECTIVE

What we lost when adda left our daily lives

In our culture, adda is more than just talk. It's an unhurried form of togetherness, built in tea stalls, street corners, and rooftops, shaped by gossip, arguments, and sports, without the pressure to conclude or agree. Today, it is hard to remember the last time we spent hours with friends without checking the time.

In the past, rooftops were rarely quiet on summer afternoons. Boys flew kites across the sky, trying to cut each other's strings, while girls watched from the edges, laughing and teasing. A carrom board often appeared in a corner surrounded by an eager crowd. Eyes wandered toward neighbouring rooftops, where adolescents tried to impress someone who was watching.

Evenings didn't begin with a phone screen. People gathered simply to talk, with tea, a few snacks and the quiet joy of being together. Aunties discussed about their favourite mega-serials. What once emerged naturally, now feels rare in a life that moves faster, demands more and leaves little room for pauses.

Streets and fields were once playgrounds for entire neighbourhoods. Friendly matches were organised between lanes, although the rivalry was intense. Locals gathered to watch and temporary stalls sold toys, sweets, and snacks. Now, the number of open spaces has decreased and our teenagers are no longer team captains. Heavy bags and endless coaching schedules leave them exhausted.

Most rooftops are locked now, and the cassette players in the living room have gone silent. Nobody waits for the new cinema on BTV anymore. The ritual of adda has been replaced by the algorithms of social media, endless notifications, and mechanical life saturated with deadlines. Conversations are no longer stretched out without urgency after school or work.

Once, adda held communities together in small towns and crowded neighbourhoods. Familiar faces met almost every day and greetings were not just a formality, but a habit. Children played in the streets under the quiet watch of elders.

We discussed our problems and offered opinions. This constant contact built trust, a sense of belonging, and quietly shaped the social fabric of our lives.

Now, people living next door pass each other in lifts with awkward silence. Young people look down at phones to avoid eye contact with seniors, fearing judgment or unwanted questions. The discomfort exists because the connection no longer does.

Digital platforms like social media have stepped in as substitutes rather than equivalents. Reactions, comments, and group chats offer the illusion of participation without the warmth of actually being there. People gather just to scroll. Conversations that used to unfold slowly, with pauses, laughter, and interruptions, have turned into quick texts and emojis.

We can't leave the professional persona after leaving the office desk because the boundaries between work and home have blurred. Life has dissolved into late-night emails and mandatory Zoom calls. The impulsive adda has been replaced by the planned outing. We go to restaurants, take photos for social media, and return to our phones. When we talk, it often revolves around trends and online updates. The raw talk about daily life feels scarce.

Those who once made adda possible have been scattered by the winds of globalisation, moving to cities or countries for education, work or better opportunities. The circles that once gathered every evening are now spread, their conversations reduced to occasional messages or status updates.

Bringing adda back is not about rejecting modern life. In a society obsessed with fast pace and productivity, choosing to just sit, talk and be together becomes a quiet act of resistance. It's a reminder that connection is what truly holds us together. Small acts like these can reclaim belonging. It's time to put our phones aside, settle in a corner and relive the nostalgia.

By Mir Elham Bin Ahmed
Photo: Collected

#RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY

How to Have Screen-Free Mealtimes WITH YOUR TODDLER

If you are a toddler parent, you are likely familiar with the frustrating sight of your child passionately gnawing on their sponge toys like they are some kinds of delicacy, while turning their heads away when a spoonful of real food comes their way.

So, you turn on the cartoon with crazy beats, and your child finally decides that finishing the plate isn't such a bad idea after all. Though the meal actually gets eaten, does this practice have a good impact on the long-term development of the child?

Studies show that this habit quietly interferes with how they learn to eat, and connect, even though it may look harmless in the moment. When a child's attention is fixed on a screen, hunger and fullness cues are easily missed. As a result, children are less likely to notice flavours, explore new foods, or build curiosity, which can develop the habit of picky eating over time.

That is why we are here with a trusted guide to make mealtime enjoyable for your child, and less bothersome for you, without the screens.

Routine plays a quiet but powerful role. As toddler brains are still developing, and they often struggle with transitioning from one activity to another. Giving a reminder before meals, keeping meal times consistent, helps children transition from play or screen time to eating without resistance.

Sitting together as a family strengthens this rhythm, because children instinctively mirror adult behaviour, and seeing parents eat without phones or televisions sends a stronger message than any instruction.

Another effective approach is to involve the child in the process of making food. Even if their contribution is as simple as peeling garlic or, in most cases, creating a mess, it can still be beneficial. On the bright side, when toddlers understand where food comes from and participate in preparing it, they are more likely to enjoy the meal.

Asking toddlers about their food preferences can make mealtime more engaging for them. Before serving food, you can ask if they would like carrots or peas, or mangoes or lychees. This gives them a sense of control and can help prevent them from pushing the food away. Also, research says they are open to trying more food options this way.

Incorporating bright colourful vegetables and familiar favourites alongside new foods encourages curiosity and exploration. You don't necessarily need to cut food into star and moon shapes. You can also use the classic move your mom pulled, make round-shaped morsels, and call them quail or penguin eggs. This often makes kids giggle and eat with enthusiasm.

Additionally, if you describe the food they are eating to your toddler, it grows their inner scientist, and they are more likely to grab the food. For example, how chicken and eggs help us grow taller and stronger, and rice gives us energy to play.

You can also try playing guessing games with the child if you are feeding them. Put some food in their mouth and let them guess what they are eating; in this way, they are not only passively swallowing food but also attentively experiencing its texture and taste.

Most importantly, keeping meals short and pressure-free is essential. Long, tense meals make screens tempting because they ensure quick calm, but 10 to 15 minutes of relaxed eating is often enough. Mess, pauses, tantrums, and uneven appetite are part of the process, and do not mean you are failing at feeding your child.

Sometimes, when you tell your child it is time for lunch, they might immediately say they don't want to eat. Instead of quickly offering their favourite snacks in fear that your child will lack nutrition, reassure them that they can eat whenever they feel hungry. Studies show that this approach can work wonders even for stubborn toddlers.

In the end, screen-free mealtimes are not about winning a daily battle or proving you are a "perfect" parent. They are about choosing connection over convenience most days, and forgiving yourself on the messy ones.

Some meals will be loud, some will be slow, some will end with food on the floor and zero patience. And that is absolutely normal. What matters is that the table slowly becomes a place where kids learn to notice hunger, taste food, and talk freely. Starting small and staying consistent is the key, and remember that children don't need constant entertainment to eat well; they just need your presence.

By K T Humaira
Photo: Collected, LS Archive

STEP IN STYLE

and in a saree this spring!

Where does one begin with sarees? Or when does one end? For every Bangladeshi woman, it isn't a mere attire but an emotion, a sentiment she holds dear to her. And add Spring to that mix, and voila! It's a love affair for the books!

Star LIFE Style

Where does one begin with sarees? Or when does one end? For every Bangladeshi woman, it isn't a mere attire but an emotion, a sentiment she holds dear to her. And add Spring to that mix, and voila! It's a love affair for the books!

In Bengal, Spring arrives in all her splendour; the air is redolent with heady floral scents from swathes of luscious blooms all around. The air is crisp, as the weather is pleasantly cool and comforts one's soul with blissful energy and hopes of new beginnings. The very essence of life is brought forth as winter is gone but not forgotten yet, and lovely little buds of new blossoms hint at what's to come.

And what better way to celebrate these precious fleeting moments of the year than adorning one's person with a beautiful saree that reflects the essence and joy of this season? Out with the old and in with the new as they say about spring.

Hence embrace all that is bright and fresh, lovely and new, now!

'Florals for Spring? Ground-breaking!' remarked cynically the high priestess of fashion Miranda Priestley. However, spring is indeed all about florals! After all, when nature gives us abundance of flowers in all shapes and forms, why not get inspired by their beauty? Florals look lovely in every way; from oversized prints that make a fantastic statement and set you apart in a crowd, to mid-sized ones that are perfect for every day, to small, dainty ones which are easy on the eyes, florals are fantastic for spring, however you like them!

This year, it's all about contrasting shades, so choose a saree with a vibrant colour. Pinks, reds, and oranges look fabulous on white, parrot green, or yellow. Find out the saree that speaks to you!

Other than florals, prints in general are having a fun moment. From geometric shapes and patterns to delicate ones, prints are pretty and perfect for spring. Again, as contrast is in, go for bright colours juxtaposed in clever ways. A teal saree with pink print will look fantastic, and its contrasting border will be the cherry on top!

Fun blouses are also another way to bring a flair to your spring style. Go for a unique look — a striped blouse paired with a muslin or tulle saree will look fun and sexy at the same time, and will elevate your style quotient for the next ladies' spring soirée!

Polka dots are very chic at the moment, so go for a blouse in a striking colour, and pair it with a solid-coloured saree to really make a serious stylish statement this spring!

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photographer: Adnan Rahman
Model: Mysha Rahman
Styling and Fashion Direction: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Shahrukh Amin
Makeover: Mehedi Hasan Kajol

#FOOD & RECIPES

6 iftar drinks to boost your Ramadan energy in minutes!

It's the month of Ramadan once more, and so, it's time to prepare nourishing and delicious drinks for iftar. These fusion recipes bring together tradition and flavour, offering a perfect balance of energy, sweetness, and comfort for your fasting routine.

FRESH GINGER LEMONADE
Ingredients
1 large piece of fresh ginger (about 3-4 inches)
4-5 lemons (freshly juiced)
2-3 tbsp honey or sweetener of choice (adjust to taste)
Ice cubes (optional)

Method
Peel the fresh ginger root and cut it into small pieces. Grate the ginger with a little bit of water to create a smooth paste. Place the grated ginger in a fine sieve or cheesecloth, and press or squeeze it to extract the juice. You should have around 2-3 tablespoons of fresh ginger juice. Squeeze the juice from the lemons and strain it to remove seeds or pulp.

In a large pitcher, combine the freshly squeezed lemon juice, ginger juice, and cold water. Stir well to mix. Add honey (or your preferred sweetener) to taste. Stir until it's dissolved completely. If you want a tangy flavour, feel free to adjust the amount of sweetener.

Pour the ginger lemonade into glasses filled with ice cubes (optional).

CARROT AND GINGER JUICE
Ingredients
4 carrots
1 ginger thumb
1 orange
1 cup water
½ tbsp honey

Method
Peel and cut the carrots into bite-sized cubes. Peel the ginger and cut the pieces into thin batons. Slice the oranges and deseed them; drop the ginger slices into one cup of water and set it to boil. Do not add the ginger to boiling water but let the temperature rise after it has been added into the water. Once the water is heated, allow the ginger to boil for a couple of minutes and then turn off the flame.

Let it cool and infuse with the water for another ten minutes and strain away the ginger slices after that.

Add the ginger liquid to your mixer along with the prepared carrots. Add honey, squeeze an orange, and mix it all together.

FRESH LIME POMEGRANATE JUICE
Ingredients
2 large limes (freshly juiced)
1–1½ cups of fresh pomegranate seeds
2-3 tbsp of honey or sweetener of your choice
Ice cubes

Method
Cut the pomegranate in half and gently tap the back with a wooden spoon to release the seeds. Once you have the seeds, whisk them in a blender for 15-20 seconds. Strain the juice through a fine sieve or cheesecloth into a bowl to remove the pulp. You should get about 1 to 1½ cups of fresh pomegranate juice.

Roll the limes on the counter to make juicing easier, then cut them in half and squeeze out the juice using a juicer or by hand.

In a large pitcher, combine the fresh pomegranate juice, lime juice, and cold water. Add 2-3 tablespoons of honey or your choice of sweetener and stir until it's fully dissolved. Adjust the sweetness to your preference.

BEETROOT AND CARROT SMOOTHIE
Ingredients
1 red beet
1 large carrot
½ cup milk
2/3 cup water

Method
Peel and chop both the carrot and beet root into cubes. Pour in the milk and then add in the cubed vegetables. Blend this on high speed until a paste is formed. Then, pour in the water and mix again. You can adjust the amount of water you add based on the consistency you desire. Stop adding water and mixing once your smoothie is as smooth as you require it to be and enjoy!

CITRUS MOCKTAIL
Ingredients
1 pomelo
2 oranges
1 lime
A sprig of mint leaves

Method
Squeeze out the juices from the pomelo, oranges, and lime. Mix everything. You can add a little bit of water if you find the taste too citrusy or want to dilute the mixture a little. Throw in a sprig of fresh mint leaves to add some freshness. You can have this daily for your required intake of vitamin C.

SWEET TAMARIND DRINK
Ingredients
150g sweet tamarind
4 cups water
Sugar to taste
½ a lemon's juice (optional)
1 tsp rose water (optional)

Method
Soak tamarind in 4 cups of water for 2 hours. Squeeze out the pulp and discard the seeds and fibre. Strain the pulp through a fine sieve. Blend the water with sugar in a blender.

If you like you can add lemon juice or rose water.

Add more sugar as per your taste. Keep it in the fridge for at least 45 minutes. Serve chilled.

— LS Desk
Photo: Collected

#FOOD & RECIPES

Protein-focused iftar choices that fit Bangladeshi kitchens

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Collected

Iftar in Bangladesh is often built around habit. Fried snacks, sweet drinks, and heavy portions feel comforting after a long day of fasting, but they rarely support the body for the rest of the evening. High-protein iftar does not require imported ingredients or a complete food overhaul. It simply asks for better use of what is already familiar.

Here are five protein-focused iftar ideas using accessible ingredients that are sure to suit your taste, routine, and budget.

Chickpea salad with local vegetables

Chickpeas are already part of Bangladeshi iftar culture, usually cooked into thick chola bhuna. Turning them into a salad keeps the protein intact while reducing oil and heaviness.

Boiled chickpeas can be mixed with chopped cucumber, onion, tomato, green chilli, coriander, and a squeeze of lemon. A small drizzle of mustard oil adds flavour without excess fat.

This salad works well as a first solid food after dates and water. It provides plant protein, fibre, and slow-release energy, helping prevent sudden hunger spikes later in the evening.

Yoghurt with chia seeds and seasonal fruits

Yoghurt is often underused at iftar, yet it is one of the most effective cooling and protein-rich foods during Ramadan.

Thick yoghurt mixed with soaked chia seeds creates a simple, balanced dish. Add small portions of seasonal fruits like papaya, banana, or apple rather than overly sweet combinations.

This option supports digestion, provides protein and healthy fats, and works especially well for those who experience acidity or bloating after iftar. It can also replace sugary drinks that cause energy crashes.

Sautéed chicken breast with minimal spices

Chicken is commonly present at Bangladeshi tables, but it often arrives deep-fried or heavily coated in batter. A simpler preparation preserves protein without overloading the digestive system.

Chicken breast pieces sautéed lightly with garlic, ginger, black pepper, and a pinch of salt require very little oil. Cooking them slowly keeps the meat tender and easy to digest.

Serve with a small salad or roti. This dish works well for people who feel weak or tired during Taraweeh prayers and need sustained energy rather than instant fullness.

Lentil soup or a light haleem

Lentils are deeply familiar, affordable, and protein-rich. A thin lentil soup made from red lentils such as moong dal, or masoor dal is ideal at iftar.

Cook the lentils soft with ginger, garlic, cumin, and black pepper. Keep it light and avoid excess oil. This helps hydrate the body and gently restarts digestion after fasting.

For families who prefer something heartier, a lighter version of haleem can work. Reduce the oil and meat quantity, focus on lentils and grains, and serve in smaller portions. This keeps the protein high while avoiding post-iftar lethargy.

Baked fish fillet with vegetables

Fish is central to Bangladeshi food culture, but rarely appears at iftar. A baked or lightly pan-cooked fish fillet can be a strong protein addition.

Use local fish, like pangas, tilapia, or ruhi. Season with turmeric, garlic, lemon, and a small amount of oil. Baking or shallow cooking preserves protein and reduces heaviness.

Serve alongside sautéed vegetables or a small portion of khichuri. This combination supports muscle recovery and keeps energy stable through the evening.

Why these choices matter during Ramadan

During fasting, the body needs steady nourishment at iftar. Meals dominated by refined carbohydrates and fried items cause quick blood sugar rises followed by sharp drops. Protein slows this process, supports muscle health, and improves satiety.

In Bangladesh, protein-rich foods are often seen as expensive or complicated. In reality, eggs, lentils, chickpeas, yoghurt, chicken, and fish are already present in most households. The difference lies in preparation and balance.

Remember, high-protein iftar does not require strict rules. One protein-rich item per iftar is enough to make a difference.

#LIFEHACKS

How to stay steady and focused during long Taraweeh prayers

The religious duties of Ramadan can be taxing, especially if you are unprepared. For many, taraweeh, or tarabi, does not become difficult during the prayer itself; it becomes tough before it even starts.

While many of us take pre-Ramadan measures for completing this ritual with due fervour, others try to approach it only when the month arrives. As a result, many face problems in continuing their responsibilities and soon quit, despite their sincerest intentions of participating in them throughout.

For a successful spiritual journey, preparations should start even before the crescent moon of Ramadan shows up in the sky. And perhaps, this year, it is not too late to make taraweeh-planning before the fasting begins.

Make adjustments to your routine

Successful participation in the prayers will require significant adjustment to your daily routine. If you intend to take part in a congregation, make sure you inform your peers. Let them know beforehand that you will be unavailable, even to pick up the phone, for a good three to four hours every evening after iftar.

Your family and friends should support you in this endeavour, and so should your colleagues.

Taraweeh is meant to bring peace, reflection, and closeness to the Almighty. When approached with balance and honesty, it becomes something to look forward to, night after night.

Select a mosque with which you are familiar. Make sure it is close to you because commuting long distances WILL pose a problem.

Faster recitation is not always better if it leaves you struggling physically or mentally halfway through. Our religion allows flexibility, and that flexibility exists for a reason. Listening to the demands of your body is not weakness but wisdom. If possible, engage yourself in some late-night prayers before the start of Ramadan to familiarise yourself with the routine.

When the month finally arrives, approach the prayers one day at a time. Make a mental note, and be sure to tick your accomplishment after the completion of an evening's prayer. This way, even before you realise, taraweeh will become a habit!

The month of Ramadan is more about spiritual enlightenment and cleansing of the soul rather than Eid festivities. So, if necessary, complete your Eid shopping beforehand. If you miss one night's congregation for any reason, make sure you cover it up by praying alone and return to the mosque with the purest of intentions and a heart full of repentance the next evening.

Preparing the body before the prayer begins

A heavy iftar may feel satisfying in the moment, but it almost always works against you during long prayers. Hydration matters just as much, but timing matters more. A 15–20-minute pause after the iftar meals, sitting quietly or lying down, allows the body to recover from the fast and prepares the mind for sustained worship.

Approaching taraweeh calmly, rather than rushing into it exhausted, sets the tone for the night. Between rak'ahs, brief pauses are opportunities. Stretching the legs slightly or relaxing the shoulders can prevent stiffness from building up silently.

After the prayer ends

Many people treat the end of the congregation as the finish line, but recovery matters too.

Rehydrating after prayer helps the body reset, especially after long standing. If hunger returns, a light snack is usually enough. Fruit, yoghurt, or a small portion of dates replenishes energy without heaviness.

Equally important is how the night winds down. Avoiding screens immediately after taraweeh preserves the calm that the prayer creates. Silence, reflection, or quiet supplication allows the spiritual effect of the prayer to settle.

LS Desk
Photo: LS Archive

#HEALTH & FITNESS

Have Gastritis?

How to plan your Ramadan meals for better health

For people living with gastritis or peptic ulcer disease, Ramadan fasting can require extra care. Common causes of this ailment include bacterial infection, smoking, long-term use of painkillers, overeating, and frequent consumption of spicy, fatty, or acidic foods.

Symptoms often include stomach pain, heartburn, bloating, burping, acid reflux, and a burning or aching sensation in the upper abdomen. These symptoms tend to worsen when the stomach remains empty for long hours, making fasting during Ramadan particularly challenging for some individuals.

What to consider during fasting

Whether a person with gastritis or an ulcer can fast during Ramadan depends on the severity of the condition. Skipping meals, especially sehri, can significantly increase stomach acidity and should be avoided.

Sehri should include slow-digesting carbohydrates to help sustain energy and reduce gastric irritation during fasting hours. If appetite is low, light but nourishing foods such as milk, dates, and sufficient water are recommended.

Tea and other caffeinated beverages at sehri should be avoided, as they increase urine output and lead to loss of essential mineral salts, potentially worsening dehydration and acidity.

Breaking the fast gently

Breaking the fast gently helps prevent a sudden surge in stomach acid. Dates and water are commonly used to break the fast and are generally well tolerated. Soups or mild fruit-based drinks can also help ease digestion.

Meals at Iftar should be balanced and moderate, including carbohydrates, protein, fruits, and vegetables. Fried, spicy, salty, and sugary foods should be avoided, as they can aggravate gastritis symptoms and cause discomfort.

Things to avoid

Fasting can increase stomach acidity, making certain foods especially problematic for people with gastritis. These include fried, greasy, and fatty foods, spicy and acidic foods, and citrus fruits such as lemons, limes, oranges, and grapefruits. Moreover, processed and canned foods, particularly tomato-based products, foods high in sugar and refined carbohydrates, can cause significant discomfort.

Smoking is strongly linked to gastritis and peptic ulcer disease, and Ramadan offers an opportunity to quit and reduce further irritation to the stomach lining.

Foods that are better tolerated

Some foods like dates and bananas are gentler on the stomach and may help reduce discomfort, as they are easy to digest, rich in potassium and provide energy along with fibre and minerals. Furthermore, almonds can be a good source of protein.

Oven-grilled or baked foods instead of fried items should also be taken into account. Eating smaller portions and avoiding overeating at both sehri and iftar are key to keeping symptoms under control.

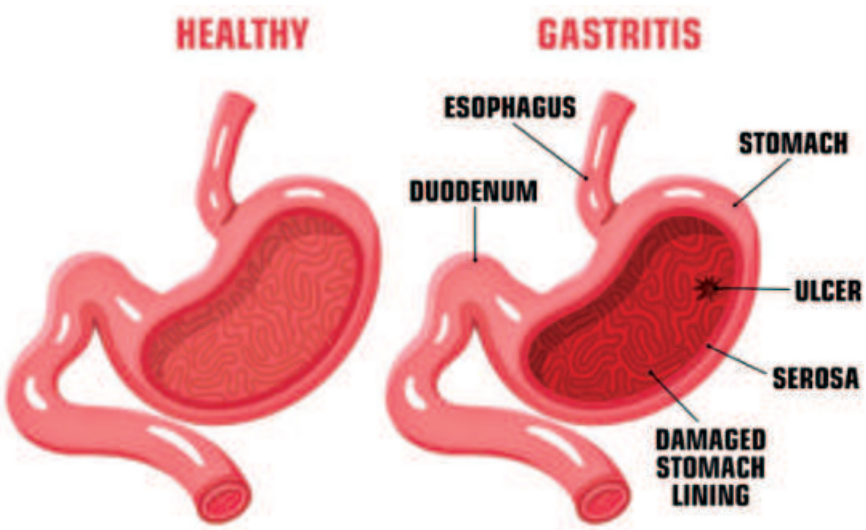
Importance of hydration and medication

Adequate hydration between Iftar and night-time is important to help the body regulate fluid levels during the next fasting day. Water and non-acidic drinks are preferable. Prescribed medications for gastritis or ulcers should be taken as advised by a physician, usually at sehri.

Observing Ramadan with comfort

While fasting is obligatory for Muslims during Ramadan, those with gastritis or peptic ulcers must be especially mindful of their eating habits. A diet that is mild, balanced, and low in spice, fat, and acidity, combined with moderation, hydration, and proper meal timing, can help ease symptoms and allow the holy month to be observed with greater comfort and care.

— LS Desk
Photo: Collected



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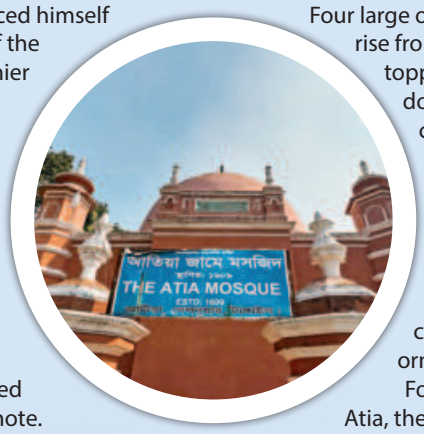
The Atia Mosque and the People Who Keep Its Legacy Alive

I wasn't even sure I was on the right road. Bright yellow mustard fields stretched endlessly on both sides as I walked through Gomjani village in Delduar, Tangail, in search of the Atia Mosque. My phone signal was weak, and the path ahead felt uncertain. Somewhere between the fields and the village road, without even realising it, I had already stepped into Atia village.

When I asked a few locals about the mosque, their faces lit up instantly. "You're here to see our mosque?" one of them asked with a smile. Before I could answer properly, I was already being guided forward by strangers who felt like hosts. At that moment, I knew I had reached the right place.

A road shaded by trees opened into a wide, quiet space. A pond lay calmly on one side, and behind it stood the Atia Mosque, surrounded by trees. The water reflected the landscape like a mirror. The mosque appeared serene, as if the beauty of the sky, the water, and the trees had gathered there to protect it. The Atia Mosque did not announce itself loudly, it welcomed with grace.

Near the mosque, I met an elderly man in his eighties who volunteered to show me around. He introduced himself as the former cashier of the mosque. "I was the cashier of the mosque for 12 years," he shared. "After I fell ill, I now spend my days walking around, eating, and playing with my grandchildren. And when I hear the adhan, I come here to pray."



He carefully pulled out something laminated in plastic: an old Tk 10 note. Printed on it was the image of the Atia Mosque. "Look," he said, pointing at the bank note. "This mosque was once on our currency. When visitors come, I show them this. It reminds them how important this place is."

Situated about 10 kilometres from Tangail Sadar, the Atia Mosque was built in 1609 by Said Khan Panee. The mosque reflects a blend of Sultanate and Mughal architectural styles.

The mosque's structure remains a major attraction for visitors every year. Four large octagonal minarets rise from its corners, each topped with a small dome. The main prayer chamber is covered by a large central dome, accompanied by three smaller domes. Built primarily of brick, the mosque features curved cornices and terracotta ornamentation.

For the people of Atia, the mosque is not just an old architectural structure, it is part of their identity. Despite official restoration efforts, the villagers feel a deep sense of ownership over it. The former cashier expressed mixed feelings about the restoration work. "Department of Archaeology works on restoration, true, but they don't always take our opinions," he said. "For us, this mosque feels like our own. Whatever we think of it is for its betterment, you know."

He also shared that a major restoration of the mosque was carried out in 1837 by Rowshun Khatoon Chowdhurani, a member of a zamindar family. The zamindar bari once stood nearby, but today, nothing remains — no gate, no sign — nothing.

Standing by the pond, watching the domes ripple in the water's reflection, I realised this mosque is not frozen in time, it lives and breathes with the village. I came looking for a mosque, but what I also found was a community keeping its legacy alive.

As I walked back through the mustard fields, I felt I was carrying a piece of Atia with me, not just knowledge, but the spirit of the village itself. The mosque offers more than architectural beauty, it shows how heritage lives through the people who care for it. More than four centuries on, the Atia Mosque remains a living landmark, sustained by faith and the quiet guardianship of a village.

"This mosque is our own," the elderly man expressed, and I could see the pride radiating from him.

By Jawwad Sami Neogi
Photo: Jawwad Sami Neogi