VOLUME 25, ISSUE 47, TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026
BAISHAKH 22, 1433 BS

# Star LIFE Style

E-mail: lifestyleds@yahoo.com
64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215. A publication of The Daily Star

# The EYE edit

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#PERSPECTIVE

# Beautiful summer and Bangladesh

We are always complaining about the season. Every year, the same discussion comes up — is it better to be a summer lover or not? Honestly, we are not particularly fond of it. The heatwaves and high humidity levels tire us out. But don't you ever feel that summer gives us more than we appreciate? They say the simpler things in life are what make it beautiful, and in many ways, the season might actually be one of the finest we experience.

You can almost smell the season in the air. From the fragrance of mango blossoms to the scent of wet earth just after the rain, it is more than just an experience. It feels a bit cinematic during the cruel days of scorching heat. People gather in ponds to bathe, and boys often jump from bridges into canals to have fun. As the heat begins to ease in the evening, women sit in the yards of their homes, enjoying the gentle breeze while sewing, doing handicrafts, and chatting.

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#FOOD & RECIPES

# Bangladeshi-origin Sabina Khan of "Flavour Lab" Steps into MasterChef UK 2026 Spotlight

The 22nd series of MasterChef UK 2026 has just begun, and one contestant is already grabbing attention: Bangladeshi-origin Sabina Khan, the person behind the popular Instagram page Sabina's Flavour Lab. She is capturing attention with a journey that is a mixture of heritage, sustainability, and culinary imagination.

Born in Bangladesh and now based in the UK, Sabina Khan's story is as layered as the dishes she creates on one of the world's most competitive cooking stages. She described herself as a "global flavour explorer", a phrase she used to explain herself during her interview that perfectly portrays her culinary identity.

"What you are eating on the plate should have ultra-immersive flavour," she said, highlighting that her focus is not just on fusion or labels but the depth of the food. For Khan, cooking is not about boundaries. She believes different foods can co-exist on one plate because it is more about the flavours and connection instead of just a simple dish.

The food journey, however, was deeply connected to a life of movement and exposure. Growing up in Bangladesh, studying across India, completing graduation in the United States, and later settling down in the UK, Khan's culinary lens formed cultures across continents.

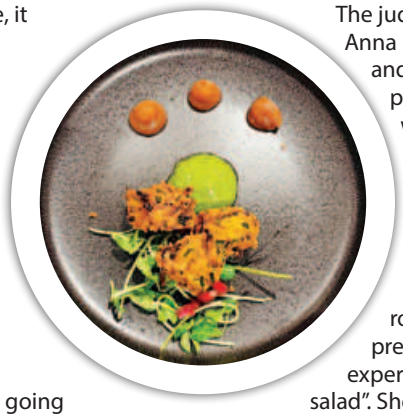
"I got a lot of exposure to different cuisines in different cultures," she shared. Also explained how her mother's diverse cooking back in Bangladesh first sparked a curiosity in her.

That curiosity eventually transformed into Sabina's Flavour Lab, which she describes as both a creative space and an experimental kitchen.

"It is called a lab because I want to have the option to experiment," she said. "Sometimes I make mistakes, but then I start again to build the recipe." For Sabina, food is all about the progress of learning rather than perfection.

Sabina Khan's approach to living a sustainable life is equally personal. Working as an environmental consultant, she feels a need to really expand those values into her cooking.

"In Bangladeshi culture, it is all about sustainability," she said, pointing to the traditional dishes like bhorta as an example of resourcefulness. "Bhortas originally came from leftovers. We were always trying to use up what we have available in our homes."



This philosophy also moulded her everyday kitchen habits.

"If I buy a chicken, I am going to use all the parts," she shared, describing how nothing goes to waste in her kitchen, from chicken skin to the bone for stock — everything is used for different recipes. This practice is not modern sustainability; it's her inherited wisdom!

Sabina Khan's Masterchef UK 2026 journey began with an emotional return to a dream that she once had to abandon. Sixteen years ago, she had applied to the competition bar, but due to her pregnancy, she had to withdraw. This year, Khan was encouraged by her children.

"When I got the call, I felt like God was reaching out to me," she said, describing it as a moment of destiny.

In her first round, she presented lentil and onion fritters — peyaju — a staple dish, a deeply familiar and loved Bangladeshi dish, especially during Ramadan and moments of gathering.

"British citizens have had onion bhaji or dal bora before, but they have not had these two things together in one dish," she said.

The judges, Grace Dent and Anna Haugh, were shocked and highly impressed with peyaju that one of them wanted to rename it to "bullets of joy". This dish secured her a place among the top contestants advancing in the competition.

In the quarter-final round, she chose to present a very creative and experimental dish, "harmony salad". She combined elements like falafel, kala chana, and quail eggs with pickled beetroot, mustard oil dressing, and garnished with garlic using a French technique and muri on the side. This dish was her attempt to show how a mix of cultures can be together on one plate.

Despite the immense pressure of the competition, Sabina Khan describes the experience as transformative.

"You press yourself to do something new, you will learn so many things from it," she said, explaining that once she entered the competition, she found herself growing and learning in unexpected ways. "I am heading into the 50s now, and I started a new chapter of my life, a new career," she further added.

Khan's ambitions expand beyond MasterChef. She hopes to publish a cookbook rooted in her "Flavour Lab" philosophy, create her culinary series and also continue writing about the history behind a food.

"I don't want it to be just a Bangladeshi cookbook," she shared. "I want it to be a flavour-exploring cookbook where you can see every flavour of the world."

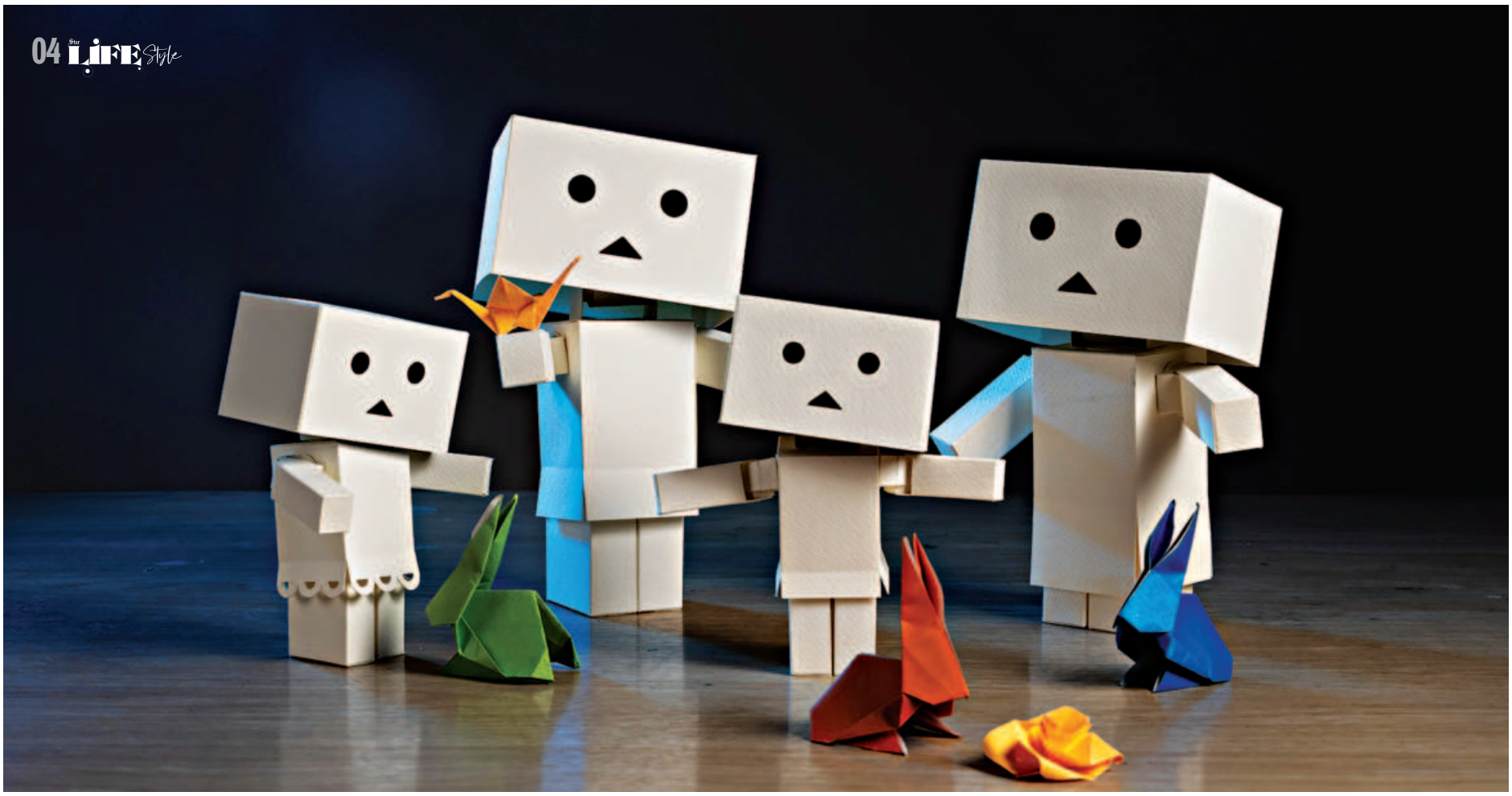
She spoke passionately about empowering Bangladeshi women in food, especially those whose cooking skills remain unrecognised.

"There are women in every corner of Bangladesh who are amazing cooks, who are not using their talent enough and earning money from it," she said. She further added, "Why can't they try to become professional chefs or start a catering business?"

As 22nd series of MasterChef UK 2026 unfolds over the coming weeks, Sabina Khan's journey is clearly more than a competition. It is about identity, memory, sustainability, and flavours. We are sending her best wishes from Bangladesh and eagerly waiting to see her wonderful journey ahead.

*You can watch MasterChef UK 2026 on BBC iPlayer and on BBC One.*

**By Faria Nowshin Tazin**
**Photo: Courtesy**



#MOTHER'S DAY TRIBUTE

# Motherhood beyond the buzzword

In today's world of changing family dynamics and family structures, buzzwords promise teamwork, balance, and a shared purpose. Yet, somehow, in the mad rush between breakfasts and bedtime stories, many mothers find themselves mentally ticking off lists that are too small to make it into the "important" conversations, yet substantial enough to weigh them down.

Here's where the popular concepts fail, and reality begins.

**When co-parenting is not equal**

Take Arsila Mehnaz, for example. She has a high-flying career in finance in a leading multinational firm and is a single mother, co-parenting her eight-year-old son with her ex-husband.

"My son was only 9 months old when the family split," she says. "In our part of the world, children usually stay with their mother. For me, that was true from the start. There was a custody battle, but my husband and I pulled out of it in the last minute."

In Bangladesh, the courts move slowly, and the law can be stacked against mothers, so the couple negotiated a joint arrangement outside the courtroom before things got ugly and then sealed it legally.

Over the years, Arsila Mehnaz has come to realise that coparenting is a half-truth.

"I work long hours in a demanding job, yet I am the one who gets him to school, manages ECAs, soothes him when he's upset, plays bad cop when needed, and plans life around him," Mehnaz says.

His week with his father, on the flipside, is the rosy break. A few hours of fun, away from the routine, the rules, and the worries.

She adds, "My ex-husband has all the freedom in the world: to work as he wishes, to socialise when he feels like it. If I so much as decide to meet my friends, I have to plan out my entire day a certain way to accommodate my son into the plan."

Arsila Mehnaz, however, is blessed in many ways. While her in-laws remain largely absent from the support scene, her parents have become the village she needed to keep her afloat in the hardest months. Without them, she doubts if she could have kept working. Financially, therefore, Arsila is fortunate to manage without asking for support.

"That would be a whole new court case, and I do not feel like going into that situation as I am self-sufficient," she says.

Mehnaz also realises that many women are not, and with unreliable law enforcement, things can be very tough for the financially dependent mothers out there.

"My son never got the conventional family life, but he did start missing it when he went to school," shares Mehnaz. "To the best of our abilities, both his father and I try to make it to his PTMs and school shows. Until he was six, we did all his birthdays together, too."

There are, of course, times when her ex-husband cannot make it, and Mehnaz makes a conscious effort to put her son's well-being and honouring his respect for his father over using his absence as leverage.

**Learning to mother alone**

In a similar boat is entrepreneur and soft-skill trainer Tahmina Shaily.

"My son was one when my husband, an expert mountaineer, disappeared from

Mount Everest on his way back down, without a trace," says Shaily.

Tahmina Shaily recollects that it was an extremely traumatic time in her life. "I did not know how to mourn it. I was going to therapists and counsellors because I had no idea how to navigate life with a 12-month-old baby, as a single mother."

Shaily likens that time to a situation where two people are thrown into the deep end of the sea, and learning to swim is the only way to survive.

"A woman can give birth to a child, but she does not instantly become a "mother". It takes a woman just as much time to learn the ropes of being a mother as it takes for the baby to learn the ropes of life," she adds.

It also takes a village, but in Shaily's case, that village was painfully small. Her in-laws had been largely absent from their lives, even when her husband was alive.

"After the incident, however, our lives unfolded like a tasteless movie. All the property that belonged to my husband was seized from us. This inheritance was my right, my son's right, but unfortunately, my in-laws cut all contact with us."

Choosing to remain positive for her son, Shaily remembers asking her therapist,

"I am not even fully a mother yet, how do I also become his father?" The therapist's response became Tahmina Shaily's guiding light: "Be your son's friend. He will keep coming back to you at each step of life."

Her son is now thirteen, and they have come to terms with life with all its highs and lows.

"We have found our symmetry," shares Shaily. "When I am at work, he stays with my mother or brother, just down the street. And I keep work flexible during exam season."

Her son accompanies her on work trips internationally or even locally, when he does not have school, or when he can bring his homework along.

"When I took up single parenting, I decided to work even more seriously. And it is this same business that is helping us get through life comfortably," Shaily says.

Tahmina Shaily's life with her son may have been riddled with trials and tribulations at first, but they fit together now, as effortlessly as pieces of a puzzle.

"We are one unit on a journey. We support each other in whatever way we can, be it financially or emotionally. It is not that because he is denied his inheritance that we are facing some sort of financial stress, no. We are each other's world, and there is something here to be proud of. What others offer or deny us makes no difference to our lives," Shaily says.

**Redefining family, on her own terms**

Where Arsila Mehnaz and Tahmina Shaily are both mothers who have found comfort and power in single parenthood — for the most part, at least — content creator Pari Rukh Al Matin has chosen an alternative path. Throwing convention to the winds, she has chosen to exercise her right over her life.

"When I got married, I was very young," Matin reminisces. "I was still in university when I gave birth to my son. Two years after he was born, my family disintegrated."

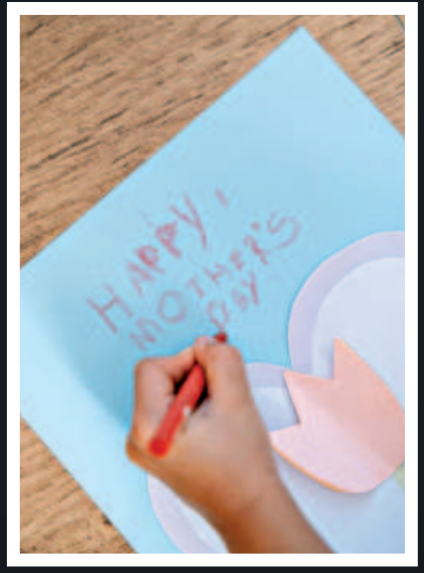
Pari Rukh Al Matin was not financially independent. She was wise enough to know that to be financially stable, she would have to work. "Getting a degree and working, while single-handedly taking care of a child, is a tall order for anyone, let alone someone as young as me."

Matin found her chances with the law to be slim as well. "In Bangladesh, a mother of a boy gets custody of the child for up to 7 years only, after

which either the custody goes to the father, or it's another legal battle."

She thought this would be too emotionally taxing for her son. "He was already going through a divorce at the age of two; I did not want to drag him through another upheaval."

Pari Rukh Al Matin shares a cordial relationship with her in-laws and her

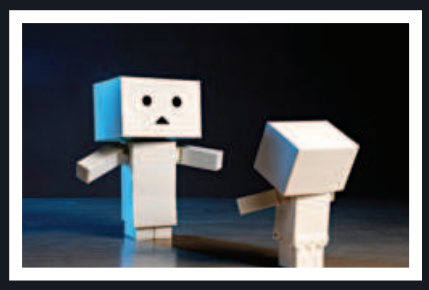



ex-husband, for the sake of her son.

"I am also on good terms with my ex-husband's partner because my son lives with them," Matin says. This way, she gets easy access to her ex-husband's home and is able to meet her son very often.

"My home is also always open for my son, and he comes to me whenever he wants and as many times as he wants. In fact, it has never been so that my son, to this date, has had to sleep without either one of his parents!" she adds.

Through efforts on her part and on the part of her ex-husband, Pari



Rukh Al Matin has managed to keep her son in high spirits. "There was no toxicity, no fighting. Despite the tumultuous nature of our relationship, both my ex and I were clear that we did not want our son to have a skewed relationship with either of us."

Pari Rukh Al Matin and her ex-husband have both remarried. "This was another area of confusion for our son, but we both chose partners who would not only accept our son, but also the bonding we share with our ex-partners' families. This way we could all be family- a great reassurance to our son."

Largely a foreign concept, it took Matin a while to convince her family and even her ex that such a set-up could hold.

"This was a largely unprecedented phenomenon in society. People said all kinds of things to us! That we still had a relationship and so much more. But looking back, what other choice did I have?" she says.

Even in an impossible situation, Pari Rukh Al Matin was quick to figure out the hypocrisies of society. In a typical Bangladeshi social system, there is an expectation for women to live in a bad marriage, simply to raise kids.

No one cares that she may have emotional or physical needs of her own. It is the desire of the same society that in case of a divorce, a child stay with the mother, even when she is floundering financially. What then can a woman do but run around like headless chickens in courtrooms, looking for child support that does not always come their way?

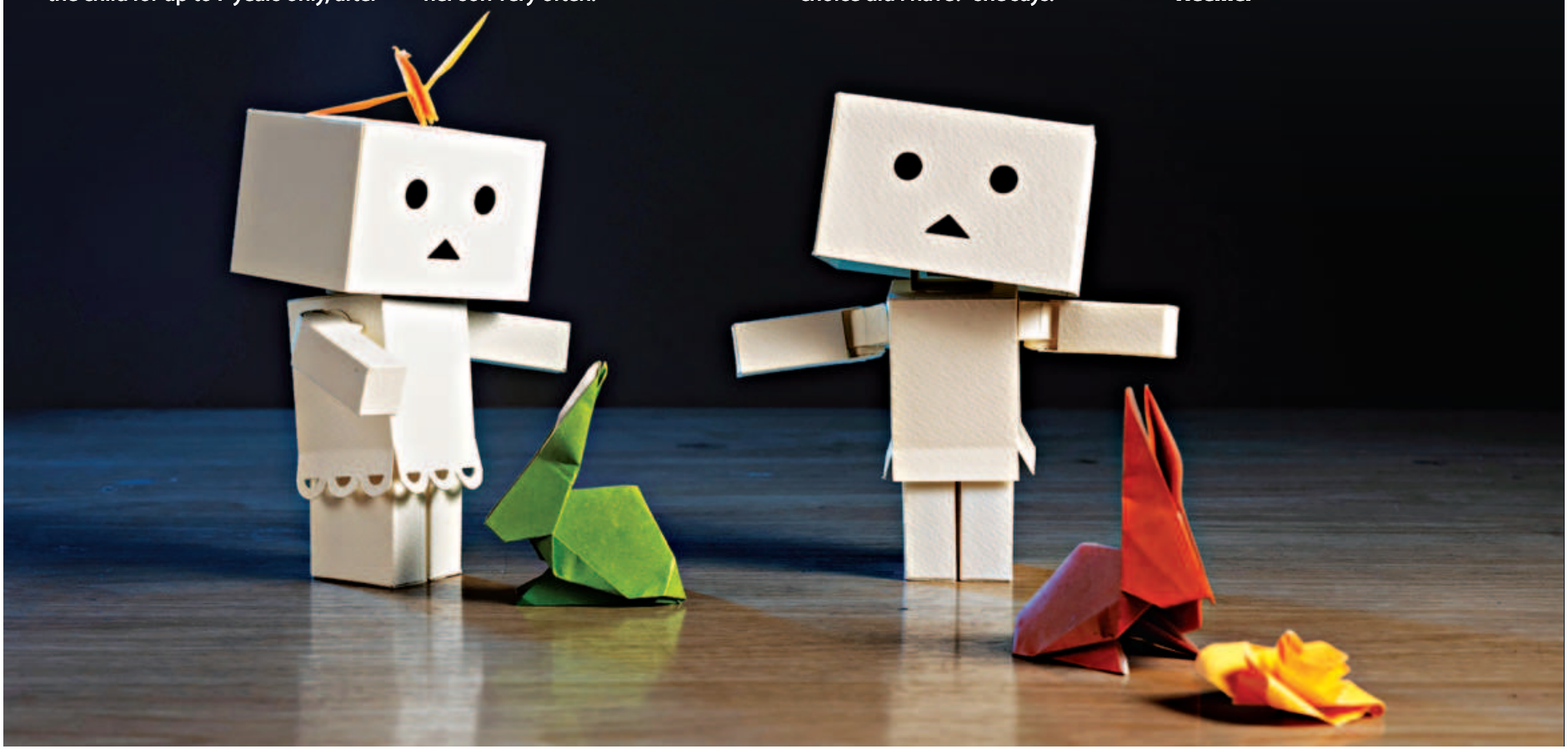
The society is quick to encourage a divorced man who decides to move on. The woman is expected to live with the stigma, as if asking for a career or another chance at love is reaching for the moon.

"It is never easy for a woman to be accepted by a man with a child from a prior marriage. This is not the same for a man," Matin muses, shaking her head at the injustice of it. "So, then, if a child must have his father's name and protection to survive at every step of life, is it not better that he lives with his father from the beginning?"

Pari Rukh Al Matin's story directly sheds light on the farcical nature of society. "The same society that trains women to change diapers, trains the men to go out and earn," she shares. But these double standards must end, she feels.

"Giving birth is a woman's biological privilege; changing nappies is a two-person job," she concludes.

**By Munira Fidai**
**Photo: LS Archive / Shahrear Kabir Heemel**



They say the eyes are the window to the soul, and what a wise adage this is! Indeed, the first thing we tend to notice about people is the story their eyes are telling us. Our emotions, feelings, and moods and their swings are expressed largely through them and boy, do they tell a tale for one and all!

Star LIFE Style

# Eye makeup that SPEAKS summer

Bengali women are renowned for their bold, romantic looks. Oceans of ink have been spilt by poets, authors, and artists describing their beauty, depth, and complexity. And when it comes to decking up, it is our eyes that get attention first and foremost. In pursuit of drama, intrigue, mystery and beauty, all of our makeup prowess is unleashed through them.

Speaking of makeup, Bengali ladies are blessed with versatile beauty that can traverse between the best of both worlds. Her kohl-rimmed eyes do all the talking as she's draped in a saree, reciting poetry or lounging in a sensual sarong by the beach.

Summer is here with her blaze of glory, and we are here for it. It may be sweltering out there, but that has not and will not stop us from going out and enjoying life to its fullest. Eye makeup is the most important aspect of our look, and we pay the most attention to it. And this year, for summer, effortlessly sultry eyes are all the rage.

Imagine this: it's a hot summer day. The sun has been pouring all day long, and you are taking a much-needed leisurely dip in the pool. As you emerge from the water, your skin is moist, your hair is slicked wet, and it's your eyes, golden and liquid, doing all the talking. Capturing the very essence of summer, soft, sultry, au naturel eyes are hot this summer.

Coachella has set fantastic trends for funky eye makeup this year, which will jazz up your whole look in an instant, whether you are raving at music festivals or shaking it up at pool parties all day long.

The best part? It's the easiest look to master. Prep your eyes with a primer and skip the powder eyeshadows for this look. Instead, go for creamy eyeshadow sticks that are quick, easy and highly pigmented. Start with a soft layer and then build up as much coverage as you want. Use your finger to smudge the edges to keep it soft and effortless. Shades like sunset gold, subtle copper, champagne and silver are perfect for this look. Finish with a swipe of mascara and voila!

Now, how does one elevate this look a bit more? For those countless pool parties and midsummer soirées, you are going to channel your inner summer goddess and jazz this look up with crystals and rhinestones. Go for a thin line of crystals or go all out with sparkling stick-on rhinestones choice is all yours. Perfect for a chic boho look, this little tweak will bring summertime magic. Keep the rest of your look simple with beautifully bronzed skin, nude lips, boho chic curls and let your eyes sparkle this summer and do all the talking.

**By Sabrina N Bhuiyan**
**Photo: Adnan Rahman**
**Model: Mysha**
**Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha**
**Mua: Sumon Rahat**
**Hair: Probina**

#FOOD & RECIPES

# Hydration, but make it fancy

# WATERMELON EDITION

The summer superstar, watermelon, is known for its natural sweetness. With a little creativity, it can easily be transformed into light, satisfying drinks and dishes. In this collection, you will find two easy drink recipes, a smooth sorbet, and a refreshing salad, all designed to bring out the best of watermelon on warm, sunny days.

**SPICY WATERMELON PUNCH**

**Ingredients**

500g watermelon cubes (seedless, chilled)
1 tsp lime juice
½ tsp rock salt
½ inch fresh ginger piece
6-8 fresh mint leaves
¼ tsp roasted cumin powder
1 small green chilli
Sugar (optional)

**Method**

To prepare your drink, start by adding the watermelon cubes to the blender. Next, include all the other ingredients. Be sure to remove the seeds from the green chilli. This will add a fresh aroma to the drink without making it too spicy. If the watermelon is sweet enough for your taste, you can skip the sugar. There is no need to add water, as watermelon is high in water content. Blend all the ingredients until the mixture reaches a smooth, pourable consistency. Finally, garnish with fresh mint leaves and serve chilled.

**WATERMELON COCO CLOUD**

**Ingredients**

500g watermelon cubes (seedless, frozen)
1 cup thick coconut milk
1½ tbsp fresh lime juice
¼ cup sugar
1 tsp lime zest (optional)

***For the sugar syrup —***

In a small pan, combine water and sugar, ensuring both are equal parts. Heat gently while stirring until the sugar completely dissolves. Avoid boiling the mixture, and remove the pan from the heat before it changes colour. Allow it to cool completely.

**Method**

Blend the frozen watermelon cubes, coconut milk, and lime juice until the mixture reaches a velvety texture. Add the cooled sugar syrup and blend briefly again. Pour the mixture into a shallow freezer-safe tray and freeze for 1 hour. Afterwards, remove it from the freezer and blend again to break up any ice crystals, then return it to the freezer. Freeze for an additional 4 hours. Serve it topped with a sprinkle of lime zest.

**CELESTE WATERMELON SALAD**

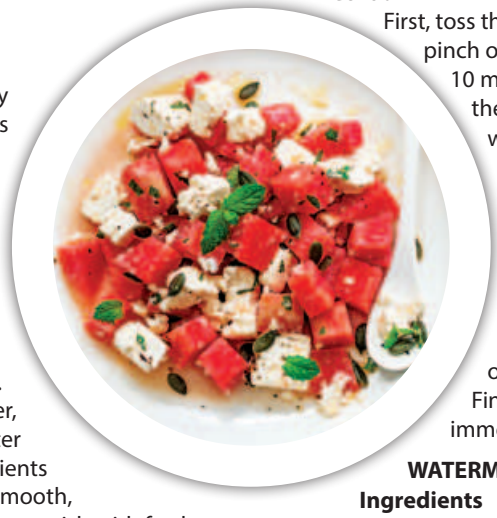
**Ingredients**

500g watermelon cubes (seedless, chilled)
150g Dhaka paneer (cubed)
1 small cucumber (cubed)
½ raw mango (thinly sliced)
8-10 fresh mint leaves
1 green chilli (thinly sliced)

**For the dressing –**

2 tbsp olive oil
2 tbsp fresh lime juice
½ tsp roasted cumin powder
Regular salt (as required)
¼ tsp fresh black pepper

**Method**



First, toss the Dhaka paneer with lime juice, a pinch of salt, and black pepper. Let it sit for 10 minutes to absorb the flavours. Pat dry the chilled watermelon cubes properly with a tissue to ensure the salad stays crisp.

Whisk together olive oil, lime juice, roasted cumin powder, salt, and pepper. Now, in a larger bowl, gently combine the watermelon, cucumber, raw mango slices, mint, and green chilli. Pour the dressing over the mixture and toss lightly. Finally, add the paneer on top. Serve immediately while cold.

**WATERMELON GREEN TEA COOLER**

**Ingredients**

200g watermelon cubes (frozen)
1 green tea bag
1 tsp lemon juice
Fresh tulsi (holy basil) leaves
Lime zest
Rock salt (optional)
Sugar to taste

**Method**

Brew a green tea bag in hot water for 2 to 3 minutes, but be careful not to boil the water. After brewing, remove the tea bag, add tulsi leaves and steep for 5 to 7 minutes, then remove the tulsi leaves as well. Allow the tea to cool completely.

Next, pulse the frozen watermelon cubes until slushy. Transfer the watermelon slushy to a jug, and add the cooled green tea, lemon juice, a pinch of rock salt and lime zest. Stir gently to combine all the ingredients. Sweeten with sugar syrup if needed. Serve immediately.

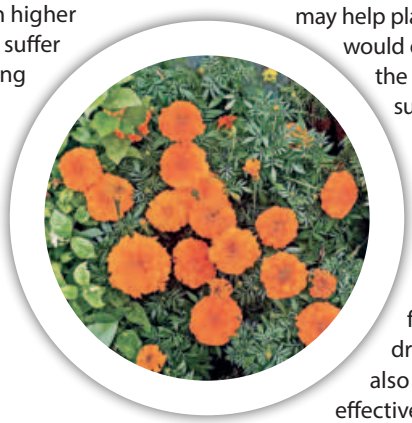
**By K T Humaira**
**Photo: Collected**

#GARDENING

# How gardens can survive the heat wave

Just like humans, plants not only feel the heat, but can also get dehydrated and eventually stop growing. With rising temperatures, unpredictable rainfall, and urban microclimates, keeping plants healthy takes consistent care and the right strategies.

This may come as a surprise to many, but any increase in temperature above 30 degrees Celsius can stunt plant growth. This is because the rate at which plants use the sun's energy to create carbs as a food source reduces when temperatures rise. In addition to this, the rate of respiration, or the rate at which the plants use up this food to grow, continues steadily even at these high temperatures. This means that food reserves are used faster in higher temperatures. Plants also suffer when they end up releasing more water vapour into the atmosphere than they are able to take in through their roots. In cases of prolonged periods of extreme heat, plants can die from food and water depletion.



**Can changing watering techniques help?**

Yes! One should check soil moisture daily. If the soil feels dry up to finger length, it is time to give your plants a drink. However, watering plants at certain times is better than at others. Early mornings and late afternoons are generally cooler and may help plants retain the water that would otherwise evaporate in the harsh glare of the noon sun.

Avoiding sprinklers and choosing to spot-water plants is a good way to ensure that enough hydration is reaching your green friend. Soaker hoses and drip irrigation techniques also help to water plants effectively.

If your green buddies are in hanging containers, they may dry out faster and require more water, often up to two times a day. Similarly, if your plants are less than a year old and have not developed extensive root systems, it may be wise to water them more frequently during heat waves.

**Are there additional substances we can add to soil to help with water retention?**

Absolutely! Organic mulch, such as woodchips or compost, can help hold in water and reduce evaporation. It shades the soil and keeps the root zone cooler.

**Should shades be introduced?**

Of course! Bringing plants in containers to a shaded spot, away from direct sunshine, can help keep temperatures lower and reduce evaporation. Covering the plant(s) with 30-50 per cent shade cloth, screens, or even white sheets can help with the amount of light hitting plants directly and causing leaf burn.

**What about fertiliser or propagation?**

No to both! Fertilising in this heat will only speed up the growth process of a plant, which it cannot sustain without additional strain on itself. Propagation, or transplantation, should also not be prioritised in this weather as these activities are stressful on plants and take up a lot of their energy resources. In fact, removing dead leaves and flowers can often be a safer bet in this heat, so that the roots do not spend much-needed energy on spent flowers/fruits. This increases their chances of blooming again once the heat passes.

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

#LIFEHACKS

# Stuck in traffic? Here's how to prevent heat exhaustion

As temperatures keep soaring in our beloved city, sitting in the already annoying traffic becomes more and more uncomfortable. With most public transport lacking proper ventilation or shade, here are a few tips to help you stay cool while stuck in traffic.

**Why does heat feel worse in traffic?**

Three things make the heat stress worse when you are stuck on a crowded bus, in a CNG, or tied to the back of a bike. The engine's heat comes from a lot of cars parked close by, the heat coming off the asphalt roads, and the lack of airflow.

**What actually works? Cooling hacks backed by science**

Experts recommend a combination of hydration, wardrobe alterations, and a few other little changes that are guaranteed to give.

**Hydration is key**

Experts recommend carrying a litre of cold water in an insulated bag so that the water remains cool. Resist the urge to chug and instead take small sips every 10-15 minutes. Adding salt or a pack of ORS is a better strategy if you stay out for prolonged periods of time. If using ORS, always prepare according to package instructions.

**The wet cloth trick**

Occupational hazard researchers recommend placing a wet cloth behind the ears, neck, or wrists due to the abundance of major blood vessels. Cooling these areas in turn cools the entire body.

Research has found that placing a damp cloth over the neck or behind the ears, as well as wiping wrists and the temples, provides a significant cooling effect on the body. To do this, keep a spare cloth with you and dampen it with water. Repeat as needed.

**Clothing colour matters**

Scientists found that wearing lighter shades, such as white and yellow, keeps you much cooler as opposed to wearing colours like black. The reason being, lighter shades reflect heat, whereas darker colours absorb it. Loose-fitting clothes are a bonus, and stacking these two really helps.

**Time your casual hangouts**

Scheduling your casual hangouts and meetings with friends and family is likely to protect you from the sun and heat. As the temperature falls after sunset, commuting at that time is likely to expose you to less harsh heat.

**Bottom line**

While the heat is unbearable and the commute is unavoidable, it is necessary to take precautionary steps to reduce the risk of heatstroke or severe dehydration. The research is detailed: strategic hydration, active cooling methods, smart clothing, and timing choices can protect your health. Your commute doesn't have to be a medical emergency.

Start today, and your body will thank you later.

**By Zawad Arif Arian**
**Photo: Star**

#FASHION & BEAUTY

# Skincare tips and tricks for hot and humid days

On hot summer days, everyone's main goal is to avoid the frustrating combination of sweat, dirt, and oil-clogged pores. It can often be tempting to cut ties with skincare products altogether in such weather, splash water on the face, and call it a day. However, dermatologists say that is not the best course of action, especially if you want your skin to withstand the humidity without damage.

A few simple habits and adjustments can go a long way, so with that in mind, we have discussed some easy-to-follow tips below.

**Wash it away**

It is ideal to use water-based or gel-based cleansers instead of oil cleansers during such weather, as the goal is to remove sebum. Many professionals recommend salicylic acid cleansers, known for their oil-controlling properties and gentle formula.

**Moisture**

While cleansing is vital, it is very important to prevent over-cleansing the skin to the point of stripping away the natural oils, which can lead to the pores self-producing more oil.

That is why skipping moisturisers on humid days, no matter how tempting, is a bad decision. Instead of heavy creams, gel-based or water-based moisturisers with a cooling effect are highly advised and essential to lock in the moisture after cleansing. Serums or creams containing niacinamide, a form of vitamin B3, are highly recommended by experts due to their oil-controlling properties.

**Refresh and soothe**

Components such as panthenol, vitamin C, and aloe vera are used in many calming serums and creams. So, using products like hydrating mists containing these elements can help relax congested skin from all the sweating and heat.

**At home**

For anyone trying to avoid store-bought chemicals, there are plenty of homemade remedies to pamper your skin in accordance with the hot weather.

Raw papaya pulp is very effective in soothing sun-tanned skin due to its high beta carotene and vitamin C content. Rose water mixed with cucumber juice can be a good homemade hydrating face mist, while raw aloe vera gel can also be applied to soothe and hydrate the skin. A homemade mask of honey mixed with yoghurt is good for exfoliation; the yoghurt is especially helpful for dry-skinned people.

**Skincare from within**

While many products can temporarily heal the skin on the outside, there is nothing quite like the magic of internal hydration and skin repair, brought about by healthy food.

To target skin hydration, coconut water and foods with high water content, like watermelon and cucumbers, are suggested. Antioxidant-rich foods like oranges and lemons are also very effective for supporting the skin barrier and controlling UV-ray damage. It is also advised to limit caffeine intake during the summer as it promotes internal dehydration.

Before using any new product, be it store-bought or homemade, a patch test is a must to ensure there are no bad reactions to the formula.

When it comes to skincare, consistency is key. The heat and humidity can feel overwhelming, but regularly following some of these tips, paired with sunscreen, can go a long way to maintain healthy and hydrated skin during summer.

**By Raidah Hasan**
**Photo: Lifestyle Archives**

# Beautiful summer and Bangladesh

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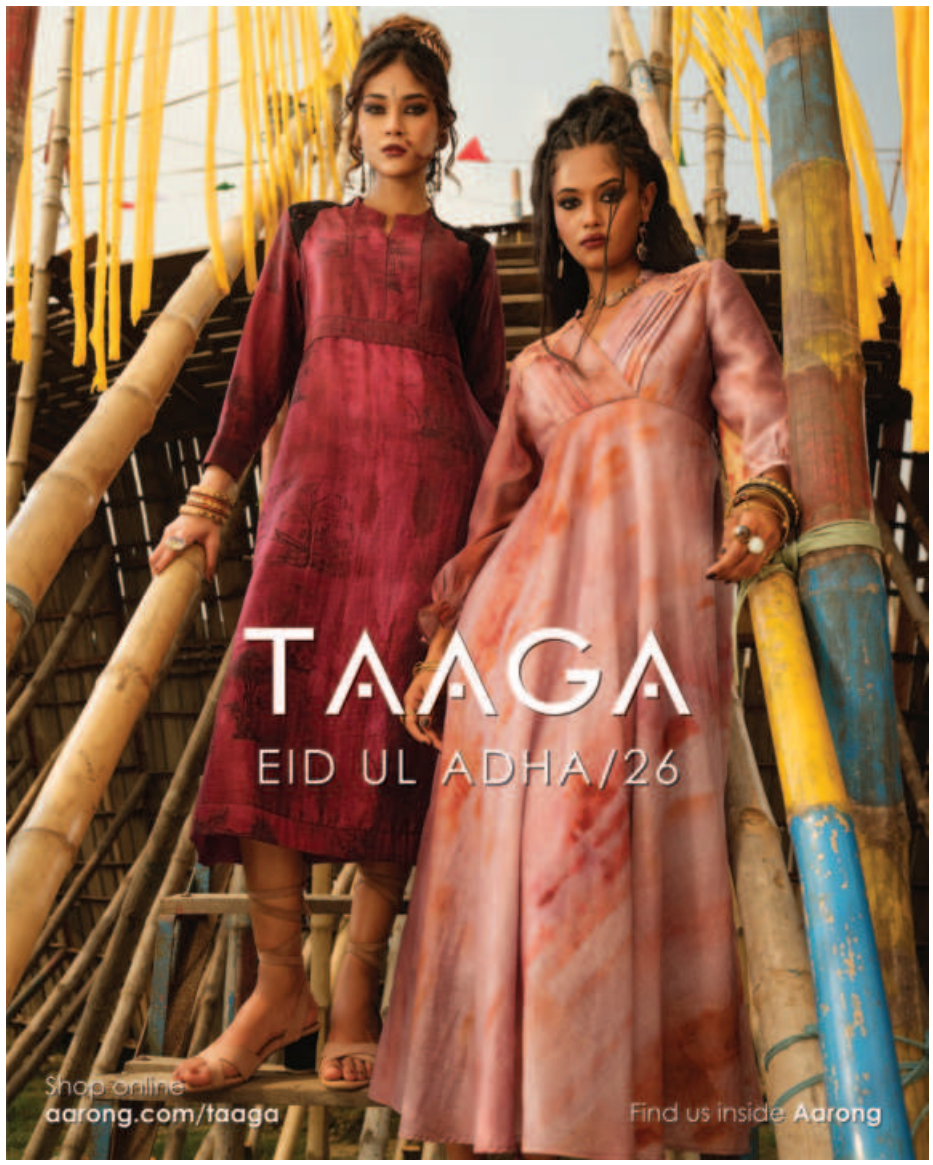
How do you feel when you see the blooming of Krishnachura along the roadsides of Dhaka, glowing like fire under the sunlight? Every year, Dhaka is dressed in bloom during the summer. Their fiery red petals spill across roads and schoolyards, as if the season itself has taken visible form. In cities where concrete dominates, the flower softens the harshness of the surroundings. In our busy schedules, we often pause to enjoy the gentle drift of Krishnachura petals and their silent rain.

Summer is the season of abundance. Jaishtha is known as "madhu mash" for the variety of fruits that the time has to offer. Unlike the delicate sweetness of lychee or the celebrated richness of mango, jackfruit arrives with a presence that is impossible to ignore. And then there is watermelon. Beyond its taste, it becomes something more essential in the height of Bangladeshi summer. It is a form of hydration disguised as a fruit. In the relentless heat, when the air feels heavy and still, each bite replenishes what the sun slowly takes away. Street vendors press sugarcane into pale green juice poured over ice, while others sell sharp, cooling green mango drinks. People stop not just to drink, but to rest and talk, easing the weight of the heat.

Yet, perhaps the most vivid moments of summer come with the nor'westers — dark clouds rolling in, winds rising, leaves trembling in anticipation. The sudden shift in light and air signals what is to come. Everyone in the village rushes to the mango orchards to collect the fallen mangoes, as if it were a festival.

Summer gives us a chance to pause, take a break and celebrate life once again. People often go on trips to escape city life and also to create memories with loved ones. The season might make us uncomfortable, but it reconnects us to the roots of culture and life. People slow down, shift their routines, and find small ways to stay close to comfort and one another. And finally, when it starts to fade into rain, what remains is not just the memory of heat, but the memory of how people lived through it.

**By Sabrin Zawad Ritu**
**Photo: LS Archive/Star/Collected**



Star LIFE Style

VOLUME 25, ISSUE 47, TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026, BAISHAKH 22, 1433 BS
A publication of The Daily Star
E-mail: lifestyleds@yahoo.com, 64-65 Kazi Nazrul Islam Avenue, Dhaka-1215

#TRAVEL

# Experience Sylhet like never before during the magical rainy season

Some travellers want comfort, while others want a boat ride through an engulfed haor and a roaring waterfall so close that mist clings to their skin. If you are the second type, Sylhet is your perfect destination. But there is a particular kind of magic that only rain can conjure, and nowhere does it work its magic more completely than Sylhet when it is pouring. Still feeling unsure? Let us persuade you a little more.

## EVERYTHING COMES ALIVE

When rain visits Sylhet, something just shifts in the landscape.

You may begin from Ratargul Swamp Forest, where the boat rides through the trees in knee-deep, dark, still water. The swamp forest is so unapologetically quiet that it makes the journey almost unreal. Follow the road to Jaflong, where the Piyain River runs cold and clear, rolling smooth stones down from the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. When the clouds roll in, those hills disappear into the horizon mysteriously.

While at its scenic best during the rains, tourist spots are often less crowded when it is drizzling, so it almost feels like you have this beautiful place to yourself. The hotels are generally calm, the boat rides are uncontested, and the tea garden paths are empty except for the pitter-patter on broad leaves. There is no one else jostling for the same view, and no one is posing in front of Madhubkunda or Panthumai Waterfall when you click the shutter.

Ratargul

Sreemangal

Jaflong

## EXPERIENCE THE RAIN LIKE NEVER BEFORE

Whether you are sipping hot tea on a plantation porch while the rain drums softly on the roof, or standing at the edge of a misty valley watching clouds roll in as curtains drawn across the sky, Sylhet teaches you to enjoy the rain differently. Not as something to escape, but as something to truly, deeply feel.

Then there is something that Gen-Z calls "sus" about the rain; it just washes away self-control. The moment the sky gives way, ordinary hunger turns absolutely brutal. You would be shocked at how your stomach shamelessly demands more after one portion of khichuri. Even a large plate of rice with a side of spicy shutki bhuna and perfect consistency daal with a squeeze of lemon from the floating food spots is gone before you can properly sniff it.

## THE SUN STEPS BACK — AND THAT IS THE BEST PART

One of the most underrated gifts of rain is simple but elite: the sun has finally clocked out. During this time, you still need sunscreen, but you can comfortably wander in the Sreemangal Tea Gardens and Lawachara National Park, watching rare birds, riding boats, and exploring outdoors without engaging in a heated debate with summer lovers. Simply, no panic about tanning or a desperate search for shade, and most importantly, not feeling like you are slowly being grilled to perfection. Just grey clouds overhead and a gentle breeze around you.

## A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER BEFORE YOU START

Travelling in Sylhet during the rains is richly rewarding for the prepared and ruthlessly humbling for the overconfident. So, make sure you wear shoes with a good grip to avoid embarrassing moves in public. Keep your phone and camera in waterproof bags even if it is not raining when you are leaving the hotel.

Carry an umbrella at all costs and don't trust "it's just a drizzle". Be cautious with puddles, as they are often deeper than they appear. It is better to avoid them, even if it takes a few extra seconds.

Now, pack your bags and leave your expectations of staying crisp firmly at home. Though the journey might not promise you comfort, it promises wet shoes, an uplifted mood, and the peace of being somewhere that looks its best when the weather is as gloomy as it could be.

**By K T Humaira**
**Photo: Collected**