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STYLING: SONIA YEASMIN ISHA
WARDROBE & JEWELLERY: SHAHRUKH AMIN
MAKEUP & HAIR: SUMON RAHAT
SET: ESKAY DÉCOR BY SAIMUL KARIM



#FASHION & BEAUTY

PUTTING ON YOUR GAME FACE: Guide to World Cup match day glam

World Cup season is here, and with it comes hanging out with your friends and families, sharing good eats, and enjoying those once-in-a-lifetime memories that you make while watching your favourite football team play!

If you were wondering how to get ready in style for the upcoming World Cup watch parties, you are in luck! From cosy home screenings to more energetic outdoor watch parties, your makeup can match the mood without needing nonstop touch-ups. The trick is going for fresh, summer-friendly vibes, the kind that can handle the heat, both from the sun and the match, pretty reliably!

AT A FRIEND'S PLACE

For a laid-back house gathering, you want makeup that feels easy and breathable. So, go for a light skin tint or a BB cream, a bit of blush, and lots of mascara to wake up your eyes. Then a tinted lip balm, or maybe

a glossy nude, keeps everything effortless. The whole look stays comfortable through hours of cheering, snacking, and the long post-match talk!

RESTAURANT SCREENINGS

When you are catching matches at restaurants or cafés, things can turn into those sudden photo or video moments when someone scores a goal! To go with such spontaneous moments, keep your base light and natural, and add some gentle structure with soft eyeliner. A small pop of highlighter could also enhance the look greatly. A rosy lipstick to complement will make the entire face look more alive without turning heavy, so it works well for the summer nights.

OUTDOOR GATHERINGS

Watching the match outside needs makeup that can handle humidity and whatever else the air throws at it. That is why you should always ensure you start with sunscreen

and a mattifying primer before you put on anything light. Use a waterproof mascara and a cream blush, so the face stays looking natural, and finish with a setting spray so it all holds together. Try not to stack on heavy layers, and let a kind of soft glow do most of the work!

HOSTING AT HOME

If you are playing host, comfort basically comes first. A bit of concealer, brows that are groomed just right, and a creamy lip colour can make you look put-together if you are running around the house doing quick work before the guests show up. Because you will be moving around, keep blotting papers and a compact powder within reach. Honestly, it can save your whole look in minutes!

WEAR YOUR TEAM COLOURS

For something more playful, bring in your favourite team's colours through eyeliner, nail polish, or just a small pop of colour on

the lips. If you are really dedicated, face paints with flags, stripes, or tiny football motifs can add a festive vibe without taking over the entire look!

REMOVING FACE PAINT WITH CARE

Once the celebrations fade, take off the face paint gently so you do not end up irritating your skin. A cleansing balm or micellar water can dissolve the pigments without excessive scrubbing. Then, use a mild face wash and moisturiser to bring hydration back, especially if you were out for hours or staring at bright screens for too long.

Ultimately, no matter where you are watching the World Cup matches, makeup should feel fun, not hard. With lightweight products and a few smart moves, you can stay fresh for the whole game and still be camera-ready for every victory selfie!

By Samayla Mahjabin Koishy
Photo: Collected

ম্যান্ডালিনা সোপ
এখন নতুন রূপে

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

Sandalina
Sandal & Moisturiser
স্যান্ডাল এন্ড ময়েচারাইজার

Sandalina
Sandal & Rose
স্যান্ডাল এন্ড রোজ

Sandalina
Sandal & Jasmine
স্যান্ডাল এন্ড জেসমিন

Sandalina
Sandal & Sandalwood
নতুন সংযোজন

রূপচর্চায় আন্ড্রিজাত্য...

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

us on f /Sandalina

#PROFILE

NOT AN INFLUENCER, A COMMENTATOR

Sadia Anika Hasan's take on fashion

In Bangladesh's crowded digital landscape, creators routinely tell audiences what to wear, where to shop, and which trends to follow. Few stop to examine why those trends emerge in the first place. Fewer still treat fashion as something worthy of analysis.

That gap is exactly what Sadia Anika Hasan set out to fill.

Most people scroll past a celebrity outfit in seconds. Sadia Anika Hasan pauses, rewinds, and asks a different question: what does that outfit say about culture, identity, aspiration, and the moment we are living in?

"I used to binge-watch these kinds of analyses and deep-dive dissecting content," she explains. "There were creators in India, Pakistan, Canada, and the US. But I always felt that in Bangladesh we don't have any voice to explain or discuss our fashion trends, what's emerging here, or what's hot and happening."

Through short-form videos on Facebook and Instagram, Hasan has quietly begun carving out a niche that barely exists in Bangladesh: fashion commentary. Her work sits somewhere between fashion journalism, cultural criticism, and social media content.

Rather than simply showcasing looks, she breaks down styling decisions, examines cultural references, and encourages audiences to think about fashion as a reflection of society.



A MISSING BANGLADESHI VOICE

After high school, Hasan moved to Canada to study Mathematics and Economics. Fashion school was her childhood dream, but practicality prevailed. However, she noticed a curious imbalance while studying abroad. South Asian fashion conversations were dominated by India and Pakistan. People knew the leading designers, the emerging brands, and the latest trends from those countries. Bangladesh was largely absent from the discussion.

"Even Bangladeshi expatriates didn't know much about Bangladeshi brands beyond a few household names," she recalls.

The omission bothered her. Bangladesh has one of the world's most significant textile and garment industries, centuries-old weaving traditions, and distinctive design histories. Yet internationally, its fashion identity often remains overlooked.

"The intention was to create content that Bangladeshis would watch, but also content where non-Bangladeshis could learn something about us," she says.

"Whenever people see a brown person, they immediately think Indian or Pakistani. They don't think of us as a separate identity."

FASHION AS CULTURAL EVIDENCE

For Hasan, fashion belongs in the same conversation as literature, music, film, and visual art. "Fashion captures the evolution of culture," she states, adding, "It deserves to be studied."

That belief drives much of her content.

She speaks about fashion not as a collection of garments but as evidence of social change. A saree draped in the 1970s tells a different story from one worn today. The disappearance of widowhood dress codes, the rise of working women, the influence of migration, and the impact of cinema all leave traces in clothing.

"Fashion reflects migration, politics, cinema, our cultural identity, and a generation's worth of storytelling," she explains.

Her examples often stretch beyond Bangladesh. She references how wartime shortages influenced women's clothing in Europe or how designers such as Coco Chanel responded to changing gender roles. The same analytical lens, she argues, can be applied to Bangladeshi fashion history.

Why, she asks, are there so many discussions about the history of ghararas and shararas in neighbouring countries, but comparatively few conversations about Jamdani, heritage handlooms, or the evolution of Bangladeshi silhouettes?

BEYOND TRENDS

Hasan's most popular videos often focus on celebrity fashion, awards shows, or major brand developments. Yet, her ambitions extend beyond trend commentary.

Ultimately, she wants Bangladesh to occupy a larger place regionally and in global discussions. More importantly, she wants fashion itself to be taken seriously as a cultural subject.

"Fashion deserves to be understood rather than just consumed as a trend," she says.

It is a deceptively simple statement. Yet, in a world obsessed with what is new, Hasan's work asks audiences to slow down and examine what clothing reveals about who we are, where we came from, and how societies change. For a country whose fashion story is still underrepresented internationally, that conversation may be long overdue.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Courtesy



#FOOD & RECIPES

Reviving indigenous rice variants



Although modern diets push “no-carb” lifestyles, rice remains irreplaceable in our culture. Our love for it is so well-known that we are often teased with the phrase “bheto Bangali.” A plate of piping hot rice with daal and a homely, thin broth of free-range chicken curry cooked with potatoes, onions, ginger, garlic, and red chilli is not just food; it is home. This quintessential comfort meal nourishes body and spirit, reminding us of fields, festivals, and the rhythm of life itself.

Bangladesh has an incredible wealth of rice varieties, a heritage that reads like a living archive of resilience. With nearly 1,000 indigenous strains alongside 127 high-yielding varieties developed through research, the diversity is staggering. Yet, prized grains like Barisal’s famous Balam chaal are now rare as machine-cut rice dominates the market.

At Manikganj’s Pran Boichitra Khamar, the Prakritik Krishi movement treats rice as a heritage crop. Founded by Delowar Jahan, the farm grows over 20 indigenous varieties season after season, ensuring they adapt naturally to shifting weather. Rejecting chemicals, the paddies teem with earthworms and snails, while organic straw feeds cattle and roofs homes.

The model now spans four villages, training farmers to preserve their own seeds and breaking dependence on corporations. It strongly advocates unpolished heirloom rice that is fibrous, antioxidant-rich, and better for managing diabetes.

Aziza Ahmed is the Director of Operations at the Bangladesh Business & Disability Network (BBDN). She has an agrarian heart and tries to source all her food

from organic sources.

“For many of us, the journey to Pran Boichitra Khamar began with a simple desire to eat better food. But it soon became something much deeper. Through Delowar’s work, I discovered that rice is not just a commodity — it is memory, landscape, history, and identity,” says Aziza Ahmed.

She adds, “I have made it a personal practice to bring a different indigenous rice variety into my kitchen every month. What began as an individual choice gradually became cultural stewardship. In a world where uniformity is replacing diversity, preserving our native grains is an act of care for both biodiversity and heritage.”

Perhaps, the most inspiring realisation is that one is never alone in this effort. A growing community believes that protecting local seeds, supporting ethical farmers, and celebrating Bengal’s food traditions is not nostalgia but a commitment to the future.

By RBR

Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel

Food & Décor: RBR



Rice as soul food

For Bengalis, rice is not only food but also nourishment for the soul.

One favourite is jao bhaat, a congee-style dish with lemon leaves, ginger, salt, and sometimes charred chilli and nigella seeds. A lighter version uses seasonal vegetables like potatoes, greens, and gourds, lifted with a spritz of lemon, known as lebu bhaat. In villages, vegetables are steamed directly in rice, creating a starchy mash that blends beautifully with the grains.

Another classic is ghee bhaat, rice seasoned with salt and clarified butter. It can be enjoyed with sugar, molasses, or rich meat curries. A sweet version with coconut shavings and sugar was once a traditional treat, though now it is almost forgotten.

There is pish-pash, a congee cooked with chicken, moong dal, and vegetables, finished with butter and

ginger, perfect when unwell. Sticky rice, or binni chaal, makes khichuri: the broth version pairs with beef curries and fried aubergines, while the drier version is cooked with lentils and winter vegetables.

Bosha bhat is another beloved preparation. It is rice cooked by absorbing its own starch water. And then there is panta bhat, fermented rice eaten with chillies, onions, and salt. Once the staple of the common people, it is now a delicacy in Dhaka during Pahela Baishakh, served with hilsa and vegetable mash.

Bengalis also cherish sweet rice dishes. Payesh is made with molasses for a deep, earthy flavour. Phirni is made with ground rice cooked in milk, flavoured with nuts and raisins, and decorated with silver foil. Jorda, bright orange rice with citrus pulp and zest, is another festive favourite.



#Recipe

Rustic khichuri from Kushtia

Some recipes are measured with cups and spoons. Others are measured with instinct. This rustic khichuri belongs to the latter.

I learned it from my mother-in-law in Kushtia, though I have never matched her touch. Perhaps it is because her cooking carries not only skill, but the rhythm of a lifetime spent with grains, vegetables, and the flavours of her land.

For 500 grams of rice, she loosely uses 250 grams of mashkalai daal, soaked until softened. The rice and daal are washed together, then mixed with mustard oil, onions, ginger, garlic, and simple spices like turmeric, red chilli, cumin, coriander, and salt. Whole garam masala adds warmth. Everything is combined by hand, water poured generously, and even the spice clinging to fingers is washed back into the pot.

The khichuri cooks slowly until tender, neither dry nor soupy, but soft and moist, with grains melting into one another. The aroma of mustard oil and garlic fills the room. It pairs



beautifully with beef curry, but is just as satisfying with begun bharta, seasonal vegetables, fritters, or a fried egg.

Each time I cook it, I am reminded that the finest food is often the simplest; recipes carried from one generation to the next, holding memory and belonging in every bite.

By Aziza Ahmed
Photo: Shahrear Kabir Heemel
Food & Décor: RBR



#PROFILE

ELITA

KARIM

reflects on creativity, comfort, and fashion

Long before she stepped in front of a camera for a lifestyle photoshoot, Elita Karim had already spent decades performing in front of audiences, reporting from the field, and navigating public life. A singer, journalist, and writer, she is not someone whose career was built around image. Yet, it is perhaps this very distance from fashion as a profession that makes her perspective on style so interesting.

Star
LIFE Style



When designer Shahrukh Amin recently styled Karim for a photoshoot, the result was more than a showcase of clothing. It became a reflection of the experiences, influences, and values that have shaped her life.

A style built on movement

Karim's approach to fashion was influenced less by trends and more by the practical demands of her career.

For years, she balanced journalism and music simultaneously. Reporting assignments took her across Bangladesh, from city streets to remote districts. Performances required frequent travel and long hours.

"Can I do that in heels? No," she says with a laugh.

Comfort quickly became essential. Sports shoes, cotton fabrics, loose silhouettes, jeans,

and scarves became staples of her wardrobe.

"My usual clothing is a cotton kurti, jeans, and a scarf," she says.

Over time, practicality evolved into a personal aesthetic. Rather than dressing for attention, she dressed for movement.

When fashion meets personality

That is precisely what made her collaboration with Shahrukh Amin so successful.

According to Karim, the designer understood her personality almost immediately. "He knows I'm not a bling person," she says.

Instead of heavily embellished garments, Amin chose pieces that reflected her preference for simplicity and comfort. Among them was a green saree with minimal detailing and another featuring floral prints, a pattern

Karim particularly enjoys.

More importantly, Amin considered her body type.

"He kept in mind that I am well-built," she says.

For Karim, this attention mattered because many women struggle to find clothing that is both fashionable and accommodating. She appreciated that the designs embraced rather than concealed her frame.

"I felt beautiful in those clothes," she says.

Beyond body positivity

Body positivity is a subject Karim approaches with characteristic nuance.

"I think we should draw a line between body positivity and obesity," she says.

Having dealt with health concerns herself, including high blood pressure, she believes self-acceptance and health should go hand in hand. "You should promote body positivity only when you not only feel happy in your skin but also feel healthy in your skin."

At the same time, she rejects the idea that everyone should aspire to the same body shape.

"Even if I lose a lot of weight, I am always going to be well-built," she elaborates.

It is a statement that feels larger than fashion. Like much of Karim's outlook, it is rooted in accepting reality rather than chasing impossible ideals.

Karim's ensemble has ultimately highlighted something deeper. They reflected a woman shaped by community, culture, work, and experience — someone who understands that style is most meaningful when it grows naturally from the life being lived inside it.

By Ayman Anika

Photo: Adnan Rahman

In frame: Elita Karim

Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Wardrobe: Shahrukh Amin

Makeup & Hair: Sumon Rahat

Set: Eskay Décor by Saimul Karim

THE PEOPLE WHO SHAPED ELITA KARIM, THE ARTIST

Whether in journalism, music, or public discourse, she has consistently chosen engagement over retreat. She believes culture itself emerges from people's responses to their circumstances. Songs, literature, and art often reflect the realities people are trying to navigate. That understanding has shaped not only her worldview, but also her creative work. Karim grew up in Saudi Arabia within a vibrant Bangladeshi expatriate community. Culture was not something reserved for special occasions. It was woven into everyday life.

"Parents are usually a child's first muse," she says.

Her father, Mohammad Nurul Karim, an English lecturer, became known for organising Eid gatherings, Pahela Baishakh celebrations, Independence Day programmes, and musical events that brought Bangladeshis together. Her mother, Dilruba Begum, meanwhile, taught patriotic songs and children's songs to community youngsters.

Neither was a professional musician, but both believed in nurturing creativity. If Karim sang a note incorrectly, they would point it out. Looking back, she sees even those corrections as encouragement.

"If I didn't get that encouragement from home, I would not have been able to move forward with music," she says.

Another important influence arrived later in Karim's life.

She credits her husband, award-winning filmmaker Ashfaque Nipun, with reshaping how she approaches setbacks and uncertainty.

"Crises are inevitable," she says. "But they don't have to define you. What matters is how you respond to them." And this philosophy appears throughout her career.



DESIGNER SHAHRUKH AMIN

on fashion beyond social media feed



Twenty-six years ago, Bangladesh's fashion landscape looked remarkably different. Designer label was a foreign concept, and getting clients to invest in a signature piece required more convincing than the craftsmanship did.

Today, with trends travelling across social media in seconds and wardrobes increasingly shaped by algorithms, the challenge has evolved. Yet, for Shahrukh Amin, the one principle that has remained unchanged is that fashion should never drown out the person wearing it.

"What we need to understand is that people are not blank canvases," says Shahrukh Amin. "What you wear should complement you and your fashion voice without outshining you."

It is a philosophy that has quietly shaped every stage of his twenty-six-year career. Long before algorithms and inspiration dictated trends travelled at the speed of a scroll, Amin was building a fashion house rooted in individuality. Today, as one of Bangladesh's most enduring designers, his greatest achievement may not simply be the garments he has created, but the trust he has woven with generations of clients who have grown alongside his label.

His own story, however, began not in fashion but with a love for painting. Art fascinated him long before fashion entered the picture. That interest eventually led him to help a friend's fashion brand, initially working just a couple of days a week.

What began as a casual creative outlet soon became something much bigger.

"The more I worked, the more I enjoyed it," he recalls. Two days gradually became four or five, until the idea of creating something of his own no longer felt distant.

That dream became Almirah, a small label— as Amin humbly states — that has now spent twenty-six years establishing itself as one of Bangladesh's most recognised names in designer fashion.

The early years, however, were far from easy.

"When I started, we were more of a design studio where several designers collaborated," he says. "Back then, the idea of designer wear itself was very niche."

Clients were not familiar with concepts like signature aesthetics or investing in a designer's individual creative vision. Building a label meant first explaining why such a vision mattered.

Ironically, Amin believes today's fashion landscape presents an entirely different challenge. With inspiration now only a swipe away, originality has become increasingly difficult to preserve.

"Everything is online. Everything is trending," he says. "Many designers are losing their own voice just to keep up with trends."

As collections begin to resemble one another, he worries that regional identities are becoming increasingly blurred. "There are times when you cannot immediately tell whether something is Bangladeshi, Pakistani or Indian."

For Amin, fashion should be far more personal than whatever dominates

a social media feed. Interestingly, he has observed that Bangladeshis living abroad often embrace local designers more enthusiastically than those at home, seeking garments that help them remain connected to their roots. Yet, amid changing markets and shifting trends, it is neither awards nor commercial success that Amin considers the greatest reward of his career.

Instead, it is witnessing his clients' lives unfold through the garments he creates.

"There are nearly twenty clients whose entire journeys I've been part of," he says with a smile. "I designed outfits for them when they were university students—at Dhaka University, NSU and elsewhere. Then came their wedding outfits, anniversary celebrations, baby showers... and today I'm designing for their daughters."

Many of those clients now live overseas, but distance has done little to weaken the trust built over decades.

"They don't even ask to see every design anymore," he laughs. "They simply say, 'Please send five outfits—whatever you like.'"

For a designer whose philosophy centres on understanding the individual, there could hardly be a greater compliment.

That philosophy recently found expression in his campaign featuring singer and actor Elita Karim. Rather than choosing a muse who would simply model the clothes, Amin wanted someone with an unmistakable sense of personal style.

"Elita has a distinguished fashion taste of her own," he says. "She knows her own style instead of following the trend train."

Understanding that she gravitates towards understated elegance rather than embellishment, the creative direction



naturally evolved into something more rooted and personal. Drawing inspiration from her love for sarees and her comfort in kameezes and kaftans, the collection balanced contemporary silhouettes with timeless restraint.

"Elita doesn't wear bling," Amin explains. "The idea was to stay current without losing individuality."

It is a philosophy that echoes the designer's own belief that clothing should complement the wearer rather than compete with them.

By Nusrath Jahan

Photo: Adnan Rahman

In-frame: Shahrukh Amin; Elita Karim

Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha

Makeup & Hair: Sumon Rahat

Set: Eskay Décor by Saimul Karim

#FASHION & BEAUTY

DESIGNER TASFIA AHMED

speaks on well-being and fashion

“A brand or a fashion label is more than just a garment,” she says. The statement reflects her growing interest in mental wellbeing. Creativity, she believes, cannot be separated from the condition of the person creating.

A particular pink cotton dress sparked a surprising series of conversations. When designer Tasfia Ahmed attended a gathering on a particularly hot Dhaka evening, people noticed her outfit. It was comfortable, breathable, and visually striking without trying too hard. More importantly, it looked appropriate for the weather.

For Tasfia, fashion begins with a simple question that is often overlooked in today's trend-driven industry: how does a garment make someone feel?

“It should be breathable, but it should not look like something you only wear inside your house,” she says. “You should look put-together”.

That practical approach sits at the heart of her design philosophy and offers a glimpse into the next chapter of her career as she prepares to relaunch her fashion label.

Tasfia's journey through fashion has never followed a conventional route.

Since launching her brand in 2019, she has worked across multiple sectors, including fashion companies, e-commerce



Tasfia Ahmed

platforms, NGOs, and freelance projects. Alongside those experiences, she developed a growing interest in an area that sits at the intersection of design and psychology.

“I've been researching and studying mental health and fashion, specifically how fashion is connected to your mental health and how it works,” she explains.

It is an unusual area of focus in Bangladesh's fashion industry, where conversations often revolve around trends, retail growth, or sustainability. Tasfia is interested in something more personal: how clothing influences confidence, comfort, and self-perception.

Ask Tasfia to summarise her creative philosophy, and her answer comes quickly.

“My basic design philosophy is being local and going global,” she answers.

Rather than reproducing traditional garments exactly as they exist, she wants to incorporate Bangladeshi craftsmanship into contemporary silhouettes that can travel beyond local markets. Heritage techniques such as hand-block printing, embroidery, and Kantha stitch are not limited to sarees or traditional wear; they can exist equally comfortably on dresses, co-ord sets, or modern separates.

“I focus a lot on fabric,” she says. “Given our weather, it's just not possible to be comfortable in polyester all the time. My main design motto is that it should be a standout piece, but at the same time, a classic”.

She points to pieces she designed years ago that can still be worn today without looking dated. Rather than chasing novelty, she focuses on versatility. For her, a successful garment can be styled in different ways and adapted to different situations. A muslin shirt, for example, might be styled differently to create multiple looks rather than being worn once and forgotten.

This philosophy feels increasingly relevant as conversations around fast fashion continue to grow.

Although Tasfia is relaunching her label with renewed energy, she is realistic about the challenges ahead. “The market is extremely saturated,” she says.

What concerns her is not simply the number of brands but the growing influence of marketing over craftsmanship. Strong promotional strategies can sometimes overshadow design quality, making it difficult for smaller creators to stand out.

“People who should be known to the audience are not known because of poor marketing,” she observes.

Rather than investing immediately in a physical store, she plans to focus on digital platforms, including her own website and selected multi-brand retailers. The decision reflects a broader shift in how emerging designers are approaching growth.

One of her long-term goals is to work more closely with artisans, particularly those connected to Kantha embroidery traditions in her hometown of Jamalpur. She is also interested in lifestyle products, exploring how traditional craftsmanship might appear on lampshades, home accessories, and other objects beyond fashion.

Underlying all these plans is a lesson she has learned during her time away from the spotlight.

“A brand or a fashion label is more than just a garment,” she says. The statement reflects her growing interest in mental wellbeing. Creativity, she believes, cannot be separated from the condition of the person creating.

“In any creative field, your work is directly connected to how you feel”

For that reason, her comeback is not only about launching a collection. It is also about building consistency, maintaining balance, and continuing to create without interruption.

In an industry often obsessed with visibility, Tasfia's approach feels refreshingly grounded. She is not trying to produce the loudest fashion statement in the room.

She is trying to create clothing that people genuinely want to live in. And sometimes, that is the more difficult challenge.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Courtesy



#REVIEW

Supper Club's – The new place to be in Dhaka



The first thing that arrived at the table was a bowl of daal. Not a dramatic centrepiece or a dish designed for Instagram. Just lentils, slow-cooked and served as the evening's opening note.

Yet somehow, that simple bowl explained everything about The Supper Club, an intimate dining experience created by lawyer, designer, writer, and home cook Sumaya Khan.

By the end of the evening, after bharta sushi and beetroot rosogolla, it became clear that this was not really a dinner event but a collection of memories disguised as a menu.

Held in an intimate setting in Banani and limited to just eight guests at a time, The Supper Club operates differently from a conventional restaurant. There are no walk-ins. Guests reserve their seats in advance. The menu remains largely undisclosed until shortly before the event. And perhaps most importantly, every edition tells a different story.

"Each supper club will have a different menu," Khan explains. "Each menu tells a different story."

That storytelling impulse is rooted in something deeply personal. While many contemporary dining concepts borrow heavily from global trends, Khan's starting point is much closer to home.

"My love language is feeding people my home-cooked food," she says. "Initially, I used to cook only for people I love. Then I wanted to turn that into a supper club."

The concept may sound fashionable, but Khan is careful about what she wants it to

represent.

"I always wanted to stay true to my roots," she says. "My food is about bringing back the brown homes we grew up in. That's the main motto."

That sense of rootedness is evident throughout the experience. Even the more inventive dishes never feel disconnected from familiarity.

A Bharta Sushi Platter reimagines one of Bengal's most beloved comfort foods through an unexpected form. A Ruby Rosogolla in Sundarban introduces beetroot into a traditional dessert, creating a natural hue without relying on food colouring.

As Khan explains, achieving that balance took time.

"We experimented with the rosogolla many times," she says. "Beetroot can become bitter, so we had to be careful. We wanted the colour, but we also wanted the flavour to work."

Perhaps the most revealing dish of the evening was the Nargis Kofta served with kacha aam syrup. The syrup itself comes from Khan's mother.

"My mother used to make it," she says. "We're serving her touch as well."

That sentence could almost serve as



The Supper Club's mission statement.

Throughout the evening, Khan repeatedly returns to the people behind the recipes. Some techniques came from family members. Others were learned from friends while studying abroad. Her husband, who once owned a restaurant in London, contributed to parts of the dessert course. The menu becomes less about individual dishes and more about the relationships that shaped them.

Cooking itself entered Khan's life unexpectedly.

"I learned cooking while studying law in London," she recalls. "Before university, I had never even chopped an onion." Her first attempt was memorable for all the wrong reasons.

"I still have a mark on my hand," she laughs. "The onion slipped, the knife cut my finger, and I was bleeding." The experience did not discourage her. Instead, it became the beginning of a culinary education

driven largely by homesickness.

Like many students living abroad, Khan found herself missing the flavours she grew up with. Recreating those meals became a way of maintaining connection.

Today, that same instinct drives The Supper Club.

"Nostalgia is very important," she says.

"This entire supper club is based on remembering our roots. We are brown, and we should celebrate that."

What makes the project particularly interesting is that Khan is not trying to recreate heritage cuisine exactly as it existed before. Rather, she treats tradition as something living and adaptable. That approach allows her to move among Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, and the wider South Asian diaspora without losing sight of the meal's emotional core.

By the end of the evening, that story feels less like a chef's showcase and more like being invited into someone's home. The dishes are inventive, but they are also deeply familiar. They carry traces of grandparents, parents, childhood cravings, London kitchens, family recipes, and shared tables.

Perhaps that is why the daal soup works so well as the opening course. It quietly announces that this evening is not about luxury or novelty. It is about remembering where food comes from, who taught us to make it, and why certain flavours stay with us long after the meal is over.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Silvia Mahjabin

#EVENTS

Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport Unveils Art Collection Highlighting Bangladesh's Artistic Heritage



On 19 December 2026, Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport, in partnership with Bhumi Gallery, unveiled a curated collection of watercolour paintings that celebrate the country's natural landscapes and artistic heritage. The gathering at Connexions was attended by guests from the diplomatic community and business leaders, along with art enthusiasts and members of the local creative community, creating a space where conversation moved easily between culture, travel, and community.

The collection of artworks created by

and international visitors a glimpse into Bangladesh's rivers, villages, and pastoral scenery.

The project originated from an artist residency-style camp organised by Bhumi Gallery, where participating artists spent days immersed in the natural environment of Jamalpur, observing and interpreting the landscape through watercolour.

According to

reflects the country's visual identity.

"Every art camp has a theme, and this time we chose watercolour as the medium to portray the natural beauty of Bangladesh," Lenin stated. "Artists need to leave their studios and experience nature directly to capture its real feel, depth, and vastness."

A total of 27 artists participated in the camp, each contributing multiple works. Organisers ensured that at least one painting from every artist was included in the final selection, creating a diverse visual narrative shaped by different artistic perspectives.

Among the participating artists was Sadek Ahmed, a graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts, who made a series of artworks ranging from plein-air paintings to more interpretive landscapes. His observations and photographic references were collected during the camp.

Lenin believes that placing the artworks in an international hospitality setting extends the impact of the initiative beyond the traditional gallery audience.

"When a painting inspired by a village pond or a river in Jamalpur finds a place in a five-star hotel, it creates a bridge between local experiences and a global audience,"

he said. "It allows visitors to encounter Bangladesh through the eyes of its artists."

This collaboration also reflects Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport's broader effort to integrate local culture into the guest experience.

Speaking of unveiling, Ashwani Nayar, Area General Manager, IHG Southwest Asia, and Cluster General Manager of Crowne Plaza Dhaka Airport and InterContinental Dhaka, remarked, "We wanted to move beyond simply displaying artwork and instead create an opportunity where artists feel seen and supported."

According to him, the hotel wanted the initiative to be more than a decorative art installation.

"Hospitality spaces naturally bring together people from around the world, making them an ideal platform to introduce Bangladesh's art and culture in an authentic and meaningful way," Nayar added.

Rather than a conventional exhibition, the evening's unveiling encouraged guests to engage directly with the artworks and the stories behind them.

As the paintings take their place throughout the hotel, this art collection stands as both an artistic showcase and a cultural ambassador — bringing the landscape of rural Bangladesh into dialogue with visitors from around the world and assuring the power of art to tell stories of rural Bangladesh.

By Sabrin Zawad Ritu
Photo: Abrar Faiyaz Niloy



27 Bangladeshi artists during a six-day art camp in Jamalpur named "Jolronge Rupashi Bangla" will be displayed throughout the hotel's guestrooms, offering local

Saifur Rahman Lenin, founder and CEO of Bhumi Gallery, the initiative was designed to reconnect artists with the country's rural beauty while creating a body of work that

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#PERSPECTIVE

Dhaka never stopped reading

The buzz was good to see.

When Kinokuniya announced it would open its first outlet in Bangladesh at Centrepont Uttara, the online reaction was genuine. It was not the manufactured excitement of a PR campaign but people talking. That kind of energy does not just come about for anything in this city.

Books are coming back.

Mashrur Arefin, writer and CEO of City Bank, said in a previous article in the Daily Star that the interest generated by an opening like this gives hope that the love of reading is not lost.

He had also said, in the same breath, that love for books is declining. Both things are probably true right now. But something is moving in the right direction.

Doomscrolling did not kill reading. It just made it harder to choose. The phone is always there, always offering something faster and louder: a video, an argument, a feed that never runs out.

Books ask for the opposite. They ask you to slow down, to stay with one thing, to resist the pull. For a long stretch of years, a lot of people stopped making that choice.

Nabil, 22, argues that books were always there. It just shifted from being in our hands to being in our pockets. "E-books are



just better in every way. Less hassle, and I can get it for free from the internet," he said.

He is not wrong, nor alone.

The younger generation values convenience and time efficiency over anything. They migrated to reading books on screens rather than buying a physical copy.

Mahdia, 21, is on the side of e-books. She says that it is far more convenient than carrying a physical book. "I can read on

my phone anywhere. I feel like reading has never declined. The medium changed, and we are yet to catch up with the new reality," she further added.

But not everyone followed that path.

Saadman, 27, still swears by physical books. He is a self-acclaimed lover of "bibliosmia," the pleasant aroma that comes out when old books start breaking down.

"There is something about holding a book that makes it feel like I am actually reading, not just scrolling in a different direction," he said.

People like Saadman are not aliens or relics. Go to Nilkhet on a random evening, or a Bengal Boi near you, and you will find teenagers and older generations deep into the world of books. While they are somewhat of a minority nowadays, they do exist. They kept showing up through the years when everyone said the bookshop was dying. The shops that survived did so largely because of them.

Books are still read, but not in the conventional manner we used to know.

"BookTok", a corner of TikTok where creators review, recommend, and argue about literature, pulled a generation of teenagers toward reading through 90-second clips. Wattpad did something similar, giving young writers a place to publish and young readers a reason to stay up until two in the morning finishing a story they found for free. Neither looks like what a school librarian would call reading. Both absolutely are.

A teenager who spends hours on Wattpad or BookTok will eventually want to buy a physical copy of their favourite story or buy a subscription to an online reading platform.

The thirst for knowledge will never be quenched. Reading will continue, be it in Nilkhet or on Wattpad. Reading is affirming its place in Bangladesh once again.

By Zawad Arif Arian
Photo: Collected