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Pink Supremacy

PHOTO: **ADNAN RAHMAN**
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#HOBBIES

A Season of Blossoms: Getting Your Garden Winter-Ready

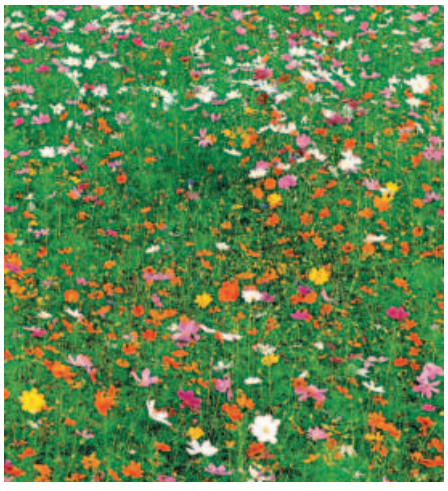
Winter is on its way, and those who know well are already preparing their gardens for a stellar display of winter blossoms. While much of the world associates the cold season with dead flowers, dry leaves, empty pots, and a garden longing to be rejuvenated by spring, we know all too well that this does not apply here in our country.

With a large variety of flowers that bloom exquisitely in our type of winter, not utilising the cold weather to maximise your garden would be a big waste of opportunity.

Some very popular varieties for this season are densely petalled flowers like marigolds and dahlias. Marigolds are widely available in local markets and nurseries, sometimes even long after winter, making them a durable choice for gardening. Among dahlias, the red ones are most common, though they bloom in many other colours too.

Light-petalled and more dainty flowers like the colourful cosmos and petunia also bloom wonderfully in such weather. While cosmos come in different soothing shades of pink and white, petunias are available in multiple vibrant colours.

Different varieties of chrysanthemum and gerbera are also some winter favourites. Both come in many different colours and shades. But, of course, talking of winter flowers and not mentioning the





forever fan favourite, roses, would be an absolute disgrace.

Roses continue to be one of the most beloved and sought-after winter flowers, be it red, pink or white. The classic red rose is most commonly associated with the cold season. While both gerberas and roses are often widely available in flower shops almost throughout the year, they grow best during winter.

For many gardeners, the fruits of their labour and the joy a blooming garden brings far outweigh the difficulties of gardening. Yet still, for many, some comparatively low-maintenance flowers can make home gardening more accessible.

Such flowers include calendula, also known as pot marigold, and cosmos. Both of them not only flourish in dry weather but are said to, in fact, prefer dry soil and fewer fertilisers.

Marigolds are also at the top of this list, due to being fast-growing and very well adapted to the dry season. They are said to naturally repel common garden pests, thereby protecting themselves and their surrounding plants.

All of these plants have relatively low watering and fertilising requirements, making them a good choice for new gardeners or people with less time on their hands.

Whether it has been nurtured for years or is just starting out, every garden needs a "reset" before the seasons change, especially before winter arrives.

A few important things to do before planting any new seeds include pulling out weeds and removing dying flowers and plants. Shrivelled-up or dying leaves and stems should also be trimmed from existing plants and flowers. Sometimes, adding a new layer of compost and manure is highly recommended, followed by a proper examination of the soil condition to decide on fertilisers.

Dry season does not necessarily mean more water is needed; adjusting to the plants' specific requirements and considering how soil retains more moisture on gloomy days is crucial before watering. Aside from the garden bed itself, cleaning the gardening tools properly is essential in preventing pests and disease.

Be it on the rooftop, balcony or lawn, your humble garden can be maintained and made beautiful even in winter, as long as you prepare in time and take good care.

By Raidah Hasan
Photo: Collected





#WOMEN IN FOCUS

When women have to rethink their ambitions

A recent conversation with one of my female friends at university left me thinking about how women imagine their working lives after graduation. She is one of the brightest students I have met, and among the top students in her batch. I expected her plans to involve a long and ambitious career.

Instead, she told me she expected to work for six or seven years before becoming a full-time homemaker.

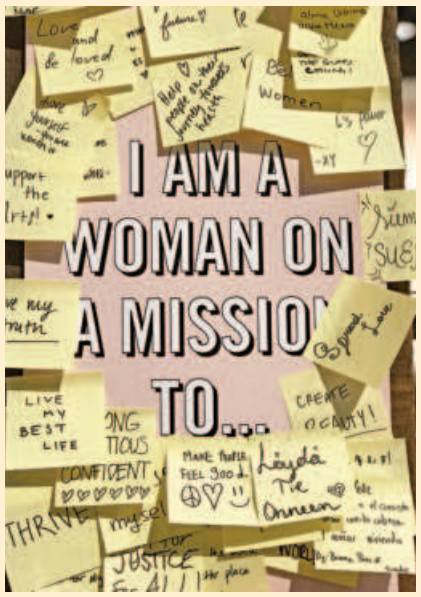
Her answer caught me off guard. Not because choosing to focus on family is inherently wrong, but because it made me wonder what other young women around me imagined for their futures.

For women encouraged to study, excel and build their futures, what happens when those ambitions meet marriage, motherhood, and social expectations?

For some young women, a career may be important without being a lifelong commitment. Rifakat Ali Sheen, a business student pursuing a CA qualification alongside her undergraduate degree, expects to work for several years before potentially stepping away from a conventional career when she becomes a mother. If financially possible, she said she would prefer not to pursue a corporate job during the initial years of motherhood, while investing her earnings to remain financially secure.

Business student and marketing enthusiast Afiat Rahman approaches the future differently. She wants her career and family to coexist rather than compete. She expressed her view clearly: "I have always found the idea of asking women to choose between a career and a partner rather strange, because I have never imagined those two parts of life as being mutually exclusive."





Marriage, however, can complicate that balance. Nazia Akhtar Rashmi, an assistant professor at a private university, began her career in multinational organisations with high professional ambitions before moving from corporate HR into academia after marriage, partly for greater flexibility.

Reflecting on that transition, Rashmi explained, "It's not about the families, it's the social structure, the social expectations. No one would say it out loud, but somehow, the social expectations shape the way a woman thinks about her professional ambition." The change brought flexibility but also new demands, including evening classes and Friday teaching.

Motherhood did not make Zeyran Mehrnush Juhie abandon her ambitions, but it changed how she pursued them. The business owner continued working while adjusting her routines around her child, with support from her family and husband.

Juhie shared, "The first two-three years, I had to go slow because a baby needs their mother the most. So mostly, if I had work or a shoot, I used to bring her with me."

That support also made her question the different expectations placed on mothers and fathers. "We have to get out of the thought that if the father works, he's a good father, but if a mother does hundreds of things, it's normal," Juhie stated.

Not every woman who leaves professional work sees it as a permanent rejection of her career. Simrin Rubab, former advocate turned housewife, continued working after marriage before stopping while expecting her elder son.

She explained, "When I was conceiving my elder son, I thought it's an important and crucial time for a child and I need to give him time, so I stopped that." Her legal education and experience still help her in dealing with people and raising her children.

Rubab does not view leaving advocacy as a decision she regrets, though the possibility of returning remains in the back of her mind. "Sometimes, I think, and a few of my close ones also say to me, that I should have continued after taking the break," she shared.





Perhaps that is what makes the question of women and work more complicated than a choice between career and family. They imagined different futures, then adjusted their ambitions and made different compromises within the realities of marriage, motherhood, and social expectations.

Maybe the question was never about whether women should choose careers or families, but whether they have enough room to decide what that balance should look like for themselves. We keep telling girls that education will open doors. But when the time comes, are they allowed to choose which door they want to open? Where does personal choice end and circumstance begin?

By Mir Elham Bin Ahmed
Photo: Collected

#PROFILE

FROM FASHION WRITING TO MILAN'S RUNWAY
Sheemtana Shameem's journey into styling

Seasoned stylist, creative director, and media producer Sheemtana Shameem describes working backstage at Milan Fashion Week as resembling the pace of "a Formula 1 pit stop". For her, the experience also fulfilled a personal ambition: to present Bangladeshi textiles as expressions of design and creativity on an international runway.

"I was tired of Bangladesh sort of being looked at as a 'factory nation,'" she explains, speaking about her reason for entering the fashion industry in the first place. She has styled campaigns for fashion brands in the country for almost 16 years, all the while staying true to that conviction.

The collection she helped style at Milan featured local silks and Jamdani worked into contemporary silhouettes, including dresses and skirts. It offered a practical answer to a perception she has long wanted to challenge.







MAKING THE DETAILS WORK

The preparations began in Bangladesh, where the team tested the outfits on a fit model. In Milan, casting and fittings determined who would wear each look. Jewellery and shoes were finalised, and completed ensembles were photographed for reference.

"On show day, you only have seconds," she recalls.

Having previously styled runways in Dhaka, Sheemtana understood the need for contingency plans. Milan intensified that experience through its pace and volume. Looking back, she remembers the coordination as vividly as the clothes. "I was fascinated and impressed by the level of precision there."



Sheemtana Shameem

Her recent work on a bridal jewellery runway required another kind of accuracy. Local sarees were paired with corsets, and she organised the looks into two broad directions: predominantly diamonds with silk, and gold with Jamdani.

The opening bridal look combined royal blue, a veil, diamonds, and rubies. The closing look brought together Jamdani, gold, and a long veil, with a corset adding contemporary structure.

"I worked closely with the fashion designer and the jewellery brand on developing the corsets," she says, explaining how necklines, proportions, and jewellery shaped the decisions for each wearer.

The process also challenged a familiar boundary. "Bridal jewellery doesn't strictly have to be worn only by brides," she observes. "Wedding guests and relatives could find ideas in those combinations, too."

FIRST CAME THE WORDS

Despite a career increasingly associated with images, Sheemtana's entry into styling began with writing.

"I actually found styling through writing," she says.

Around fifteen, she inherited twenty or thirty fashion magazines from a cousin moving abroad. Already interested in writing, she became absorbed in fashion journalism. She later studied English and began writing style features, eventually taking on the photo shoots that accompanied her articles.

"I used to style all the pieces that I was writing about," she says.

Writing required her to explain an idea. Styling required her to demonstrate it. Her particular interest was translating international trends into a Bangladeshi context, questioning the assumption that certain clothes were only wearable abroad.

"You can still be on-trend with the rest of the world and make it relevant to Dhaka as well," she says.

That approach gave her early work a purpose beyond assembling attractive outfits: helping readers recognise possibilities they might otherwise dismiss.

LEARNING TO OWN HER STYLE

Her confidence developed gradually. As an athletic teenager, Sheemtana preferred oversized clothes, sneakers, and chunky sandals. She loved fashion but felt different from girls whose wardrobes looked nothing like hers.

"What I started to realise over time was that, actually, that is my signature style," she recalls.

Her family provided lasting influences. She remembers her maternal grandfather as exceptionally stylish and admired how her mother dressed unconventionally while navigating conservative expectations in the 90s.

Her mother has also worked directly with Jamdani weavers for over three decades, giving Sheemtana an early understanding of the fabric's craftsmanship.

"I know the story, the craft, how creative the weavers are, and how beautiful the motifs are." These influences encouraged her to experiment with sarees without abandoning her own style preferences.

"I just owned the sarees in my own personal way," she says.

Fashion developed alongside a career in the development sector. With a master's in international relations and politics and no formal fashion education, she eventually chose to pursue the creative work full-time.

WHAT COMES NEXT

Sheemtana now wants to explore opportunities for newcomers to learn through shadowing or apprenticeships. Another priority is encouraging people to reconsider clothes they already own.

"Repeating an outfit is actually a flex," she says. "Re-styling pieces you already own is the ultimate styling achievement."

Through different accessories, shoes, bags, and hairstyles, she argues, a familiar saree can acquire multiple identities. The challenge is to experiment before deciding something will not work. She also hopes to move into costume direction for cinema, bringing her experience in writing and visual storytelling to the task of interpreting characters.

"Styling to me is simply telling stories through clothes," she says.

That ambition returns her to the relationship that first made this career possible. Writing taught her to imagine a person and their world. Styling gives those observations a visible form, down to the last detail.

By Ayman Anika
Photo: Courtesy

#FASHION & BEAUTY

The cultural language of classical dance jewellery



What if I told you that every ornament worn in a dance form has a story to tell, whether we notice it or not? From the placement of a crescent moon in Bharatanatyam to the intricate silver jewellery of Odissi, or even a simple pair of ghungroos, these ornaments are far more than decorative additions to a costume. They carry cultural identities, religious beliefs, artistic traditions, and sometimes even personal memories.

Arthy Ahmed, a Bangladeshi Bharatanatyam dancer, teacher, and activist, stated, "Ghungroos are almost like a deity to us."

Dancers treat them with great respect, avoiding shoes while wearing them and never placing them on the ground.

Each classical dance form has its own distinctive style of jewellery. Bharatanatyam is known for its gold-toned temple jewellery, usually decorated with colourful stones.

Odissi dancers wear intricate silver ornaments, particularly silver filigree, along with a distinctive white headpiece called Tahia. Mohiniyattam has its characteristic side-bun ornament, known as Rakudi, while Kathak has its own style of jewellery.

Antora Akter, another Bharatanatyam dancer, choreographer, and teacher, sees ornaments as more than finishing touches to a costume.

Having trained in Bharatanatyam, Manipuri, and Kathak, she has seen how each form uses jewellery differently.

"Salangai is very meaningful because it is connected with rhythm and footwork," Akter explains. She believes ornaments do more than make a dancer look beautiful. They also help audiences understand the traditions and cultural background of a dance form.

"I think ornaments help the audience understand the character, especially when we perform without speaking," she added.

Ahmed explains that the crescent-shaped moon, worn on the left side of the head, represents Parvati, while the full-circle sun on the right represents Shiva. The waist belt, or Oddiyanam, often carries images of gods and goddesses. The long braid extending below the waist is traditionally associated with the spine.

Traditional ornaments, crowns, and other visual details can offer clues about the character being portrayed, while facial expressions, hand gestures, and movements complete the storytelling.

For Abu Ibney Rafi, a Kathak dancer with a background in painting and ceramic art, ornaments are also a form of visual storytelling. He pays attention to their colours, shapes, and textures, much as he would when working on a painting.

"In the Natya Shastra, Aharya Abhinaya includes the visual elements of a performance, such as costumes, jewellery, and makeup," he stated.

"My personal favourite ornament is the ghungroos, which are an essential part of Kathak because they connect the dancer's footwork with rhythm and music."

For Rafi, ghungroos also serve as a reminder of the discipline, patience, and dedication that dance requires.

There is probably no end to this conversation, because every dance form and every ornament has its own story. But there is one thing that feels a little sad. In Bangladesh, dancers often struggle to find the right ornaments when they need them for a performance.

Some have to borrow from fellow dancers, while others go through the trouble of bringing them from abroad. It makes you wonder why something so closely tied to our artistic traditions should be so difficult to find.

Shouldn't we be making it easier for these traditions to live, grow, and find their place on our stages?

Ahmed recalled organising a programme with around 200 Bharatanatyam students. Even after collecting jewellery sets from vendors across the country, there were not enough for everyone. Some performers had to go on stage without the traditional ornaments, while others arranged sets from abroad.

For her, this points to a larger need for local artisans to produce good-quality temple jewellery. Cheap imitations, she worries, can gradually lose the details and craftsmanship that make the original pieces special.

These ornaments deserve more attention, not just from dancers but also from the people who make them. If young dancers are to learn and carry these traditions forward, they should be able to find the jewellery that belongs to their dance forms.

The steps may teach them how to dance, but the ornaments help them understand what they are carrying onto the stage.

By Sabrin Zawad Ritu
Photo: Collected





Life *in* PINK

A celebration of FEMININITY

To say that women possess a special affinity towards pink in all its glory is a fact universally acknowledged. The lovely hue speaks to our soul; delicate and feminine, it is a reflection of the softness and warmth every woman exudes. Characteristic of our gender, this very softness and empathy make the world a better, kinder place.

From the beginning of life, when a baby is born, it is cradled in its mother's arms, gaining strength and security from her love and affection. The softness of her touch calms her wailing child, soothing it instantly. Such is the power of a woman's kindness that the profession of nursing depends greatly upon it. Her healing touch cures the ill of their sickness and breathes life into dying souls. Soft yet strong, feminine energy is divine in all its forms.

While some may consider the colour pink frivolous, it is anything but. Just like a woman, it comes in beauty and, in moments of duress, displays unmatched strength and power. Perhaps that's why a pink ribbon represents breast cancer and its survivors, symbolising their courage, hope, and resilience in the face of a life-threatening illness. Shades of pink celebrate femininity in all its glory and so much more!

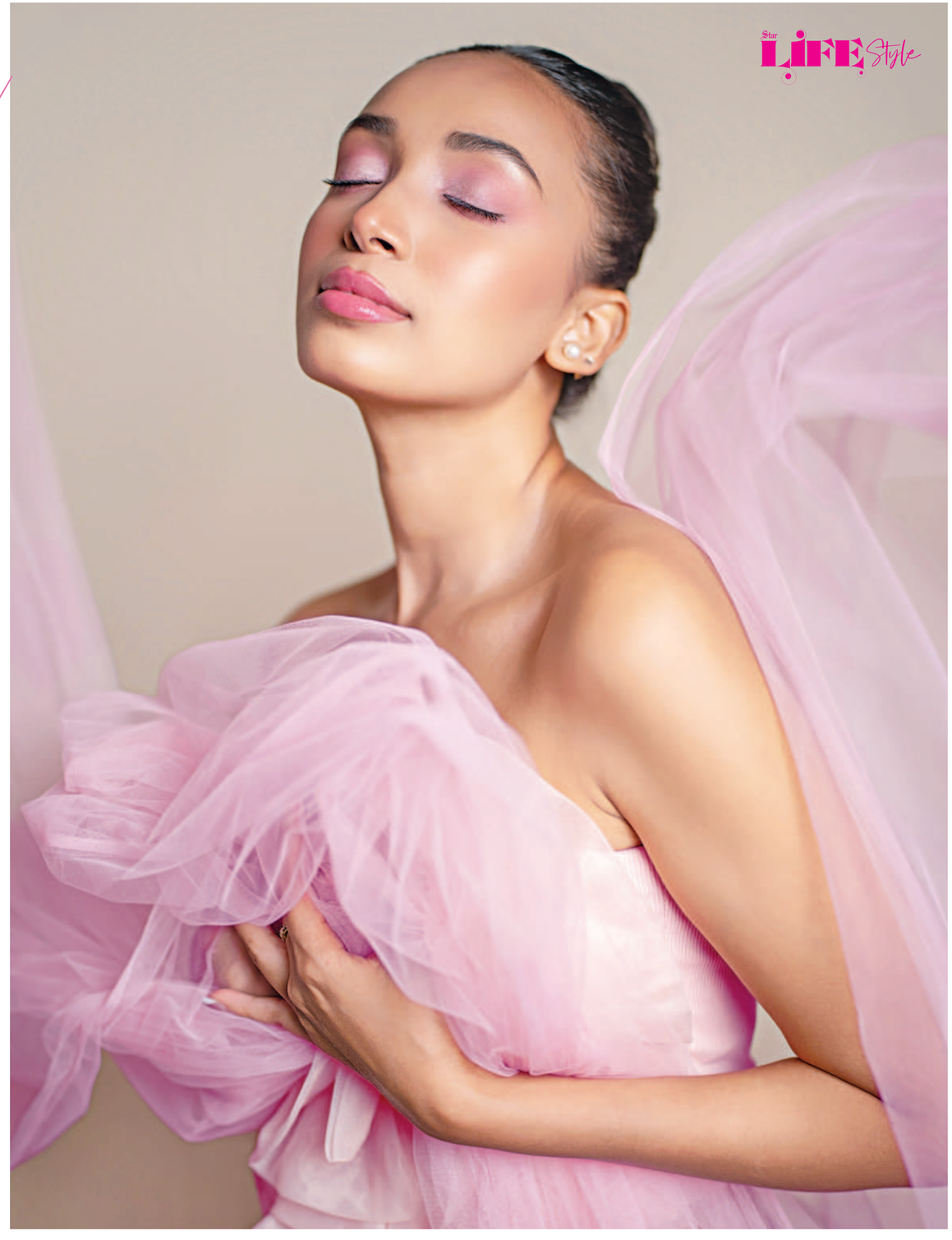
As a colour, pink holds a formidable place in the sartorial world. Some of the world's most iconic dresses have been pink. From Marilyn Monroe's incredible shocking pink off-the-shoulder gown in Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, which instantly propelled her to superstardom and cemented her status as a Hollywood legend, to Audrey Hepburn's stunning embellished Givenchy number from Breakfast at Tiffany's, with its matching pink coat and headdress, these are two among many.

A heady, sparkling cocktail of glamour, style, and femininity, pink dresses always make a statement. And it's not frivolous by any means, mind you! From Elle Woods topping law school in her pink tweed ensemble, accessorised from head to toe with pink sunglasses, a purse, and platforms, to Gwyneth Paltrow accepting her Oscar in a pale pink Ralph Lauren duchess satin gown, pink is powerful and packs a punch. These looks in pink are referenced time and again owing to their timeless appeal and significance.

We love wearing pink and living in pink, too! For home décor, pink is a dream! It is every little girl's ardent wish to have her room decorated in her favourite shade of pink. And it doesn't change much when she grows up!

Living out her Barbie fantasy, women fulfil their lifelong affinity with pink by surrounding themselves with it. From bubblegum pink to elegant, sophisticated shades of pink, it's always a great hue to incorporate into home décor. If a room full of pink is a bit too much for you, but you would still love to have touches of it, accents are a great idea. A dusty pink couch or headboard will look chic and mod. A table lamp or mirror in different shades of pink will definitely elevate the look of your room while giving you infinite joy and happiness! So don't be shy; live out your dreams in pink!

By Sabrina N Bhuiyan
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Proma
Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Makeup: Sumon Rahat



#FOOD & RECIPES

FROM FRIDGE TO FABULOUS

Ways to Transform Leftover Rice



Did you know that when cooked white rice is cooled for 24 hours and then reheated, it has a lower glycaemic response than freshly cooked white rice? This simply means that what we call "leftovers" can actually be beneficial for both healthy adults and people with type 1 diabetes because it can produce a smaller glucose spike.

So, it is time to grab that sad, snubbed bowl from yesterday's dinner and give those white grains a fancy makeover.

GOLDEN SHRIMP POPS

Ingredients

2 cups cooked leftover rice
½ cup shrimp, peeled, deveined, and finely chopped
1 small onion, finely chopped
½ tsp chilli flakes
3 tbsp grated cheese (optional)
2 tbsp cornflour
½ cup breadcrumbs
1 egg, beaten
Salt to taste

Method

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a pan. Add the chopped onion and sauté for a while. Add the chopped shrimp, black pepper, chilli flakes, and salt. Cook until the shrimp turn pinkish and avoid overcooking them, as they quickly turn rubbery.

In a mixing bowl, lightly mash the leftover rice until slightly sticky. Add the cooked shrimp mixture, grated cheese, and cornflour. Mix everything thoroughly until well combined and firm enough to hold its shape.

Take small portions of the mixture and shape them into croquettes. Dip each one into beaten egg, then coat evenly with breadcrumbs. For an extra-crispy crust, repeat the egg and breadcrumb coating once more. Shallow-fry the croquettes in batches until golden brown and crispy on all sides, or air-fry them as a healthier alternative.

SEOUL STREET BIBIMBAP

Ingredients

2 cups cooked leftover rice
1 carrot, julienned
½ cucumber, julienned
1 cup spinach
½ cup mushrooms, sliced
2 eggs
2 tbsp sesame oil
2 tsp sesame seeds
Salt and black pepper to taste
150 g minced beef or thinly sliced chicken



For the bibimbap sauce —
1½ tbsp gochujang (Korean chilli paste)
1 tbsp soy sauce
1 tsp honey or sugar
1 tsp vinegar

Method

Begin by preparing the protein. Mix the minced beef or chicken with soy sauce, garlic, sugar, and sesame oil. Heat a little oil in a pan and cook the meat over medium heat until fully cooked and lightly browned. Set aside.

Prepare the vegetables separately to preserve their individual flavours and colours. Heat a little sesame oil in a pan and sauté the carrots, mushrooms, and spinach individually with a pinch of salt. It is best to keep the cucumber raw for a refreshing crunch. In a small bowl, combine the gochujang, soy sauce, honey, sesame oil, vinegar, and water. Stir until smooth to make the bibimbap sauce.

Arrange the cooked vegetables, cucumber, and prepared meat in separate sections over the reheated rice. Fry the eggs sunny-side up and place one on top of each bowl. Drizzle with the prepared bibimbap sauce and finish with sesame seeds and a little sesame oil.

TUNA CRUNCH PANCAKES

Ingredients

1½ cups cooked leftover rice
1 can tuna, drained
2 eggs



¼ cup
cornflour
1 tbsp mayonnaise
½ tsp garlic powder
½ tsp chilli flakes
½ tsp paprika (optional)
Salt to taste

Method

In a large mixing bowl, lightly mash the leftover rice with a fork to break up any large clumps. Add the drained tuna, eggs, and cornflour. Season with garlic powder, chilli flakes, paprika, and salt. Mix thoroughly with a little water until the ingredients come together into a thick, scoopable batter.

Heat a little oil in a pan over medium heat. Pour in the pancake mixture, leaving enough space between the pancakes. Cook for 3–4 minutes on each side until golden brown and crispy. Avoid flipping them too early, as they need time to develop a firm crust.

Serve warm with a spicy mayonnaise dip made by mixing mayonnaise, a little chilli sauce, and lemon juice.

MEDITERRANEAN RICE MEDLEY

Ingredients

2 cups cooked, chilled leftover rice
½ cup cucumber, diced
½ cup tomatoes, diced
½ cup sweet corn, boiled
½ bell pepper, diced
¼ red onion, finely chopped
2 tbsp chopped spring onions
½ cup boiled, shredded chicken
½ cup cooked chickpeas (optional)
¼ cup Dhaka paneer (optional)
For the dressing —
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp honey
1 tsp mustard
½ tsp black pepper
½ tsp chilli flakes
2 tbsp mayonnaise (optional)
Salt to taste

Method

Place the chilled rice in a large mixing bowl and gently fluff it with a fork to separate the grains. Add the diced cucumber, tomatoes, sweet corn, bell pepper, red onion, and spring onions. Add cooked chickpeas, Dhaka paneer, and shredded chicken for extra protein.

In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, honey, mustard, black pepper, chilli flakes, and salt until well combined. Pour the dressing over the rice and vegetables. Toss gently until everything is evenly coated, taking care not to mash the rice.

Refrigerate the salad for 10–15 minutes to allow the flavours to develop. Give it a final toss before serving and garnish with a squeeze of lemon juice.

By K T Humaira
Photo: Collected

#EVENTS

BEYOND THE CAGE

KHAR's mission to make MMA accessible across Bangladesh

After hosting more than 200 fighters across 12 editions, Bangladesh's amateur mixed martial arts (MMA) circuit is preparing to expand beyond Dhaka, encourage greater female participation and bring combat sports together with rock music at its next event.

For years, Bangladesh's MMA scene remained relatively small, with competitive opportunities largely concentrated around a handful of established gyms in Dhaka. For aspiring fighters outside those circles, finding opportunities to compete, gain recognition and develop their skills was often a challenge.

Established in 2025, KHAR has sought to address this gap by organising regular amateur competitions and bringing together athletes from different gyms, regions and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Across its first 12 editions, more than 200 fighters have participated. While most competitions have taken place in Dhaka, athletes from Sylhet, Savar, Chattogram and Rangamati have also entered the scene, reflecting growing interest beyond the capital.

For chairman Mohammad Maaz, making the sport accessible regardless of a fighter's circumstances has been a guiding principle.

"I believe talent should never be defined by someone's social class, financial background, gender or where they come from. A fighter from a small village deserves the same opportunity as someone training at the best gym in Dhaka. We want to create a level playing field where everyone has a fair chance to compete, grow and be recognised. MMA shouldn't belong to a handful of gyms or a particular group of people. It should be open to everyone," said Maaz.

TAKING MMA BEYOND DHAKA

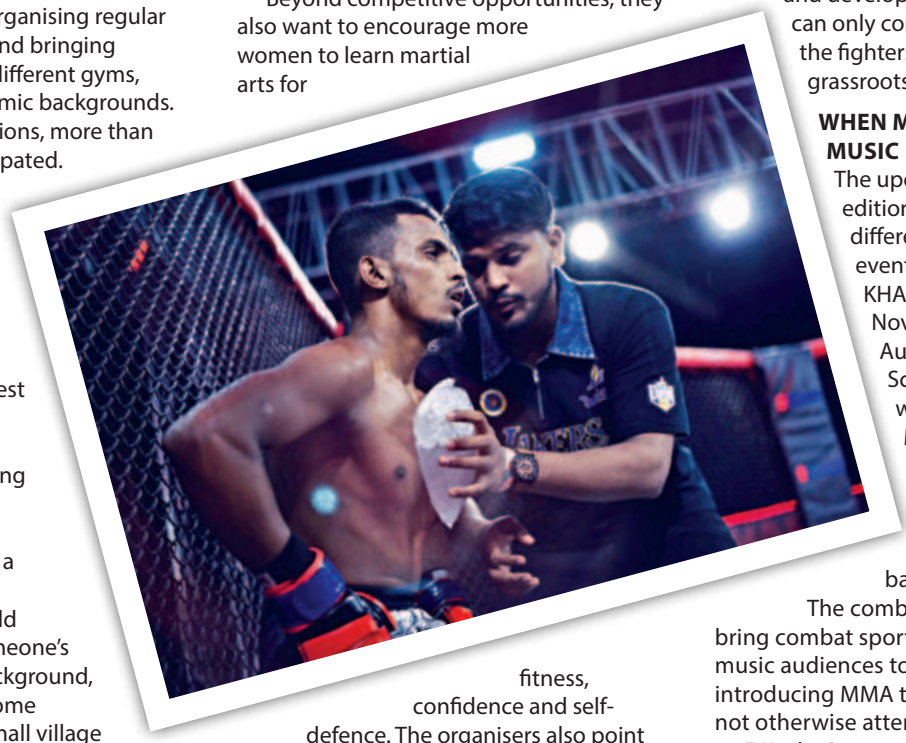
Having largely concentrated their events in the capital, the organisers plan to expand competitions across Bangladesh from 2027. The proposed expansion would give regional fighters more opportunities to compete closer to home while introducing organised MMA events to new audiences.

"When we started, the competitive scene was largely dominated by one or two gyms in Dhaka. Over the past year, we've seen more gyms and fighters coming forward from different parts of Bangladesh. Next year, we want to take KHAR across the country. We want people outside Dhaka to experience a live MMA event, and we want talented fighters to have opportunities without always having to travel to the capital," Maaz said.

ENCOURAGING WOMEN IN COMBAT SPORTS

Increasing women's participation is another stated priority. They have already hosted six women's MMA bouts, with two more scheduled for the thirteenth edition.

Beyond competitive opportunities, they also want to encourage more women to learn martial arts for fitness, confidence and self-defence. The organisers also point to encouragement from the country's president for women to take up mixed martial arts.



"I don't believe women should have fewer opportunities simply because combat sports have traditionally been male-dominated. We want women to have the same platform, recognition and respect as male athletes. At the same time, not every woman needs to become a professional fighter. Learning martial arts can help build confidence, discipline and the ability to protect oneself. We want more women across Bangladesh to have access to that training," said Maaz.

DEVELOPING THE NEXT GENERATION

Providing amateur athletes with regular opportunities to compete has been central to their approach. Their tenth edition, KHAR X, attracted more than 500 spectators, while some participants have progressed to professional competition, including bantamweight champion Arafat Hossain.

Managing Director Sadat Kabir Rudro believes developing a strong domestic competitive structure is essential before Bangladesh can aspire to international success.

"Before we can dream of producing world-class fighters, we need to build a strong foundation at home. Our priority is to give amateur athletes consistent opportunities to compete, gain experience and develop. International success can only come when we invest in the fighters and the sport at the grassroots level," said Rudro.

WHEN MMA MEETS ROCK MUSIC

The upcoming thirteenth edition will introduce a different dimension to the events. X-Force Presents KHAR 13, scheduled for November 13 at the Australian International School (AUSIS) in Dhaka, will feature eight amateur MMA bouts followed by a full-length concert by Nemesis, one of Bangladesh's recognised rock bands.

The combination is intended to bring combat sports enthusiasts and live music audiences together, potentially introducing MMA to people who might not otherwise attend a fight event.

"We don't want people to feel they have to be MMA fans to attend a KHAR event. Someone might come for Nemesis and discover a genuine appreciation for the sport. We want to create a space where different communities can come together and experience something new," said Maaz.

The fight card includes Bhupen versus Mumit, pairing an established competitor with a recent debutant, and Md Ali versus Nafis. Two women's bouts will also feature.

Organisers expect between 750 and 1,000 spectators, making the event an opportunity to introduce emerging fighters to a wider audience.

LOOKING AHEAD

Their longer-term plans for 2027 include taking competitions to different parts of Bangladesh, creating opportunities for regional fighters and encouraging more women to participate in MMA and self-defence training.

Turning these ambitions into a sustainable competitive structure, however, will require consistent opportunities for athletes regardless of their location, gender or financial circumstances.

KHAR 13 begins at 5:30 PM on November 13. Tickets are priced at Tk 750 for standing, Tk 1,000 for gallery seating and Tk 1,250 for front-row access. Admission covers both the MMA bouts and the Nemesis concert. Tickets are available through Quicket.

The event is presented by X-Force, powered by Dour, with Jeep as supporting partner and Quicket as official ticketing partner.

— LS Desk
Photo: Courtesy



#HEALTH & FITNESS

PROTECTING YOUR HEART: THE ESSENTIAL DOS AND DON'TS

Your heart works around the clock, often without demanding much attention, until something goes wrong. While factors like age, genetics, and pre-existing health conditions play a role in heart health, daily habits can have a significant impact on your cardiovascular well-being. Understanding the essential dos and don'ts of cardiac health can help protect your heart and effectively reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease.

KNOWING YOUR KEY HEALTH NUMBERS

Dr Ashraful-Ur-Rahman, a Medicine Specialist and Cardiologist at the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD), urges everyone to "know the numbers" when it comes to heart health. He stresses that you cannot manage what you have never measured.

The common tests include a lipid profile, blood sugar, and HbA1c. Moreover, the Body Mass Index (BMI) should be below 25, and blood pressure should be monitored regularly.

Dr Rahman also explains that kidney disease and heart disease are closely linked. Protein in the urine is an early sign of blood vessel damage, especially in individuals with diabetes or high blood pressure.

WHAT YOUR FAMILY HISTORY MEANS

Dr Rahman notes that people should not wait until after 40 to think about this, since heart attacks can occur in young people, and family history is often the reason.

However, "A positive family history does not mean a heart attack is inevitable. It means you should get screened sooner," Dr Rahman adds. Some families carry an inherited form of very high cholesterol, which is why early lipid testing matters in this case as well.



SLEEP, STRESS AND HEART HEALTH

As clichéd as it sounds, around six to seven hours of sleep is essential. But what matters most, Dr Rahman elaborates, is the routine. One bad night does no lasting harm. Weeks and months of short or broken sleep do. Because sleep deprivation disturbs hormones, can push blood pressure up, and can worsen anxiety, it affects the heart indirectly.

HEART ATTACK, ANXIETY OR INDIGESTION: WHAT PERPLEXES MOST PEOPLE

These three are commonly confused, and Dr Rahman's most useful clue is the pattern.

"Heart-related pain, or angina, has a definite pattern linked to exertion. It grows worse when walking or doing heavy work and eases with rest. Pain from anxiety or indigestion, by contrast, tends to come 'anytime, anywhere', with no pattern and non-specific features unrelated to effort," he clarifies.

But most importantly, the pattern is just a guide, not guaranteed evidence. A heart attack can begin at rest and without typical features, especially in people with diabetes. Chest pain that is severe, lasts more than a few minutes, or comes with sweating, breathlessness, nausea, dizziness, or pain spreading to the arm, neck, or jaw needs emergency care immediately.

HOW SIGNIFICANT IS HITTING THE GYM?

Many people think that exercising for heart health requires joining a gym, purchasing equipment, or following a structured workout plan. But several studies suggest otherwise. While a gym can be a convenient option, it is not necessary. Any activity that raises your heart rate and is performed regularly can provide heart benefits.

Moreover, moving your body throughout the day is much more beneficial than an hour of intense gym workouts followed by remaining still for the rest of the day.

Taking care of your heart does not have to involve drastic changes overnight. Instead, focus on consistent and sustainable habits. Eating a balanced diet, staying physically active, managing stress, getting enough sleep, and monitoring notable health indicators can all lead to significant improvements over time.

This article is for general education and is not a substitute for personal medical advice. Please consult a cardiologist about your own risk.

By K T Humaira
Photo: Collected

#HEALTH & FITNESS

Is depression contagious?

What psychotherapists want you to know

Moods and stress can quickly spread between close partners, but feeling low after supporting a friend isn't always clinical depression. Experts break down the fine line between temporary emotional contagion and a serious mental health condition

We often think of depression as a deeply personal struggle, something that exists within the mind of the person experiencing it. But what happens when someone close to us is depressed? Can their sadness, hopelessness, and emotional exhaustion begin affecting us too? While depression itself is not an infectious disease, the emotions surrounding it can influence people who share a close relationship with someone experiencing depression.

In a recent interview with psychotherapist Abdul Hamid of the Monobikash Foundation, he explained that depression can be emotionally contagious. "When someone very close to us is depressed, we may end up carrying their emotions," he explains. In some situations, this emotional impact can extend beyond one person and affect an entire group.

However, feeling low after witnessing someone else's suffering does not automatically mean that a person has depression. Hamid explains that if someone experiences deep sadness, emptiness, or loss of interest for 14 days or more, and these feelings significantly interfere with everyday activities, relationships, and lifestyle, it may indicate depression. The distinction between temporary emotional distress and clinical depression therefore remains important.



THE EMOTIONAL WEIGHT OF CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

The impact can become particularly significant when the relationship is emotionally close. A partner, family member, close friend or caregiver may spend considerable time listening to the depressed person's struggles and witnessing their difficulties. Over time, this constant exposure can create emotional exhaustion. The caregiver may begin feeling helpless, hopeless or overwhelmed, especially when they feel responsible for helping the other person recover.

This does not mean that we should become emotionally detached from someone who is suffering. In fact, empathy remains essential. "We cannot become robots," Hamid says. We need to understand another person's pain and respond with compassion, but there is a difference between feeling someone's emotion and making that emotion our own. The goal is to remain empathetic without taking ownership of another person's suffering.

That is where healthy emotional boundaries become important. If someone else's depression is beginning to affect our own emotional wellbeing, we need to recognise the change and establish boundaries. Hamid suggests that we can listen and remain supportive without allowing the other person's emotional state to completely take over our own. If necessary, maintaining some distance while continuing to show empathy can also be healthy.

For caregivers, this distinction becomes even more important. Hamid compares emotional well-being with physical health: just as we do not physically take another person's illness into our own body, we should not carry their emotional problems as our own. Caregivers need to remain conscious of their own emotional state and watch for signs that they are mirroring the depressed person's feelings.

WHEN PROFESSIONAL HELP IS NEEDED

So, what should someone do when a close person's depression begins affecting them? Hamid suggests first paying attention to whether the person's suffering appears to have reached a clinical level. Sometimes, an accident, traumatic event or difficult experience can deeply affect someone and create significant emotional distress. Instead of trying to personally solve the person's depression, suggesting professional help may be a more appropriate response.

Trying to become someone's personal therapist can also create another problem: judgment. When we desperately want to help someone, we may start giving unsolicited advice, comparing their experience with ours or telling them what they should do. Even when our intentions are good, such responses can make a depressed person feel misunderstood. Professional support can provide a safer and more appropriate space for addressing serious psychological difficulties.

At the same time, caregivers should not silently absorb their own discomfort. If someone feels that another person's depression is affecting them, sharing that discomfort with a trusted person can be helpful. However, confidentiality must also be respected, particularly when the person is acting as a caregiver. Supporting someone does not give us permission to disclose their private struggles without considering their dignity and privacy.

RECOGNISING THE WARNING SIGNS

The warning signs can sometimes become surprisingly similar. According to Hamid, when emotional distress becomes strongly mirrored between a depressed person and their caregiver, the caregiver may begin experiencing symptoms such as losing interest in activities they previously enjoyed, changes in sleeping patterns, significant changes in appetite, social withdrawal and persistent negative thoughts about themselves.

These changes should not simply be dismissed as the price of caring for someone. If a caregiver feels that another person's depression is gradually consuming their own emotional wellbeing, early intervention is important. Seeking professional guidance at the primary level can help the caregiver understand what they are experiencing and develop healthier ways of supporting the other person without sacrificing their own psychological wellbeing.

THE DIGITAL SPREAD OF EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

Technology has added another dimension to this emotional influence. We are increasingly individualised while remaining deeply connected through technology, particularly social media. Emotional states can now travel far beyond close personal relationships. A person's posts, videos or public expressions of distress can reach thousands or even millions of people, potentially influencing the emotions of audiences who have never met them.

Consider a social media influencer openly expressing their experience with depression. If that content reaches hundreds of thousands of followers, a portion of that audience may emotionally identify with the person's experience. For some viewers, particularly those already struggling emotionally, such content may become triggering. What begins as one person's personal experience can therefore have a much wider emotional impact in the digital environment.

This does not mean people experiencing depression should hide their stories or remain silent. Sharing personal experiences can reduce stigma and encourage people to seek help. The concern is about how audiences consume and respond to emotionally intense content. Social media users should recognise that repeatedly consuming another person's distress can affect their own emotional state, particularly when they already feel vulnerable.

EMPATHY WITHOUT ABSORBING THE PAIN

Supporting someone with depression requires more than empathy. It requires boundaries, awareness and, when necessary, professional help. We can listen without absorbing, care without carrying, and support without trying to become the person responsible for another's recovery. As Hamid explains, we need to acknowledge another person's feelings without taking ownership of their suffering. Sometimes, protecting our own emotional well-being is also part of being able to care for someone else.

By Farhana Faiza
Photo: Collected

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Organise overdue tasks. Plan a relaxed outing with loved ones. Addressing unresolved issues could bring personal healing. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Make time for hobbies. Nurture your relationships. Appreciate the comforts and beauty you have created. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Stay patient with workplace confusion. Maintain sustainable wellness routines. Explore creative ideas that could develop into promising projects. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Review unnecessary expenses. Declutter your living space. Make room for creative pursuits and activities that bring you joy. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Reconsider what makes you feel secure. Explore your family roots. Spending time outdoors could help restore your sense of balance. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Approach responsibilities with confidence. Stay adaptable when plans change. Pay attention to everyday experiences that offer unexpected insights. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Review your financial priorities. Challenge fears surrounding new opportunities. Set practical goals to build greater long-term stability. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Explore emerging career opportunities. Seek advice from trusted allies. Challenge self-doubt before allowing fear to influence important decisions. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Complete overdue work. Reconnect with friends. Prioritise rest and reflection over the weekend to restore your energy. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



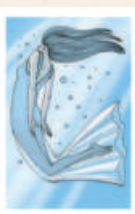
CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Reconsider your long-term ambitions. Reassess friendships and support networks. Let go of limiting beliefs that prevent personal growth. Your lucky day this week will be Wednesday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Reconsider professional expectations. Seek balance in relationships. Honest conversations can help strengthen connections and support your ambitions. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Explore travel possibilities. Discuss future adventures with loved ones. Research destinations that could turn your dreams into reality. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



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#FOOD & RECIPES

6 food stops to make on a day trip to Narayanganj

Narayanganj has long been a bustling river port and trading hub, and its food scene carries traces of that rich history. From old eateries that have served generations of customers to sweet shops known for their traditional items, the city offers plenty for food lovers to explore. If you are planning a trip, here are six food stops worth exploring.

NEW BOSE CABIN, SANATAN PAL LANE

Established in 1921 by Nripen Chandra Bose, popularly known as Bhulu Babu, Bose Cabin began as a small tea stall and gradually became a landmark in Narayanganj. Renamed New Bose Cabin after relocating in 1988, the shop is associated with the city's political and cultural history.

A cup of tea and a plate of snacks offer a simple way to experience a place that has been part of the city's everyday life for more than a century.

KHAWAJA SWEET MEAT, SS ROAD

For a taste of traditional breakfast, Khawaja Sweet Meat is worth a stop on your Narayanganj food tour. We tried paratha and halua, and the halua stood out for its silky-smooth texture, making it a satisfying complement to the freshly prepared, warm paratha.

Beyond breakfast, the shop offers a variety of sweets and doi, giving visitors plenty of options to explore.

JAGATBONDHU MISHTANNA BHANDAR, UKILPARA

Located near New Bose Cabin, Jagatbondhu Mishtanna Bhandar has been serving traditional sweets for nearly 60 years. Founded by Sanatan Ghosh, popularly known as Sonai Ghosh, the shop has earned a loyal following among Narayanganj's sweet lovers.

The shop was crowded when we visited, and we tried lalmohon, chhana, and malaikari. Each offered a different take on the richness of traditional Bengali sweets. The shop is particularly known for its 'kheer Madras', a popular item that is a must-try for new visitors.

GRAMEEN MISHTANNO BHANDAR, UKILPARA

Right beside Jagatbondhu, Grameen







Mishtanno Bhandar brought back childhood memories with its chinir putul, the familiar sugar treats. These simple treats have a nostalgic appeal, bringing back memories of a time when little sugar shapes could be as exciting as a box of fancy chocolates.

The laddus were delicious too. Since the two shops are next to each other, you can easily visit both and enjoy a taste of traditional sweets.

ASLAM BIRIYANI HOUSE, BURUNDI BAZAR, BANDAR

Aslam Biriyani House offers an experience much like a traditional Bengali village wedding. Tables are arranged beneath a pandal, while even the simple handwashing station, made from a drum fitted with a tap, adds to the familiar wedding-feast atmosphere.



You wash your hands, find a place at the table, and settle in for a plate of beef biryani. A full plate costs Tk 350, while a half plate costs Tk 250.

BHAI BHAI SHAHI CHOTPOTI, CHASHARA RAILGATE

Near Chashara Railgate Mosque, Bhai Bhai Shahi Chotpoti was another memorable stop on our tour. What stood out was the chef's dedication to preparing the dish. The ingredients came together in a well-balanced combination, making every bite satisfying. Despite being street food, the chotpoti was fresh, flavourful, and perfectly balanced. It was a simple street food experience, yet one that left a lasting impression.

By Jawwad Sami Neogi
Photo: Jawwad Sami Neogi







