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The New Royalty

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LIGHTS: SELIM AHAMED

CHECK IT OUT

The men in our lives



Two days from now, on 19 November, the world is going to observe International Men's Day 2026. Here at Star Lifestyle, we have started the programme early, with this special issue, where we discuss all things men!

Some may say that the men in our lives are often not celebrated and thanked enough as friends, fathers, brothers, husbands, and colleagues. While others may claim just the opposite, that men get all the attention and privilege.

The real answer may perhaps lie somewhere in between. Whatever your answer may be, 19 November is a day that gives us a chance to talk about issues surrounding men. From mental health to physical well-being, and from fashion to bonding, we explore a wide variety of subjects by discussing them from the male perspective.

Whether you are a man or not, we hope that our stories this Tuesday will be a conversation starter, across all genders, regarding various lifestyle aspects and societal issues that we should indeed speak more about!

— **LS Desk**









#RELATIONSHIPS & FAMILY

What fathers left unsaid: The emotional distance between fathers and sons

A father is such an important figure in a person's life that it can shape and outline the personality and psyche of a person. But even fathers make mistakes, whether unconsciously or on purpose. They are human after all. It is imperative that a father has the right conversations with his child. But for countless reasons, our fathers have skipped a whole lot of those and missed many lessons — lessons that could have made life easier for us or conversations that could have altered the course of our lives.

THE MISSED LESSONS

"My father is a superhero in my eyes. I have seen him carry a business, nurture a family, and meet all the demands of society, all with a smile on his face. To this day, I cannot figure out how he did it. And he never taught me how either. It is a marvel to me but I regret that we have never had that conversation," said one middle-aged Musfiq Fuad, who grew emotional recalling the memories of his late father.

"This is true, especially when it comes to family. My father used to balance and meet the demands and needs of each and every family member. He knew how to prioritise and still keep everyone satisfied. Yet here I am, trying to do the same thing, but I cannot balance it.

"I try to keep everyone satisfied within my limits, but it never works. My father could have taught me how to balance it all," he added.

Fuad added, emphasising that he was not blaming his father, but rather expressing his regret of not spending more time with him while he was still alive.

"He also never discussed his finances with me. Or any of the commitments he had made. When he passed away, I got in a conundrum with his commitments and it got to a point where it grew difficult for me to meet them all. And the worst part is that I had no idea if these were real commitments or people were just making them up to take advantage," Fuad recalled the difficult years following his father's death.

Mohammad Shameem, a young banker, shared similar views.

"My father never had 'any' conversations with me," he said in a melancholic tone. "We never discussed anything because he did not have the time. He was always so busy that there was no time to spare for a conversation."

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

If you achieve something, it sure feels nice to be acknowledged. It feels especially good to be appreciated by your family. But what if your family just does not communicate that way?

"After my father passed away, I learned much later that he was really proud of me and had high hopes for me. Even grand plans. But he never said any of that to me," Shameem recounted, observing that our father's generation preferred to maintain a hardened exterior even though they had no shortage of love.

This trait is the trademark characteristic of our father's generation. But think how their acknowledgements could have boosted us. They will boast of your good results, praise your talents in a tea stall, but when it comes to saying: 'good job, son', suddenly it becomes a Herculean task.

Our fathers raised us well, but they also made mistakes. But like their lack of acknowledgement, the lack of apology was also consistent.

"I wish my father had said sorry. Just once," said one Raihan Alam, a young businessman.

"It's not that I am blaming him for something specific or that I have a disdain, none of that. I know he did the best that he could with what he had and, in his shoes, I would probably do much worse. But I just wanted him to acknowledge that he has made some mistakes and he could have done many things differently," he elaborated.

It's true that our fathers did their best within their limitations and with every passing year, as you take on more and more responsibilities, you learn to appreciate their sacrifices and actions a little bit more. But that doesn't alleviate the lack of communication that we feel. And while it is justified to want that one conversation or acknowledgement from your father, it is also important to attempt to understand their actions.

Perhaps, as we become parents, we will learn from the mistakes of our parents. We will try our best, but how well we did will be judged by the next generation. For now, let's acknowledge our fathers' sacrifices despite their limitations.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro

#PERSPECTIVE

Why are men taking their time to get married?



Ask a young man in Dhaka why he is still single and you may get a pause before the answer. It is rarely because he has no interest in marriage. Marriage is still the milestone that makes a man a grown-up in the eyes of his family and neighbours. What has changed is the checklist he must tick before he says yes, and for many men that list keeps growing.

The first item is simple: where he is in life. A student still finishing his degree or a fresh graduate chasing that first job knows a marriage is not a small thing. It means a household, a wife's expectations, possibly children, and the bills that come with all of it. Taking that on before he can carry it feels irresponsible, however loudly the aunties insist otherwise.

Then comes money, and this is where the conversation gets uncomfortable. Families speak of stability as the most important quality in a groom. A steady job, a salary that covers rent, maybe a flat of his own. Yet most people are living with rising costs and wages that have not kept up. A job that looked respectable a decade ago now barely covers a small household in the capital.

The wedding itself makes things worse. Prestige in urban middle-class life often depends on an elaborate ceremony in a hotel or community centre. For a man still building his career, that is less a celebration and more of a loan he will be repaying for years.

Then there are the parents. A son is still expected to support his own household, and if his parents are ageing, their medical bills can become his problem too. One hospital admission can wipe out months of careful saving. A man already carrying that weight struggles to picture adding a wife, a home and eventually, children to the list.

Family is another hurdle. A marriage is rarely just two people. It is two households joining together, each with its own opinions about who should live where and who gets the final word.

Freedom of choice can sound like a fancy phrase once the family council sits down. Many men decide the marriage may be theirs, but the negotiation belongs to everyone else.

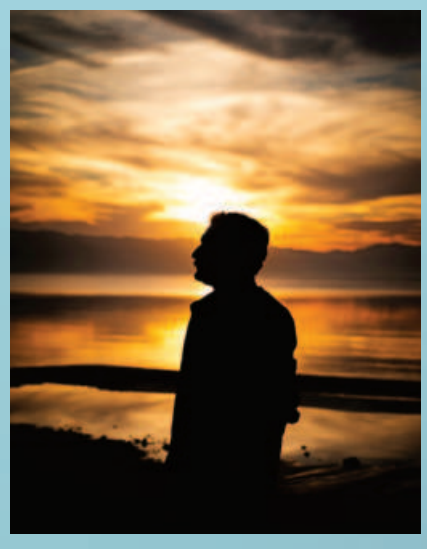
The way people meet and interact has also shifted, and modern technology has played a major role in changing the landscape. Matchmakers and family introductions have given way to dating apps and social media platforms. On paper, having a sea of choices directly at your fingertips seems like an advantage. In reality, it breeds a relentless decision fatigue. You swipe, you connect, you go through the motions, only to realise the other person might not be looking to settle down either. You wind up right back at square one, exhausted by the cycle.

These same platforms have made the idea of the "greener grass" constantly visible. Infidelity is not new, but technology has made the path to it faster and far more accessible. More importantly, it has changed how people react when a marriage hits a rough patch. When the illusion of endless alternative options is constantly flickering on a screen, the willingness to stay, fight, and do the hard work required to fix a marriage erodes quickly. It becomes far easier to give up and walk away, leaving many men wary of investing their heart and future into something that feels increasingly fragile.

Finally, there is a subtle shift happening inside the home itself.

For generations, men relied on marriage for the basic logistics of daily life. But something changed with millennials and the generation following them. Encouraged by mothers who wanted to ease their own heavy daily loads, young men learned to cook, clean, manage a household, and take care of themselves. Armed with these essential life skills, a new generation of men has realized they are entirely self-sufficient. They do not need to marry simply to have a functional home life. They can cook their own meals, run their own errands, and maintain their own spaces without depending on anyone else.

When you add it all up — the crushing economic pressure, the duty to ageing parents, the loss of personal privacy, the fear of fragile commitments, and a newly discovered personal independence — the choice becomes clear.



The old question still has its place. But the men answering it are asking a few of their own.

By Intisab Shahriyar

#LIFEHACKS

What should a gym-going man actually eat?



Walking into a gym is often the easy part. Figuring out what to eat afterwards, how much protein to consume. And whether to give up rice altogether can be far more confusing.

For men trying to lose weight, the advice usually sounds simple: eat less, cut carbohydrates, and increase protein. Those looking to build muscle are told to eat more, load up on protein, and buy supplements. Following this without understanding how food works makes fitness goals harder to reach.

Diet and exercise need to work together. An hour at the gym means little if the rest of the day is spent eating without a plan.

Ruslan Hossain, a prominent Bangladeshi bodybuilder, estimates that diet accounts for 80 per cent of achieving fitness goals, with exercise making up the remaining 20 per cent.

Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin, Chief Clinical Dietitian and Head of the Dietetics and Nutrition Department at Continental Hospital PLC, believes that diet and exercise are both important — they have to run in parallel.

Losing fat: Eat less, but eat properly

For someone trying to lose body fat, the starting point is a calorie deficit, which means consuming fewer calories than the body uses.

Ruslan Hossain suggests that a daily deficit of around 500 calories can lead to roughly one pound of weight loss per week. He cautions, however, against treating weight loss as a simple equation, since the quality of food and how it is cooked also matter.

He recommends prioritising protein and complex carbohydrates, with a split of 40 per cent protein, 40 per cent carbohydrates and 20 per cent fat, although he acknowledges that individual requirements vary.

Chowdhury Tasneem Hasin challenges a common belief among Bangladeshi gym-goers: that rice makes you gain weight.



"One misconception in our country is that rice is responsible for gaining weight," she points out. "No, it's not. Overall calorie consumption, cooking methods, and cooking oils are also very important."

Instead of cutting rice, she recommends watching portions and choosing protein sources such as fish, chicken breast, eggs, milk, yoghurt and chickpeas, along with regular vegetables.

Both interviewees also warn against crash dieting. Drastic cuts may bring quick results but are hard to maintain, and Hossain says people often regain the weight, making later attempts harder. Hasin adds that the body adapts to prolonged restriction. A moderate deficit that can be sustained is the better aim.

Building muscle: Protein is important, but not everything

Building muscle calls for a different approach. More protein alone is not enough; the body also needs sufficient calories and carbohydrates to support training and recovery.

Hasin identifies three requirements: progressive training, adequate protein, and sufficient rest. For healthy adults who exercise regularly, she cites an international recommendation of 1.4 to 2 grams per kilogram of body weight daily, provided kidney function is normal. A man weighing 70 kilograms would need roughly 98 to 140 grams a day.

Carbohydrates matter too. They fuel workouts and replenish muscle glycogen, the stored form of glucose that muscles use during exercise.

Hossain recommends a slight calorie surplus but warns against overeating. He stresses, "One thing to make sure is that resistance training is a must when it comes to muscle building."

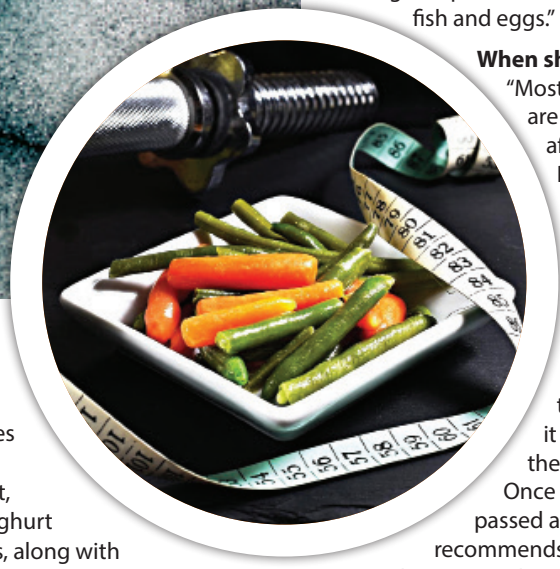
Do you really need protein powder?

Protein supplements are a familiar sight in gyms, and many men assume building muscle requires a tub of whey.

Both say food should come first.

Hossain's view is that gym-goers here usually have access to good protein sources like meat, fish and eggs. Supplements only make sense for those who cannot meet their needs that way, such as people who spend long hours outside, and the diet comes first. "They should include protein in their diet at first, and then if they need more they should turn to supplements."

Hasin's advice is similar. "I would recommend getting an adequate amount of protein through diet," she shares, "by eating rich protein sources such as meat, fish and eggs."



When should you eat?

"Most important meals are the ones before and after the workout," Ruslan Hossain notes. The one before, he adds, "is going to fuel the workout."

Hasin gets more specific as she adds, "We should stop eating any food that has calories in it 30 minutes before the workout session."

Once 30 minutes have passed after exercise, she recommends a protein-rich meal and urges regular times for both meals and workouts.

Beyond that, total protein across the day matters more than any exact post-gym window.

Stop treating carbohydrates as the enemy

Hossain observes that men dieting here treat carbs as the enemy and leave out rice and other carbohydrates first. Hasin warns that swapping rice for bread achieves little, since bread has similar amounts of calories.

She also finds meal skipping very common and warns against randomly dieting in the morning only to consume large amounts of calories later in the day.

Then there is what happens outside the gym. "We should stay active throughout the day," Hasin advises, rather than spend an hour at the gym and stay sedentary all day.

There is no single diet that works for every man who goes to the gym. Fat loss and muscle gain call for different calorie and protein targets. But neither requires abandoning familiar Bangladeshi meals or spending a fortune on supplements.

Balanced meals, controlled portions, enough protein and regular exercise are better starting points than chasing quick results.

By Mehdi Islam Mahi



#FASHION & BEAUTY

Traditional menswear has never really gone out of style. The panjabi, sherwani, and other familiar pieces have remained part of men's wardrobes for generations, appearing at weddings, Eid gatherings, and family occasions. But somewhere along the way, they became associated with a particular look: polished, sophisticated, and carefully put together.

Star LIFE Style



Breaking the RULES of Traditional Menswear



There is, however, another side to it. These pieces can be just as bold, relaxed and unconventional as anything in a modern wardrobe. They simply need to be worn a little differently.

A well-made panjabi or sherwani already has plenty of character. The cuts, fabrics, embroidery and details give these garments an identity that does not need much help. What makes them interesting today is the freedom to move beyond the usual combinations.



Traditional clothing does not always need to be paired with matching trousers, formal footwear and carefully coordinated accessories. Sometimes, the best way to wear it is to break a few of those expectations.

A panjabi, for instance, does not have to be treated as a complete outfit on its own. Pairing one with relaxed trousers, textured bottoms, or even a contrasting pair of pants can give it a more casual edge. Printed trousers can add personality to a relatively simple top, while shades such as olive, brown and beige work well for a more understated look.

The idea is to let the pieces complement each other without making everything look too coordinated.

Layering is another way to change the character of traditional clothing. A long, textured coat or an open sherwani worn over a panjabi can add depth to an otherwise familiar outfit. It also creates an opportunity to play with different fabrics and lengths.

Dark outerwear over a lighter base, for example, gives the outfit contrast without relying on loud colours. For something bolder, patterned fabrics and unusual colour combinations can make traditional silhouettes feel less predictable.

The sherwani, often reserved for weddings and formal celebrations, is particularly interesting in this regard. Its structured shape naturally gives an outfit presence, but that does not mean it has to be styled in the conventional way.

Wearing it with relaxed or patterned trousers instead of matching bottoms can take away some of its formality. An open front, a less structured inner layer or even a pair of simple, understated shoes can make the entire look feel more relaxed. The garment remains recognisably traditional, but the attitude changes.

Accessories deserve some attention too. Traditional menswear has room for more than a watch and a pair of formal shoes. Rings, layered necklaces, bracelets and statement scarves can bring a different personality to an outfit.

A scarf worn loosely rather than folded neatly, for instance, adds movement and makes the look feel less rehearsed. Small leather bags, unusual headwear and heavier jewellery can also work, particularly when the rest of the outfit is kept relatively simple. There is no need to wear everything at once. One or two strong accessories are often enough.

There is also something to be said for moving away from the idea that traditional clothing must always look refined.

A panjabi with rolled-up sleeves, relaxed trousers and sturdy footwear can have a much rougher edge than the usual festive combination.

Similarly, a sherwani does not lose its character when worn with a more casual attitude. Dark colours, heavier textures and slightly unconventional pairings can give these garments a tougher appearance without taking away from their heritage.

This flexibility is part of what makes traditional clothing worth investing in. A panjabi bought for Eid should not have to spend the rest of the year sitting in the wardrobe.

With a change of trousers, footwear or accessories, the same piece can work for a casual evening out or a gathering with friends. Sherwanis may be more occasion-specific, but simpler designs can also be reused as outer layers over different outfits.

The appeal of traditional menswear lies in the fact that it already has a history. There is no need to reinvent the panjabi or sherwani to make it relevant. What matters is how they are worn. A little contrast, some confidence and a willingness to experiment can take these familiar garments somewhere unexpected.

Traditional clothing can be elegant, but it does not always have to be well-behaved. Sometimes, a little swagger suits it better.

By Mehdi Islam Mahi
Photo: Adnan Rahman
Model: Azim
Fashion Direction & Styling: Sonia Yeasmin Isha
Wardrobe: Shahrukh Amin
Makeup: Piash
Location: Studio Crane
Lights: Selim Ahamed

#HEALTH & FITNESS

How young men are finally talking about mental health

My father is not an expressive man. I can never tell what he is thinking: happy, sad, struggling, or nothing at all. The only emotion I have ever seen him show is anger.

He is not unusual. The script for Bangladeshi men stayed short for generations: endure, provide, and say nothing. Mental illness was "madness", a word that could sink a family's marriage prospects. If you struggled, you were told to be stronger, to pray more, and to stop thinking so much. Silence passed for strength.

Something is shifting, however. Men my age talk about therapy, burnout and panic in group chats, on podcasts, sometimes even at the dinner table. It is clumsy and uneven, and I am not sure my father would recognise it. But the subject is no longer whispered.

For Shihab, 25, getting there took years.

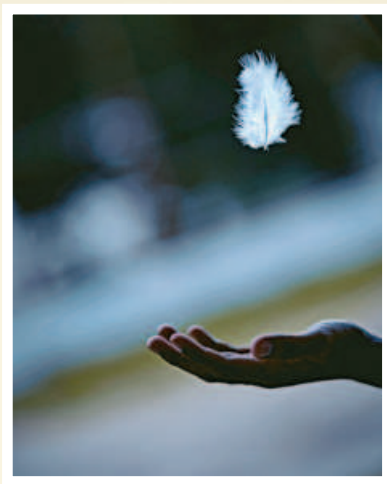
"It took me many years to realise that I was struggling with myself and that I was not a burden on anyone," he says. When he finally told his friends and family, they urged him to see a therapist. Nobody treated it as shameful, he says.

Nabil, 22, thinks that response is something we choose. "It is only as stigmatised as we make it," he says. In his view, the stigma survives because people keep treating it as one.

Taufik, 18, goes further. "I find the idea that men are not supposed to cry toxic," he says. "We are humans too, and we want to express our feelings. Men are not robots."

He seeks help actively and talks to his friends. It is a short, unpolished statement, and it says more than most awareness campaigns manage. I struggle to imagine my father's generation saying it at any age.





My own way is less dramatic. I unplug from social media. Scroll long enough, and every young man online seems to have it figured out: the job, the money, the body. The bar of success it sets for young men is unrealistic, and it makes me feel inadequate. Switching off does not fix anything, but it quiets the comparison.

I am not suggesting everyone delete their apps. For me, it is a small act of honesty: admitting that I measure myself against people I have never met and that the measuring costs me something.

That honesty, I think, is where it all starts. Nabil is right, and the first step is simpler than it sounds: we have to accept that a mental health problem is as serious as a physical one. No one tells a man with a broken leg to pray harder and stop thinking about it. The second step is harder: admitting, to yourself first, that something is wrong. Shihab's years of silence show how long that can take. Acceptance is not weakness; it is the step that makes help possible.

None of this is neat, and it is not equal. Talking is easier for some of us than others. Shihab's family urged him to see a therapist, but not every family answers that way, and a young man in a group chat is not the same as a man of fifty with a household to run. The change I am describing is real, but it has mostly reached people like me: young, online, and with someone to listen.

Which brings me back to my father. He has never said anything like this to me. I do not know what he has carried, or whether anyone has ever asked. I only know the script he was handed, because I grew up inside it. When he is angry, I have started to wonder what else sits underneath. Maybe our job is not to fix men like him but to ask earlier and to keep asking even when the answer is silence. That is a small start, but it is a start.

By Zawad Arif Arian



SaRa Brings a New Wave to Winter Fashion

Fashion trends and clothing preferences continue to evolve with time. As winter arrives, SaRa Lifestyle introduces its latest winter collection, combining comfort, elegance, and contemporary style. Alongside winterwear for every member of the family, the brand also presents a modern western fashion collection for young consumers through its youth-focused fashion line, DHEU – My Wave.

Winter brings a refreshing change to nature, and fashion embraces that change with new colours, designs, and styles. As temperatures drop, people's clothing preferences evolve. While some look for comfortable jackets, others prefer stylish hoodies and sweatshirts. For many, winterwear is not just about staying warm; it is also about expressing personal style and individuality. Keeping these diverse preferences in mind, SaRa Lifestyle, a sister concern of Snowtex Group, has introduced its latest winter collection.

This season, SaRa Lifestyle has focused on meeting the clothing needs of every member of the family. The collection features a wide range of designs for men, women, and children. Available items include jackets, sweatshirts, shirts, denimwear, trousers, joggers, shawls, and comforters. From everyday wear to



outings, casual gatherings with friends, and busy working days, the collection offers versatile options for different occasions and lifestyles.

DHEU – My Wave: A New Expression of Youth Fashion

Young consumers have always had distinctive preferences when it comes to winter fashion. New designs, comfort, colours, and personal expression play an important role in shaping their fashion choices. Addressing these preferences, SaRa Lifestyle's western fashion line, DHEU – My Wave, has introduced its latest winter collection.

This season's DHEU collection includes denim jackets, bomber jackets, hoodies, oversized shirts, cargo pants, and coordinated sets. The collection offers a variety of options for those who prefer casual outfits, streetwear, and contemporary western styles. It allows young consumers to explore different looks and express their individuality through fashion.

Inspired by the philosophy of 'My Wave', DHEU focuses on confidence, individuality, and personal style. By bringing international fashion trends within an affordable price range, the brand aims to introduce a fresh dimension to the fashion preferences of young consumers in Bangladesh.

Winter Fashion at Affordable Prices

While design and quality are important considerations when purchasing winter clothing, affordability also plays a significant role in customers' buying decisions. This is particularly important for families shopping for multiple members. Keeping this in mind, SaRa Lifestyle has introduced its latest winter collection across



a range of affordable price points.

Men's winterwear starts from Tk 690, while jackets are available at prices of up to Tk 2,490. Women's clothing starts from Tk 590, with jackets priced at up to Tk 2,290. Winterwear for children starts from Tk 490, while jackets are available at prices of up to Tk 2,500. For added warmth and comfort during winter nights, comforters are priced between Tk 1,790 and Tk 2,190.

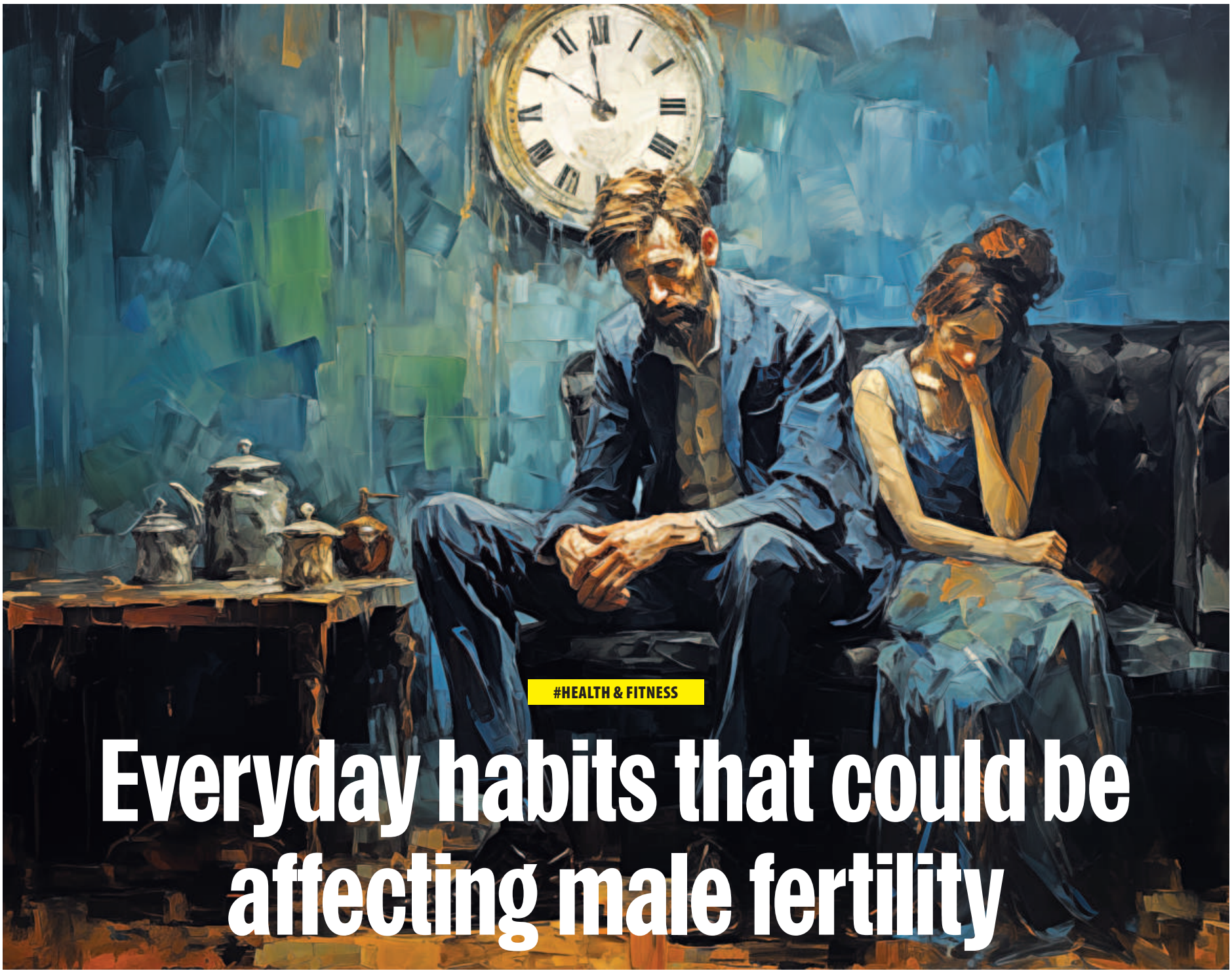
Where Comfort Meets Style and Variety

In today's fashion landscape, clothing is no longer defined solely by design or appearance. Comfort, practicality, quality, and the ability to reflect one's personality are equally important in shaping an individual's fashion statement. This is particularly true of winterwear, where balancing warmth and style is essential. Accordingly, SaRa Lifestyle's latest collection features both everyday essentials and designs suitable for different occasions.

Meanwhile, DHEU offers young consumers an opportunity to explore and express their individual fashion identities. By bringing family-oriented fashion and youth-focused western wear under the same brand umbrella, SaRa Lifestyle has further expanded the range of choices available to its customers.

With its commitment to quality and affordability, SaRa Lifestyle has established itself as a trusted destination for family fashion. Through its latest winter collection, the brand aims to strengthen that position further. Overall, SaRa Lifestyle's winter collection offers a comprehensive range of fashion choices for the entire family, while DHEU – My Wave brings a fresh wave of contemporary style for young consumers looking to embrace winter in their own way.





#HEALTH & FITNESS

Everyday habits that could be affecting male fertility

When a couple waits months or years for good news, the questions usually go to the wife. The husband rarely gets asked, even though the cause can lie with him.

Doctors use the term when a couple has regular, unprotected sex for a year or more without a pregnancy. In a man, it means his body is unable to make a healthy partner pregnant.

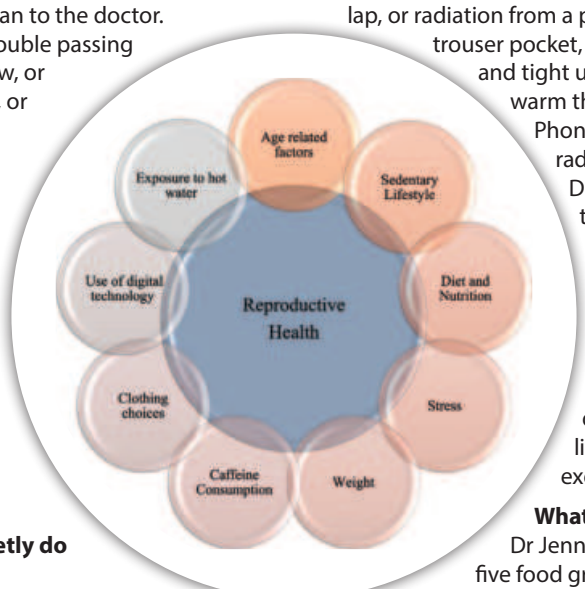
Dr Fahim Ara Khanom Jenny, Associate Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Sylhet Women's Medical College, says it is time men took part in the conversation.

What can go wrong?

According to Dr Jenny, the trouble usually starts in one of four places. The body may not be making healthy sperm, the passage sperm travel through may be blocked, the sperm may not reach the right place, or the fluid that carries them may have problems.

Other common causes include obesity, thyroid trouble, hormone imbalance, and difficulty getting or keeping an erection. Some medicines, including those for high blood pressure and mental health, can also play a part. So can age, and so can infections, whether recent or long past. They can lower sperm quality, upset hormones, or block the passage.

Dr Jenny also lists warning signs that should send a man to the doctor. These include trouble passing urine, a weak flow, or a lump, swelling, or heavy feeling in the testicles. Chest pain, breathlessness, blood in the stool, unexplained weight loss, constant tiredness, low mood, and extreme thirst also need checking.



Habits that quietly do the damage

Smoking, alcohol, and drugs lower the number of sperm, slow their movement, change their shape, and damage the genetic material inside them.

Stress and poor sleep hurt too. They disturb the body's hormones and put it under strain, and that affects sperm.

Heat is another culprit. A laptop on the lap, or radiation from a phone in the trouser pocket, long hot baths, and tight underwear all warm the testicles. Phones also give off radio waves, which Dr Jenny says add to the problem.

Weight and exercise matter as well. Being overweight hurts sperm health, and so does doing too little or too much exercise.

What to eat

Dr Jenny points to five food groups: Salmon, mackerel, and sardines supply omega-3 fats and zinc. Walnuts, pumpkin seeds and chia add fibre, magnesium and selenium. Spinach, kale, broccoli and chard bring folate and vitamin K. Blueberries, pomegranates and tomatoes offer antioxidants, while lentils, chickpeas, quinoa and oats provide fibre and plant protein.

What to cut back

Processed red meat such as sausages, hot dogs, and salami is on her list, along with fizzy drinks, energy drinks, sweetened tea, and refined pastries. Too much alcohol and caffeine should also be avoided, because they can damage the genetic material in sperm.

On supplements, she prefers getting vitamins and minerals from food. If you are thinking of taking pills, speak to a doctor first.

How long until it works?

Sperm take time to renew, so the benefits of a better lifestyle arrive slowly. Dr Jenny says results settle in about 6 to 12 months. If nothing improves after that, medical treatment is the next step.

Her advice is simple. Look after your sleep, weight, and diet; keep your body cool; and give up smoking. If a year passes with no change, book a proper check-up.

By Zawad Arif Arian



Basics of sleepmaxxing: Which viral bedtime hacks are actually worth it?

A good night's sleep was once considered a simple matter of going to bed and waking up refreshed. Today, however, social media has turned it into an elaborate wellness project. This growing phenomenon is known as "sleepmaxxing".

Popularised on TikTok and Instagram, sleepmaxxing refers to combining lifestyle habits, products, gadgets and bedtime rituals to optimise sleep quality and duration. Its appeal lies in the promise of better energy, improved concentration and overall well-being through more restorative sleep.

The chase for perfect sleep

Growing awareness of sleep's influence on physical and mental health has encouraged people to pay closer attention to their sleeping habits.

The trend ranges from simple lifestyle adjustments to elaborate bedtime routines. Common practices include maintaining consistent sleep schedules and reducing screen exposure. Others experiment with weighted blankets, white noise machines, mouth tape, melatonin supplements and bedtime snacks.

Apps such as SleepMaxx: Sleep & Habit Coach, Sleep Max-Rest Best, LifeMaxing Sleep Tracker and SleepScore Max offer ways to monitor sleeping patterns and establish healthier routines. Depending on the application, users can record bedtime and wake-up times, track nighttime awakenings and daytime energy levels, and monitor caffeine or alcohol consumption. Some also provide sleep scores, habit reminders and personalised recommendations.



Where science draws the line

Harvard Health Publishing, in a March 2025 article, highlighted the importance of consistent sleep schedules, limiting caffeine and reducing evening light exposure. Regular physical activity and a comfortable sleeping environment can also support better rest.

However, sleepmaxxing has not been scientifically established as a comprehensive method. Evidence supporting several viral practices remains limited. Mouth taping, in particular, may pose risks for people with obstructive sleep apnoea or other breathing difficulties. Melatonin supplements are not universal solutions for sleep problems, either.

Sleep-tracking technology has limitations, too. An excessive preoccupation with achieving perfect sleep scores may lead to orthosomnia, an unhealthy fixation on optimising sleep that can itself create anxiety.

Rather than chasing flawless scores and elaborate routines, building sustainable habits and seeking professional advice for persistent sleep difficulties may be more sensible. After all, sleep is meant to restore us, not become another thing we have to get perfect.

By Farhana Faiza





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KUNDALINI RISING

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Can yoga help young people navigate a complex world?

Every week, someone sends me a study, a podcast, a neuroscientist explaining something on a reel, and I find a new name for what my body already knew — Nervous system regulation. Fascia release. Lymphatic drainage. Hormonal balance.

I had none of this vocabulary when I first unrolled a mat 25 years ago. I only knew that I slept better, that my temper had a longer fuse, that a knot somewhere behind my ribs



loosened after a long exhale. The science is catching up with what the practice has always known.

I think about this when I look at the young people around me in Dhaka.

They are anxious, and they have nowhere to put it. A university student here carries exam pressure, family expectation, a job market that promises very little, and a phone that never sleeps.

Mental health is still whispered about at home. Counsellors are scarce. Most campuses offer nothing between "you're fine" and "see a doctor," and a great many young people are living in the gap between those two sentences, without the simplest tools to settle a racing nervous system. Breath. Movement. Stillness. A way back into the body.

Look at what our city offers its young: malls, cafés, more malls. Nearly every place to gather is built around buying something. There are few spaces to move, to meet interesting strangers, to hear a view that is not already in your feed. When they do go looking for wellness, it arrives looking foreign. Expensive studios, imported vocabulary, leggings that cost a month's tuition.

A sun salutation will not fix unemployment, and a breathing exercise cannot rewrite an exam system. But I have seen what happens when an anxious twenty-year-old slows her breath and feels her body answer. She finds a lever she didn't know she had. That is no small thing to carry into an exam hall, or a job interview, or a hard conversation at home.

What our young people need are places. They need the practices of their grandmothers handed back to them, with the science attached, so they can trust them. It took me twenty-five years to understand what yoga was doing for me. I would like the next generation to find out sooner.

Photo: Courtesy

