

## Love, spring, long weekend : Valentine's Day gets Dhaka makeover

- A Monitor Special

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Dhaka : This year, Valentine's Day arrives with unusually good timing for Bangladesh's city dwellers. Falling on Saturday, February 14, with Friday, February 13 also a public holiday, lovebirds are getting a rare gift: a full weekend to celebrate romance, friendship, and togetherness without the pressure of work alarms or rushed dinners.

Adding to the festive mood is the arrival of Pahela Falgun, the first day of spring, traditionally marked by splashes of yellow, floral accessories, and a sense of renewal. With Valentine's Day and Falgun celebrations spilling into the same long weekend, Dhaka is gearing up for a citywide celebration of love and color.

Yet this year's festivities come with a practical consideration. With the national election scheduled for February 12, many are choosing to stay closer to home. Concerns over post-election uncertainty and possible

disruptions have made long-distance travel less appealing. As a result, Dhaka itself is emerging as the preferred destination - and the city is more than ready to host.

Falling in love with Dhaka all over again

For couples staying in the capital, Valentine's weekend offers a chance to rediscover Dhaka through a slower, more indulgent lens. Morning walks in Ramna Park, coffee dates in Dhanmondi or Banani, and sunset views along Hatirjheel promise simple yet intimate moments amid the city's familiar chaos.



Restaurants offer many delightful offerings like this Scarlet Passion Delight Cake on Valentine's Day (top), and (bottom) beautiful flower bouquets are traditional items to gift on Valentine's Day

Restaurants and cafés across Gulshan, Uttara and Old Dhaka are expected to roll out themed menus, candlelit dinners and live music.

Florists, already preparing for Pahela Falgun, will see roses share space with marigolds, while street vendors sell heart-shaped balloons alongside traditional spring garlands.

### Rise of staycations

With travel outside Dhaka considered risky by many this year, hotel staycations are set to be one of the biggest Valentine's trends. Luxury and boutique hotels across the city are offering special packages featuring romantic décor, couple-friendly dining experiences, spa discounts, and late checkouts.

From rooftop dinners overlooking the city lights to breakfast-in-bed experiences, these urban retreats offer a mini escape without the stress of highways or political uncertainty. For many couples, it is the perfect compromise: privacy, comfort and celebration - all within the safety of the city.





Holiday Inn Dhaka City Center is offering an exclusive honeymoon getaway till February 15, featuring suite room stay with breakfast at BDT 14,000 and BDT 17,500 with dinner. The package offers guests in-suite jacuzzi, rose-petal welcomes, heart-shaped red velvet cake, 30pc discount on spa, swimming pool access, and late checkout, among others

Things to do, without going too far

For those skipping hotels, the long weekend still offers plenty to do:

Cultural outings at art galleries and music lounges hosting Falgun-themed events

Movie dates as theatres release Valentine's specials

Home celebrations with curated playlists, homemade dinners and balcony picnics

Friendship gatherings, as Valentine's Day in Dhaka increasingly celebrates love in all its forms

## A weekend of meaningful choices

This year's Valentine's Day reflects a broader mood in the city - a desire for joy tempered with mindfulness. Staying in Dhaka is not just a safer option; it is also a chance to support local businesses, avoid travel stress and celebrate love in familiar spaces.

As spring quietly arrives and hearts find reasons to pause and connect, Dhaka's long Valentine's weekend promises warmth, color and closeness - a reminder that sometimes, the best destination is right where you are.