

People vs The Shutdown

When defence is perhaps your best offence

HIYA ISLAM

As the country reopens to life pre-pandemic in a strange turn of events, what should you be expecting? The restrictions have eased but the threat still remains out there lurking on surfaces or multiplying in humans. Since businesses are permitted to resume, there are some things you need to look out for. At this point, there would be numerous sources of transmission; being judicious about your well-being is the least you could do to protect yourself and those around you.

We cannot revert back to life BC (Before Corona) in a snap of a finger. This is the “new normal” and it is high time we follow the health code drummed on our ears. So, do not throw away the masks and gloves. Wipe off counters, desks, door knobs, switches, keyboards or anything that requires contact, before use. Nonetheless, do not forget to wash hands throughout the day—the ultimate save.

It may be enticing to travel given cheaper fare rates. However, the prime reason why the virus has spread globally is travel, along with the fact that transmission is very much possible via asymptomatic individuals which brings us to people showing symptoms of undiagnosed disease. Hence, postpone any plans to travel whether it is within the country or beyond. The last thing you want is catching the virus and getting quarantined in an unknown land.

It is also emphasised to not mingle in large crowds or social gatherings. It is prudent to not go visit your friend or an elderly relative just yet. And it goes without saying

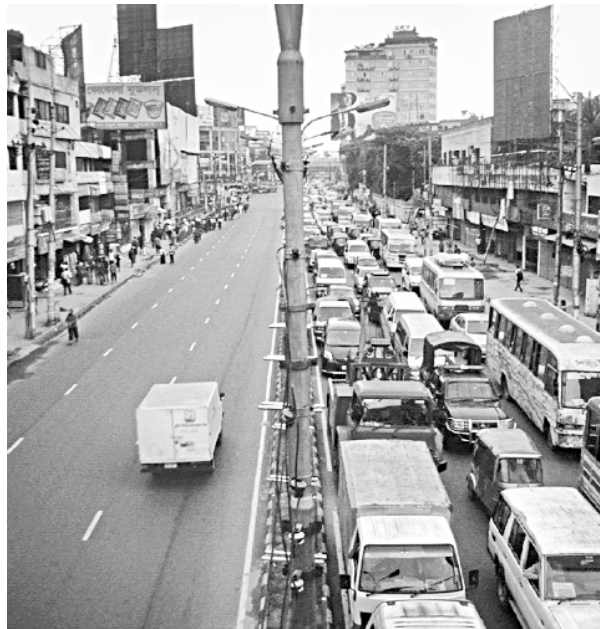


PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

that parties (even home parties) are a no-no. Non-essential businesses such as malls, gyms, salons etc. are expected to get back on track. It is best advised to avoid these places for now. If living without these has been possible up till now, find alternatives and make do for a few more months. Restaurants, on the other hand, might allow customers to dine in small groups. However, the

risk is still huge as there is no evidence of transmission via ventilation systems in closed spaces.

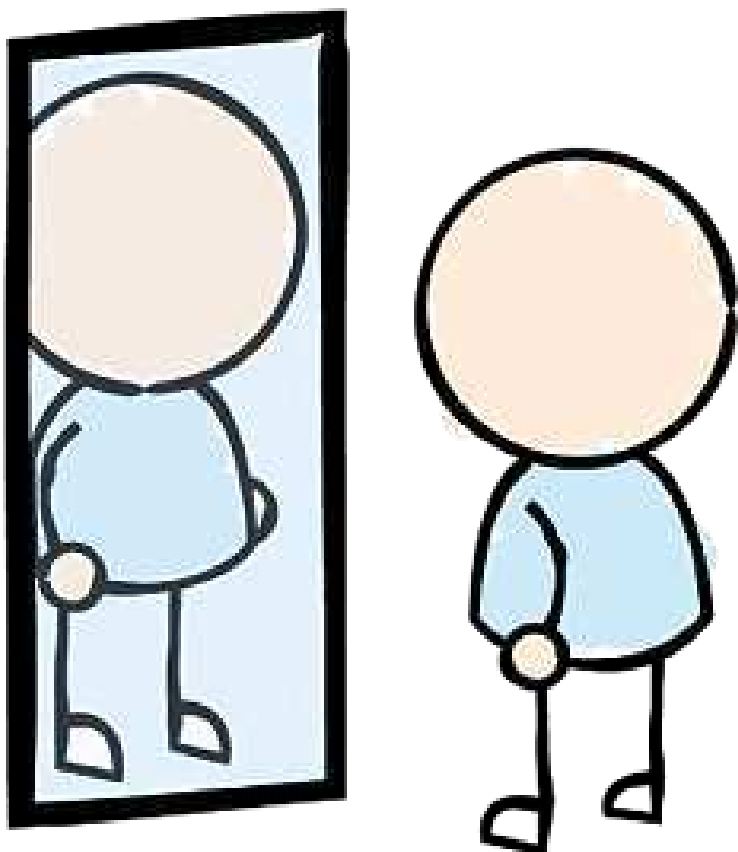
Reoperation of organisations implies commute. Stick to your personal mode of transport. Do not carpool. Public buses are to reinforce social distancing by blocking out seats as unavailable. Walk the distance, if possible. Take care of personal hygiene all the while. Some organisations have decided to let employees work in the premises for a set number of days. As before, temperature checks will be done. Perhaps, disinfecting stalls will be installed as well.

In other parts of the world, countries are opening up gradually in planned stages. Most plans intend to resume small businesses with limited opening hours. Some have chosen to keep recreational spots like theatres, parks and such closed while others have adapted strict guidelines regarding social distance by putting up shields, boundaries and opting minimal capacity. Social gatherings are prohibited. In stages, all businesses are to open, moderate gatherings will be allowed and physical distancing is to be maintained, especially for elderly citizens who have been in shelter prior to this stage. Educational institutions are likely to continue online.

In the end, it boils down to survival. Weigh the pros and cons before you make a move. It may be absolutely essential for you to step out. But this only means you adapt to an even stricter hygiene code in any ingenious way possible.

Hiya finally has time to catch up with her book-reading goals. Suggest her something at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com

A TIME FOR REFLECTION



MAISHA NAZIFA KAMAL

Secluded at our homes, we can take this time to reflect upon the things we might have missed thinking about when we were so engrossed in our daily lives.

NO MORE REGRETS

Before the shutdown, I wasn't giving time to anybody at all; I was so busy. Now sitting idle, I regret not spending more time with my friends. If I knew there would be so much time to sleep now, I wouldn't have ditched some of the plans just to get some good sleep. Come to think of it, we always had a vague tomorrow in our mind putting off the todays. Yes, we are interacting via social media but a group chat is not the same as sitting with a whole bunch of people. Real life communication is much more important than a virtual one. And we should have prioritised the former than the latter while we had the chance to. Taking the company of people for granted is a huge regret.

BE YOUR OWN EVALUATOR

Being quarantined, I also realised that this is a good time to reflect upon our behaviour. While we might be against toxicity in all its manifestations, it is also plausible that we might possess some of the toxic

traits without even intending to. So, this is quite a period for us to weed out the traits which might be problematic to others. Self assessment is always a good option. However, it doesn't mean that we have to become solipsistic; it's more of a routine check-up of our mental health to achieve that higher level of equanimity.

YOUR HEALTH MATTERS

Earlier we were so tapped into our busy lives that we might not have had the time to maintain a healthy diet or lifestyle for that matter. Well, now is the time to follow that health routine you made a few weeks back but never followed. Build up healthy habits and let go of the detrimental ones. Try cutting off that extra caffeine from your lives that you've been meaning to, workout a bit and just take some time to do what you love.

In short, in this quarantine, let's take a step back and allow ourselves to look back. In hindsight when we see ourselves, we can find the loopholes and all the shortcomings we have and work on that, acquiring that great sense of satisfaction we wanted.

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