

A BURGER LOVE STORY

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The last picture posted on my Instagram was 29w ago. That's 203 days, 4872 hours, 292320 minutes or 17539200 seconds (and counting) ago I had my last burger. That is slightly more than half a year but it feels like forever and a day.

This is the new norm; a life with no burgers or purpose. No, homemade burgers don't get in the equation. There is some undefined bliss in being served a plateful of delicacy as you walk back to the table, hands wobbling with edible weight. On second thought, the bliss lies in the leeway to dodge kitchen toil. Cooking is therapy, they say. But cooking is also numerous heartbreaks, especially if you're just starting out.

The camera roll on my phone is another story. Folders hoarding tonnes of photos are cast away in a corner, never to be opened or chanced on. These are repressed memories of an older time when burgers were taken for granted. Anything that prompts misery is buried deep within; snaps of fries, shakes, all the things that hit off with silly buns stuffed in meat and drippy sauce.

Okay, okay, I know what you are

thinking. Did food delivery die? No, they haven't. They are here and getting richer by the second. The pandemic has brought together depressed, food-greedy souls by the throes of discounts. However, there's a catch. Blame scientists for not knowing if the virus spreads through food packaging. I am talking about "conclusive evidence", not "put it under the sun for x hours", or "wash your hands after". Blame overprotective parents. Blame my gutlessness. Or maybe, this is being prudent.

Every day I pat myself on the back for living without burgers. I deserve more. It is much more than living without junk food. It's about saving money, like a real adult. Closing your doors to the outside world, living like a hermit, weaning yourself off a love you couldn't resist would seem hardly possible a year back.

Sadly, this is what a pandemic looks like. Sanitizers are the new keys. Wearing no masks can get you arrested. Standing too close to people will get you fined. People who go to restaurants end up as dead statistics. I am here well and alive. But at what cost...

Hiya goes to and fro between boredom and sleep. Talk to her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Small steps to reduce your carbon footprint

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Believe me when I say that reducing your carbon footprint is not as daunting as it's made to sound. With the pandemic showing no signs of slowing down anytime soon, people continue to scramble to the nearest stores to stock up on disposable masks, gloves and other plastic-packaged goods, rapidly increasing the amount of waste that has been arriving in dumps over the past couple of months.

Though we understand that climate change is a very real threat, there are many of us that seldom go the extra mile to ensure we're doing everything we can to slow it's progress. Despite the fact that the richest 10 percent are to blame for approximately 40 percent of global environmental damage, there are a few easy things we can do to ensure we don't contribute to global warming and one of them includes paying attention to our carbon footprint. Here are a few ways you can start reducing it.

THE FIVE R'S

When you're looking into reducing how much waste you produce, it's very important to remember the five r's: refuse, reduce, reuse, recycle, and rot. That is, refuse the unnecessary, reduce the necessary, reuse what you have, recycle what you can, and rot the rest (set up a composting system)!

AVOID SINGLE USE PLASTIC

Start by making a resolution to start cooking more at home to avoid getting plastic-packaged takeaway. If there's a reason you want to order in instead of going

out (like a deadly pandemic), make it a pact to reuse the plastic packaging. When you go grocery shopping, take a reusable bag with you (or old plastic from ghosts of grocery trips past). While we're on the topic of shopping, try to limit the amount of products you buy that come with plastic packaging. Opt for refills instead of buying new plastic bottles, go for soap bars instead of liquid



bottles. Carry around a bottle of water, refuse plastic straws with drinks and invest in a bamboo or steel straw instead; the same can be done with utensils. And yes, your toothbrush too. Over 4.7 billion plastic non-biodegradable toothbrushes are wasted yearly. Instead, opt for a bamboo toothbrush!

KNOW THY GARBAGE

Keep track of what you put in your garbage bins. If you can muster the strength, sort through your garbage and look at what kind of products you buy most and think about whether you can recycle or reuse them. This increases accountability as you will be more aware of what you're buying, the quantities you're buying in and whether you can downsize purchases in the near future.

DRIVE LESS

Sometimes it can truly be an advantage living in a small city. This makes travelling less time consuming, which is why opting for walking, cycling or taking a rickshaw is much more feasible. Though it has been moderate the past couple of months because people are going out less, under normal circumstances, Dhaka has one of the worst air quality in the world. If your destination is too far away for any of the above mentioned methods of commuting, consider whether you can use public transportation before deciding to drive. Not using a car for a year can save up to 2.6 tons of carbon dioxide!

When it comes to living waste-free there are thousands of resources that make it easier for you to care about the environment, starting from turning off the tap when you wash your hands to using a search engine like Ecosia instead of Google. A quick search can enable you to lead a lifestyle better suited for the planet we so dearly love.

Fariha enjoys binge-watching movies in the dark vicinity of her bedroom. Strike up a conversation with her at fariha.safa@gmail.com