

The many shades of Bangalee

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THERE have been several articles where the authors have expressed painfully their confusion whether they are Bangalee or Bangladeshi. Some have been pulling their hair over the issue for the past several years. Well, if you pull them for too long you will neither be a Bangalee nor a Bangladeshi; you are more likely to emerge a baldy, so slow down, eh!

Seeing all this puzzlement, psychologists have explained that those who believe in the War of Liberation 1971 have lesser chance of being confused.

The most apt explanation is that one is a Bangalee as a product of one's society and culture, and a Bangladeshi as a political entity of an independent country. To distinguish yourself from those in India's West Bengal, you may even tag yourself as a Bangladeshi Bangalee.

The phenomenon is nothing new; in fact, it is rather common worldwide.

A UK citizen could be English, Welsh, Scottish, and even Bangalee. An Indian could be Gujrati, Marathi, Tamil and even Bangalee. A Pakistani could be Sindhi, Punjabi, Pathan and even a Bangalee. Oh! See the smiles light up on the faces of the razakars.

Whether you are British, Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi, or whatever, you know you are a Bangalee when you

- consider spitting on the road preceded by a loud *waarghh* a constitutional right
- (as a male) stare at a non-Bangalee for half-an-hour before realising you do not know her, nor does she know you
- love to talk to a non-Bangalee you meet in Dhaka in what you think is *Urdu*
- carry the flag of a foreign country to a cricket or football match being held in your country and in which your team is also participating, or you paint the flag on your face
- prepare a banner hailing (or criticising) the national budget even before the finance minister makes his announcement in parliament
- splash rainwater on pedestrians while driving a car
- (as a female) look at a man for the fifth time in twenty seconds and then yell why the hell was he staring at you
- insist that your sister must get married to an engineer or a doctor when you yourself never went beyond HSC
- refuse to fulfil the dowry demands of your sister's family while pressing your wife to fulfil yours
- arrive late at a meeting simply because you are the chief guest or the boss
- arrive late at a meeting because of one hundred reasons
- pack a small wedding gift in a large box
- smoke in the toilet of a no-smoking flight
- have a wardrobe with clothes that you have not touched in the last four years
- tell everyone a secret by telling each one of them, 'don't tell anyone else'
- have a grandfather (paternal or maternal) who was the *jamindar* of some place
- salivate your index finger while leafing through a restaurant menu or several *haat-ruti* kept on a plate
- introduce an acquaintance of two days as a bosom friend
- hide your cigarette from your elders even when you are past sixty
- introduce your girl (or boy) friend as your cousin
- say you care a hoot for positions after you have been selected president of a committee or *samity*
- lose three years the day you fill up your SSC form
- see the person you love being hooked to someone else only because you hesitated for two years and six months to make a positive move
- ask for and simultaneously pull out the inside page of a newspaper a bus/train co-passenger just bought from a vendor whom you did not entertain
- gargle at the dining table
- pick your nose in public in such ecstasy as if no one can see you
- dip your biscuit in your tea
- take out putty from furniture with your nail
- curse in English
- know the names of at least ten Bollywood stars
- litter the street when there is no penalty

It is not expected of any Bangalee to match each and every case above, but any Bangalee will fit into at least one of the situations. Only goes to show that Bangalee comes in many shades.