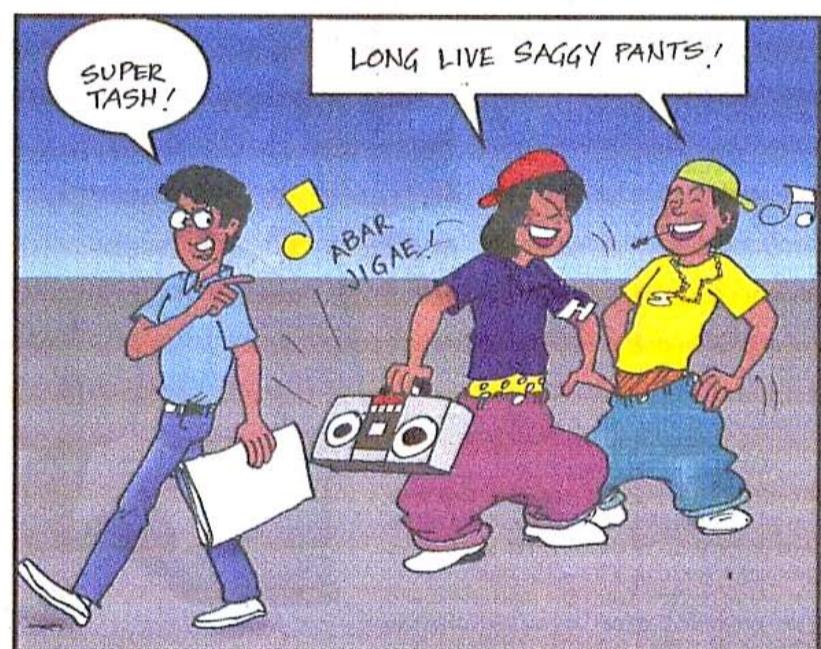
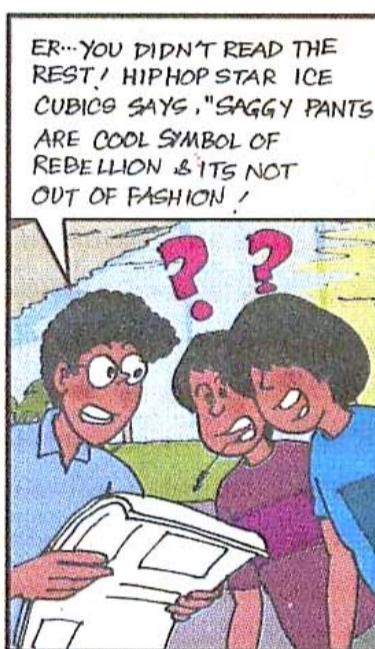
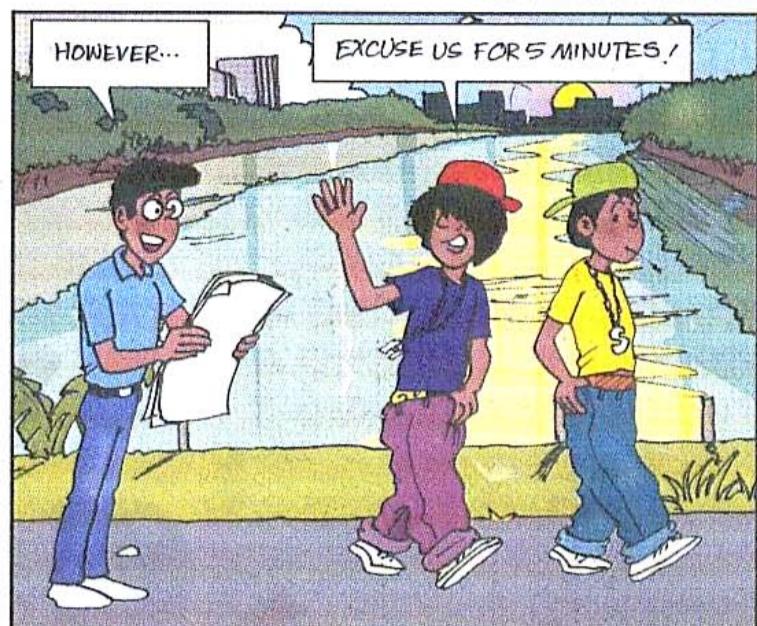
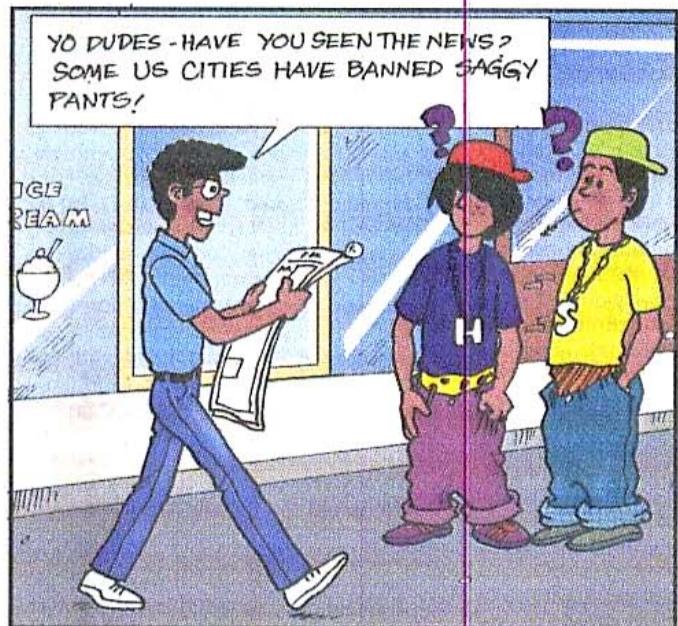


# Babu

Tash Rebels

Sharier



## The art of extorting Salami

**A** few more days and the special day will arrive, when you will be forced to get up early in the morning in spite of it being a holiday, then dragged to visit numerous family members, most of whose names you don't remember but who nevertheless will insist on hugging you so tight that you will ask God to replace them with a ferocious grizzly bear. Even so, Eid definitely has its perks. In some cases we really enjoy meeting up with relatives, either because we love their company, or because we love their wallets (or purses). Yes you guessed it, the thing we look forward to the most on Eid day, salami! Most of us usually settle with visiting relatives, touching their feet and hoping to be handed a nice, shiny note. But are there any other ways to manipulate unsuspecting relations into giving more salami? Here are a few tricks worth attempting.

When you spot your victim, be the first one to rush into the room and grab their feet, but don't throw them on the floor with your over enthusiasm, it's not the Stone Age and you're not Dino the dinosaur. Bend down as much as possible and stay in that position for as long as you can. If you are really eager to please you can try dusting their shoes while you are at it. If your victim has prepared a huge feast for visitors, stuff yourself. Ask for the recipes of every dish and compare her cooking to Fakruddin's and Tommy Miah's. While you are eating make all sorts of loud, lip smacking noises (Note: do not confuse with burps) and say "Mmmmm delicious!" even if the food tastes like mummified toenails. Flattery is the one of the best ways of getting what you want, but when the flattery becomes obvious, you just might get one, tight slap. So it's best to limit the oiling and buttering to just the cooking or the décor (wow your house looks fabulous, I bet you designed everything!), or you can go for only the appearance (I love your kameez and your hair, did you cut it? It makes you look like Salma Hayek!).

Then again, there are other vile ways to extract salami from an elder. If you are visiting a really gossipy Aunt, you can become chums with her. Agree when she carps about the "nak

uchu dhongi" who lives next door and nod vigorously when she gives you mind numbingly boring accounts about this-and-this bhabi and their catfights. Tell your own tall tales, preferably about people you don't like, and drop your voice to a dramatic whisper when you reach the heart of the scandal. All this might leave a bad taste in your mouth, but it might make your Aunty give you a generous amount of salami after discovering such a kindred soul.

Of course, you can always resort to bribes. Since there is no point in buying a gift for people from whom you wish to extort money, you can always make something, since such gifts 'come from the heart' and have an emotional price tag attached to it. You can take a plastic mug, wrap it with colored paper, paste stars and stuff on it and write "Best Aunt/Uncle in the World" with lime green glitter pens, or you can make such improvisations on a card. The younger you are, the more forgiveness you will receive for your ridiculously immature and crude artwork. And you just might receive more salami for your sugary, thoughtful act. Then there is emotional blackmail. You can make sure that your relative 'accidentally' overhears how much (imaginary) salami all your other family members have given, in which case he/she might feel inclined to give as much to stay in the competition and maintain their "manshomman". Or you can let them know how you spent all the money you earned from your low paying job to buy a sari for your mother and now have nothing to spend on yourself. This will be more effective if you can bribe or beat up your younger sibling into saying such things, upon hearing which your relative's eyes will fill with tears while hurrying to give poor you some salami and wishing that the world had more dutiful children like you.

Surely the rest of you can think of some better ways to persuade your relatives into giving you more salami. So put on your thinking caps, arm yourself with a helmet in case your parents discover your wily schemes and start your mission. Eid Mubarak and happy hunting!

By Shuprova Tasneem

