Are We Really There yet?

Just a couple of days back, a friend was talking about her "eligible for marriage" sister whom the potential groom's family was about to "see" that evening. What bothered me was that the groom-to-be lives abroad and won't even be present during the first meeting. His parents were just coming to see whether my friend's sister would make a good wife to their son or not. How can you know a person in one meeting when it comes to making such a life altering decision? On another occasion, I was talking to someone about a common friend who was "looking" for a girl. I imagined a market place where I was looking for a fresh, shiny fruit. Even though we talk about equality, we are still ages behind when it comes to treating women equally to men. I am not asking girls to adopt the same method to "look" for the perfect match. It's about having the right to take one's life in their own hands. It's the 21st century; we talk about equality and gloat about having a female leader. And yet, we end up with disheveled faces struggling to fight for female rights in a land of non-emphatisers. These stories will probably not be taken very seriously, but it shows the mentality and attitude of our general people. It shows how women are still being showcased to the world like products in a shop, waiting to be chosen by people who think that they are "right" for them.

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STAGED PHOTO TAKEN BY ZAHEDUL I KHAN

Honest Vs Dishonest

On March 23, a Special Branch officer told me to go to his office to submit all the necessary documents for verifying my passport application process. Even though it was his duty to collect the items from my campus, I decided to not confront him about it and do as he said. I was almost sure that he would ask for bribe, but he didn't mention anything when I went to his office, and instead talked to me in a very nice manner. He told me that he was a student of Chittagong University, and even his wife was an alumni. When I came back to my hostel, I told my roommates that I was truly impressed with his honesty. It turned out that I was completely wrong about the man. He called me after a while, and asked me to pay him Tk 500 via Bkash, warning me that I would have to face a lot of difficulties if I didn't do as I was told. I was shocked and felt like he had attacked my self-respect. I visited the Shahbag police station to complain about the corrupt official, but the Officer-in-Charge advised me to not prolong the matter, and suggested that I negotiate with the SB officer. I returned to my hostel crestfallen, but then suddenly remembered the police officer Mashroof Hossain, who always spoke about fighting corruption. I contacted him, and he advised me to record the SB officer's voice when he asked for bribe. I followed his instructions to the T, and by the end of the day, the corrupt officer apologised to me, promising to never repeat such an action. I want to thank Mr Hossain from the bottom of my heart for being a responsible police officer. I would also like to urge everyone to not give into the pressures of corrupt officials. Giving bribe is as big a crime as taking it from someone.

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