

OPINIONS

NEW YEAR CELEBRATION IN BANGLADESH

MASNOON KHAIR

The beginning of another year means different things to people – some see it as hope in turning their lives around and others see it as more of the same old. This New Year, we find out what people are up to and what they think of New Year celebrations in Bangladesh.

People are often conflicted as to whether to celebrate the Bengali or the English New Year – but I think it's very possible to observe both, it's not like we don't follow the English calendar anyway. I often see people who say that we shouldn't celebrate the New Year because it's "Western culture". Sometimes these are the same people sending their children to English medium schools and constantly telling them to learn English. I think that's a bit hypocritical, especially since when we are not living in a strictly fixed Bengali culture. Usually our parents think New Year's Eve is about drinking or smoking the whole night, but it doesn't have to be the case. For me, personally, New Year's Eve is just another occasion. Although, I think it's fun to celebrate with close friends. – *Upama Kabir, Architecture Student, BRAC University*

New Year's Eve is a time of celebration. Despite the chill outside, it is a perfect time to embrace the mood of togetherness in festivity and spread that warmth. While New Year's celebration in Dhaka is in no short of being grand, there is a certain element of togetherness missing. Dancing, arguably, is a timeless method of welcoming something propitious but spending time with family, reminiscing good old memories, can also be a wonderful way to bid farewell to another year. Blasting groovy music on New Year's Eve perhaps can serve as a reminder that we need to have our own good music to dance to. It is time we stopped relying on Pitbull. – *Imani Khaled, English Student, North South University*

I think celebrating the New Year is a good thing. Since we live in the city – minding our daily business – we barely get to spend enough time with our friends and family. New Year's Eve is a good opportunity for everyone to come together. We are so stressed out most of the time that this can also be used as a means of calming our nerves. New Year's celebration needs to be a bit more organised here, so that people can enjoy it to the fullest. At the same time, people shouldn't force New Year's resolutions on themselves, it creates the pressure for achieving these goals and people often end up doing none. – *Syeda Shajeela Shawkat, Anthropology Student, BRAC*

First things first, I don't have any problem with people celebrating the New Year. People all around the world do it in different manners. But I have a problem with the weird "drinking culture" some people have developed here. New Year's Eve has become an excuse to get drunk and do whatever you want. Now I know everyone has a right to do stupid things and all but that is no excuse for the mess some create every year. Well, Happy New Year anyway. Enjoy responsibly. – *Ishraq Navid Chowdhury, Marketing Student, Dhaka University*

I prefer to stay in. One night of the year when you're pretending to have fun because that's what you're supposed to do. You're not cool enough if you're not out celebrating "31st night". Probably the safest bet is to stay in and be unsocial for once. – *Parisa Karim, 24, Graduate, Institute of Business Administration*

I see no reason why people shouldn't celebrate the New Year; it's an event that is accepted worldwide. What irks me is how people choose to celebrate it here. When I was in Australia, all the main attractions such as the Sydney Opera house had some sort of gathering around New Year's Eve. There were big fireworks with a lot of people coming together and celebrating. But here in Bangladesh, I see no festive mood and no central gatherings – it's all over the place and a bit chaotic. Sometimes, the streets become a bit unsafe because of this, and we see the presence of police and RAB in some places. December 31 here then becomes a night for mostly drinking and speeding cars rather than actual celebration. – *Shahidur Rahman, Associate Professor, BRAC University*

2015

JANUARY

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
29	30	31 ?	1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10