



PHOTO: STAR FILE

## A Rickshaw-puller's Epiphany

The rickshaw puller was a middle-aged, jolly fellow, who spoke with concern about the hygiene and cleanliness of the city. He suddenly stopped the rickshaw, signaling to me that he will be back within a couple of minutes. I noticed that he went to a corner beside a sidewalk to respond to nature's call. I laughed out loud at the irony of

the situation. When he came back, he apologised for his action. However, he added that if there were enough public toilets, which were accessible for working men like him, then he wouldn't have to resort to using public space as a toilet. He acutely observed that the government did not care much about the hygiene situation of the city. He asserted that no

pedestrians or rickshaw pullers would commit this crime if there were more public lavatories around the city. I was surprised at his eloquent thought and concern for the society, something that seems to be lacking in the authorities of the city corporation of Dhaka.

Kazi Amzad Hossain  
Lecturer  
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## TECHNICALLY DUMB

At the last moment, I remembered that I had forgotten to do my math home assignment. As I was busy playing games and meeting up with friends the entire weekend, I had completely forgotten that I had to submit my homework. It was an online assignment and so I informed my teacher that the internet connection in our house was down. When she asked me for the real reason for not

submitting the assignment, I was shocked. I then realised that I had informed her about not having internet in my house over an email. I truly deserved the punishment that came my way for being so stupid!

Lamia Hossain  
Dhanmondi  
Dhaka

Write  
to Mita



SHAHEEN ANAM



Dear Mita,  
I am a 48-year-old man and have a 20-year-old daughter who is now away at a college abroad. Her mother and I divorced over a decade ago. However, when I remarried someone else around four years back, my daughter was not pleased with my decision. My wife has been very patient and treats my daughter like her own. But my daughter insists on behaving badly with her, not even attending family events if my wife is there. My ex-wife has encouraged my daughter in this behaviour but now I think that enough is enough. I refused to grant one of her many requests and since then she has gone completely quiet on me. Even though I pay her full college tuition, she snubs me while I continue to communicate one-sidedly with her, sending gifts and emails. How do I reconnect with my daughter and tell her that everything is not as she sees it.

Weary Father

Dear Weary Father,  
This is certainly a very difficult situation for you. However, my only answer is that you have to be patient. Your daughter is angry because she had to spend years of her life without her biological mother. This is not your fault but she has to blame someone and takes it out on your present wife as she cannot find anyone. All you can now do is continue to give her your love and support; hopefully she will realize and reciprocate someday. Children do not take well to the divorce of their parents. It is a traumatic experience for them and each express their frustration and anger in different ways. This is also very unfair on your wife so you need to pay extra attention that she does not feel neglected.

Dear Mita,  
I have been married to my husband for over 30 years. He is a diabetic patient and was even diagnosed with a heart ailment. He has been a chain smoker and can't give up this habit despite all these medical ailments. I have tried many times to persuade him to stop smoking without success. My family and I even held several intervention sessions to tell him how important he is to us and why we want him to give up smoking. But he says that he can't function properly without his cigarettes. How can I persuade him to cut down, if not completely give up, this fatal habit?

Concerned Wife

Dear Concerned Wife,  
As they say, you can take a camel to the well but cannot force him to drink. Some people just will not understand realize what is good or bad for them. This is not unusual as you will find many families struggling with such issues. Get him to meet people who have given up smoking successfully; he might realize it is not as difficult as he thinks it is. In such cases friends can be helpful to talk some sense into him. I can imagine your frustration but you have to keep on trying. Diabetes with smoking is a walking disaster and he must become aware of this.