



MUSING

Driving in Dhaka

Have you ever taken a drive out of Dhaka? If you have then you will know that the highways in Bangladesh have more twists and turns than any other place in the world. When I was on the highway to Chittagong, I swear that there was a warning sign on the road that resembled that of a butterfly. If that does not give you the creeps, the scariest part of the experience is the cars that are coming at you from the opposite direction at a 100 miles per hour. This means that in every turn, you can expect a little surprise.

There are a few scenarios that you might have to face if you decide to go on the road and travel to a nearby city. The possibility that you ought to dearly hope for is that, during a turn, there is no car coming from the opposite direction.

Secondly, there may be a bus coming from that direction but is rather slow and staying in its lane for the most part. Thirdly, there is a bus coming that is going too fast

and almost completely covering your lane. Finally, fourth, there is a line of buses and a tractor approaching the turn really fast and taking up whatever road there is and some of the surrounding countryside.

If you get the fourth, your only chance of survival is to drive headfirst into a field to your left. If there is no field but a lake, then your swimming lessons will finally pay off.

Even in the city things are turning for the worse. There is a new system in town. That's right, this system is now effective in areas such as Baridhara, Bashundhara and some parts of Banani and Gulshan. I am of course talking about the invention of a traffic circle. This is when a traffic policeman is your traffic light and the idea is a really bad one.

Traffic circles work well in other parts of the world where the people in general agree to follow the laws and where the policemen are not on the side of the road

sleeping under the shade.

During school hours in Bashundhara, there is an unending stream of cars, buses and rickshaws speeding around. You literally have to wait for a small opening and plunge your car into the flow. The circles do not have sides and it can get very confusing sometimes and also you are competing for a spot in the flow against other people who are a lot more experienced than you are. If you do make it out without hitting anything then you are probably heading in the wrong direction.

No wonder there have been instances of people losing their cool and going on crazy rants. Why would you not road rage when you are stuck in traffic for hours on end and finally some random car in front of you cuts you off? That is one of the reasons my parents suggested that I keep a "relaxer" prescription in the car at all times.

It is inevitable that you will get lost eventually so stop and ask for directions. The kids

who go to school in that area are friendly and will offer you their help. Do not be alarmed if the directions they provide are incorrect or if they leave out a crucial part. Dhaka has too many roads and lanes and anyone can make that mistake. However, you might want to ignore directions for the dreamy eyed girl who's walking home from school. "Oh, just go left and keep going until you notice a cow sitting under the tree with a broken branch. Then take a right and you'll arrive at the store where I got my new jeans. From there, it's easy."

So, don't worry, the only way you will get used to driving in Dhaka is through trial and error. The roads will eventually lead you to your destination but hey, you might be a few hours late. But so what? You will find out that your faculty is probably still stuck in the traffic circle!

By Naveed Naushad
Photo: Collected

সাদার নতুন নাম



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সব রকম দাগ-ময়লা দূর করে



রঙ্গিন কাপড়ের রং রাখে অটুট



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