

# SIMPLE WAYS TO GO GREEN

MASHIYAT NAYEEM

At this point, we are no strangers to global warming. The controversy regarding the Rampal Power Plant project seems to have opened our eyes more so. But how much are we really doing to curb global warming? Small changes in how we live can go a long way in reducing our carbon footprint on the planet. Here are 5 ways to be a better global citizen.

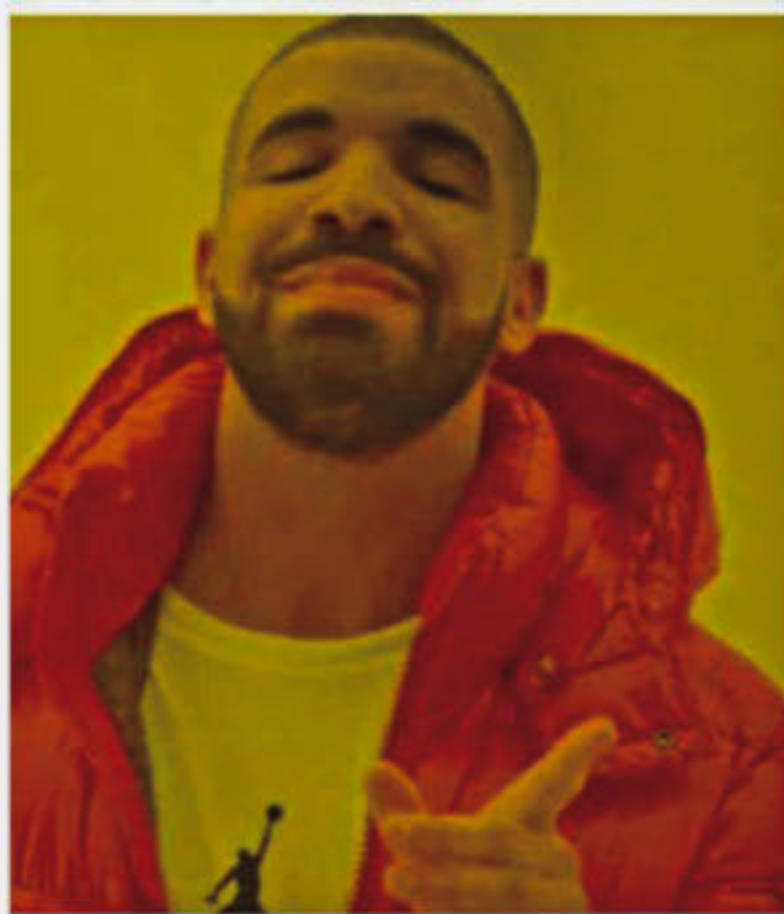
## Replace plastic bottles with reusable flasks

Plastic accounts for 300 million tonnes of waste every year and it's not even biodegradable – meaning it takes thousands of years to naturally decompose. Most of it is dumped in the oceans and the rest of it lands in landfills, putting marine life and soil fertility at risks.

We cannot prevent manufacturers from using plastic, but we can help reduce disposal waste with sensible reuse and recycling which also cuts down the amount of energy lost in creating something from scratch. Since boxed water (tetra pack, which is more environmentally sustainable) is not available in this part of the world, we can use flasks which would reduce the amount of disposable plastic in the waste. There are plenty of options to choose from. You will probably find a decent bottle that can last years from all the Tupperware stuff your mom is hoarding.

## Replace polythene bags with paper and jute bags

Polythene bags are used by everybody, from vegetable vendors to designer boutiques due to its availability and low cost. Sure it is strong and a hygienic way of carrying food and other products but that doesn't mean it's reasonable to use for everything and increase litter, loss of



animal lives, and risk of toxic fumes.

Paper bags are a greener option since paper is renewable but the best option is to use jute whenever possible as it has low ecological and water footprint, and decomposes super fast. Also, you'll be helping the country's economy as well as preserve the heritage of the 'Golden Fibre of Bangladesh'.

## Buy from sustainable businesses

Green and ethical businesses are mushrooming around the world, encouraging consumers to think eco-friendly when it comes to fashion and lifestyle. Your personal shopping habits may sound insignificant but the effects of the combined effort can be massive as it will promote the use of sustainable materials and cause more environment conscious brands to pop up. One such business is Made in Bangladesh, which uses green, locally sourced or upcycled materials to craft lifestyle goods without compromising the quality of the final product.

## Carpool or take the bus

Neither is the population of Dhaka decreasing, nor is the number of cars clogging the streets coming down. We take great pride in our ownership of several personal cars but we fail to take into account that in addition to health problems, vehicle exhaust fumes are a big culprit when it comes to air pollution. I am not asking you to switch to ultra-modern hybrid cars that reduce emissions, but simply share the ride. Your neighbour is going to the same area as you? Use one of your cars and at the same time socialise. You're not only cutting back on harmful emissions but also reducing Dhaka's biggest woe: traffic jam.

At the end of the day, we preach but do not practice. But try. Think of the planet next time you randomly chuck a soda can on the street.

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# THE DARK SIDE OF TWINNING

MARISHA AZIZ

The word "twins" always sparks wonder and curiosity in people's minds. When they stumble upon a pair, many people often ask, "Isn't it amazing, having a twin?" to which twins answer with awkward smiles and non-committal grunts, because real life #twinning has a lot less glamorous side to it than most think.

I do not have a twin, myself, but I have siblings who are. Over the years, I've watched people exclaim over their identical features and proceed to interview them. Whether they take place at a wedding or an elevator or a ladies' room, the interrogations usually go like this:

"Excuse me, are you twins?"

"Yes, we are."

"Oh, wow! You were, like, born on the same day?"

"Yes..."

"And you're in the same class at school?"

"Yes."

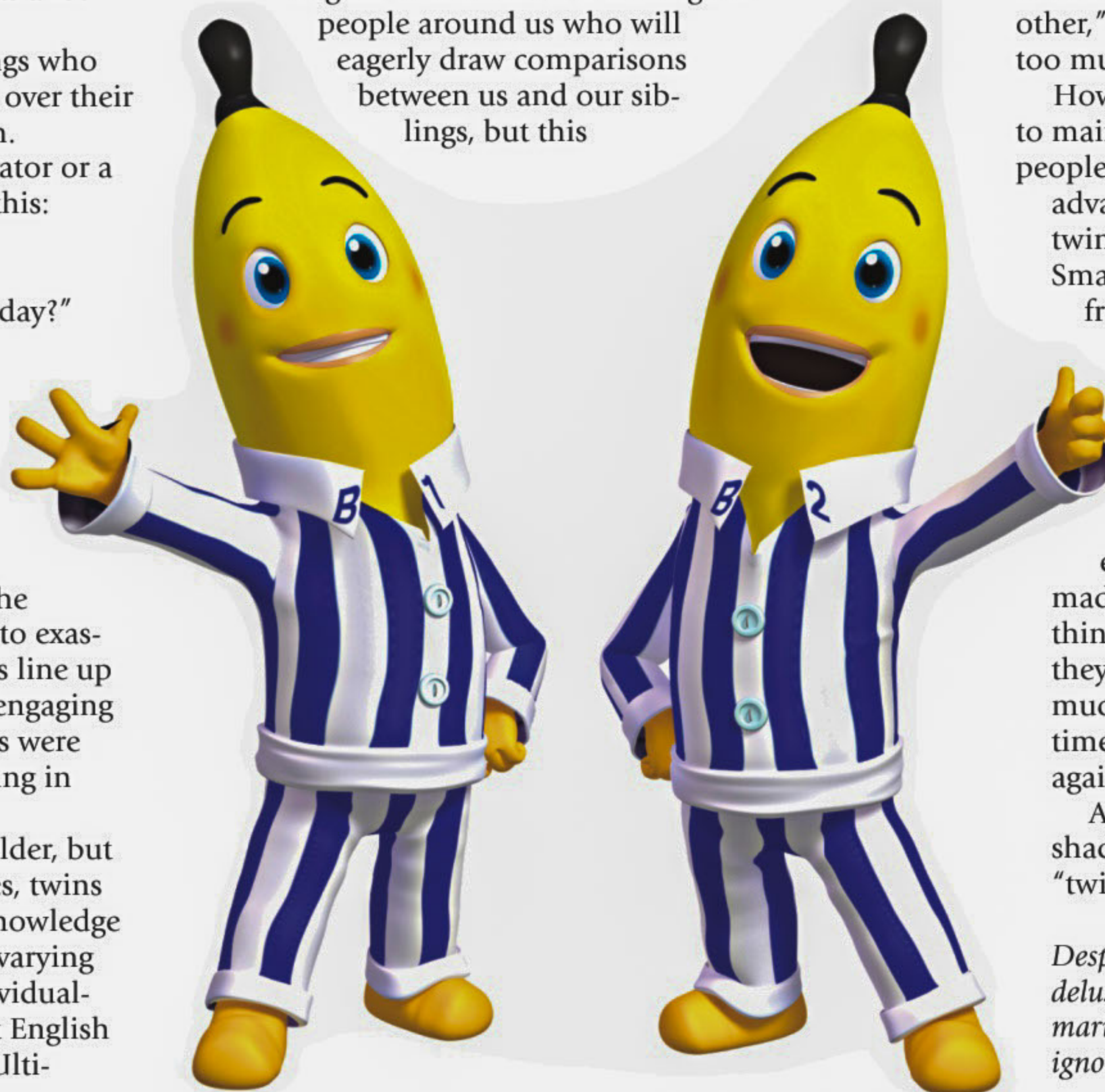
"So...you're actually twins?!"

This kind of conversation may seem hilarious to bystanders, but apparently, it gets on twins' nerves. Things like countless mini-interviews and random photo sessions next to the frozen food section in local supermarkets seem to exasperate rather than excite. I once witnessed adults line up three pairs of twins at a social gathering before engaging in the race to capture the perfect photo. The kids were not impressed by the twenty or so phones flashing in their faces.

This celebrity status fades away as twins get older, but it is replaced by greater challenges. In some cases, twins are treated as a unit by their peers. Very few acknowledge that they are actually two different people with varying personalities. "We start to lose our sense of individuality," said Waziha Aziz, a student of Cantonment English School and College. Her twin Wasima added, "Ulti-

mately, we start fighting with each other and resenting each other because one of us is labeled based on the other's characteristics."

Since they share a birthday, people expect twins to also get similar grades and have equal achievements in various fields. When they fail to do so, the comparing begins. There's never a shortage of people around us who will eagerly draw comparisons between us and our siblings, but this



problem intensifies if your sibling is your twin. Twins can't use "age differences" and "growing up under different circumstances" in their defense, so things get tough. According to Farshid Saad, a student of BRAC University, the constant comparisons create a rift in the brotherly bond between him and his twin. "It also creates a sense of competition to always get to a higher place than the other," he said. While a little competition can be healthy, too much of it can lead to potential disasters.

However, on those occasions where twins do manage to maintain standards in academics and extra-curriculars, people are quick to insinuate that they receive unfair advantages. This can turn into a major problem for twins who attend the same educational institution. Small things like getting notes from missed classes from a twin seem to bothering fellow students.

Teachers sometimes make unfounded accusations of copying homework assignments from each other. Many assumptions are made, and as a result, twins have to work twice as hard to prove their worth to their peers.

Twins share a bond that is yet to be fully explained by science. Their lives are definitely made cooler by the fact that they have double of everything and a guaranteed best friend forever. However, they face unique hardships which make their lives much less amazing than people assume. So, the next time you sigh at the sight of a pair of twins, think again.

Also, no, when you're wearing a cardigan five shades lighter than your friend's, you are not "twinning." So please stop kidding yourselves.

*Despite being a hopeless fangirl, Marisha Aziz lives under delusions of awesomeness. Contact her at [marisha.aziz@gmail.com](mailto:marisha.aziz@gmail.com) to give her another excuse to ignore her teetering pile of life problems.*