



PHOTOS: DARSHAN CHAKMA & PRABIR DAS

# BEAUTY OF BD TRAFFIC

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Let's face reality for a moment; almost all of you reading this article have heard the three special words. No, I'm not talking about something as bland and tasteless as "I love you" (God forbid), I'm talking about "I'm stuck in traffic." You now also know that I seem to have difficulty differentiating between three and four words (or five if you get technical), but we'll skim over that, shall we?

But truly, being stuck in traffic is a wonderful, once-in-a-life-time experience; assuming you kick the bucket the very same day because another driver decided to make your former emo-teen dreams of suicide come true. Now you might be wondering, "What's so great about traffic and is this a satire article?" Friend, let me guide you through the beauty of daily Bangladeshi traffic. And as for whether this is a satire article: of course not, what gave you that impression?

Chuck your nightmare of driving down an empty highway in a Lamborghini into the dustbin, because you're stuck in a beautiful dream where the traffic officer has brilliantly managed to let loose all lanes in a four-way intersection simultaneously and now everyone's stuck and blaring horns. Either that or he's forgotten about your lane completely and you've been stuck in the same spot for the past twenty minutes, contemplating the logic of the U.S. elections while getting stoned on black exhaust fumes from the bus beside your car as beggars politely wave suspiciously unconscious children or stumps in your face.

Of course, this all happens if the officer is there; it is a common occurrence to find intersections where the only person who might be there to look after the daily cascade of vehicles is a ghost who is more than likely laughing at the two schmucks who just crashed their cars together. They continue to affectionately exchange curse words while all around are cars honking at them to continue their new-found bromance. Unfortunately, in such cases when cars are stuck, there always will be that one person out to ruin everyone's day by taking the time to get out of their car and help everyone on their way. If you are such a



person, please know that we're all happy where we are and your assistance is obviously unnecessary. We city-dwellers may not have flower fields, but we're certainly content with stopping to smell exhaust fumes and open garbage disposal bins that possibly rival the smell of the worst public washrooms. Or exceed that expectation. "The destination is only second to the journey and time is but a human construct" — words which may help you explain why you're three hours late.

Speaking of black exhaust fumes and buses, next time you meet a foreigner, be sure to tell them all about our immaterial bus stops in the middle of road. They won't miss those. As the bus driver's senses start tingling when they are near passengers. Another sign that the bus is stopping is when clearly-suicidal passengers cannonball out of the bus without looking if a car is zooming by.

Of course, it isn't only the passengers who are suicidal. Pedestrians, while not strictly considered vehicles, must also be taken into account as traffic. It's hard to miss them (literally) because they have a tendency to end up in front of your car when you're driving at 60 km/h. Other than pedestrians, motorcyclists also fall under this category, as they are evidently quite well-versed in Mathematics and strive to draw sine/cosine curves on the road for no reason other than "YOLO". They also like to squeeze into tiny spaces between cars, revealing their

uncanny similarity to cockroaches. Bicyclists also fall into this category, although you'll sometimes find them rightfully almost running over unadventurous passengers who use the pavement and overbridges.

You'll often find cars driving down the oncoming road instead of the road they're supposed to be on. These people are the grumpier kind, unwilling to smell the flowers. There are also those who help others experience the beauty of traffic by deciding to be the furthest away from the intersection and make a U-turn at the last instant when the traffic officer lets go of the lane. This person, fortunately, cannot be identified until the moment they flick on their indicator. They are our true salvation.

Despite having written at least 800 words about it till this point, the beauty of traffic is truly indescribable. However, I'd like you all to remember that no matter how beautiful, you mustn't get too addicted to traffic. Victims include drivers who decide to park on the tiny lanes and make everyone else take millenniums to pass by one single spot, drivers who possibly rig their cars to break down in heavy traffic, that one idiot who can't do a U-turn without reversing five times, etc. If you are such a person, seek help, because now you're just being plain weird instead of appreciative.

