

# EID 2117

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There are a lot of things Rum1 hates in life, having to update his neural ID card, standing in line for the hoverjet to school, wearing his socks backwards – you know, the usual things. Waking up to an infrasound alarm clock that zaps you with a shock for every other time you press the snooze button is usually one of those things, but today is different. Because today is not just another day in the busy metropolis of Dhaka2pia, no sir, today is Eid day. The memory of last night is still fresh in Rum1's mind. As soon as he'd heard the Universal Islamic Foundation's announcement about the moon being sighted, he went to the observatory with his household robot to see the historic *Eid-er chaand*.

His Eid starts with a quick cleansing through the nanoparticle shower tube; he walks out wearing the timeless Eid apparel – a *panjabi* which he bought from BongoBazr Online™. Looking at himself in his bargain *panjabi* in the 3D mirror, Rum1 can't help but feel amazed that even after the World War III of 2020, the great flood of 2046 and the alien invasion of 2091, Bongo Bazar still persists. BongoBazr Online™ continues to be the one-stop solution to all of Dhaka2pia's clothing needs.

Rum1 walks to the dining room, elated at the thought of getting to eat before sundown. He shuffles through the refrigeration unit to bring out a white capsule – the *firmi* capsule in all its sweet, delicious glory. He wonders how real *firmi* tasted 100 years ago. Rum1 has only ever tasted organic cow's milk once in his life. He was very young; it was before the Intergalactic Government of Justin Trueheart the 13th had decided to ban all sorts of animal products in order to sustain all life forms in the universe. Now the government just makes capsules using the tastes they've managed to preserve.

As soon as he tastes the capsule, he realises that he made a grave mistake. He accidentally ate the *Ilish bhaja* capsule that he had been saving for Pahela Baishakh. He looks through the fridge again but doesn't find a *firmi* capsule. Rum1 feels devastated, not only did he ruin Pahela Baishakh in advance, his first breakfast after a month also got ruined. He would launch a full-scale investigation on who stole the *firmi* capsule but there's no time. He must head down to the Eid prayer now.

Grabbing a prayer mat in his right hand and wearing a *tupri* on his head, Rum1 buzzed through the Dhaka sky thick with a sepia cloud of dust and smoke. Not much has changed at

the Eidgah, except that it's 16 stories now, each floor levitating over the other to accommodate the 9 digit population of Dhaka2pia. As the prayer ends, Rum1 rushes to the corner to get ahead of the forming crowd. There's always a line in front of the Kolakuli bot 4000™.

Ever since the Chikungunya outbreak of 2017, which was followed by the Beefgunya outbreak of 2039, humankind has decided on avoiding all forms of physical contact. The sterilised Kolakuli Bot 4000™, remains the only bearer of the age-old tradition of *kolakuli*. Personally this part of Eid has always been Rum1's favourite. Feeling the warm embrace of the Kolakoli bot 4000™ while his own hands hold the robot ever so tight is ironically the most human feeling he gets to have all year. After hugging the bot for 5 minutes straight,

he goes to the Salami ATM sponsored by AnantaNet. The

whole ordeal of *salami* has undergone quite some change. As obesity kept increasing and it got harder for people to lean down for a *salami*, the revolutionary scientist Nahid Grain came up with the Salami ATM. Rum1 enters his age, income and neural ID number into the machine, and it gives him 500 BitPoishas, which is enough for some cheap *firmi* capsules.

He notices his friend New-ha using the ATM beside his. Before he can say "*Eid Mubarak!*", she asks, "Hey goathead, you free tonight?" "Yes but I don't want to buy something from your online shop that I can get from BongoBazr," replies Rum1. Every time New-ha talks to him she tries to sell him fancy clothes. None of her friends can afford those. "No I've started a more... lucrative business. I sell the good stuff now. I wanted to give you some because you're my best friend."

They realise that the other people in line for the ATM are starting to get restless. New-ha hurriedly whispers, "Meet me at the alley behind your house at 10 PM. That's when '*Mokbul akhon Mars e*' airs, so your parents won't notice."

On his way back, Rum1 keeps thinking about New-ha's tempting offer. What is she so



excited about? Last time she said she scored something good, it turned out to be a Fidget Spinner version 2100. It's probably something as lame as that again. As soon as he gets home, his mom calls him to the living room where his *khala* has come to visit, in holographic projection form, of course. No one wants to battle the air traffic and pollution just to visit relatives they don't like, and eat capsules. What amazes Rum1 is how obnoxious his beloved *khala* can be even as a haphazard projection. She takes one look at him and goes, "Wow that looks like a cheap *panjabi*. Have you gained weight? I've told your mom so many times to hide those capsules. My daughter recently got a GPA 4.00 from Harvard University Intergalactic Programmes. Your mom said you got accepted at Dhaka2pia University, I hope it's a good school but I saw that their hoverjets fly on the wrong side of the skyway. Anyway Eid Mubarak, you should really lose some weight." Rum1 doesn't get a chance to say anything in reply as his *khala*'s projection vanishes. He asks his mother if he's really that fat but she doesn't notice. She's surfing channels on the Interdimensional Cable with utmost concentration.

Not finding anything better to do, Rum1 decides on spending some quality time with the family in front of the television. All the Bangladeshi channels have organised 3-month long Eid-special programmes. Rum1 sits there with bewildered curiosity. The 140 inch screen shows a middle-aged person with overblown sunglasses and a ridiculous Hawaiian t-shirt. His speech is thick with an accent Rum1 isn't familiar with. The man keeps repeating the same line that goes like "*Hetere keu pani te chubas na ka re?*" His mom tells him that this person happens to be the genetic clone of an actor from a long time ago. Painstakingly watching the show for a while, Rum1 decides on giving it a break. He feels his neural chip throb. Looking at the clock Rum1 sighs that Eid is pretty much done at this point. He was waiting for this day the whole year and it was over without a notice.

But then, something hits him while he's prepping his sleep pod. As in someone actually hits him in the back of his head

with a stiff bag.

Rum1 doesn't need to turn around to know who it is.

New-ha grumbles, "What the hell, goathead? I told you to come to the back alley!"

"Man I forgot, I was watching this weird show where a middle aged dude..."

New-ha cuts him off, "I don't care, Rum1. You were supposed to leave *during* that show. Jeez do you want the stuff or not?"

"Yeah cool. But what is it?" Rum1 asks sceptically.

New-ha shakes her head as she brings out a tupperware box from her bag. It has a thick white creamy substance in it. "Is that... what I think it is?"

"Yes, it's *firmi*," New-ha says with a mischievous smile. "So do you want some or not?"

"Of course I do. B-but, this is Grade-A illegal substance we're dealing with. Are you sure about this?"

New-ha fixes her stare at Rum1 and whispers in a tone he is not familiar with, "I've never been more sure, Rum1."

Rum1 wasn't quite ready for the first spoon of *firmi* that hit him. It was a burst of flavour in his mouth. To his taste buds that haven't felt *real* food for an eternity, it was blissful. Is this what humanity has actually lost in the pursuit of science and dominance? A box full of creamy, melt-in-your-mouth *firmi* that can't be replaced with a thousand capsules? Rum1 agreed with that sentiment in a heartbeat, and judging by New-ha's expression, so did she.

Eid 2117 could have gone any of the myriad ways. But sitting there with New-ha finishing a box of real, organic *firmi* is the one Rum1 would have chosen every single time, in all of time and space.

Best Eid ever?

Best Eid ever.

*Aanila Kishwar Tarannum started hating on everything the moment she realized why her parents put so many As in her name: because they knew her transcript would be devoid of any vowels. Find out about her relentless rants at [aanila.tarannum@gmail.com](mailto:aanila.tarannum@gmail.com)*

*Nuren Iftekhar is your local stray cat in disguise; he interacts with people for food and hates bright light. He got Hufflepuff 3 times straight in Pottermore so no walking around that one. Send him obscure memes at [n.iftkhar18@gmail.com](mailto:n.iftkhar18@gmail.com)*

