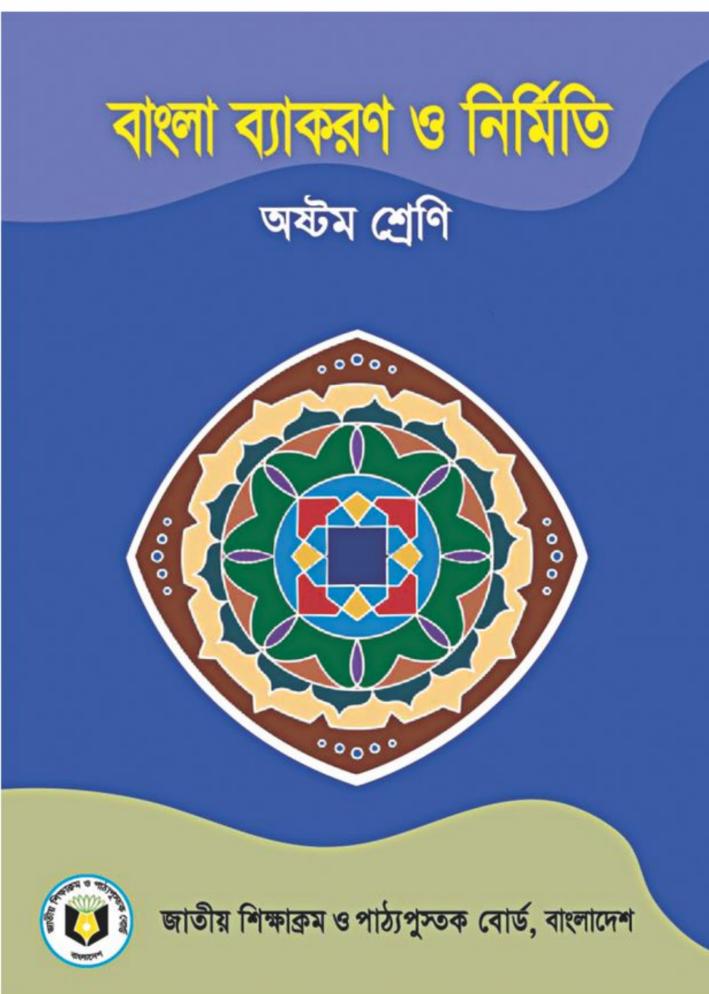


AN ODE TO BENGALI SECOND PAPER



ZARIN REZWANA

Bengali literature, which is as rich as literature could possibly get, has always been a favourite of mine. From the emotions of Tagore to the mysteries of *Feluda*, the ideas around which the works have revolved are commendable.

From our roots, as we deviate to school and Bengali becomes a tedious subject, a drastic change takes away some of the love. To me, Bengali second paper has been one of those tragedies. During school, it was always the exam I dreaded every term. Even now, though I do not remember the last time I sat for an exam in Bengali, the nightmares of class six still haunt me.

Every time the syllabus was handed out, I would feel the shivers run down my spine seeing the magnitude of words I had to memorise. Pages after pages, my already faltered memory had to slurp down words I never understood the meaning of. My sixth grader self questioned the need for the mass of jaw breaking words. However, once the pressure was lifted, it was not so difficult to realise that the paper was something that now represents the gravity of our language.

When it came down to the essay, the curricula would always have a rigid format for the chunk of writing – much like a jigsaw puzzle, only that the pieces had to be forced into a definite space. The essay would have to have the definite introduction, description and conclusion — a conventional format that has been around for

an awfully long stretch of time. The topics were worn out, and repetition of similar topics gave off the aura that Bengali was limited to the contents of the book.

Everything we gobbled up the night before the exam was forgotten once the paper was submitted. However, I still remember the chanting of the memorised essay that would go on outside the exam hall, as nervous students tried to remember an entire page of thesis on a farm animal.

Nonetheless, Bengali second paper has been all about the usage of grammar and enriching our speech or writing. Standing at the observer's end when I see my juniors committing the same mistakes that I made, it all takes a toll. We were never asked to write something off of our own accord – it was all a point of getting through the term, making it a burden altogether.

And as redundant as it may seem even now, Bengali second paper was always in the bad light. With works like *Golpoguchho* that could make a reader cry because of the depths that may seem unapproachable to some, it is still part of a glorious collection of literature that needs some enthusiasm and a hint of ease. As for a reader, I learned that what matters is trying to incorporate the beauty of the language in the words that we use. And in the end, it all becomes a breeze because our native tongue is still the mode of speech whose familiarity is unparalleled.

Zarin Rezwana is a weird potato, trying to be a French fry. Send help, or send ketchup at riditah4@gmail.com

The Common Personalities in a Trip v.2.0

FATIUL HUQ SUJOY

It's been one and a half years since I wrote the original "Common Personalities in a Trip". Trips came in abundance since then, and so did an array of new personalities to ponder about. Although these entries are based on my personal travels with friends, intensive research (that I've most definitely done) suggests that you'll probably find them relatable as well.

THE HATEM TAI

A true blessing to the travelling group. Even with a limited trip budget, this person never disappoints when faced with queries like "Dost, pay the tea bill," or "Hey frendo, turn on the hotspot." It's a mystery why the Hatem Tais do what they do where the equal distribution of expenses was promised verbally and the trust between peers spiritually. Maybe it's because they're good people or maybe they're building up a blind admiration towards them to utilise everyone's gullibility in their future shady schemes.

THE AGGRESSIVE FOODIE

When you're on a trip, it's imperative to experience the local cuisine. It doesn't matter if it's normal food that can be found at every corner of your home town. It also doesn't matter if it tastes absolutely terrible, the Instagram hearts will help recover the taste buds. Whole itineraries get reorganised due to the availability or the lack of certain food reviewed on social media. On the flipside, sometimes, due to the insistence of the aggressive foodies, the rest of us get to discover actual rare gems of delicacies.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA REPRESENTATIVE

What's a trip without letting everyone else know how much fun you're all having? If their news feed isn't spammed with at least 37 photos of your adventures per hour, it's better to just stop the tour altogether. The social media representative takes care of this matter with an iron fist and a fragile metal phone. You leave it to them to post adequate selfies and candid photos with appropriate (the right amount of curiosity and admiration inducing) captions. You can be one of those "taking photos ruin the actual adventure" people but after the trip's done, you'll be thankful to them for all the pictures you get to cherish as memorabilia.

THE SURPRISE ADVENTURER

Others before the trip: "Is this guy for real? He's never rode any vehicle other than his family car. He brings his own tiffin for lunch and it's already been the 5th semester. And he sneezes four times in a row whenever he gets sick and that's like every other day. He's not fit for our adventurous trip."

Others during the trip (to him): "Dude, I swear to god, if you don't use the safe path to climb down like the rest of us and instead use the intertwined branches of the trees hanging by the mountainside, we will end you if you don't already fall and die... Okay, so you've landed unnaturally perfectly. But never do that again (proceeds to doing it 13 times more)."

THE ONE WITH THE CONTACTS

Need a place to crash with preferably no expense whatsoever? This guy knows

someone who can provide a whole resort free of cost, and it's a friend of his father's employer's nephew-in-law. Need permission to enter some place restricted from normie citizens?

This guy calls the

ex-bff of the neighbour's cat's previous owner to contact the right authorities. Need bus tickets at the last minute and it's also Eid season? This guy pulls in a favour from a bus line owner he saved during a *hartal* or something. And the best thing about him, he doesn't even need to be physically present in the trip.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is a tired soul (mostly because of his frail body) who's patiently waiting for Hagrid to appear and tell him, "Ye're a saiyan, lord commander." Suggest him places to travel and food-ventures to take at fb.com/SyedSujoy.

