

What is an odd job? What specifically makes an “odd job” odd? Does the robot who works as a waitress have an odd job? Is it odd because she’s a robot or because she’s a waitress?

While I was planning to pursue my Master’s in Australia, I had to entertain the idea that I might have to get one of those so-called “odd jobs”, and I was ready. Or so I thought.

For those who do not know, an odd job in Bangladesh is equivalent to a normal blue-collar job everywhere else in the world. In this country, it is

From 18-year-olds who just finished high school to 55-year-old research associates who are looking for an income on the side, I have worked with a wild bunch of people in this field, each with their own stories, backgrounds and experiences. They have made me realise two things about this line of work: firstly, I will lose a lot of weight, and secondly, work is just work, nothing more, nothing less.

I remember, during an interview for the position of a cocktail waitress, I met a girl who was already doing a government job for the transportation sector in Sydney

at the time. To me, she seemed like a person with a career, who is settled in every conventional way. I asked her why then she was applying for this job, and she seemed surprised by my question. “It [the government job] is tedious. And more importantly, I’m not content. The pay is good, but what else?” she said. I was always taught that if the pay is good then that’s all that matters, so what was this satisfaction she spoke off? This job was a way for her to meet new people, work casual hours and, as a cocktail waitress, attend parties, all the while making enough to get by. Her enjoyment was more than

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Shakib Al Hasan was just a 23-year-old aspiring all-rounder when he was entrusted the captaincy for the first time. The Tigers were in the Caribbeans and the Test skipper for the tour, Mashrafe Bin Mortaza, injured himself on the very first day of the first Test.

An unprepared, yet confident, Shakib stepped in and led Bangladesh to a brilliant 2-0 series win over the West Indies in their own den. The feat of course was diluted because the West Indies had not fielded their strongest possible side due to internal disputes. However, that series provided the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) an insight into Shakib’s captaincy abilities.

Fast-forward six months and Shakib was handed the captaincy officially. He would go on to lead the Test team for a little more than a year, from January 2010 to August 2011. In between, Bangladesh would play eight Tests against India, England, New Zealand and Zimbabwe. It was a tough period and the Tigers didn’t win a single game. The defeat against Zimbabwe in August 2011 led to Shakib getting axed.

Shakib’s captaincy did not hurt his performance. Neither was he criticised for his tactics on the field as much back then. It wouldn’t be wrong to say that he managed to make the most of an inexperienced Bangladeshi team.

However, his inability to keep the team united off the field was what eventually led to his fall. According to the BCB, there were reports of indiscipline against both Shakib and former vice-captain Tamim Iqbal during the Zimbabwe tour and as a result, they were both relieved from their leadership roles.

Back then communication off the field with players was poor and efforts weren’t made to keep members of the team motivated. Shakib was easily the most sought-after player of the country, with international acclaim and huge demand. However, many say that fame had gotten the better of him.

Six years on and the BCB has reverted to its best player. The move is an opportunity for the left-hander to further explore the intricacies of the longest format as a captain, a position he wasn’t able to enjoy for long.

On a personal level, it can give him a chance to think more about the longest version of the game as opposed to T20 cricket, the format that keeps him the



Shakib Al Hasan

PHOTO: REUTERS

OF ODD JOBS AND OLD PERSPECTIVES

ASMAUL HOUSNA

generally associated with working in the hospitality industry or retail sector or driving a cab—jobs that are at times frowned upon and shrugged off into a category of its own with zero importance or worth attached to them. In Bangladesh, an educated person cannot even think of such a thing—it would be social suicide for the person and his/her family, even though so many of us are doing it abroad. But why is that?

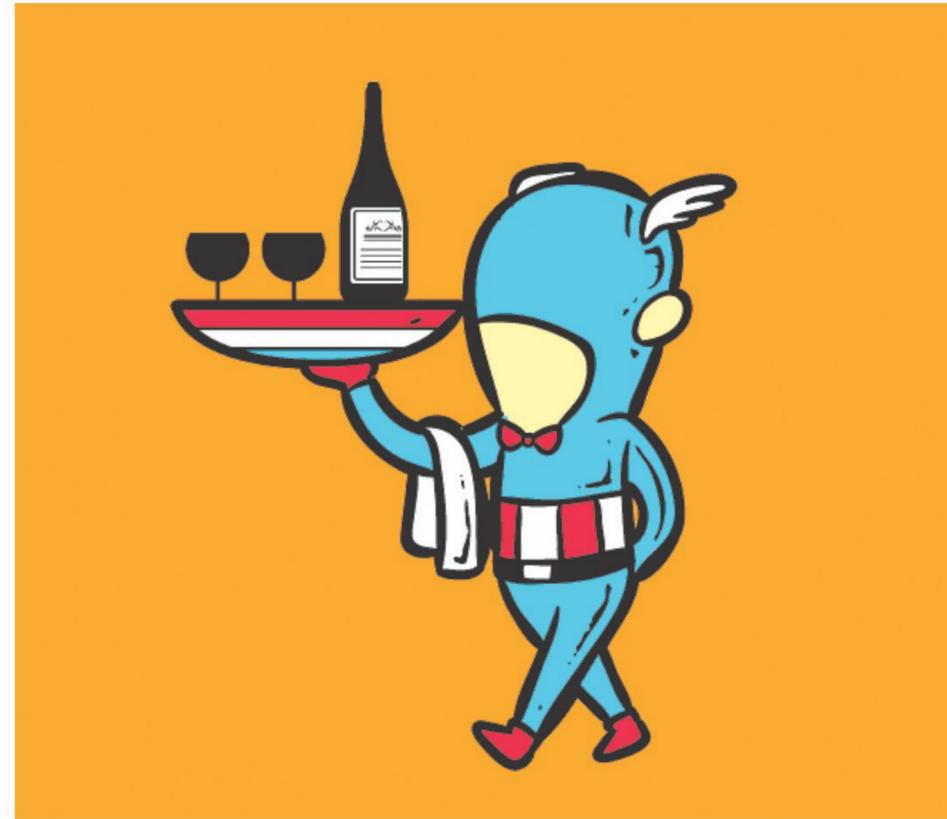
My initial transition from working in a fancy office in Bangladesh to making fries in a burger joint at Darling Harbour was not a pleasant experience. It was filled with moments of self-doubt, existential crisis, and tears—lots of them. It completely shattered the bloated ego that my friends and family had nurtured throughout my life. Within days, I went from being greeted at the reception to the one greeting customers with a fake yet glorious smile; from being the one to give orders to the novice completing one; from doing a “socially respectable” job to an ordinary one; and from longing to get out of the country to missing home and my mum’s *hilsa fry* and *daal*.

But perhaps the most ironic part of my ongoing journey is that I nearly didn’t get my first fry-frying Spongebob-esque job because I was overaged and underqualified, according to my 19-year old manager who was already three years my senior in this sector.

I could only blame my parents. If only they’d allowed me to begin working part-time when I was 15 years old instead of coddling and spoiling me with whatever I wanted, maybe today I wouldn’t have such a hard time finding a job. Why wasn’t I allowed to work in the numerous cafés and restaurants sprouting around Dhaka?

While my parents and our society remain in the shackles of the phrase, “*Manush ki bolbe?*” (What will people say?), kids in Australia are becoming more responsible, independent and learning the importance of hard work. They are being exposed to a work environment where they have to get out of their comfort zone, adapt, and deal with people from every sphere of life—all at a very young age, whereas at 15, I was busy throwing tantrums about why my rice pudding had raisins in it.

Parents, as taught by their predecessors, protect and nurture their children to the point of being useless in real life. They think “adulthood” is a phase that we will automatically breeze through. They might as well be taking us on a nice helicopter ride across the Bay of Bengal and dumping us in the middle in order to teach us how to swim. After 22 years of education, we are thrown into the wild, expected not only to survive, but to thrive.



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any money she was already making. I could never have imagined something like that. I was programmed differently as a child. In the education that began when I was four years old, no one thought to instill the idea of satisfaction or what I want from my life.

So, what is the endgame to all my stress and study? A good job. That’s all it came down to, with not a clue what that “good job” really meant or would be.

Just when I thought I had already become the person I was meant to be for the rest of my life, I began to change. Waiting tables not only taught me how to carry three large plates at once but also made me realise that no matter how educated or open-minded you are, some ideas of hierarchy are ingrained within and it took me months to adopt this new outlook. I have learnt to see that a job cannot and should not define you, and we as a society need to refrain from the idea that certain jobs are for certain people. Answer me this, will I stop being a Master’s graduate if I keep working as a waitress?

Asmaul Housna is a Master’s student in Sydney, Australia.

WILL SHAKIB’S SECOND STINT BE ANY BETTER?

NAIMUL KARIM

busiest. That’s a challenge that he will have to ace if he wants to excel in this field.

A lot has changed in Bangladesh’s cricket over the last six years. The left-hander himself has grown and is a lot more mature than the last time he was given the captaincy role. The job is also likely to be a lot easier than the previous stint. The mentality of the players has changed. They are a lot more professional now. Strategies of team management have developed. Shakib’s insight can only further improve the overall output.

The change in captaincy also highlights a number of other interesting

aspects. The first thing that it brings to the fore is that the Tigers don’t have many captaincy options. Mushfiqur Rahim led the Tigers from 2011 to 2017. While he did enjoy a long run, his captaincy was constantly criticised. The long run he received, though, was partly because the BCB did not really have any other option.

Tamim Iqbal, who served as Mushfiqur’s deputy for a number of years, was replaced by Mahmudullah Riyad last week. It just goes to show that the board has now changed plans and is thinking of someone else as Shakib’s backup.

The other question that arises is whether the board actually has a plan to find someone who can lead the team in the future. Most of the senior players are of the same age and are likely to retire at

the same time. That would lead to a huge vacuum in the team.

Last week’s move also means that Mushfiqur, who was in charge of both the ODI and Test teams prior to 2015, does not officially have any leadership position in the team. Truth be told, the move to replace Mushfiqur has been on the cards for the last three years. While a number of Bangladesh’s historic wins came towards the end of his tenure, the team management has always had issues with him.

During the final innings of Bangladesh’s historic Test win against England, the team management reportedly instructed Tamim Iqbal to take over unofficially, since the team strategy was not being followed. The board also did not like some of the comments Mushfiqur made during the South Africa series.

It wouldn’t be wrong to state that Bangladesh is at a crucial juncture as far as Test cricket is concerned. They have beaten England, Australia and Sri Lanka. There’s no doubt that bringing on Shakib as captain, arguably the team’s best cricketing mind, can help capitalise on this momentum and move to the next level.

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BEYOND THE INSIGNIFICANT
TASADDUK HOSSAIN DULU'S ART EXHIBITION
Organiser: Kala Kendra
December 15, 2017- January 06, 2018,
6.30 - 8.30 pm, Kala Kendra, 1/11, Iqbal Road (3rd floor), Mohammadpur

YOUTUBE FESTIVAL BANGLADESH 2017
Organiser: HelloEventz.com
December 22, 5-9 pm, Bangabandhu International Conference Center, Sher-E-Bangla Nagar

DHAKA COMICON 2017 "TIME SPIRITS"
Organiser: DHAKA COMICON
December 21-23, 11 am - 8.30 pm, Jamuna Future Park, Progati Sarani