

# WALKING TOWARDS THE EDGE OF THE PLANET



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Humans can embark on unrealistic measures to seek ways of validation at times. While there are a gazillion ways to be recognised in a respectable manner, I chose to sway with the opposite. Here I stand, as a changed man to share my story of guilt.

While I was trying to walk my way through the squelchy ruins of my sleep cycle, all the thoughts came rushing to me just when I needed a bit of shut-eye, including the awkward interactions with my fellow elementary schoolmates that took place ten years ago. As I shuffled the thoughts mostly filled with embarrassing encounters and Nyannyancosplay memes, it struck me. What have I been doing to make my seemingly pointless existence a bit more meaningful?

Humans have accomplished all sorts of amazing things. Armstrong left his footprints on the lunar plane, Momtaz Begum has 700 albums for the world, and artists like 6ix9ine have left the human race with questions. I too wanted to leave something for the world. And so I made a decision.

Nineteen kilometres, twenty-seven thousand steps on my size tens. The figures may sound underwhelming compared to the stories found in every South Asian biography on how people had to walk a thousand miles to reach the nearby school. However, while they themselves might have played monumental roles in various fields, little did their journey to

school have anything for the history books.

What we, that is I and my fellow naive friend who had no idea of what he had signed up for, were about to do was going down in history. We were about to walk ourselves towards the edge of the planet while surviving on the bare minimum—mobile internet.

For those of you who are still wondering what we're trying to imply, as flat-earthers, it's common knowledge that a certain extract of human civilisation lies at the furthest edge of the planet, and that the place is called Uttara. We chose to do the unthinkable, walk from Dhanmondi to Uttara entirely on foot, a place where a single car ride would cost us a day's hang-out.

Our journey began in front of a restaurant in Dhanmondi which barely had any customers, apart from a few wedding arrangements once every three months. Mother Nature had handpicked all the weather parameters accordingly, adding a slighter degree of comfort for us to brave such a frenetic experience.

Only an hour into what we had deemed as "The Ultimate Experience" even ten minutes ago, and there we were, contemplating our life choices. Google Maps, the trusted cure to the horrible navigation skills of us millennials, was rather causing us a headache as we repeatedly kept checking it, just to find that we had progressed a few hundred metres since our last check. On top of that, it stopped rerouting after a

while and then, as we proceeded to choose a route manually, the distance increased by a few kilometres. This was the jump scare that we never asked for.

Two hours had passed. Our legs were screaming at sound levels only comparable to those of a Dragon Ball Z episode. One might feel judgmental regarding how hyperbolic our description sounds, since there are tons and tons of people out there in the world running in marathons, a standard size of which takes up about 26 kilometres. And here we were, complaining about a 19-kilometre long walk, that too while we were in the middle of it. But marathons barely have their attendees risk their lives to motorcycles randomly approaching them from all diagonals possible.

No sooner had we reached the airport vicinity than we realised that walk cycles had been hard-coded into our legs. It had developed some sort of muscle memory and while it didn't hurt any less, it got automated, possibly becoming the pedal version of substance craving. Meanwhile, it was whole a new ride for our eyes. They would hallucinate at each block and make hyper-realistic projections of all the food outlets we had left out at Dhanmondi. Much to our demise, all of them either turned out to be one of those food places that have sponsored lemon drinks slapped onto their signboards or rather extremely posh cuisines that we would not be able to afford even if we sold each other at the end of the meal.

Four hours – it took us four long hours. I looked at my hands, covered in grease, an aftermath of needlessly grabbing handles near the sidewalks. Then I looked at my friend, covered in grease, an aftermath of having an abundance of melanin. When we both looked at our pockets, we found that it barely had the amount to sustain our legs, that is to afford a car ride back home since there's no way we'd be able to walk, or to be honest, if we'd ever be able to walk. After lustfully taking a gander at the outlets of Uttara that we can't afford, we escorted ourselves to a much cheaper option, XYZ Fried Chicken. The burger had bones in the patty, the drink had water mixed in it and it was just a plain carbonated beverage. But who were we to complain? We neither had the energy nor the motive of a food blogger to write a thousand-word tirade on the food quality.

For all the calories we had burnt that day, all we got in return were questions surrounding our sanity, and a few days of back pain, muscle cramps and aches in places we never thought to be relevant to walking. The aftershocks took place to make the title "The Ultimate Experience" somewhat appropriate.

And that was how my gullible friend had learned to take decisions on his own.

*Deeparghya Dutta Barua likes to feel apprehensive whenever there are more than two people around. Help him in finding new ways of butchering his name at [deeparghya@rantages.com](mailto:deeparghya@rantages.com)*