



PHOTO: STAR

SATIRE

# IF BANGLADESH IS ROMANTICISED SUMMER LIKE WINTER

*In a parallel universe where summer in Bangladesh is shorter than its winter, but everything else — the land-grabbing, the struggles faced by women, the traffic and pollution — is the same.*

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

The migratory birds that had been successful in evading the local poachers' eyes packed their belongings and left. The dead trees are breathing again, their crowns filled with leaves. The jackfruits, the mangoes, the litchis — they all were smiling as they hung ceremoniously from the branches of the rejuvenated trees. The tin sheds were hot like sizzling pans; if a bird landed on it, it'd be fried in no time. The car roofs glistened. It was summer again.

10 AM

It's a holiday. Estha wakes up triumphantly today. He recalls the days when he would need to set seven alarms to ditch his tiger-print blanket and stand on his feet. The chill in the air is gone. The sun is shining ardently. The running water doesn't seem to be something repulsive. No one in the household is wearing sweaters or socks. No one is shivering.

10.30 AM

Estha is excused from having to eat the regular *bhapa pitha* and the other sugary delicacies whose smell reigned over every household before summer arrived. His social media is littered with everyone sharing joy. Some are posting photos of the morning sun, captioning "summer is here." Some are posting photos with the same caption wearing half-sleeve shirts, shorts, and basically any sort of clothing that doesn't involve wool.

Manju uncle is the only one seemingly upset about the season. He thinks he might get a tan soon enough. He is one of those people who will be ready to cut off ties with their kids at the drop of a hat if their kids do not marry someone with fair skin.

12 PM

The conflict minerals in Estha's DSLR are

ready to work their charm. He slings the camera over his shoulder and sets out to capture the summer sky and almost everything under it.

Outside, everyone is sweating and the drastic shift in wardrobe are a testament to skyrocketing summer clothes' sales. The mango carts are mushrooming throughout the neighbourhoods like shooting marbles. The raw, ripe, green, yellow, big, small, formalin-induced, and formalin-free mangoes piques everyone's cravings.

4 PM

The streets, the alleys, and the fields are alive with kids and teens playing sports. They aren't wielding badminton rackets anymore. The racket, net, and shuttle cock sales have plummeted; the badminton courts' existence has been forgotten. Cricket and football will rule for as long as the summer breeze blows.

7 PM

Estha returns home with a heart that is content and a camera full of images that'd soon be uploaded with summer-related punch lines. He finds out he has no *biyer dawaat* to attend to. He is relieved. This is the only season, although a short one, when most people wouldn't get too excited to get married. And the potential guests would be graced from having to attend all the wedding functions. He also finds out that he has 15 days off from school as summer vacation. He breaks into excitement and subconsciously plans sleepovers and trips with his friends. He would soon be one of those people who simply go about planning spontaneous trips.

For now, he finds solace in the fact that his hands won't turn frosty whenever he washes them and bathing won't require him to be hesitant.

# Transitioning from school to university

AAQIB HASIB

The alarm rings, it is 10 AM. You think to yourself, "No more early morning classes." School is over and university has started, propelling you towards a whole new world.

"Everyone in university has their life together," you think, contemplating how, for the first time in a while, your life will also slowly transition into smooth sailing from here on out.

But wait, there's a lot you haven't accounted for. I want to enlighten you on some of the ways in which university is going to disappoint (or destroy) your expectations.

**NO MORE EARLY MORNINGS**

This is the biggest lie anyone could tell you. While you can choose your courses in some universities, you will find yourself with that one mandatory course that will eradicate any chance of you getting a few extra hours of sweet sleep. To add a bit more salt to the wound, you'll also be spending many more sleepless nights from the overall stress of exams and assignments.

**YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF SPARE TIME**

Whoever said this was probably pulling a long-run practical joke. You dream of this ideal world, where you only have classes on Mondays and Wednesdays that start at 12 PM and end by 3 PM. Unfortunately, what is more likely to happen, is that you will have classes that start at 9 AM, then at 2 PM, and finally one at 5 PM. And those run almost five days a week including all the labs and extra classes that end up in your class schedule.

**GROUP WORK**

Working in groups during school was either an excuse

for you and your friends to chill at each other's houses, or if you were unfortunate enough to not be in the same group as your friends, it would result in you hating your unfamiliar group mates because of one reason or the other. Irrespectively, the result would always be the same. You will always end up with a project so badly managed that you would feel lucky about not getting an F. University life is not going to be any different in this front. Be it chilling with friends, or feeling frustrated while working with incompetent strangers, there is no escaping a poorly executed group assignment or presentation.

**GETTING YOUR LIFE TOGETHER**

Growing up, there would always be a cousin who was studying in university, and seemed to have his life together. Sadly, being in university now, I realise that it was merely a façade that every university student puts on when attending family events. The university equivalent of the "white picket fence" dream is non-existent. Your life is just as mismanaged as it was when you were in school, and it really doesn't change much. With assignments getting overdue and exams all year around, you will most likely end up sleep deprived after each week.

If all of this seems extremely daunting, I'd like to take this moment let you know that it's okay. University students are just older school kids, and all of us are in the same boat right there with you or waiting for you.

At the end of the day, just like in school, you will end up finding friends (read support group) who will help you somehow survive four more years of School version 2.0.

