



PHOTO: STAR

Survival guide for the Dhaka International Trade Fair

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For some people, a new year brings in hope of self-improvement. For some, it brings in new possibilities. For the rest, there is the Dhaka International Trade Fair. Of these three, two of the events never really happen while the third one is a game of survival the guide to which is presented below.

GETTING THERE

The trade fair has been identified as one of the prime reasons for gridlocks caused all around Dhaka during the month of January. This year will be no different. The rush at the fair can be felt from as far as Banani, Farmgate, Mohakhali, Banani, Mirpur and all the roads via which you can reach the trade fair will surely be clogged up with vehicles moving in the slowest speed ever recorded by man. On your way to the fair, there is a hundred percent chance that you too will end up sitting in traffic for hours. If you live near the fair, the best option for you is to get there by walking. In case you are coming from a distance, you can either walk, fetch a helicopter ride or build a human teleportation device to serve your purpose. On a serious note, if you end up in a gridlock within a three kilometre radius of the fair, it will be wise to get off of your vehicle and travel the rest of the

distance on foot rather than sitting in traffic.

KEEP YOUR BELONGINGS SAFE

Despite the extensive security measures, there will always be snatchers and pickpockets trying to take advantage of the crowd. Keep your valuables close to you at all times. Check your purse or pockets to make sure that your phone or wallet hasn't disappeared. Avoid the stalls that are overcrowded.

FOOD

At one point in the fair, you are bound to feel hungry from all the shopping or 'sight-seeing'. Thankfully, the trade fair has got your appetite covered. There are plenty of food stalls at the fair that sell all kinds of food. From basic snacks to full course meals, the fair has it all. There is however, one problem. The price; it is way too steep. Your everyday plate of *fuchka* will cost you twice as much at the fair. It's basically daylight burglary. These food stalls are quite expensive for an average person. So if you want to avoid putting more pressure on your wallet, it's best for you to not visit the fair on an empty stomach.

THE 'IMPORTED' TAG

How do you get a middle-aged Bangladeshi woman to purchase a ton of cooking utensils at the trade fair? Simple, you slap a 'Made in some foreign country

that doesn't even manufacture *haari-patil*' tag on them. In their prime, the sales people at the fair can sell you a *bodna* that was hand crafted in the United States using Haitian plastic. Their positive attitude and convincing talking points can trap almost anyone. Before you actually fall for their words, try and do some quick research on the internet about the origin of the product in question. See if the product is actually imported or has the quality to be classified in that category. There are many genuine products that come in from abroad but the authenticity of some of the goods makes us question the entire lot.

FREE STUFF

Who doesn't love getting things for free? There are plenty of people who buy a product just for getting the free product that accompanies it as a gift. It is a nice way for brands to get their products off the shelves and into the bags of the customers. Buyers also see this as a nice gesture from the brand. Although there is nothing wrong with getting free stuff, you might want to check with yourself whether you actually need the product or not. People will end up buying an entire year's supply of biscuits just for a medium sized plastic container. Such gift offers usually come with bulk purchases like buy ten and get one free. This is where

you need to decide if the offer is actually worth it or not.

LAST DAY RUSH

Legend has it that on the last day of the trade fair, stalls will give customers unbelievable discount on all available products. The legend is in fact true. In order to clear out the stock, they will try their best to get the people to buy them. From discounts to free offers, anything can happen on the last day. However, you also need to be aware of the fact that you might not find the exact product that you desire. Given that it is the last day, it becomes difficult to find the perfect product according to your specifications. For instance, your desired product might be there but it will leave some boxes unchecked. Perhaps a dress that is the right colour for you will not be available in your size or vice-versa.

The Dhaka International Trade Fair is the gift that some people want, no one needs, and absolutely everyone suffers from. It is important to prepare for it, and if you get lost in the vastness, don't forget to stand by the tall tower because that's where they'll look for you.

Faisal wants to be the very best, like no one ever was. To survive university is his real test, to graduate is his cause. Send him memes and motivation at abir.afc@gmail.com