

ALMOST USEFUL
LIFE HACKS



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That's right. This article contains two very difficult to digest morsels of truth. One, Chris Hemsworth was NOT in Dhaka to shoot scenes for a movie called Dhaka. Instead, he was in India which is almost like Dhaka what with all the pollution, traffic and inappropriate groping of women. Two, February 14 is quite possibly the least romantic day of the year.

For starters, romance in February is expensive. It is expensive every other day but particularly so on February. This is because couples have expectations. B-I-G expectations often assisted by ads on YouTube or sappy love songs on playlist suggestions. If you are on social media, which you are, there will be friends on

Facebook remembering that one moment of romantic extravagance three years ago, real or artificially curated. This builds up a sense of impending doom like those few moments before the mushroom cloud envelops the nameless extras in every disaster movie. It is coming and you cannot really get out of the way. It will flatten you like a Toyota under a racing, runaway Ena bus.

You get it. It is doom and gloom but you weakly mumble, "Valentine's day is about love. It must then be love-ly."

Er, no. Think about the Zombie Rush.

Eating out is like being in a zombie movie. Everybody is hungry, everybody is listless and people will kill for a free table. This is not the day to go out for

lunch, dinner or even CP chicken. In cities like our beloved Dhaka, there aren't many parks or quiet places for couples to gaze uninterrupted into each other's eyes. The only refuge is every single open space turned into a food joint.

Couples look for peace and quiet but every food place sounds like many phones going off in vibration mode because everybody's stomachs are gently grumbling. The hunger from all that waiting is compounded by the bill that is yet to come.

Technology has only made our expenses go up and not down. Sure, you are saving rickshaw fare or fuel bills while you click away online. But the glowing screen of your smartphone lulls you into a sense of misplaced comfort. You order more than you should. We now have flower purchase and delivery online for those men too confused by the sight of different coloured petals. Prices of chocolates, flowers and cards go up on February 14. Worse, rickshaw fares spike even for seemingly single people. I hate paying the price for other people's love. Rickshaw pullers show no mercy because they think even solitary people are on their way to becoming a couple following their rickshaw ride. Even when I tell them I am on my way to office, they refuse to believe there isn't a girl waiting on the end of the trip. There is a solution though. On Valentine's Day, dress like a slob. For some it might be your everyday look. For this day, pay extra attention. Creases, bad hair and torn t-shirts surely help. It will make you look like a miserable single person because on this day, single people are considered miserable. In which case the rickshaw puller will promptly ignore you completely much like how Donald Trump ignores political etiquette.

Surprisingly, with all that hot hormone floating around, this is not the day when most babies are conceived. If it was, way too many babies would be born in November. But November ranks ninth along all the other months for babies to happen. Let's face it, Valentine's day is not spontaneous by any shot. It is pre-pre-planned to the point that all contingencies are expected and fully covered.

That seems a lot of effort for an event that is symbolised by a shape that looks like buttocks. Hearts look like buttocks, there is no denying that. On the plus side, meme makers go on overdrive. For all the single and plural people online, the best jokes pop up on social media.

"Do you have a date on Valentine's Day?"

"Yes, it is 14 February."

Further pluses include the streets generally smelling nicer. Men, women and children from classes six-nine apply so much perfume that the heady smell of exhaust fumes and open drains are mostly drowned out. I do not hate the notion of love and romance. But flowers do cost less the next day and restaurants are emptier and quieter.

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How to survive the least romantic day of the year



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY