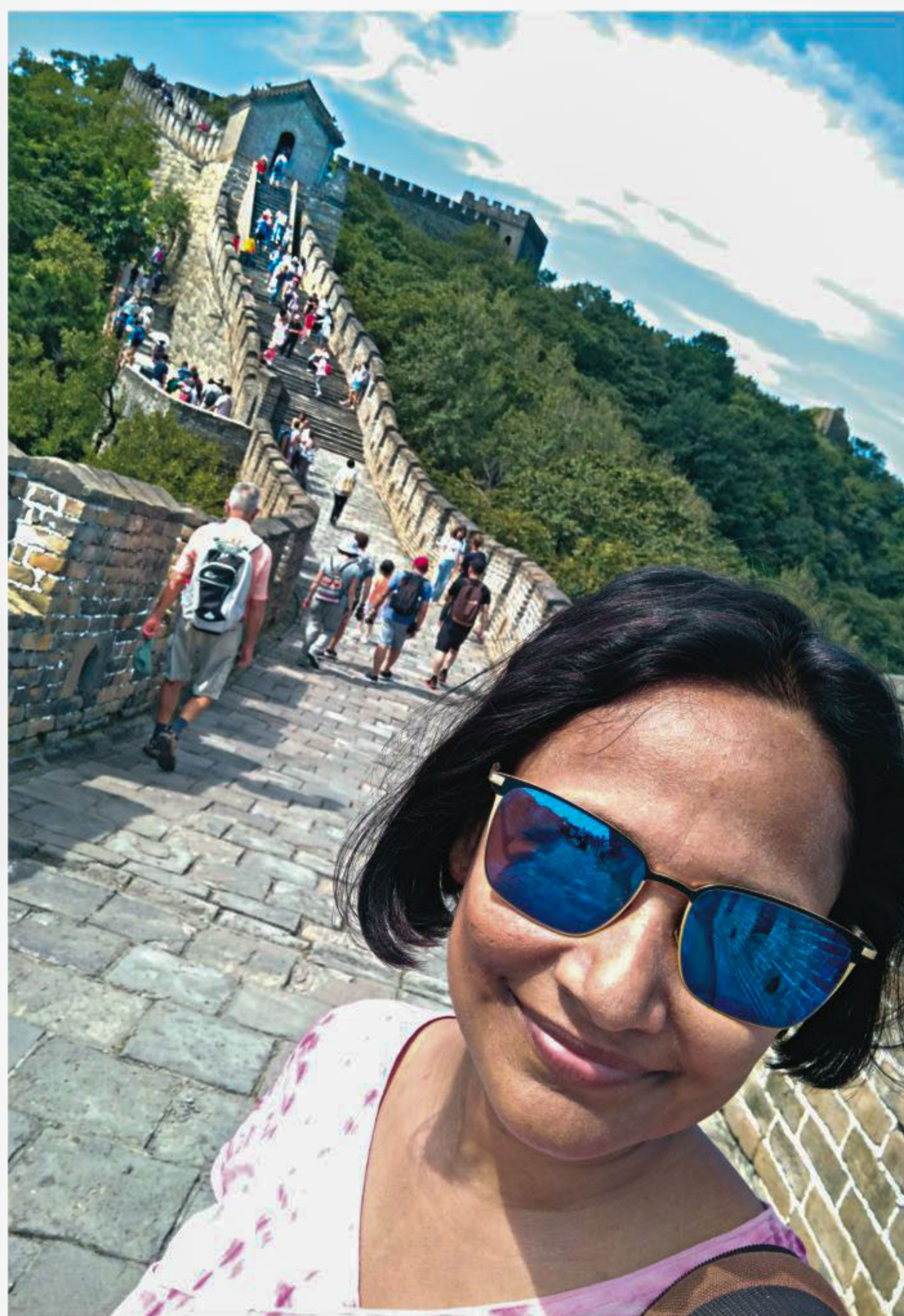


# THE LIFESTYLE PARENTHESIS

DHAKA SUNDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2019, FALGUN 12, 1425 BS **24**

## The lady's side of solo travel



Shahnaz Parveen

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For any solo traveller, there is a purpose or a reason that makes them embark on this special journey.

Shahnaz Parveen, Broadcast Journalist at BBC Bangla addressed this directly, "There are two reasons to take a solo trip, speaking for myself. I would say it would be my desire to take a trip with my friends. But considering my age, and my friends and our circumstances, like lack of time and family managing and mismatch of holidays, as well as financial constraints, it didn't happen the way I wanted it to. It boils down to the fact that I want to go, but can't find someone to come along with me. That cannot mean that I will have to sit out of all these great trips while time passes by!"

"For the younger travellers, it may be good to get a taste of freedom outside of their parents' jurisdiction. But for individuals like us who are more mature and have progressed further along the roads of life, specifically from my perspective, I would say, I had to get away from the daily grind that is Dhaka. Just think of it as a 'brain resetting,' go somewhere, be on your own, and unwind as you want, without anyone else to cause you the slightest of disruptions."

Reema Islam, currently researching the heritage of food (and suffering from severe wanderlust) weighed in on this with her own interests, "I love going to museums and archaeological sites, so in most cases, it's always nice to be on my own, as I get to discover the place in peace."

Furthermore, the experience of meeting new people and tagging along with new-found friends to visit a new place is also very special. I made

numerous friends all over this way."

Sheema Hossain, a travel enthusiast, focused on the freedom that can only be enjoyed by travelling alone had this to say, "I personally love solo trips because doing that gives you time to spend by yourself, doing only the things you love without having to consult anyone. There is no pressure to stick to a plan. It is also nice to break free of the cliché that women need to be chaperoned everywhere."

Sarika Siraj, a young traveller, takes her solo travels as an opportunity to discover her inner self in a different environment. "For me, taking a solo trip anywhere is all about knowing

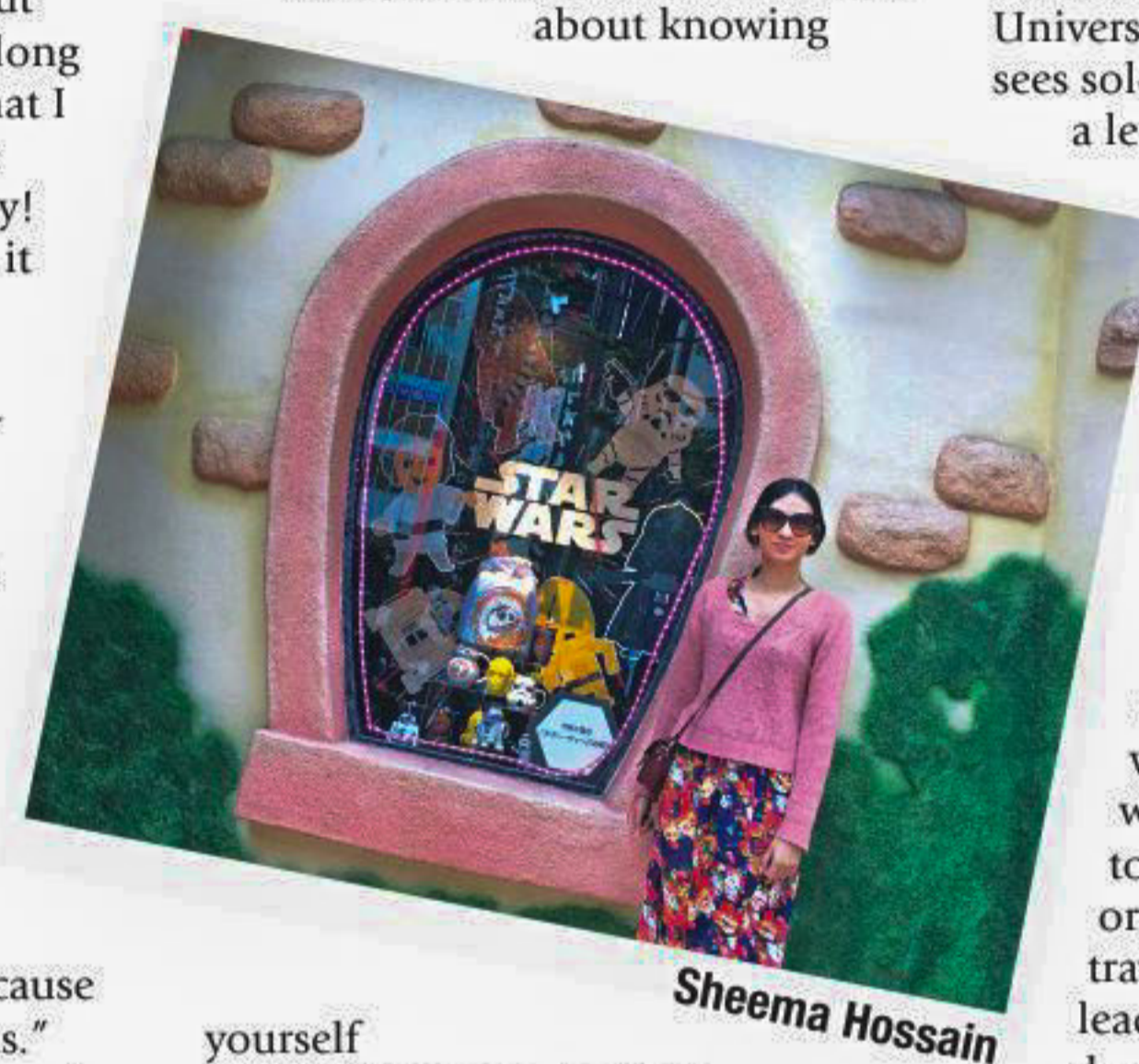
friends who would help you to discover their city, culture, or lifestyle, and essential skills that you would never find in any books or travel-ogues. You will soon learn that not every stranger poses a danger to your life. The lessons of our culture should have been based on developing our intuition rather than just disbelieving any human being we come across. In my view, a solo journey is the best way to develop our intuitions. In the end, it adds up to your decision making and the choices you make throughout your life."

Ayesha Rahman Chowdhury, a student in her final year at BRAC University, also shares this view, and sees solo travelling as more than just a leadership role — "As a female

traveller, especially someone in their late teens/early twenties, it is really an essential learning tool, especially in Bangladesh. You learn to take responsibility for your affairs, and be aware of your actions, plus you handle monetary matters! Solo travelling can be taken as a 'stairway to adulthood,' and for women who are often taught to be in roles where they follow orders in this patriarchal society, travelling solo puts them in a leadership role. Yes, they are in charge of themselves only, but I believe recognising the core individual within oneself is crucial to finding agency and power."

Travelling inevitably brings with it a selection of stories. Frequent travellers often find themselves lost as they talk about a cup of coffee at Marrakech, and then drift off into a dreamy description of a hidden little trinket shop somewhere in London.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25



Sheema Hossain

yourself better. With each decision taken, you get to know your limits and boundaries. Finding out these limits of your character help to understand which of them has been embedded in you culturally/socially, and which of them were originally yours. For example, culturally, we are taught not to trust strangers. However, when you travel solo, you will most definitely meet strangers, who later become acquaintances —

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