



A RANT ON RUSH TRIPS

FATIUL HUQ SUJOY

Before we criticise and praise the different aspects of a “rush trip”, we need to define it. Any trip that tries to cover multiple distant places in the shortest possible timeframe and the least possible expense can be regarded as a rush trip. Rush trips prioritise the number of locations visited over the quality of the visits. Reaching the next spot as fast as possible is the mantra you have to live and breathe during these trips.

So, are they good or bad? And how can you utilise them?

First of all, huge disclaimer: I personally have a negative bias against rush trips. You can contribute that to my general affection towards comfort and sleep. One of the biggest features of rush trips are overnight journeys – cutting down hotel expenses and time “wastage” for sleeping. Now, unless I’m mortally tired and the seat is optimally positioned and the window is just the right amount of open to let in a soothing breeze instead of a blizzard, I cannot sleep in a vehicle. This lack of sleep affects the entirety of the next day of the tour, which is dedicated to sightseeing and exploration.

When we go to a site of profound historical significance and unforeseen beauty, I only think, “You know what, this thing isn’t a bed. Does it have a bed? Where’s the bed? I need a bed.” And it gets worse each passing day. Granted,

there can be nights where you can be comfortably tucked inside a bed in a passable hotel. But be warned, you’ll have to wake up a bit early the next day, like 2.30 AM, to cover all the necessary sites before jumping on a bus/train to the next destination.

Another major issue I have with rush trips is the lack of time to explore the locations visited. It’s more about ticking away on a bucket list than savouring the culture, cuisine, and nuances of the place. I believe there’s as much to see in the back alleys and unappealing restaurants as in the monuments they preserve for tourists and sites rated 5 stars in some blog. But rush trips rarely accommodate that. I finish visiting a site, I tell my friends, “Brethren, let us traverse through this generally uncharted path and consume gajor er halwa from that street side parlour,” and 59 seconds in our venture I get alarms from my phone informing us that we just missed all our trains for the next 15 days and all the hotels cancelled our reservations.

So far, I’ve just mercilessly ranted about rush trips. They aren’t that bad. Truth be told, rush trips are conceptually the best kind of trips. We, in our small lives, with our limited resources and opportunities, cannot possibly explore everywhere in time. Rush trips provide the chance to skim through as much as possible, to at least see the wonders of the world with your own eyes. But, then again, what is

the use of seeing a beautiful monument if you don’t experience the hidden gems in the culture that exists around it? Are the few photos in front of it enough to complete a journey to an exotic land? Is the purpose of traveling justifiably served with throwback photos featuring a blurred historical structure blocked by the other 3124875 tourists in the background and your tired face with a forced pose in the front? It all comes down to what you prioritise in your life. And also how much money you have. Because if you’re stacking, there is no rush whatsoever. Just fly wherever you want, stay at the fanciest of places for as many moons as you like, and explore and experience.

But not all of us (or our forefathers) were blessed with a rags to riches character arc. So what can we do to make the best use of rush trips or how can we modify them to our advantage?

Firstly, assign at least one extra day to a destination. Spend however long you need to cover the nearby tourist attractions but leave a day to just do whatever. Secondly, for trips with multiple long-distance journeys, plan quite ahead of time to get air tickets cheap. If it’s in your budget, try to cram at least one journey by air to optimise both time and everyone’s mental and physical health. Hours after hours stuck in the confines of a vehicle will definitely tire you out, regardless of how super fun you think your squad is. These journeys are a unique experience on

their own, but one too many consecutively will just hamper the general trip vibe.

Next, rush trips are not for extensive shopping. It is understandable to buy the local apparels, jewellerys, cosmetics or delicacies for all ten thousand of your relatives when you visit places popular for that, but this ain’t that trip, chief. Although shopping can be a good excuse for exploration, communicating with the local people (mostly haggling) and roaming around town looking for that sweet sales offer, most of the time it’s just reliving your Bongo Bazar excursions on foreign soil and nothing more. To minimise this, and to segue into my last point, compromise intelligently.

Just because rush trips offer limited scope for exploring doesn’t mean you can’t make time. Maybe avoid a shopping session, sacrifice that sweet nap, get snacks on the go instead of full-fledged meals, exclude a mid-tier tourist attraction if it doesn’t interest you, or abandon the company of your mates if their philosophy on travel and life doesn’t coincide with yours. But also don’t overdo it. Keep your health and friendships in check. After all, the ultimate goal is to enjoy.

Fatiul Huq Sujoy is waiting for that sweet release of public holidays to take him to exotic locations with high throwback value. Suggest him books to read during travels to make him look cool at s.f.huq11@gmail.com