

Experiences you miss out on when you're FROM Dhaka

RABITA SALEH

Being from Dhaka means you've probably experienced a few perks all your life, like empty roads during Eid. However, it also means that you've missed out on some experiences that sound like they would be fun. As someone whose ancestors have lived in Dhaka for as far back as can be traced, here are a few things I have never related to.

BONDING BASED ON COMMON DESHER BARI

People often ask each other where their ancestral homes are upon the first meeting. If any of them have any shared history in that area, the next question that follows is, "Oh, where in that region?" Then they go into a detailed discussion about which roads they can commonly name, and which wells their great grandmothers might have drawn water from together once upon a time. Somehow by the end of that conversation, trivial though it may seem to me, they have formed a type of kinship.

All the while, I stand there, knowing that I'll be going through the same interrogation process soon. They ask me, I tell them, and then inevitably they follow up with, "Yeah, you live in Dhaka, but where are you FROM?" while looking at me like I'm not quite right in the head. I sigh heavily. Where is that face-palm emoji when you need it?



[Crying in Dhakaiya]

ANCESTRAL HOME EID TRIPS

Sure, the empty roads during Eid are something us folk from Dhaka hold covetously as our own. However, I always see people terribly upset because they haven't been able to go to their hometowns for Eid. That, combined with the dangerous looking trips by road and water that show up on the news, makes me wonder whether I'm really missing

out on something great. Is there a secret club that throws the best raves out there? Would someone please spill the beans already?

POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE BIASES

This is not news to anyone, but biases based on someone's region of origin are widespread in this country. There are positive biases, whence people eagerly help out those who are from their own

regions or ally regions. And then there are epic enmities between people from "rival" districts, which can be expressed in the form of mild comments or full blown wars at the dinner table. I just watch, popcorn in hand, as the events pan out, comfortable in my knowledge that no one usually has a problem marrying people from Dhaka.

SPEAKING IN DIALECTS

I have numerous friends who come from different parts of Bangladesh. I'm at a constant risk of being engulfed by people from Sylhet or Chittagong. And when they start speaking in their tongues amongst themselves, it annoys me to no avail. It makes me feel like an outsider in my own motherland! I concentrate my hardest on trying to decipher their cryptic codes. *It can't be that hard*, I think. After all it's just a version of a language I already speak. Alas, this one time I walked in on a friend talking in a rapid Noakhali dialect with her mother, and I swear it sounded like Klingon to me.

Despite all these missed experiences, I wouldn't change my heritage for anything. People from Dhaka, if you're reading this, don't be disheartened. They can keep their Eid trips and dialects. The best biryani is still ours.

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MAKING A CASE FOR THE NEWS

MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

Who needs more mundane updates about the world when your own life is stressful enough? Surely a dose of environmental disasters, pictures of one foreign leader shaking hands with another, and news of a Chinese robot mastering yet another task that makes you less valuable as a human being isn't going to lift your spirits at the start of the day.

However, keeping up with the news encompasses so much more than that. Here is why the news directly benefits you everyday.

IT HELPS YOUR GRADES

Keeping up with the news is the get out of jail free card when taking a course in almost any discipline (except math. Nothing can help you with math). In class discussions as well as in exams, you can draw on so many real world examples and incidents to amplify your responses, you can fill in most question seven if you don't remember the ones in your syllabus. Besides class discussions to impress your teacher, a good understanding of the real world helps you back up almost any claim you make when writing essays.

GIVES YOU MORE CONVERSATIONAL MATERIAL

For natural conversationalists, carrying on any conversation comes effortlessly, but for the rest of us, being aware of the news gives you things to talk about with people. This is true especially with people we don't know too well, at events and of course in professional settings. And by news you don't necessarily need to talk world politics – technology, business, arts, human rights, culture, the environment – take your pick.

IT'S NOT THAT HARD

Nobody has to read the entire newspaper. Simply scan through the main pages and see what catches your eye,

stick to just a couple of pieces based on your interests. Follow as many credible news sites on Facebook as possible (Note: CREDIBLE!!). Keep up with the news comedy shows such as Last Week Tonight with John Oliver, The Daily Show, Real Time with Bill Maher or find one that matches your sense of humour. These shows are a tremendous blend of news and comedy and is good entertainment in its own right.

YOU FORM BETTER OPINIONS

We form our opinions on issues based on what our family and people around us think and on what we see in our immediate surroundings. Reading the news broadens our mindset quite a bit. You realise the problems people who live around the world have. You realise the historical relevance of things that are happening in society today. You start connecting dots and sensing patterns. And most importantly, you realise which forces have how much power over you.

Reading the news may invoke flashes of scenes in 'Downton Abbey' where the help would receive the papers every morning, iron them out in their quarters to dry out the ink before taking it 'upstairs' to place at the breakfast table of the household. You can have the news for free online. Just read it.

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