



IS IT THE INTERNET OR IS IT JUST YOUR MOM?

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The internet has been around for as long as we can remember. And although our relationship with the internet has changed over the years, its ability to be there for us when we need it has not.

Sound familiar? After being an active internet user for the last decade, I finally realised that the internet is a lot like my mom. You might find this pretty bizarre, but the resemblance is truly uncanny. **IT HAS THE SOLUTION TO ALL YOUR PROBLEMS**

Having problems setting your AC on timer? Go to the internet. Having problems with a coworker who doesn't seem to stop calling you short? Go to your mom! While the internet has the solution to most of your problems, there's nothing better than going to your mom for life advice. Both of them will *always* have a solution for whatever problem you're facing. **SOMETHING YOU TAKE FOR GRANTED**

We understand the value of things when they aren't there anymore. When you stream a TV show for 5 hours, do you have the internet in mind? NO. But when it decides to take a break, and you're no longer connected to the world, you feel empty. You just want it back, even if it's for a second; much like your mom when she isn't around. The lady has nurtured you for years and you barely valued her. But the moment you'll have to move out, you'll start to realise how valuable this individual really is.

THE REASON YOU HAVE A LIFE
Your mom is the one who gave you life, no doubt. However, technology has advanced to a point that most of our

lives revolve around social media. For people like me, who'd rather stay home and text others than go out and meet them, this is a vital medium of communication. In other words, the internet is the reason some of y'all have a life, be it real or virtual.

FINDS YOUR STUFF BEFORE YOU
We've all been in that situation where you look for something but find it nowhere. Yet when you ask your mom to look for it, she finds it within seconds. Although I'm yet to figure out how she does it, this is definitely something that applies to the internet as well. Think about it. It will probably take you hours to find the longest word in the English language. But if you ask the internet to look for it, you'll know it is pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanokoniosis within a second!
SOMETHING YOU CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

At this point, we are so used to having the internet around, it's hard to imagine life without it. For me, it was there when I first discovered Spongebob games and it was there when I found out how high my university's tuition was. Coincidentally, my mom was there too. And both times, she was there scolding me for being on the computer all day. Both the internet and my mom have been there for so long that it really has become hard to imagine life without them. But although I might be able to live without the internet someday, there is no way it will be as easy to live without my mom.

Antara wishes to conquer the world someday and bring back an alien from Pluto. To know more about her evil schemes, send an e-mail at: antara56.ar@gmail.com

Survival tactics in Nilkhet

ARAF MOMEN AKA

Ah Nilkhet. The favourite foraging ground of many Bangladeshi bibliophiles, occasional book readers, and students desperate to find the course books they need for their semester. Add to that with the sweet musk of new books is something most love. Plus, shopping for books in Nilkhet is more cost-effective than a dinner in Dhanmondi.

Yet, every heaven on earth has its perils. Nilkhet is no different. Dangers will lurk around you in every 'Mama, ki lagbe?' Let's gloss over a few and see how we can circle our ways around them.

OVERPRICING
Right off the bat, the biggest danger you have to face is being offered a book at a price that would be 10 times more than it cost them to make a book. If you do not bargain with the shopkeeper, you are bound to have the Bengali 'Mama thoksen' tag stuck on your forehead.

To counter that, give them a counter-

around this issue. Unless you can remember the narrow, identical roads inside using the shops that look all-alike as landmarks. There's that too.

RAIN
Your shoes and clothes will meet their untimely demise in the Nilkhet flood. I'm sorry, there's no way out of this one.

CROWDS
Nilkhet is notorious for its crowded narrow scantily-clad brick streets (we do notice concrete narrow streets nowadays, so there's an upgrade). Come admission season, you would easily confuse Nilkhet with Gabtoli during Eid-ul-Azha, minus the cow manure everywhere.

Counter this by mustering all your inner strength and plowing down anyone in front of you. Channel your inner bull. Show no mercy. Stop only when you get to the shop you've been looking for over half-an-hour. What's your excuse? That you're a sack of potatoes? Well the heavier you are, the more inertia you have. Run and plow like no other being.



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

offer so low that even you would feel ashamed of being offered. For example, telling the shopkeeper that you would buy a book for 70 taka when you're pretty sure it costs at least 130 taka to print. The shopkeeper will be ascertained of your dominance and bargain with you in a respectful manner.

NAVIGATION
Nilkhet is a huge place, with roads leading into dead ends, the streets, or Narnia. Navigating your way through these areas is not easy. But always remember, you are doing it for a better cause: A new book to read (or to fulfil course requirements).

To navigate your way through Nilkhet, bring a compass, a pencil with an eraser, a ruler, a divider to portray accurate measurements, and a big piece of paper to make a map out of. Walk your way around Nilkhet so that you can make your precious map. Because there's no other way

BAD PRINTS
You will come across books with poorly printed content. Either the text will be lightly printed, or some pages will remain completely blank.

Now the sane thing to do here would be asking the shopkeeper to give you a better copy. But this is Nilkhet. Sanity is not an option. Throw a tantrum that your book came out to be badly printed. Bonus points if you curse. The shopkeeper will surely listen to your every word now.

These are just a few dangers that were addressed here. You will find your way through many more hazards. But never forget. You are a Bangladeshi. If you can parkour your way through the streets everyday, you can do anything.

Aka is a tiny bleep on the world's radar, and he finds peace in knowing it. Ruin his peace by poking him on akaaraf@hotmail.com