

CLEANING UP YOUR NEWSFEED

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Information sounds like quite a broad term, but to survive in this digital era of social media and smartphones, it is definitely a necessity.

Whether it's keeping up with the latest news or ensuring your meme game is on point, your main point of contact with such content is usually your newsfeed. Therefore, it's essential to keep your feed as de-cluttered and organised as possible. With social media becoming a cesspool of fake news and random memes in recent years, it has become quite difficult to navigate it for your required information. For those of you looking for a better newsfeed experience the tips below may help you in your quest.

THE MEMES

Memes are essential to surviving our daily monotonous lives and reality in general. But the number of meme pages and groups you've accumulated over the years may just be a hindrance at this point. Pages with names like "Shonar moinar dank memes", that one of your friends - who you don't even talk to anymore - convinced you to follow ages ago, should probably be the ones to go first. And let's not forget pages which repost memes without properly



crediting the original creators. Keep to the tried and tested pages which are known for delivering quality memes.

THE POWER OF UNFOLLOWING

I'm sure some of you out there have accumulated a large number of friends on Facebook over the course of multiple coachings, friend groups, extracurricular activities and so on. You don't have to jump the gun and start deleting them, but you could unfollow a few of them - whose posts you scroll past anyway. For anyone still typing like this

"aMaKe vLoVa\$hA dEo" the decision to unfollow is even easier. And let's not even start on the people who share mindless propaganda and fake news.

NEWS OUTLETS

The entire reason for dealing with the last two points is to ensure there's adequate real estate on your feed for the essential news. To keep with the theme, it's best to get rid of any illegitimate news pages that you follow. Pages that post stuff like "Do you KNOW what China is doing in Noakhali?"

Click to find out" - and when you open it to find an article about some Chinese guy vlogging on his trip to Bangladesh - are the sort of clickbait trash you don't need on your feed. It's always best to ensure the pages you follow for news are all legitimate news outlets, which are held to a certain standard.

FEEDLY

If you're tired of relying on Facebook for any coherent information and use it for nothing beyond "haha" reacting on your friend's pictures, then might I suggest Feedly? Unlike Facebook, Feedly helps you set up your own custom feed, using a vast repository of sources, from news outlets to random websites. Additionally, Feedly gives suggestions for each category of topic, and all of these sources can be trusted. And the icing on the cake is that it works on your browser and Android or iPhone.

The end result should, ideally, be a newsfeed that is easier to interact with and extract information from. And the suggestions above are a step in the right direction, where a cleaner and minimalist feed helps make your life easier.

Aaqib is stuck in an existential crisis loop. Send help at aaqibhasib94@gmail.com

WORLD BOOK DAY DAY 2019

What have you been reading?

MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

April 23 is World Book Day and in its honour I took a trip to Dhaka's unrivalled book buying and selling hub - Nilkhet. With rows after rows of alleys circling around each other and tiny lanes that lead to an unending number of shops, Nilkhet sells just about every type of book one could possibly want.

Mohammad Amin Hossain has been a bookseller at the market for almost all his life. Asked what is most popular with the readers of Dhaka these days he answers, "A lot of the English novels published recently are selling really well. For Bangla, Humayun Ahmed always sold well and sells just as well today." Hossain is among those booksellers who have been part of the market for so long, they have seen the crowd evolve. "The life of our market has always been the students. From school

students to masters degree level, about 80 percent of this market's customers have always been students." "And the other 20 percent has been the guardians of those students," a nearby shopkeeper adds laughing.

The narrow alleyways can feel a little congested. Craning my head to read the titles of volumes stacked in enormous piles from floor to ceiling, I caught sight of many a salesman half visible with one half of their body in the false ceilings above the store searching for books and the other half expertly balanced on a floor to ceiling ladder.

Mohammad Tofazzal Hussain, proprietor at another shop spilled on a different type of book that is popular with the Dhaka crowd now, "Motivational and psychology based books are selling the most. This includes self help books. Sidney Sheldon, Malcolm Gladwell, Yuval Noah Harrari



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

are also authors that are quite popular." Based on the collection in sight, Bangla translations of English books were selling too. "Popular books in English and their translated versions sell almost equally well in our shop," Hussain says.

The most prominent collection displayed in each store were of the authors who gained popularity quite recently. "Jenny Han and Elif Shafak are selling the most right now and so is that book," Mohammad Monir Hossain, proprietor of a shop says pointing to a copy of 'Six of Crows' by Leigh Bardugo. "Overall Murakami, Stephen King, John Grisham, Jeffrey Archer, Danielle Steele, Agatha Christie and Khaled Hosseini are our biggest sellers," he adds.

However, classic works of literature were also part of every shop's collection. "Classics sell too. Not just for class, but people buy classics for pleasure reading

too," Hossain informs.

The appeal of Nilkhet doesn't stop there as shopkeepers buy back used books as well. "We buy books from customers and pay according to the appeal of which writer's book it is. The condition of the book would factor in as well," a shopkeeper explains.

Brand new, second hand, imported, local, Bangla, English - Nilkhet continues to serve the readers of Dhaka to this day. There are rare books available here which aren't sold in other book shops in the city, as the shopkeepers here will proudly tell you. Dhaka is not home to as many book shops as any booklover would like but a trip here serves as a reminder that the local reading culture continues to thrive.

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