



SNAIL MAIL

My (mostly) failed experiment

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My knowledge about sending mail is limited strictly to how it's portrayed in the wizarding world. If I am writing a letter I assume there is an owl as smart as Hedwig or Pigwidgeon who I can let loose while I proceed to sit next to its empty cage for the next month as it makes its return trip.

Realising how little most of us know about the present reality of the easily accessible and affordable real life post service, I set out to undertake a little letter writing myself, hoping to have an informed opinion on the idea.

THE LETTERS

First, I realised I forgot everything about letter writing I ever learned at school. Does my own address go on the envelopes too or just the letters? I'm sure I have to write the date somewhere but where? Also, is there a specific envelope my letter goes in? Do I have to buy this envelope at the post office? What about stamps? Did I honestly deserve the grades I got in primary school?

Realising that I have the liberty to mess up and I wasn't going to be graded on this, I decided to stick to my best judgement in every decision. I wrote my letters and headed out to post them because of a lack of any carrier pigeon.

THE POST OFFICE

Walking into Banani Post Office, it was exactly what I imagined the interior of a post office to look like. The age of the wooden furniture in the office was greater than the collective age of all the people in the room combined. The one story establishment was cramped with people standing in queues for reasons unknown to me. Besides people, stacks of papers and letters were also



overflowing on desks, cubbies, shelves and any other visible surface. Employees were weighing packages people were sending to loved ones abroad.

THE POSTING OF THE LETTERS

I had written three letters — one was to be delivered in Sylhet, one abroad to an address in Australia, and the final one all the way to Uttara. When it was finally my turn in line, the officer behind the counter handed me two small yellow envelopes for the letters that would be sent domestically and a standard-sized white envelope for the overseas letter (this answers one of my previous questions regarding envelopes).

The envelopes already had the relevant stamps attached so all I had to do was write down the addresses of the recipients and my own address on it (answering yet another question). The most interesting and old timey thing I got to do was seal the envelopes shut with gooey liquid glue with my fingers (there is a jar lid with

glue that permanently hangs out on the desk of the post office).

I had to pay up for the stamp at this point; each domestic letter cost BDT 5 while the overseas letter cost BDT 55. There are no other charges involved in shipping unless one wants to pay extra for assurance of delivery of the overseas letter. I did not opt for this seeing how my letter had very little value. Having handed my letters to the man behind the counter, I strutted out of the office a confident woman enlightened.

THE RESULTS

Weeks began to pass without any news of any of my letters reaching its intended recipients. It was on a Wednesday that I had posted the letters and was assured that my letters would reach Uttara and Sylhet after the upcoming Sunday and the letter to Australia a little later than that.

I was ready to recommend sending letters by post for fun to people around me since I was more than pleased at the convenience and low cost. However, after a few weeks of hopelessly waiting for my letters to be delivered, I had given up on the prospect completely.

Then finally and possibly through divine intervention, almost a month after it had been posted, my letter was received in... not Sylhet, not even Uttara but Australia! The letter had two extra seals on it when it was received and had made the journey fully intact.

A full month later, and my two other letters have not yet reached its domestic destinations which only proves how having a trustworthy snowy barn owl is a great investment for off grid communication purposes.

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