

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE

# SHOUT

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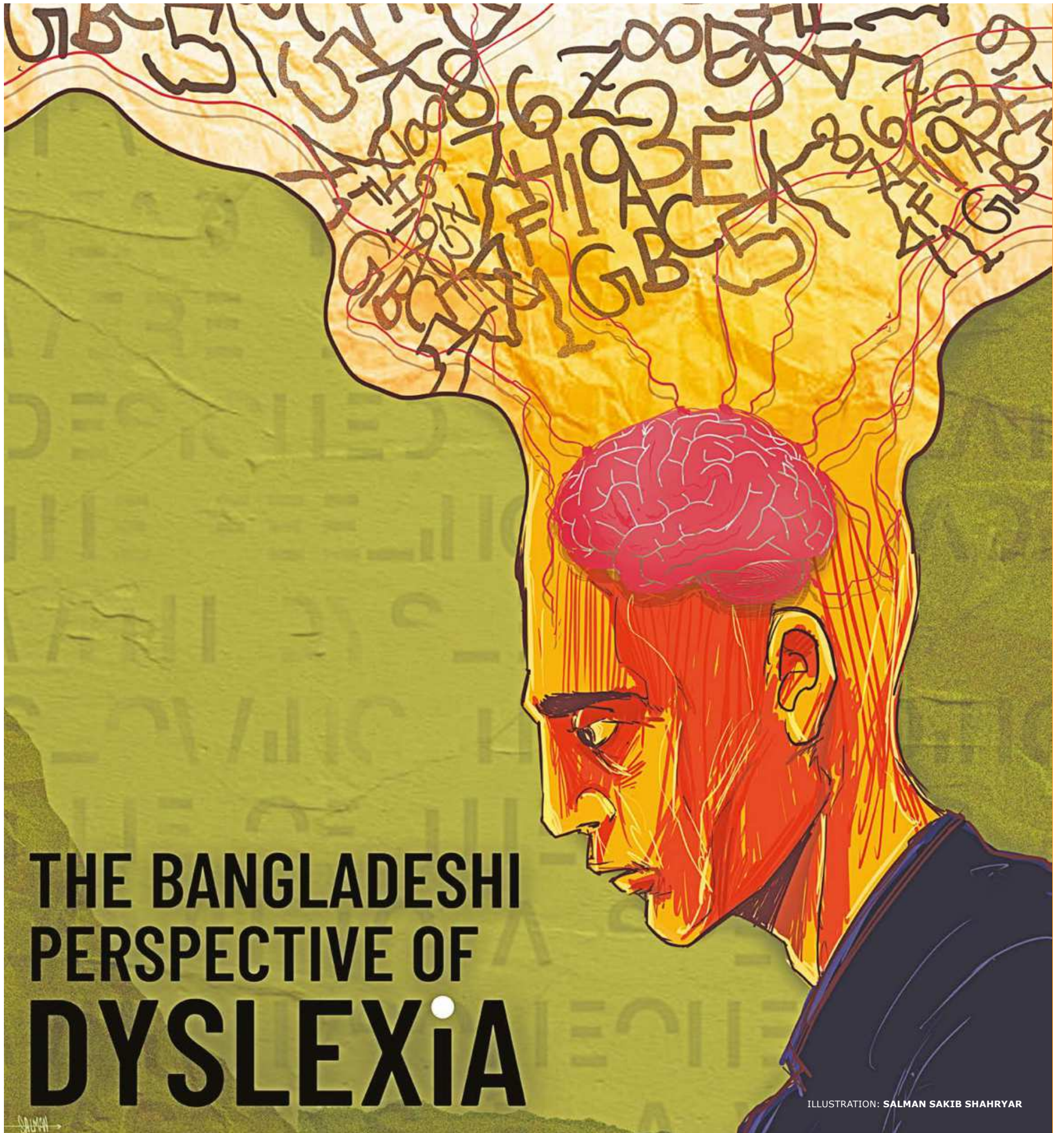


SHOULD YOU MAKE MONEY  
FROM YOUR HOBBIES?

PG 3

MAN CROWNED FEMINIST  
ICON AFTER MAKING A CUP  
OF TEA

PG 4



## THE BANGLADESHI PERSPECTIVE OF DYSLEXIA

ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR



# EDITORIAL

As humans, we are no stranger to comparison. Even a newborn gets their physical features compared to those in their families. A couple years later, they might be compared with other kids on the basis of their talking manners.

Are they talking? How many words do they know? Not as many as their second cousin? *Oh.*

The prime factor as to why dyslexia is still a mystery to us is because it goes unnoticed, uncared for. A child, unbeknownst to the world of letters and numbers and images, and perhaps in a class where possibly every other kid is a “peer”, will never know why the textbooks feel like a trap. Children need care; their teachers need training.

The kids already have it difficult growing up in a world that often behaves like a pinball machine. If they learn to talk a bit late, or show signs of dyslexia and its myriad counterparts, know that they need attention. To know more, read this week’s cover story and hopefully you’ll have a different perspective than what we already harbour.

-- Kazi Akib Bin Asad, Editor In-charge, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### MOVIE REVIEW



# Judas and the Black Messiah: *Trust No One*

ADHORA AHMED

When the trailer for *Judas and the Black Messiah* was released last year, I was riveted yet sceptical. The doubt arose from my cynical view that a major studio movie about the Black Panther Party would inevitably suffer from negative bias.

Fortunately, I was proven wrong.

*Judas and the Black Messiah*, directed by Shaka King, is a historical drama that was released in February, starring Daniel Kaluuya (*Get Out*), Lakeith Stanfield (*Sorry to Bother You*), and Jesse Plemons (*Breaking Bad*). The film, based on true events, portrays the infiltration of the Black Panther Party by the FBI, a part of the agency’s controversial COINTELPRO project.

Bill O’Neal, played by Stanfield, is hired by the FBI as an informant to gather intelligence on Fred Hampton (Kaluuya), the leader of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party. O’Neal, who is arrested for stealing cars and impersonating an FBI agent, reluctantly agrees to infiltrate the party in lieu of serving a lengthy prison sentence. What follows is O’Neal’s struggle to keep his act up while being increasingly drawn to the party’s politics and the charismatic Fred Hampton. The film also sheds light on Hampton himself, a captivating orator dedicated to uprooting the systemic oppression of not only his own race, but the entire proletariat. While he attempts to garner wider support for the Black Panther Party with the Rainbow Coalition and the Free Breakfast for Children Program, Hampton and his fellow comrades are routinely abused by the state in various forms, aided by O’Neal’s espionage.

The greatest strength of the film lies in its acting. Both Kaluuya and Stanfield’s

stellar performances were nominated in this year’s Academy Awards for Best Supporting Actor, with Kaluuya bagging the Oscar. In hindsight, I shouldn’t be surprised because the Oscars have a preference for awarding actors who impersonate real people. Nevertheless, Kaluuya’s metamorphosis into Fred Hampton was amazing to watch. Lakeith Stanfield was marvellous in portraying the transformation of O’Neal’s character arc, from being ambivalent towards the civil rights movement to his increasing agitation and remorse as he gets more involved in the conspiracy. An honourable mention goes to Jesse Plemons who plays Roy Mitchell, the seemingly friendly yet calculating FBI agent in charge of O’Neal.

As mentioned before, the portrayal of the Black Panther Party in *Judas and the Black Messiah* is different from similar references in other mainstream Hollywood movies, *Forrest Gump* for instance. By centering the story on Fred Hampton and Bill O’Neal instead of the FBI agents involved in the investigation, it is evident that the director’s sympathy lies with the Black Panther Party and their cause, thus providing a refreshing narrative other than the negative image they have been associated with in the past years. This re-evaluation of the Black Panther Party makes the film very relevant today given the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement last year, as a result of which the BPP’s legacy returned to the spotlight.

As for possible faults, I believe the process of O’Neal gaining Hampton’s confidence — enough to be included in the latter’s inner circle — should have been explored in more depth. Other than this, the movie is a timely drama with first-class acting.



# SHOULD YOU MAKE MONEY FROM YOUR HOBBIES?

**TAZREEN JAHAN BARI**

According to contemporary society, if you manage to make a profit from something you are passionate about, it is a sure sign that you have made it. Living in the age of entrepreneurship makes the capitalist urge to commodify your hobbies and turn them into profitable side-hustles stronger than ever.

When all time not dedicated to profit or productive output feels like a waste, it is easy to give in to the romanticised tale of commercialising hobbies. And if you are lucky enough to make it work, it can be both meaningful and economically sustainable.

But is the overused quote about not having to work a day in your life if you turn your passion into profit all there is to side-hustles that emerge from our hobbies?

Most people have one or two hobbies, but due to the lack of accountability, it is hard to make time for these hobbies regularly. When you are turning your hobby -- be it painting, photography, video editing or any other creative skillset -- into something you can make a profit off, you are held accountable for finishing things on time which makes it easier to actually do them. Commercialising your hobby can be the best thing ever as you are getting entertainment, profit and meaning — the holy trinity of value when it comes to any kind of work.

However, in many cases, commercialising your hobbies can result in you taking everything personally and losing the ability to separate your personal life from your professional life. When you are trying to make profit off your creative endeavour, there will occasionally be harsh clients

who misjudge your work leading you to question your abilities. To make things worse, when you love what you do, you naturally want to do your very best, which is not always feasible. Striking a balance between working yourself to death and feeling like you are not giving your best can potentially make your work more stressful than a job you have no emotional attachment to.

The reality of turning your hobby into a side-hustle will always come with a string of menial chores that just has to be done. Meeting deadlines, spending hours packaging or catering to your clients' needs while sacrificing your preferences and so on constitutes the backstage of every gig. It is one thing to do something you love for the sake of doing it. But when your creativity is linked to income, it can put a lot of stress and pressure on you which can make something you previously loved feel like a chore.

The truth is, anything you like doing will come with its own set of things that are necessary but less enjoyable. In other words, even your most favourite task will come with its own sandwich feedback. No one enjoys the work they are passionate about one hundred percent of the time.

So, while trying to make money from your hobby, the question you should ask yourself is not what you are passionate about rather what you are passionate enough about to deal with its occupational hazards.

*Tazreen is stuck reading painfully depressing postmodern poems and absurdist plays. Send aid in the form of memes or fluffy book recommendations at tazreen-zahan@gmail.com*



## Change Your Life With 7-Minute Crafts

**MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN**

Hi guys, welcome to 7-Minute Crafts. Today we're going to make candles out of a raincoat.

First, we take a perfectly fine raincoat. Then we completely obliterate it. Because I have no respect for how things are intended to be used and I fight capitalism by not buying things but also buying different things to use to make the things I want. Capiche?

Now we're going to learn how to make a suitcase out of a pair of socks. Imagine yourself strolling into an airport and people thinking, huh, that person really made a suitcase out of a pair of socks. Because socks have no intrinsic value and cutting things up into tiny pieces is how I escape the unanticipated stress of adulthood. My parents keep forgetting my name.

So, you take a pair of socks. You add wheels to it. Now it's a seriously unsafe rollerblade. Now you extend the pair of socks upwards by knitting really fast. Oh, did we mention you need mad knitting skills for this? Well, you do. Now extend the socks horizontally as much as you did vertically to have a rectangular shape. Once you have ample space inside, stick thick pieces of cardboard on the interior of each side. Add a couple of handles at the top and boom you have a suitcase.

We're going to throw in another useless segment now and make this 7-Minute Crafts video over 10 minutes long, because we want the ad revenue as much as Foodpanda users want good customer service. So, let's make a dress out of a pair of tights. You take a pair of tights, and start stretching it. Once you can fit your whole torso into each one of the legs, you cut out a hole for your leg, one for your arm and one for your other arm. We're going to gloss over the fact that you very likely have a fourth limb but we're hoping you're not going to catch on to that. Now we will quickly replace this tube-shaped monstrosity we created with a slightly better version we bought at a store and bam! You have some sort of a garment?

Finally, we're going to learn how to have a giant picture of Timothée Chalamet on your walls. You print a giant picture of Timothée Chalamet and stick it on your walls.

Thank you for watching 7-Minute Crafts. This is a cry for help.

*Mrittika Anan Rahman is a daydreamer trying hard not to run into things while walking. Find her at mrittika.anan@gmail.com*





# Humour as a Coping Mechanism. *LOL.*

AYRA AREEBA ABID

We often turn to humour to comfort ourselves and to seek solace in despondent times. When luck falls down, we confide in our best buddy – humour. Amusing ourselves is important in such times, and is often so classified as a coping mechanism. When dealing with life problems, a little smile goes a long way. “Laughter is the best medicine,” they say, but techniques of inducing amusement vary from one person to another.

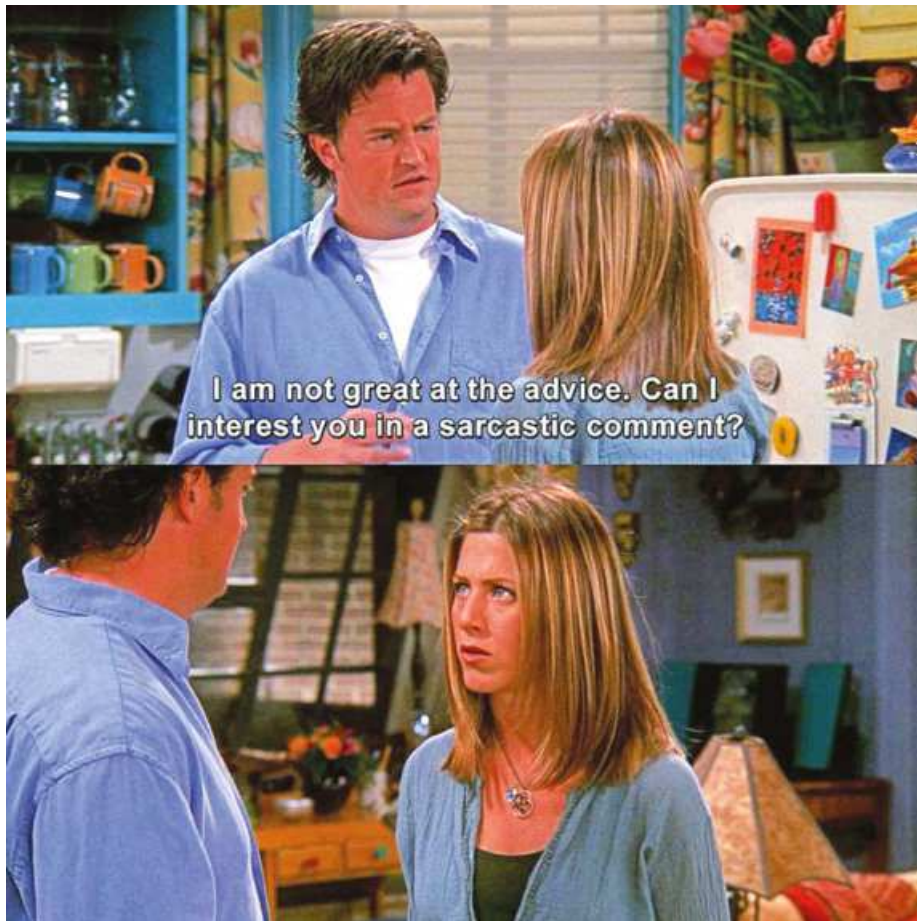
Here are four kinds of humour we see all the time, nowadays often through memes on social media.

## AFFILIATIVE HUMOUR

This is the type of humour we need in our lives to promote the love of sheer positivity. There will always be that one class clown we cannot imagine being absent in our classrooms, or that one *deshi* uncle/auntie at *dawats* who will fill the room with their wholesome laughter (even while passing dad jokes). Affiliative humour creates special bonds: at workplaces, classrooms and even at our own homes. Just as buds grow into flowers, relationships too, often thrive through the use of humour. To deviate from the stress of modern times, simply laughing or even smiling with companions can go a long way.

## SELF-ENHANCING HUMOUR

Gen-Z has seen the epitome of this type of humour through memes, more so recently centred on the ongoing



pandemic, depreciating mental health and academic pressure, among others. The latter can be understood as discarding the challenges life throws at us, but

self-enhancing humour can actually help people focus on the brighter side of their lives and deviate them from depressing news.

## AGGRESSIVE HUMOUR

Disparaging has become too common in our daily lives, sadly, and this can be truly seen in the form of “savage” memes, power abuse in workplaces and bullying at school. This type of humour is highly discouraged, readers. “Sarcasm” can sometimes evade borders. Alienation and ridiculing aren’t cool. Aggressive humour is usually used as a coping mechanism, sometimes in the name of dark humour. I urge to eradicate this form of humour style from and rather engage in acts of valour. There will be more ripple effects than what is anticipated, I promise.

## SELF-DEFEATING HUMOUR

Self-defeating humour is entirely opposite of the former. This type of humour is used by people who amuse at their own expense. Butchering and belittling yourself is not a good practice, either. It is important that we value ourselves and others while respecting our individual borders.

These four types of humour which have been elucidated above can tell us a lot about specific personalities. So, when you’re meeting someone new, you can detect their style of humour to get an idea of how they truly are as human beings, while a lot of characters are unique to themselves.

Which style of humour is most relatable to you?

Ayra Areeba Abid’s favourite word is ‘serendipity’ and she’s a linguistics geek. Connect with her at areeba.ayra@gmail.com

## SATIRE

# Man Crowned Feminist Icon After Making a Cup of Tea

NUZHAT HASSAN CHOWDHURY

It was a bright, sunny afternoon in the city of Chaka. As lunch time arrived, all busy workers in the city breathed a sigh of relief and took a well-deserved break. In a particular office, located in the centre of the city, were three co-workers Sadman, Sakib and Rahman. They sat at their lunch table and politely argued over whom among them was the most feminist man.

“I always encourage my wife to be as independent as I,” said Sadman, while wearing the clothes his wife ironed and eating the lunch his wife made. “I also inspire her to work harder, which is why I let her handle her day-time job, parenting the kids and the household chores all on her own. This will allow her to truly live up to her potential, you know?” he continued.

“You’re absolutely right! In this modern day and age, a woman’s place is not just in the kitchen, it’s all over the house. It only makes sense to let her manage all the tasks around the house,” chimed in Sakib. “Being a feminist has made me realise that society does not respect women enough. This is why I’m forcing my wife to dress the way I deem appropriate and giving her the chance to earn my respect,” he added.

“Really? How is she taking it?” asked

Sadman.

“She curses at me at times and says silly things such as ‘Why did I settle for you?’ or ‘You’re such a misogynist’ and other little jokes, but it’s no big deal. I understand that change can be difficult,” said Sakib. Everybody nodded in agreement.

“My wife is extremely important to

me, which is why I sat my family down to have a talk about this before getting married. I made sure they knew that none of that old-timey ‘control and oppress the daughter-in-law’ mentality will fly with me. After the talk, they all agreed to treat my wife like royalty... like the Duchess of Sussex to be specific,” said Rahman.



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

“We’re all such great allies, I wish more men acknowledged the hardships women face and actively tried to do their part in attaining equality for all,” said Sakib, shaking his head in disappointment.

Just as the gentlemen were about to declare a tie among themselves and conclude that they are all equally feminist, the new employee, Farhan, joined the lunch table.

“Hey, what are you guys talking about?” asked Farhan. Upon being briefed on the dilemma in hand, Farhan spoke up, “Guess what, I once made a cup of tea for my wife.”

Everyone at the table shuddered in disbelief. Bloodshot and wide-eyed, jaws on the floor, they screamed in unison, “WHAT???”

“Yup,” Farhan replied with a smug look on his face. He knew they were no competition to him.

The three men looked at each other, and without saying a word, agreed that Farhan was the clear winner. Proudly, they picked up Farhan for his *Lion King* moment and held him in the sun’s rays, like Rafiki held Simba upon his birth. They chanted “Alpha male! Alpha male! Alpha male!” and crowned him as the feminist icon of the office.

Nuzhat Hassan Chowdhury is a student of Economics and Finance from North South University.

# THE BANGLADESHI PERSPECTIVE OF DYSLEXIA

HIYA ISLAM

Dyslexia is a learning difference (or a disability) of neurological origin that manifests itself when a person begins learning to read. In Bangladesh, dyslexia is a concept alien to most educators and parents, and many dyslexic people themselves.

Dyslexia can be found in people from all walks of life, if diagnosed well. Although the demographical data is likely to vary, dyslexia is said to affect roughly around 10 percent of the population globally. A study in 2015 revealed a 9.02 percent prevalence rate of dyslexia in the primary schools of Dhaka. Apart from this study, there is only a handful of research that has been carried out in Bangladesh which explains the oblivious attitude of common people to the condition. With further studies encompassing a wider age range, a lot more can be told about the current status of dyslexia in Bangladesh.

Dyslexia is also genetically inherited. The genes in play and the neurobiology of the disorder are yet to be understood completely. If not present in the immediate family, it is highly expected to be existing in the extended family. However, no access to education, unnoticed reading difficulties and general disregard can combine to make it perplexing to ascertain.

In conversation with Muhammad Shamsul Huda, founder of Suriyafaz Dyslexiabd and a self-taught dyslexia tutor, it was revealed that dyslexic students were indeed very much present in the community and are struggling deeply in schools and other academic settings. There is a serious lack of awareness and understanding of this language-based disorder in Bangladesh. This, along with the positive diagnosis of Huda’s nephew, had spurred the creation of this organisation that has been up and running for about 10 years now.

Huda’s journey hadn’t been easy initially. During the early days, he had been frequently mocked by people. However, he had received utmost support from his family, especially his elder brother who had been highly sceptical at first but later changed his beliefs after reading a book on dyslexia.

Dyslexia being a lifelong condition does not equate to illiteracy. With the help of dyslexia tutoring, special needs accommodation and in some cases, individualised plans, dyslexic people can be empowered to read, write and spell on their own. Huda says, “By the age of 25 at most, individuals are capable of learning independently given they are taught using the methods fit for dyslexics.”

Dyslexia has its symptoms occurring over a spectrum ranging from mild to moderate to severe. It is very possible for two dyslexic people to have a different set of symptoms. The signs of dyslexia can appear as early as pre-school and hereafter vary somewhat according to age. During the preschool years, children seem to have a persistent “baby talk” or mispronunciation of familiar words as well as difficulty in learning nursery rhymes and recognition of rhyming patterns. They struggle to remember how words are spelled and confuse letters that look or sound similar. As they struggle to read and spell, a common tendency is to use vague terms such as “stuff” or “thing” to refer to

something and often substitute difficult or new words when reading aloud. They may also skip words. When it comes to speaking, they often have trouble expressing their thoughts. Apart from these tell-tale signs, learners spell the same word correctly and then incorrectly in the same exercise.

Requesting anonymity, Rayed\*, 22, says, “I got to know I have a few symptoms of dyslexia in ninth grade.” Since then, he has been receiving support from dyslexia tutors. He is currently a third-year student studying Economics in a college under the University of Dhaka.

As they grow up, these issues cumulatively become the cause of poor school grades and low self-esteem. As Rayed recounts, “I did not feel good about myself even though I had been trying my best.” Besides linguistic complications, dyslexia leads to poor time management, low power of memorisation and

diagnosis.

In class, they are often labelled as lazy or unintelligent when in fact they are trying harder than their peers to complete the same task. The term “difference” is used in contrast to “disability” because it is a more strengths-based definition and makes it clear that dyslexic people simply learn differently than others do. And this is where Bangladesh struggles.

“There are hardly any schools that take dyslexia seriously,” says Huda. To create an inclusive environment for dyslexic students, the problem needs to be targeted at the core of the teaching profession – teachers’ training programs. If trainers are made aware of this underlying issue, future educators will be better-equipped when dealing with dyslexia. Simultaneously, students won’t have to tolerate a discouraging environment and have a chance at exploring their abilities. “Most of the teachers laugh

significant trouble overcoming it. This does not equate to the fact that they cannot succeed in life. For example, Abdullah\*, a 26-year-old who got diagnosed with dyslexia when he was preparing for his IELTS, took the help of Huda’s teaching methods. He is soon to fly to Ulster University in the UK to begin his MBA.

While dyslexic people struggle with organisation, planning and time keeping, they are highly creative. They can be brilliant at three-dimensional thinking, problem solving and at seeing the big picture. In fact, there are many famous people who we don’t know as dyslexic. Some of the greatest minds in history like Albert Einstein and Stephen Hawking were dyslexic. Leonardo da Vinci’s surviving notes and art works suggest he may have had dyslexia as well.

When certain teaching methods are employed, students with dyslexia demonstrate



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

slow physical movement.

Some of these actions frustrate parents and teachers alike and as a result many of them resort to hitting the child as a corrective measure. Huda along with his team has campaigned in many schools till now. After completion, Huda claims that one of the teachers admitted that they no longer hit children when they struggle and instead, they employ the teaching methods they have been shown.

Mother of 22-year-old Sheikh Md Riyadul Islam states, “I wouldn’t realise [it] in any other way.” Like her, there could be many more unaware parents. Some parents also associate stigma with the condition and refuse to talk. Like dyslexia, it is possible that other learning differences such as dyscalculia and dysgraphia, can go undiagnosed leading to greater number of drop-outs. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, also known as ADHD can also co-exist with dyslexia. It is considered to be a mental disorder and requires a different

it off or pass it as autism, which is entirely different,” he later adds.

After Huda had started Suriyafaz Dyslexiabd, he received support and training via international collaborations such as Nancy Young (Canada), Dyslexia Daily (Australia), and Breaking Through Dyslexia (India). With the help he had received, he formulated a number of screening tests for his students to gauge their extent of dyslexia, as well as other resources for school teachers. This is an informal evaluation which is sufficient to conclude if a child has dyslexia or not and is usually done by dyslexia tutors. As opposed to informal, there is a formal kind of evaluation conducted by a team of doctors and licensed educational psychologists. With a formal attestation, dyslexic people would have the chance to apply and ask for special accommodation when it comes to examinations.

Dyslexia is different for everyone. People with a mild form may eventually learn how to manage while others may have

an improvement in scores. It is necessary to continue campaigning about dyslexia as well as other learning differences so that more people feel encouraged to seek help. At the same time, there is a need for professional services and qualified experts who would lead these campaigns and help in diagnosis.

\*Names have been changed upon request

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Hiya loves food that you hate by norm – broccoli, pineapple pizza and Bounty bars. Find her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com



# EDU: Pioneer of “Flipped Classroom” in Bangladesh

## SHOUT DESK

The Covid-19 pandemic has laid bare the truth that without leadership, innovation, and adaptability, it is impossible to survive let alone make a difference. In the education sector, the probable effect is much more intense compared to other industries. From the beginning of the coronavirus outbreak, traditional classrooms were forced to go online, but facilitating classes online is challenging if the educators are not trained, willing to adapt, and commit to keeping up the quality of education delivered.

At the current stage of the online study, East Delta University (EDU), realised the need for a novel endeavour. They took the lead and planned to “flip the classroom” to make the learning process smoother with asymmetric teaching methodology. EDU introduced the “Flipped Classroom”, the latest trend in the global education arena, as the first university in Bangladesh.

## FLIPPED CLASSROOM

A “flipped classroom” is a type of blended learning strategy where students are introduced to a topic by utilising recorded video content and textbook at home. Then, in the classroom, they are given a brief lecture on that particular topic, and after that, students will receive assignments and projects to practice both in classrooms and from the comfort of their homes. This strategy is the reverse of the conventional approach practiced throughout Bangladesh’s educational institutions, Sayeed Al Noman, the Founding Vice Chairman of EDU, expressed.

the School of Business, said, “All the joys of university life are on campus. As it’s been closed for a long time, it feels like we have forgotten the joy of studying at the university.”

When EDU asked students to join campus to implement the Flipped Classroom strategy, they responded to this call with great interest. They are now participating in the class on a rotation basis.

Student Nahin Chowdhury said, “Chatting and roaming with friends in the canteen or university premises after class, singing the chorus to the guitar’s tune, talking with the faculties -- these are what university life means to me. Now, I am coming to the campus by contacting my friends whenever I get a chance. I also feel safe as the university takes necessary measures to ensure the safety of those coming to the campus.”

EDU has also taken necessary precautions to provide the best possible safety measures to those entering its premises. It has implemented the “Campus Movement Protocol”, which all personnel must adhere to.

## TRANSFORMATION TO ONLINE/LIVE CLASSROOM

This is not the first time EDU has taken innovative steps to open the door to new ideas. From the start of the lockdown, EDU actively participated in finding and implementing different means to facilitate the students. Two weeks prior to the official announcement of educational institutions’ closure in March 2020, the university adopted a strategy to shift everything online.

data per month for faculties and students to make online access and participation seamless. EDU was the pioneer in taking such measures from the early stages of the lockdown. Grameenphone actively participated in this landmark initiative by providing the students with a special SIM card where they sent the data bundle every month on behalf of EDU. A few months later, another survey found that students were joining online classes with great enthusiasm and energy.

## ASSESSMENT PROCESS SYNCED WITH LATEST INNOVATION

During the lockdown period, arranging examinations as well as motivating students to adapt to this new normal, came as a

tion. Students were given the opportunity to register for the next semester automatically. EDU tried its utmost to support the students in the smooth continuation of their studies.

## CONTINUATION OF SALARY-BONUS

Due to the pandemic and its associated complications, EDU had to go through extreme challenges. The university authority struggled to manage organisational activities. In spite of this, the university authorities have kept the full salary-bonus and retained the regular promotions. While many institutes were seen trimming salaries of employees in Chattogram as new student enrolment immensely dropped, not only did the EDU authority provide



PHOTOS: EDU

He said, “We are offering a variety of avenues for our students to choose from to continue their education and set the pace for their autonomous learning. Moreover, a few students are coming to the campus while the rest of the same section attend classes from home, simultaneously. We are calling it a blended learning experience, both on-campus and online. Our faculty members and students are actively practicing the flipped classroom strategy that we have implemented from the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester. The ideas of both blended learning and flipped classrooms are very new in our country, and we are pioneering the adoption while testing its feasibility.”

Even with active participation, the students were very keen to return to the campus. Mashfia Rahman, a student from

From the very next day, EDU went forward with full-fledged online classes, and since then, no classes have been suspended till date. This has been the result of careful long-term planning and investment. Such transformation was possible at the right moment because of continuous digitisation and modernisation since its inception.

## BREAK THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

EDU conducted multiple surveys prior to and following the online classes. It raised some issues in addition to sincere compliments. The primary concern that came to light was the connectivity issue. Since internet facilities are not the same all around, Sayeed Al Noman took the “Breaking the Digital Divide” initiative to solve it.

Under the “Breaking the Digital Divide” initiative, the university decided to provide 30 gigabytes of free internet

great challenge. EDU’s traditional assessment model consisted of class attendance, one or two assignments, a few class tests, midterm and final exams. Inside the assessment model, most emphasis was put on mid and final term examinations. Since the classroom is flipped and students are doing more than usual, it was found to be a standard best practice of constantly assessing their efforts and grading them as they move forward with a class/lesson/topic.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH COURSERA

It was postulated that students, faculty members, and admin staff would have extra time to learn new things during the days of lockdown. To make the most out of those trying times, the institute partnered with Coursera. The successful MOOC platform hosts more than 4,500 general and certification courses offered by renowned universities worldwide. More than 3000 enrolments were recorded from the students, instructors and staff on the platform in a wide variety of courses.

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO STUDENTS

Realising the crisis from an early stage of the pandemic, EDU removed all bars on different fees. Late fees were revoked, the deadline for all due payments was relaxed and payments in instalments were introduced. To keep the flow of providing services as an educational institute and to carry out various types of expenses, including salaries and allowances of the employees during the pandemic, it was crucial to have the funds. However, EDU took a stand not to force the students regarding clearing their payments despite the situa-

the full salary-bonus but they carried it out in time. This initiative was highly commendable among the employees and was a great example set by the authorities. More than three hundred employees are currently working on EDU as faculty members, officials and staff. The university spends BDT 40 lakhs per month on salaries, which was a considerable amount when the income was almost zero during the lockdown period.

EDU were able to stay by the side of every staff member, providing their families with the necessary support during this difficult time of the pandemic.

## AWARDED OVER 30 EMPLOYEES

When layoffs, intermittent promotions and other benefits became a common practice worldwide job market in the coronavirus outbreak, EDU took the opposite approach. The authorities honoured 33 teachers and officials of the university in five categories for their extraordinary leadership and responsible role apart from the university’s regular responsibilities from the very beginning of the pandemic. Along with a crest, the authorities also provided financial incentives of BDT 12 lakh for the honour. The Abdullah Al Noman Employee of the Year award went to Prof. Dr Rokibul Kabir, Associate Dean of the School of Business among the teachers and Mofazzal Uddin, Assistant Manager, IT & Innovations among the administration. In addition, 31 others received awards in four categories, namely Faculty Leadership Award, Staff Leadership Award, Faculty Performance Award and Staff Performance Award.



**UPOMA AZIZ**

"What's the largest sum of money you've seen at a time?"

I don't remember who asked this. Could have been him, could have been me. What I remember are the important details; the stars burning in our palms, leaving stardust all over our shoes. Our clothes damp, our eyes dry as we stare into the startling nowhere, beyond the racecourse of vehicles. There was no home in sight, so we would walk aimlessly before hanging like a mocking half moon from the foot-over bridge. I remember the darkness where his canine was supposed to be when he smiled.

Asad was a brother to me. Fifteen minutes prior to the schedule, we would trail down the gap-toothed stairs, waiting for the last bus. There was something haunting in the fog that spun itself around the bus, like a craftily placed curse. Half in sleep and another half in daze, we reached our destination. We lived the same day over and over again. But we played dress up and so did the world, to make it seem like one day was different from the other. It was not. That is, till the day of the reckoning. How much money had I seen; pinched through my thumb and index at a time?

We worked the same job, in the same place. The low ceilings of the shop and the bitter sin of not having been enough bent my neck permanently in an odd angle. He was a foot shorter than I was, the ceiling

could not corrupt him. "Hello, sir. Hello, ma'am," one of us would say, "What are you in need of today? We have excellent quality non-stick fry pans, yes, in all three sizes." He would be up in the front more often than me, though we both used the same phrases we were taught, he said them with conviction, like he too had been using iron skillet all his life. "Won't rust in your lifetime, have you looked at this finishing?" "That one is a heavy bottomed pan ma'am, that steel is stainless." He kept a handkerchief stuffed in his chest pocket to wipe away the froth in the corner of his mouth that bubbled up when he had too much to say. Books were irrelevant but back then, I could read him.

This was not what I envisioned my life to be, but once I was knee deep in the stream, letting the wave push me through life was simply easier. I never had a muse and my imagination too had abandoned me, so in the future in my head, I would keep repeating the same routine, till one day gravity pulled the last grain of sand down, and then we'd drown. In my ignorance about the changing nature of life, I had committed hubris. And till that point the largest sum of money I had seen, held or felt was eight thousand takas. Then he asked me the question. He didn't look at me; he craned his neck out and spoke to the horizon, to the setting sun. "It's a big word. If I were good with big words, I wouldn't be working this job," he contin-

ued on with his monologue, explaining that he was about to die.

"No, he isn't," the thought came to me as a reflex. That was the only time that I heard him talk about his ailment. I made copies of the diagnosis reports; I learned to pronounce the name of the disease which he refused to give power to by calling it out. The retail workers from the neighbouring shops came and went, and a few stayed. The ones who stayed went out with the copies of the report and shoved them into the chests of whoever they found on the road. Between the cardboard boxes with incisions and money orders, the highest amount of money I'd ever cradled began to rise.

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There must be a specific number of times that one has to repeat a lie before it becomes the truth. I do not know that number. But as my daughter asks about my friend, the Prince Asad, every night, I tell her the only truth I know.

"You two were very good friends," she states. "Yes," I confirm. She has heard the story enough times to be able to reproduce it on her own.

"Tell me about how you were there for him, baba," she says, and I tell her the story where her father was a knight in armour – the story where I dumped all the money, well above eight thousand, on the hospital desk and begged them to save Asad. I stood with my dying friend's hand in mine as he

peacefully passed away.

It must have been in some other universe, or in some other life that I never went back to him. Both of us were barely surviving, were we ever alive anyway? If playing with possibilities or mere percentages on my fingertips, pitted against stoic certainty was something I knew how to do, I'd be an entrepreneur instead of a retail worker. With the same conviction he had while educating a possible customer about the vices of buying cutlery from peddlers, Asad had told me that he was about to die. "He must have known," I thought to myself as I double stuffed the corners of my tattered bag with the money enough to save one person. I chose to save myself.

I didn't have an enviable lifestyle, but I lived on better than before. I never forgot the friend I was indebted to – in life and in death. When my child pointed pointlessly at the sky in a ritual I never taught her, to compare the dead to the stars, sometimes I couldn't help thinking that while Asad had metamorphosed into a celestial luminary, I was the stardust under our soles. And once in a while during a serein, when the rain would descend from the cloudless sky right after the first stars emerged, the fine mist of water on my skin felt like a wrathful spit.

*Upoma Aziz is a slouching, crouching, grouchy time bomb too tired to go off. Tell her to declutter her room and her mind at [fb.com/upoma.aziz](https://fb.com/upoma.aziz)*



# Let This Summer Pop, With Popsicles

**ELORA MAJUMDER**

Since the time we were toothless, the first ice cream most of us got a taste of were the orange and lemon-flavoured popsicles, popularly known as "Lolly" in Bangladesh. This frozen summer dessert made its debut even before the 90s kids were born and has been popular ever since.

When it comes to cooling off in the summer heat, there's nothing better than indulging with an ice-cold popsicle. Heaven on a stick, they are easy to make at home, too. All you need are some fruits, chocolates, some more ingredients, wooden sticks, and a bit of patience.

The only difficult part? Figuring out which of the amazing popsicle recipes to make. Let's try a few.

**Watermelon Ice Pops:** Cool and refreshing, with no artificial colours or flavours.

You will need: Half cup water; 1½ cups watermelon, seeded and diced; 1 tbsp honey; 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice; and 1 tbsp white sugar.

Blend all the ingredients until smooth. Pour mixture into ice pop moulds and freeze until solid, for about six hours.

Run warm water over ice pop moulds for a few seconds to unmould if needed.

**Banana Choco Chip:** The ripe bananas have a wonderful creamy consistency when frozen, and the rich chocolate coating is delicious.

You will need: Ripe bananas (peeled and halved across); 1 pack of semisweet chocolate chips; butter; and coconut (or any other flakes) as desired.

Insert a stick into the end of each banana and freeze for two to three hours. Melt the chocolate and butter, stirring it well. Dip the frozen bananas into the melted chocolate. Roll in coconut and place the dipped bananas on the wax paper-covered baking sheet, and freeze until the chocolate is firm.

**Green Mango Pops:** This raw mango popsicle has a lot of benefits and is also a refreshing summer treat.

You will need: Two raw mangoes (chopped); half a cup mint leaves; 1 cup powdered sugar; 1 tsp cumin powder; and 1 tsp rock salt, to taste.

Blend all the ingredients together. Pour the mixture into ice pops moulds with sticks, freeze overnight or for hours. You can also add a pinch of red chilli powder for some heat.

**Double Chocolate Frozen Fudge:** Make frozen fudge pops without a packaged pudding mix.

You will need: White sugar; corn starch; cocoa powder; milk; vanilla extract; butter; and semisweet chocolate chips. Take the ingredients as needed.

Combine the sugar, corn starch, cocoa powder and milk in a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a simmer, add vanilla and butter. Refrigerate until cool. Stir the chocolate chips into the cooled chocolate mixture. Pour into moulds and freeze until firm, for about four to six hours.

**Dreamy Creamy Mango Pops:** They have a softer "bite-able" texture rather than a hard, icy texture, bursting with fresh mango flavour.

You will need: Mangoes, peeled and chopped; almond milk; a pinch of honey; and naturally sweetened vanilla yogurt.

Blend it all together and pour into the moulds with sticks and freeze overnight.

**Blueberry Yogurt Pops:** Protein-filled blueberry yogurt pops that are great for summer.

You will need: One container Greek yogurt; fresh blueberries as needed; and honey.

Blend yogurt, blueberries, and honey together in a blender until smooth. Pour into small plastic cups with wooden sticks added at the end. Freeze until pops are solid, for about four to five hours.

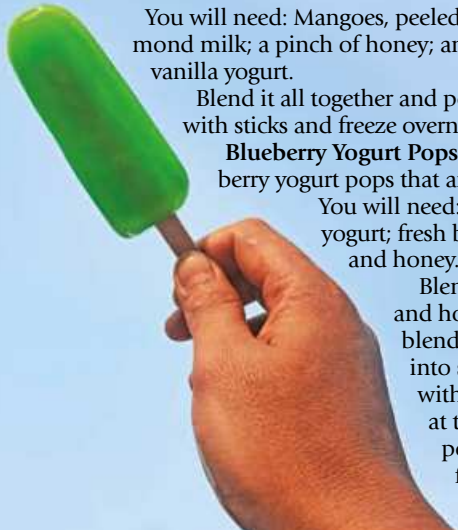


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA



PHOTO: STAR

# AS WE GREW UP, SO DID BANANI ROAD 11

**RASHA JAMEEL**

Banani's Road 11 wasn't always the hustling and bustling social hotspot that it is today. As a part of the Banani from the bygone days, the iconic "Road 11" was initially intended to serve as a residential area. However, despite being billed as such, the street didn't exactly garner the kind of popularity it was supposed to, at first.

A limited number of houses dotted the 1.3 km long street, which ended at the lake separating Gulshan from Banani. Road 11, sometime in the 90s, was a pretty ideal location for a nice afternoon walk or perhaps an evening stroll. There was a strong sense of community spirit there, just about everyone on the street knew everyone. Members from each building would gather every now and then to either celebrate a special occasion, or to just pass the time with some good old-fashioned gossip. A pretty tight-knit community, it was.

The year 2008 brought a rather unexpected change to Road 11. A bridge was being constructed across the Gulshan Lake, finally easing transport between the two areas. This set in motion a chain of events which saw Banani's Road 11 take on a new form quite drastically, going from a seemingly quiet residential street to a heavily sought-after commercial location. Some people began moving out, relocating to a less-busy environment suitable for a home. The others began to rent out their spaces in their residential buildings to accommodate small businesses.

In the words of Fauzia Sultana Mahbub, a long-time resident of the street, Road 11 had gradually lost its community spirit over time. "It started with the construction of the bridge," Mahbub says, "Road 11 very soon became

devoid of that wholesomeness. There was a time when my friends and I would play around the neighbourhood and befriend members of the adjoining WAPDA colony. Now I don't even know much about the neighbours next door."

Gradually, larger businesses moved in with their offices. Within a decade, Banani Road 11 had fully transformed into a commercial hub. There was now a pharmacy every two minutes along the street, and countless eateries and fashion stores, you name it.

According to Samiha Khan, who frequents Road 11, Banani's most iconic street has evolved into a more diverse location, boasting a wide range of lifestyle stores catering to people from various different backgrounds, instead of just Banani locals. She says, "I like how much variety the shops have there. There are *deshi* stores, and there are ones offering more Americanised clothing options; 500 eateries with different cuisines, and whatnot. There are people of all ages having a good time at Road 11 these days."

Banani's Road 11 in present day doesn't look anything like how I remember it from my childhood. It doesn't look anything like how my mother remembers it either. During her time, a shop of any kind was hard to come across on Road 11. And now her own daughter is spoiled for choice amongst Aarong, Puma, Noir, Tarka, Burger King, and Pizza Hut. God knows what my nieces and nephews will come to witness on Banani's Road 11. One thing remains certain, though: the street continues to be as iconic as ever.

*Rasha Jameel is your neighbourhood feminist-apu-who-writes-big-essays. Remind her to also finish writing her bioinformatics research paper at rasha.jameel@outlook.com*