

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY JULY 1, 2021, ASHAR 17, 1428 BS

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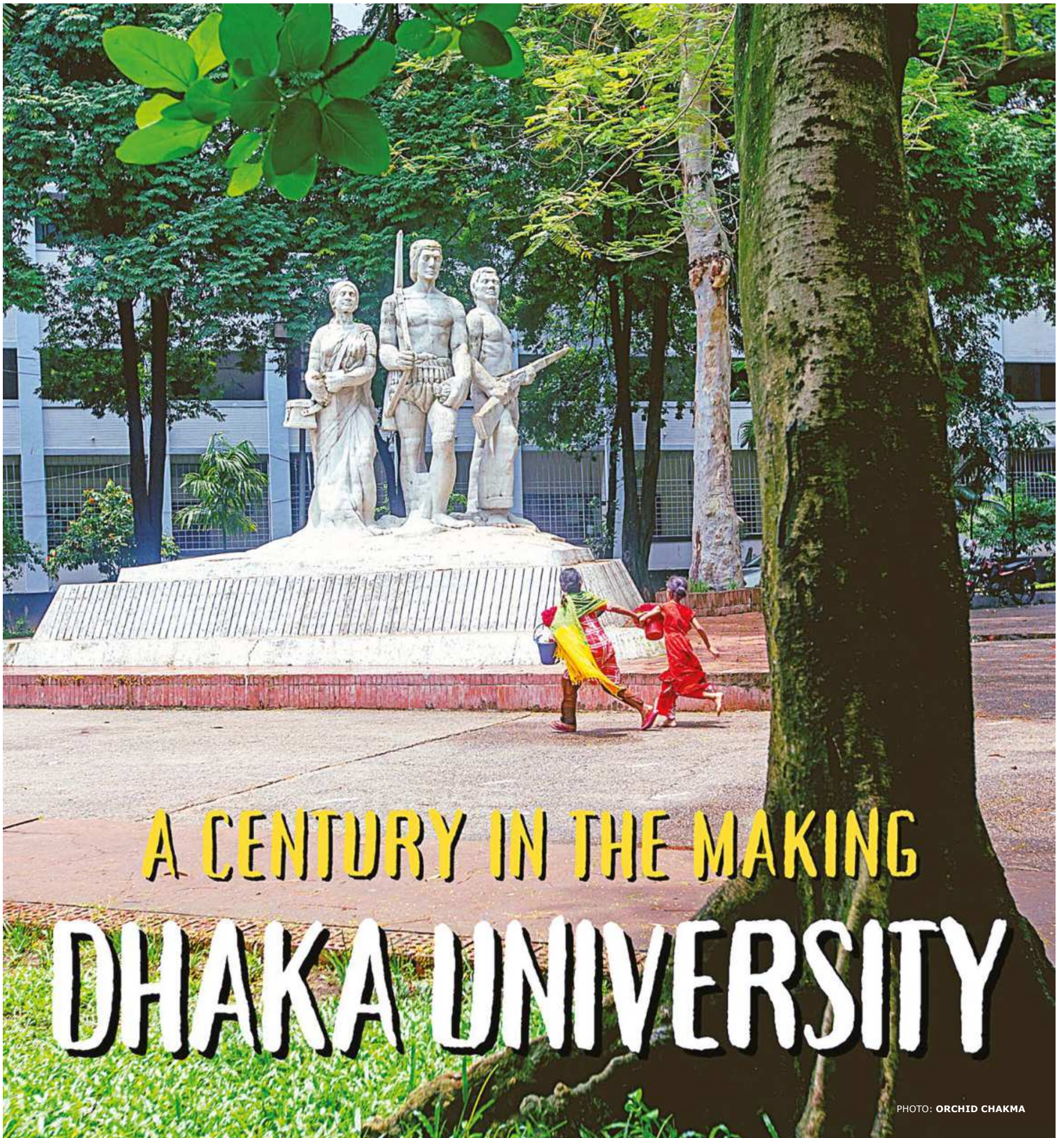


THE GENERATIONS OF
NOSTALGIA AT DHAKA
UNIVERSITY

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A SUBTLE EMPTINESS AT
DHAKA UNIVERSITY

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A CENTURY IN THE MAKING

DHAKA UNIVERSITY

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

EDITORIAL

Growing up, my family would always have Friday morning breakfast together. Everyone had to wake up in time for breakfast, no excuse. I never complained much because I enjoyed the food and more importantly, I enjoyed the weekly ritual my dad and I would follow. We would sit with the paper and trade pages one at a time. I would save Rising Stars, and later SHOUT, from the week to read during Friday morning breakfasts. I'd highlight the songs from the mixtape, giggle at the horoscopes which often made no sense to me and stare at the beautiful illustrations to understand the messages they may contain. I still have cutouts of some of my favourite cover illustrations.

As I write my first editorial on SHOUT, I feel a little nostalgic, and might I say maybe even a little proud of myself for getting here. A little part of me feels excited every time I get to read an article before it gets published. After all, what can be better for a fan than to have the privilege of reading an issue before it's even published?

-- Syeda Afrin Tarannum, Sub-editor, SHOUT



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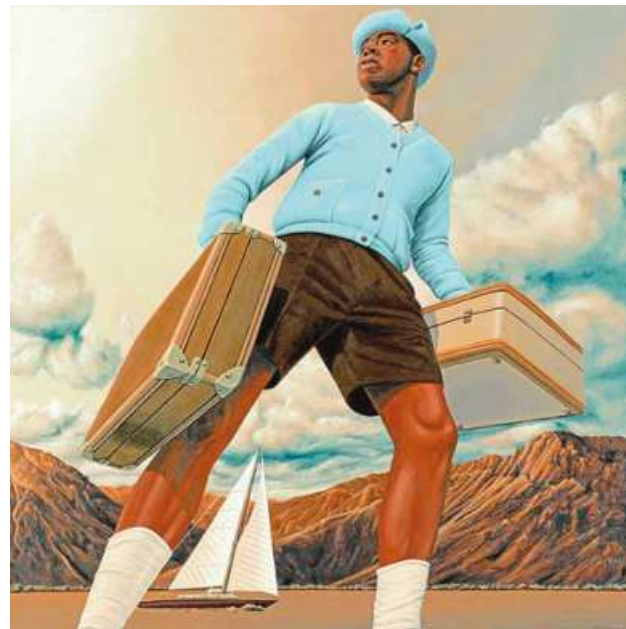
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PLAYWATCH

ALBUM REVIEW



Tyler, the Creator Creates Magic Yet Again

SHAYOR HAMID

American rapper Tyler, the Creator delves into the musical past of his own discography and influences while venturing uncharted territories in his sixth studio album *Call Me If You Get Lost*.

After releasing his Grammy-winning album *Igor*, not much from Tyler was heard in the last two years. And then recently, a mysterious billboard with the words "CALL ME IF YOU GET LOST" appeared in Los Angeles, which later turned out to be a promotional billboard for the rapper's upcoming album.

Unlike his last albums, *Call Me If You Get Lost* does not have the narrative flow of a concept album, but continues the tradition of introducing new characters. Tyler plays Tyler Baudelaire, borrowing the last name of the famous French poet, Charles Baudelaire.

The album starts with "Sir Baudelaire" featuring DJ Drama who is featured throughout the album, which is reminiscent of the famous hip-hop mixtape series *Gangsta Grillz*. "Sir Baudelaire" is a laid-back track with Tyler rapping about the lavish lifestyle of a famous rapper.

"Corso" picks up the pace with stories of festivities and fast-paced life, but ends with a story of how the singer got his heart broken, and his failed attempt at filling that void. "WusYaName" is a throwback to the sound Tyler made famous on his album *Flower Boy*. The aggression returns with the album's first single "Lumberjack". The vicious drums used in the track were a staple of *Gangsta Grillz*. The composition of "Hot Wind Blows" is made of flute-like synth, with

the legendary Lil Wayne delivering an excellent and lyrical verse.

"Massa" has Tyler contemplating the contrast between the slavery era and the opulent lifestyles of individuals like Tyler in modern day America. He expresses his paranoia about his lack of emotional connections with people despite his accumulated wealth. One of my favourites on the album, "RunItUp", lends the voice of the fresh and creative Teezo Touchdown, with the composition consisting of celebratory horns and a memorable hook which makes you feel like the protagonist in a 90s rap video.

"Manifesto" has a comedic intro that provides a suitable carpet for lines about Twitter activism. "Sweet / I Thought You Wanted to Dance" is a two-part story about falling in love and losing that person to someone else, with both compositions drowning in Tyler's signature melodic style.

At the end of the album, "Juggernaut" is a bass-heavy number with Lil Uzi Vert delivering one of his career-best verses. "Wilshere" is the longest track on the album. In this story, he sings about falling in love with his friend's other half and the painful confusion that ensues in his mind. The album closes with the strong "Safari" which feels like a celebration for both Tyler as well as the listener. Tyler, the Creator has solidified his place as one of the greats of this generation. This is an album that his fanbase and critics alike will cherish. It is a long listen, but it never fails to stay fresh with a little something for anyone who has a favourite among Tyler, the creator's diverse discography.

satire.

How to Start a Youth Organisation

ARYAH JAMIL

Listen, we're all on the same boat here. A couple of months left until university/college applications and you've suddenly come upon the realisation that you have no extracurriculars and your CV is looking pretty dry. You curse your parents for not forcing you into a thousand different hobbies at age two and set out on your own journey of CV building. You only have three months to do as much as possible and pray that the admissions officer doesn't see through it. You stumble upon the concept of youth organisations, and after going through 739 Facebook recruitment posts you realise that you won't just join a youth organisation, you are going to start your own. But how?

Follow these steps to build a "youth org", and remember your existence will be a tautology to the actual problem you're trying to fix. It doesn't really matter if you're there or not.

STEP 1

Find your cause but make sure you're raising awareness and capitalising on your privilege by becoming "The Voice of the Voiceless" because power and privilege totally aren't limited resources and you definitely need to add your voice into the narrative instead of amplifying those who have lived said experiences.



STEP 2

Build your team. Throw up a recruitment post and watch like-minded CV builders pour into your inbox. See, they need dramatic titles to make themselves feel important. Using Canva templates and fancy fonts doesn't sound great; let's call it Head of Social Media. Sending a "please like and follow" isn't going to cut it, call it Head of Marketing. Make sure your first 12 posts are announcing every

member of your made-up departments.

STEP 3

Start the work and spread the news. Make your research team rephrase Wikipedia articles and insert them into the same four overused templates, maybe you can really spice up your content and add some stickers and stock images. Remember you can only post infographics of whatever is trending on Twitter. If you're a news page, be sure to have a graphic designer who

carries the entire account on their back. You have to make them put in hours of their time and not pay them a penny for their work. Exposure to your school friends is the best compensation, right?

STEP 4

Add CEO/Founder to your Instagram bio because everyone knowing about your work is more important than your actual work. Bonus points if your "organisation" has a single Bangla word as a name which has some vague association with your purpose. When you leave for college or university, and so do your friends, your page will become another 600-follower page that has been abandoned after it has served its purpose.

So, you've built your youth organisation or have a plan of action ready to go. Let's meet Zameer, founder of a "youth organisation". He lives in Norway in his own little privilege bubble. He writes about poverty and protest pieces on his MacBook Pro and adds his voice-overs to trauma ASMR. Zameer's organisation is called "Zameer's Stick", he has a brilliant unpaid graphic designer, and adds nothing new to the narrative. He is like the news if it was a month late and only did it for views.

Aryah Jamil is mediocre at everything except laughing at their own jokes. Tell her to stop talking at jamil.aryah@gmail.com

Finding the Right Balance Between Academic and Social Life

AYRA AREEBA ABID

Reconsider the times you spent an awful amount of time *only* studying. As a student, studying is essential, I agree. However, have people (especially Bangladeshi parents) stopped to think that life for the youth is so much more than "porashona"?

Time management is imperative. Forget what procrastination is and focus on what is essential to you as an individual. Press your ears and listen to none but yourself. As clichéd as it sounds, follow your heart. You will never regret using your heart as a map, especially when you are lost and in dire need of a guide. Your youth cannot be salvaged once it passes. So, I urge you to find your voice.

It is alright to go at your own pace because life is not a race but having a definite routine can help make sure you are on the right track. If you are interested in something, it is likely that you will be attracted to it like a magnet. Attraction is inevitable. Once you discover your forte, keep brushing upon it to prevent your skill(s) from becoming rusty.

Invest your free time in video calling or at least texting friends and family to stay in touch. Cherish your connections. Pour the significant amount you spend on social media to events that will keep you engaged with the brighter side of life. If you are an introvert, you can definitely immerse yourself in books because sometimes we socialise better with fictional characters than actual people.

Nevertheless, I encourage you to go out there, show what you have to offer the world and fly free like a butterfly out of your cocoon instead of keeping to yourself, which might deliver warmth but will always restrict you from the beauty of life. Who likes restrictions anyway?

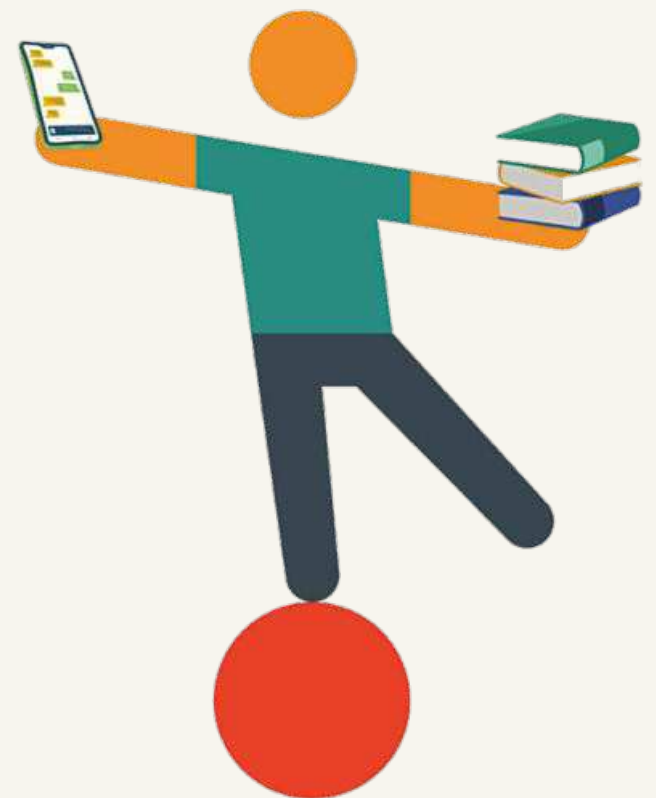
Search for the right balance. There are people who pull all-nighters, forgo all sorts of leisure activities and entirely focus on school grades only. I believe this is absolutely unhealthy, both physically and mentally.

Nawal Naz, soon flying off to start her undergraduate studies at Yale University this fall, says, "I think for the students who focus solely on grades, it's important for them to understand that there's a life beyond the margins of a textbook."

She adds, "I agree with you: it's very unhealthy and I have gone through that myself and I have nothing but regrets. There's a world beyond academic pursuit and I think the sooner we start to realise that, the less regrets we'll have."

There must be something that attracts you. Do not repel if you hate repentances. Acing grades can become easier if you are happy and happiness arrives along with peace. The latter can be truly sensed only when the see-saw called life is balanced.

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



The Generations of Nostalgia at Dhaka University

NAHALY NAFISA KHAN

Today's date marks the 100th anniversary of University of Dhaka, also called Dhaka University or in short, DU; the first university of the country, established in the British colonial era. Naturally, the history of the university is intertwined with the history of the country itself, and even that of the sub-continent in many ways. The experiences of the students belonging to different eras have evolved differently as well.

To us, the current generation of DU students, the experience of the university is marked by many little things. Whether it be tea stalls run by our beloved "mamas" at TSC, the overly sweet lemonade at Shadow, the music and the festivals, the long walks through Suhrawardy Udyan and Fuller Road and countless other experiences that add to the memories of our campus life every day.

Apart from all that, the years we spend in the university are in many ways the formative years of our lives. The friends we make, the stories we live together and the culture that encircles our lives play a huge role in shaping us as individuals. Many of us had a particular fascination with this university due to the history associated with it, but that was not it. It was also the stories our parents told us from their university days that helped forge this fascination even stronger.

What was it like for our parents, who went to Dhaka University decades ago?

I spoke to my friend Tasfia Tasneem, recent alumnus and currently a Master's enrollee in the Department of English. Tasfia's mother, Sultana Akhtar, attended Dhaka University in the early 80s and graduated from the Department of Sociology. According to her, the overall environment was much safer back in her day, with her peers being very cooperative and open-minded.

Tasfia's opinions about her university life are different, however. "I think my mother's experience is significantly different from mine," she says. "Back then, students from different cities, and of different ideologies and morals, lived under the same roof. We still have that but anyone having a different viewpoint from the majority gets singled out or coloured. We don't have that harmonious coexistence among different groups of students anymore. The environment, to say the least, has become toxic in my opinion."

Sultana Akhtar was a resident student, and a large portion of her campus life was marked by cultural activities, as her friends and classmates were culturally active. Although Tasfia never had the experience of being a resident student, she thinks the culture at DU is something that has positively influenced her life as well.

Dhaka University has been a hub for promoting and nurturing different forms of art since the beginning. This environment alone has created many talented writers, singer-songwriters and artists in the past and continue to do so in the present. The trends have well adapted to the changes in taste among the students brought by the time. The presence of pop culture is evident almost everywhere, from John Lennon and Sanjeeb Choudhury to Pink Floyd and Che Guevara graffiti scattered all over the campus. The movie screenings and concerts add more to this experience.

"As an individual interested in arts and culture, Dhaka University was a great fit for me because it has a lot to offer in this

regard," Tasfia expresses.

Back in our parents' days, political activism in the university campus was far more prominent. The legacy is powerful, with the history of the birth of the country being associated with this university, which years later was followed by a major democratic movement in the 1990. Politics was a major part of the campus, and the communication between politically-involved students and regular hall residents was much better, according to Sultana Akhtar.

Tasfia, however, draws a stark difference in her experiences from her mother's in this regard.

"Now, most students seem unaware of what's happening in the real world. However, the movements in 2018 followed by the 2019 DUCSU election after 28 long years were crucial in initiating a change, and I believe that the situation with the political awareness among students is getting better with time," she says.

Slowly but surely, the times they are a-changin', and hopefully for the better.

The experiences with the aesthetics of campus life seem to change every year, though, in the name of "development", among other things. Just the year before our batch got into the university, the streets in the university area would be lit up by warm and yellow hues of the sodium lights in the evening. The name "Sodium Batir Gaan" was inspired by this evening view of the campus. Sodium Batir Gaan became a musical event very close to our hearts over the last couple of years and is still going strong, while the sodium lights were replaced some four or five years ago. Nostalgia remains, if not the sight. And this is how it's going to be for the future batches as well. Case in point: while we initially had a campus life that wasn't marked with the changes brought by the construction of the metro rail, it will never be the same again for the future generations of the students.

Despite many things that we wish to change about this institution, it is still the place for us where we got to live the best years of our lives.

"I had a good time on the campus. In a way, I feel very lucky to be part of a department that always promoted free-thinking. I encountered teachers that I absolutely loved as well," shares Tasfia.

The University of Dhaka has witnessed many things; things as great as the birth of a nation, and as small and personal as the making of beautiful friendships, memories, ideas and cultures. These are the stories that live on, and get passed onto the next generations. So, no matter how different the experiences are, the rose-tinted glasses of nostalgia resonate with all the generations the same way, from our grandparents to parents and now to us, bringing back the homesick blues.

Nahaly Nafisa Khan is a sub-editor at Toggle, The Daily Star.

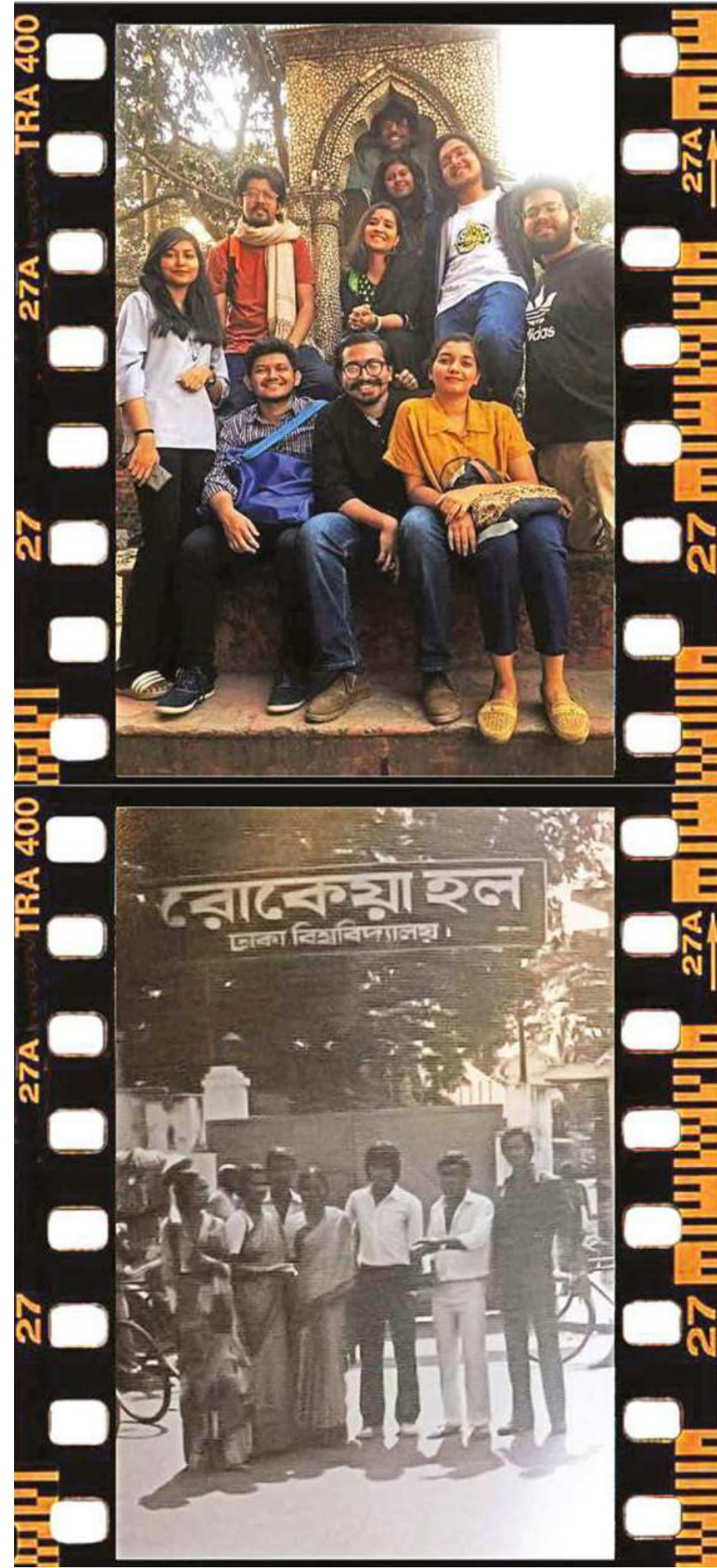


PHOTO: COURTESY COLLAGE: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Life in the Hallowed Halls of DU

H. RAINAK KHAN REAL

The University of Dhaka (DU) occupies a special place in the hearts of Bangladeshis as the flagbearer of our struggle for independence, which eventually led to the birth of our nation.

Exactly a hundred years ago, on July 1, 1921, the university formally began its academic activities with just three faculties, 12 departments and three residential halls for students. Today, on its centenary, DU remains more than just a prestigious educational institution, it is a symbol of pride for our nation. Revered as the country's highest echelon of academic excellence, DU continues to groom outstanding, illustrious students, many of whom have gone on to earn national and international recognition.

Adorned with iconic historical landmarks, the campus of DU was never quite the exclusive possession of its students, but remains a noteworthy socio-cultural hub of Dhaka. For this story, we reached out to the residential students of DU to learn about their daily hall life, and their thoughts on this momentous occasion.

The hall residents usually start their mornings early, since classes in DU can be scheduled as early as 8 AM.

"I am accustomed to waking up early due to my classes, so I usually stroll through the hall field because the fresh, cold morning breeze feels very comforting. As I head towards my department by passing through the Curzon Hall, I'm always captivated by the beauty of this Indo-European architecture," says Mayisha Chowdhury*, resident of Kabi Sufia Kamal Hall, while describing her early morning routine.

About his quotidian afternoon activities, Abdus Salam, resident of Masterda Surja Sen Hall, says, "During lunch break, I grab a bite from the Math department canteen or from the food carts located beside the Central Shaheed Minar. Most of the time, I return to my room after I'm done with my classes to take a quick nap."

Evening is the time of the day every student looks forward to, as some of them head out for work while others engage themselves in a variety of recreational activities.

"My job as a tutor keeps me occupied for three evenings a week. But, when I'm free, I enjoy the evening playing football with my teammates," adds Salam.

The campus of DU offers the perfect hangout spots with plenty of open space, privacy and food carts, the need for which restaurants can't compensate, and the hall residents take full advantage of it. Teeming with life, students are frequently seen occupying their favourite spots, passing time or making memories, often losing track of time completely.

"The pond by Dr Muhammad Shahidullah Hall bears witness to the birth of many friendships and relationships, and the pond itself has its own share of enigmas and superstitions. Being my most favourite hangout spot in the entire campus, I often sit at the eastern ghat with my friends and talk about everything," says Farzana Akhter*, a resident of Shamsun Nahar Hall.

As the night sets in, a sense of responsibility and purpose drives the students to re-evaluate their priorities: some

focus on their studies, some pursue their passions, while others hone their skills, all in the hopes of fulfilling their ambitions.

"The two-three hours after 10 PM is reserved only for myself. This is the window when I get things done. On full moon nights, I race either to the pond by Shahidullah Hall or its rooftop, where I sing out my favourite lyrics or recite the verses of my favorite poetries as I bathe in moonlight. On certain occasions, I even write down a verse or two of my own," Abrar Tazwar, a resident of Dr. Muhammad Shahidullah Hall, recounts his experience.

Late night hangouts around the Kola Bhaban, VC Chatter, Madhu'r Canteen, Social Science Chatter, watching nerve-wracking matches in the hall common rooms, enjoying games of carrom, badminton, and finally wrapping up the night with Bukhari's *chaap* or Mintu's *khichuri* are some of the many experiences which will remain evergreen in the hearts of residential students.

The residential halls, often considered as a home away from home by their residents, are centres where students



from a diverse variety of socio-economic and cultural backgrounds coexist.

"Hall life taught me how to socialise with others, made me more empathetic and introduced me to my wonderful roommates. And with their continuous love and support, I managed to keep my homesickness in check," says Rabita Ahmed*, a resident of Ruqayyah Hall.

Arpita Roy Shawon, a Bangladesh-Kuwait Maitree Hall resident, shares, "I'm proud to have the Maitree Hall as my residence. When the seniors who left the hall years ago come for a visit, especially during Saraswati Puja, I feel thrilled to meet them and hear about their recollections. Since my hall is small compared to other residential halls, the bonding and companionship between my hallmates are even more intimate."

When asked about the perks of living in residential halls, students we spoke to unanimously agreed that the personal freedom and the sense of solidarity among the hallmates is what they love the most.

However, the list of inconveniences which the students face in their hall life is long. "The gono roomsof DU residential halls where a large number of students are

crammed together in extremely unhygienic conditions is a major issue faced by the first-year students who have no choice but to stay at their respective halls," says Hossain Khalid, a resident of Jatir Janak Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall.

"Though cheap, the foods at the hall canteens aren't exactly healthy. In most cases, proper hygiene is not maintained," adds Mayisha*. Hall life can be miserable if a student falls sick often or ends up with unsupportive roommates.

Despite having their fair share of complications, both DU and its residential halls are adored by the students. Students we spoke to appeared to be pretty excited about the centenary of the institution.

In this regard, Arpita comments, "I certainly consider myself very fortunate to witness this historic occasion being a current student of DU. In the 100 years behind its glorious past, the University of Dhaka always played the leading role in tackling national crises, and I believe it will continue to be at the frontline in case any crises arise."

Regarding expectations from DU, Shakib Al Fahad, a resident of Bijoy Ekattor Hall, says, "As DU turns 100, I expect to see modernisation of its classrooms and laboratories. The DU authorities need to renovate the old residential halls, prevent non-students from illegally occupying hall seats and take solid measures to ensure the quality of canteen foods. In addition, I desire to see a litter-free and drug-free campus."

Khalid adds, "The university and the hall authorities need to take the accommodation crisis seriously, fix the longstanding accommodation scarcity and remain vigilant at all times to keep politics out of hall seat allotment. I earnestly hope that DU would prioritise academics and research over picking sides. Through the introduction of modern methods of learning in the classroom, DU should be committed to realise its full potential and strive to be an educational institution of global standard as it once was in the past."

If not for the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, DU's 100th anniversary would have been celebrated in an extravagant manner on campus. "I'm sad that we have to celebrate such a wonderful occasion from home. I would have loved being on campus with my friends, enjoying the centenary celebration programmes and taking lots of photos to commemorate the occasion," says Farzana*.

It is no exaggeration to say that the 100th anniversary of DU is significant not only to its students, but to the nation as a whole. Years down the line, when DU alumni look back, they will inevitably get the sense that it was all better back then. Going down memory lane, the residential students would certainly never run out of intriguing recollections to share with generations to come.

*Names have been changed upon request.

H. Rainak Khan Real studies Geography and Environment at University of Dhaka and can often be found wandering in the vicinity of Curzon Hall.



ECHOES BY
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

A Subtle Emptiness at Dhaka University

I
After my HSC, I stood at a crossroads. I reached a fork where only “two roads diverged”. And I had no option but to take one of the two roads and embrace the next phase in my life. I didn’t formally study Economics till then, but I was aware any decision would be irreversible. Because we’ll always be “sorry [we] could not travel both” roads, like the Robert Frost poem.

When I passed my higher secondary in 1987, the choice of universities was far less than today. Going outside Dhaka was an option, but not feasible because the two best general universities of that time were located in Dhaka city. My choices therefore narrowed down to one of the following two: University of Dhaka, or Jahangirnagar University.

II
My father had studied Economics at the University of Dhaka. He started his journey in 1958, and he was affiliated with Sir Salimullah Hall. Through my father and his friends, I grew up on stories of the University of Dhaka as a centre of many centres. Long before I made the decision on where to go for my higher studies, the University of Dhaka was already in my psyche and imagination.

Later on, in 1970, my father joined the Department of Economics at Jahangirnagar University as an Assistant Professor. He was in the group of the first faculty members to be recruited in Jahangirnagar. As I grew up in its green campus in Savar, the university was slowly building a reputation of its own.

By the end of the 1980s, some departments of Jahangirnagar were already on par with Dhaka. When my time came,



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

I was in a dilemma. I “could not travel both” roads. I also couldn’t go back once the choice was made.

What would it be? Physics, Mathematics, or Economics? Had I known then that Mathematics is much more than just counting numbers, I probably would have gone for the subject, or maybe even Physics. The choice then narrowed down to just Economics. But then again, where? Dhaka or Jahangirnagar? A divine intervention came into play.

I am my late mother’s first-born. All first-borns have a special relation with their mother. I was tempted to leave Jahangirnagar. When I asked my mother for her opinion, she smiled, but with no life in it. My fate was sealed. It was Econom-

ics at Jahangirnagar University.

III
I didn’t regret my decision then, and still don’t to this day. However, there’s always been a silent “what if” that has left a subtle emptiness in my heart.

I was living with my parents at Jahangirnagar, but our family in Dhaka has lived in New Elephant Road from the mid-1950s. Whenever I’d come to Dhaka, the university area was only a walking distance from home. In spite of all its natural beauty, then and still now Jahangirnagar, or any other university, can’t compare with Dhaka University.

As you walk from New Elephant Road towards Katabon, the air starts to smell different. Take a diversion and walk towards

Nilkhet. When you come to the intersection of Katabon, Zahir Raihan Road and Nilkhet Road, the air changes once again. The afternoon sun from the West in New Market tells you, you’ve started to breathe history. No other institution in Bangladesh, or perhaps the world, can give you this feeling.

From day one, the students of Dhaka University are exposed to historical landmarks inside the campus. Zahir Raihan Road stretches out and joins with Dhaka Medical College, BUET, High Court and other iconic landmarks and establishments. Wherever you go, inside and around the campus, the ambience is different.

When I would visit Dhaka University in my student days, there was never a lack of warmth in people accepting me as one of their own. The campus was mine too, just as much as it was theirs, and anybody else’s in Bangladesh. But, that subtle “what if” of an emptiness was also there.

Nowadays, when I cycle around the campus of our oldest university, one-hundred-years-old today, I feel happy. I feel happier when my daughter rides along with me. Even after a century, the campus stands silently and accepts with open arms the child of one university alumnus.

And, who knows? Maybe one day Dhaka University will accept the grandchild, when her turn comes to make a major decision in life.

Asrar Chowdhury teaches Economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com

Korean Ambassador Lee Jang-keun visits IUB campus

A CORRESPONDENT

H. E. Lee Jang-keun, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in Bangladesh visited Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB), one of the leading private universities of the country on June 17, 2021 located at the capital’s Bashundhara Residential Area.

Ambassador Lee met with IUB’s Vice Chancellor Tanweer Hasan, PhD as part of maintaining a bilateral relationship with the university and working together to strengthen the academic and cultural collaboration between IUB and Korean universities. This significant meeting was called by Korean culture expert and eminent film researcher and the Head of the Department of Media & Communication at IUB Professor Zakir Hossain Raju. The Pro-Vice Chancellor, Professor Niaz Ahmed Khan, Treasurer Khandker Md. Iftekhar Haider and Registrar Brig. Gen. (Retd) Md. Anwarul Islam were present during this time.

Ambassador Lee focused on facilitating the setup of the



Korean Language Learning Centre by Korean faculty members and also discussed setting up a Korean Center at IUB with the objective of developing academic and cultural exchanges. This meeting carries a great significance in emphasising IUB’s status as a high-quality international institution in the local and global arena. Professor Hasan shared how

IUB has repositioned its vision and mission.

Later, Professor Raju, who has developed a semester-long course on Korean Cinema and Society which he has been teaching at IUB from 2016, accompanied the Ambassador to the Broadcast Journalism (TV) Lab and Audio Visual Post Production Lab of the Media & Communication Department.

The Ambassador, his entourage and the Dean of School of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences Professor Dr. Taiabur Rahman, Professor Zakir Hossain Raju, and the coordinator of IUB K-Club Raiyana Rahman attended a cultural presentation in honour of the Ambassador.

Ambassador Lee thanked Professor Raju for promoting Korean studies in Bangladesh, particularly in IUB as Korean cinema is taught at leading universities around the globe to discuss Korean studies. This course at IUB is the only such course taught in South Asia under the leadership of Professor Zakir Hossain Raju. The presentation was organised by the IUB K-Club.



UNVEILED

RAMISHA ANAN RAHMAN

Changing the diapers of a fully grown adult is drastically different from removing the soiled diapers of a bawling toddler. The putrid stench emanated in both the scenarios is often indistinguishable to the nose, but when it concerns an adult, it generally comes with a plethora of apologies to the caregiver. Needless to say, it is no nuisance to me. However, my reaffirmations and consolations seldom succeed with the ailing geriatric, whose memory has been plummeting since long before we'd even met.

Mrs. Chowdhury is distant. She seems to have barricaded everyone by an invisible shroud that I am unable to perforate. Perhaps I would have done the same thing, had my brain betrayed me too. At times, she jolts up from her reverie, unable to recall her own name. Having grown very fond of her in the past few months, I often find myself trying to imagine the inexplicable anguish she must feel. An image is often conjured up in my mind of slender tendrils reaching out to each other, only to never quite reach. Other times, the tendrils become entangled, forming a convoluted labyrinth any memory is unable to escape from. Her despondent nature escalates my curiosity, but remains unquenched. After

all, how could I unveil the demons of her past if she herself cannot reconcile her dejection with her buried past?

Her usual melancholic demeanor has seemingly experienced a detour today, however. Her frail frame is draped in a gorgeous saree, and the rouge on her wrinkled cheeks is anything but inconspicuous. Her enticing smile exclaims that the recesses of her mind are cooperating. Ecstatic by the sight of her renewed vigor, I proceed to brew some freshly ground coffee for her. Mere moments pass before all chaos ensues.

"I remember! I remember it all now. Please make it stop!" she cries hysterically, decimating the tranquility in our minds we have both just established. My legs whizz past the kitchen counter and are by her side within seconds, already perplexed as to what could have possibly transpired to earn such a reaction. The trembling of her hands intensifies, and I flinch as the teacup breaks free of her grasp and shatters on the mosaic floor. Her entire body is riddled with tremors, reminding me of a deadly earthquake. I soon connect the dots, realising that the tectonic plates of her brain did not stop at connection, but continued to bombard each other, leaving its remnants in ruins. The inexorable howling and shrieking follows, and the furrows in my brows only

deepen. Failing to decipher what prompted this meltdown, I hold her to my chest as she grapples to escape my hold. She murmurs something imperceptibly into my shoulders, and pulls back to reveal the whites of her eyes that have now turned to fiery vermillion. As her muscles become slightly lax, I nudge her for answers.

An inexorable discomfort spreads through my veins as she relays to me the answers to all the questions my mind has previously posed. In my haste, I had forgotten to sweeten the coffee, the bitter taste of which not only struck her palate, but also her mind. As if the coffee was the only mediator required for bridging the gap between her neurons, it reminded her of the time her son lashed out at her for forgetting to add sugar to his coffee. Her relationship with her son was incredibly strained, and it was only a few days later that her son's family planned for her to leave their home, a sprawling mansion he deemed his mother's presence to be unworthy of. The animosity her son felt towards her was unconquerable, and he soon came to the realisation that he no longer wished to keep contact with the woman who birthed him. Over the years, as she developed dementia, she made the journey to the very home she was exiled from. Surprised by the new inhab-

itants of the house, she fell headfirst into the horrors of depression and memory loss. She never saw her son again.

I had always wondered why Mrs. Chowdhury lives alone while suffering from such a debilitating condition, why she never has visitors, why she never speaks of relatives. Dementia is a monster with an insatiable appetite. It robs you of your own name, so it is no wonder that it also robs you of memories of your past life, including memories of the ones you love. Upon disclosure of what led to her current state, however, it may even be proposed that the disease is not always one's enemy. Some memories are better off locked in a box, with the key thrown into the ebbing river. The burden of certain memories is perhaps too bulky to travel with. Memories can make an irksome companion. Mrs. Chowdhury's one was a parasitic leech, which would nibble away at her brain even if the dementia hadn't.

The cruel twist of fate strikes me. Her feeble attempt at uncovering her identity is always superfluous. What a lamentable situation, to not be able to unveil the cherished memories, but to stumble upon the one memory she wishes to forget.

The writer is currently a student of Pharmaceutical Sciences at North South University.



From Cooking Video to Kitchen Disaster

BUSHRA ZAMAN

Are you an amateur cook or someone trying to find a newfound hobby in cooking while browsing through YouTube videos?

WHAT'S THIS CALLED? HOW'S THAT MUCH?

Imagine pausing a short cooking video to go grab a pen and paper, only to later realise the action was futile because no ingredient names were mentioned to begin with. You could pour random things in a pan too but that would probably not have the same end result as the video.

Was the red thing tomato ketchup or sriracha? Why do all ground pastes and powders look the same? Why do people use terms like "to taste" and "a pinch" when you can just mention the quantities? These are not prehistoric times, you know, we have measurement tools. At this rate, "eyeballing it" is probably a disclaimer that you could be bawling your eyes to.

FINDING REPLACEMENT INGREDIENTS

After having deciphered the ingredients used in the "recipe", you realise that you have not gone grocery shopping in a while and are out of most of the ingredients mentioned, so you begin looking for alternatives.

You find alternative ingredients on the internet, but many of them sound questionable in terms of taste. You wonder if you can really switch soy sauce with fish sauce, and think maybe it is because they are both salty. At this point, you are too. You proceed to question if fish could live in soy sauce but then realise you are procrastinating to avoid actually cooking.

THE MATH BEHIND TEMPERATURES

The recipe mentions a specific temperature, but you are using a pan instead of an oven. You look for another recipe to make the same dish using a pan, but the quantity of chicken breast you have used matches neither of the two recipes.

You try to do the math in your head; you don't even know where to start. You wish this stuff was taught in school instead of the unnecessary bill calculations of some luner who bought 5000 watermelons. You end up having to check every few minutes to see if you have overcooked the chicken. How do you figure this out without cutting it in pieces or chewing bits to check? After all, food poisoning was not what you had in mind when you started cooking.

THE ULTIMATE OUTCOME

You have finally managed to find a video actually mentioning the names and quantities of the ingredients used, but as you begin seasoning the chicken with just salt and pepper, you have concerns over it being too bland. The person in the video seemed to think the end result was delicious so you follow suit anyway.

However, no matter how golden brown your chicken looks on the outside, it tastes nothing but steamed. It finally hits you that that is why you are recommended to season to taste, because taste varies from person to person. Where was this disclaimer in the video?

Let's face it, you'll probably just end up ordering in anyway.

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DECONSTRUCTING CRUSH CULTURE

TAZREEN JAHAN BARI

The celebrity crush culture has been democratised thanks to social media. With just a couple of taps on a lazy afternoon, we can now track someone's every activity without having to interact with them or even let them know that we are obsessing over them, given they have a social media presence. In other words, we engage in a form of parasocial interaction while crushing on someone.

But why do we collectively choose to constantly crush on someone while refusing to confront the messy realities of being in a relationship?

FEAR OF RISK TAKING

Confessing our liking for someone puts us in a vulnerable position where there is a chance we will be rejected, and therefore deemed unlovable or "not good enough" by the person we like. Crushing on someone is thus safer, because there is no possibility of confrontation and/or subsequent rejection.

If a confession results in a full-fledged relationship, then we are again at the risk of getting hurt, exposing the most vulnerable sides of ourselves, and discovering the flaws in a person we previously deemed perfect. Having a crush is exciting partly because we do not have to take these risks.

EXTREME INDIVIDUALISM

Living in 2021 comes with a myriad of downsides, one of which is extreme individualism. Finding oneself on the extreme side of individuality — like we tend to do these days, results in an inability to compromise or give someone space in our personal life.

For people who are extremely individualistic and have difficulty allowing someone in their space, or difficulty making compromises for others, crushing on someone saves them from the realities of being in a relationship.

FANTASY OVER REALITY

Having a crush on someone often involves daydreaming about them. It is also very common for people to create a perfect image of their crush based on their own projected desires. A lot of young girls and boys crush on someone when they want to be in a relationship, but are not emotionally mature enough to handle being in one. Having a crush then is more about the fantasy it creates than the reality we live in. What can be questioned then is an entire generation's obsession with fantasy over reality.

With the use of realism in movies, television series and even social media platforms where the representation of reality is carefully constructed, we cultivate in ourselves a desire to see this same constructed reality in our lives. This obsession with a perfect reality or hyperreality, is also causing us to endorse crush culture — to replace reality with a perfect image of it.

There is nothing wrong with having a crush on someone. If anything, it can be a healthy, self-reflective experience. However, if your obsessive crushing communicates a desire to be in a real relationship, then maybe ask yourself why you keep choosing to avoid acting on it.

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