

THE DEFINITIVE
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SHOUT

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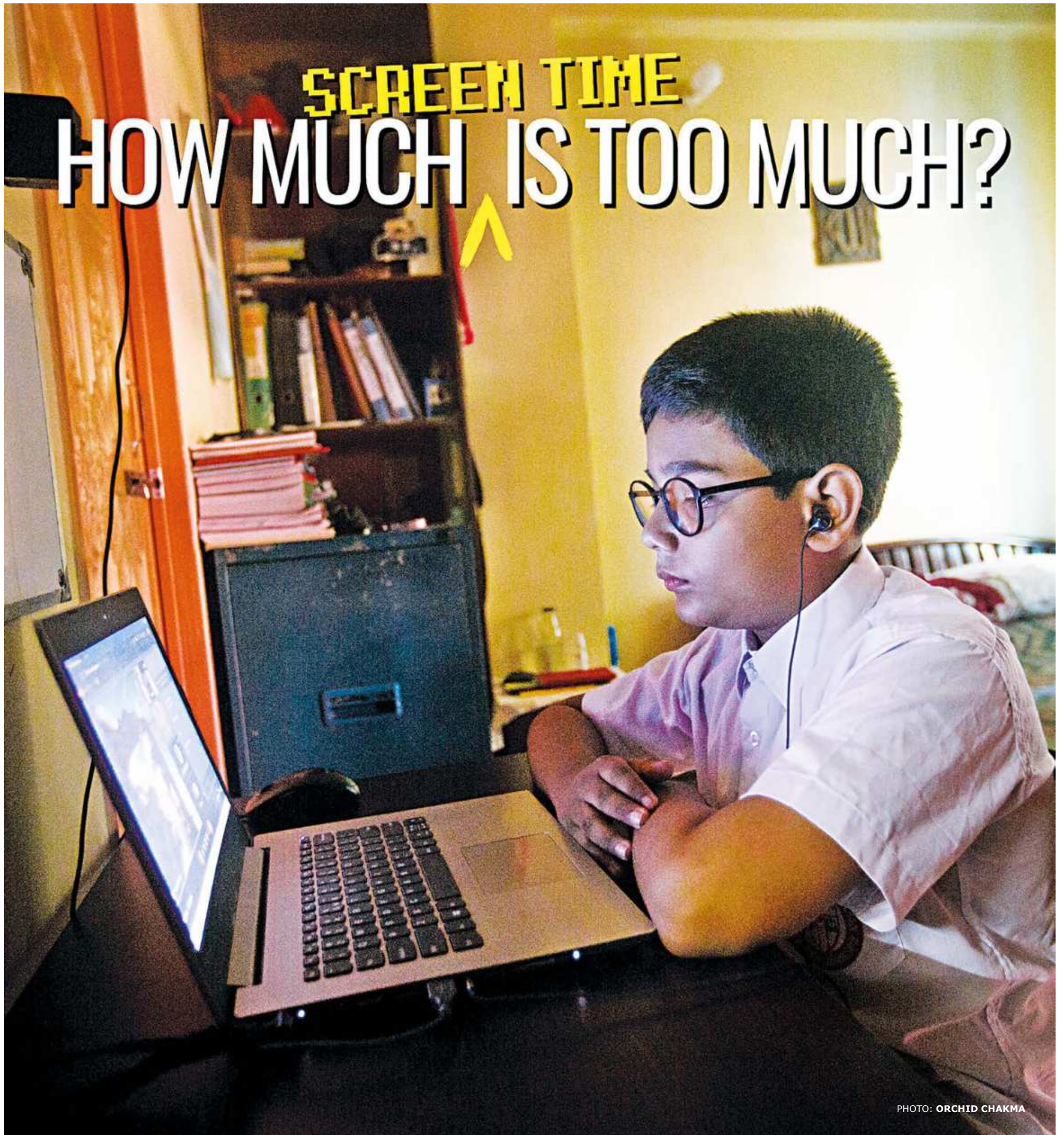


THERE ARE 5 TYPES OF
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BLOGGERS

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SCREEN TIME HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

EDITORIAL

The thing about my to-do lists is that I know I'm not going to get around to doing all of the things on it. It's reassuring to have a list. I like looking at a complete set of things I have to get around to doing. Sometimes I even hear the list in my own voice when I'm reading it out in my head.

In the process of finding the perfect place to have my lists (the notes app I don't like, and the reminders app sends way too many alarms for my anxiety-suffering self to cope with), I found the joy of texting reminders to myself. The tech genius that I am, I didn't know this was a thing that could be done. Besides the obvious perks such as me being online every time I send myself a message, texting myself my reminders turned out to have a strange reaffirming effect.

While typing out for myself what I want me to do, buy, wear and study, somewhere in there I sent myself a message saying I was happy I got around to doing most of the things I set out to. And sometimes, a note from yourself saying you're happy with your own progress is all you need.

– Mrittika Anan Rahman, Sub-editor, SHOUT



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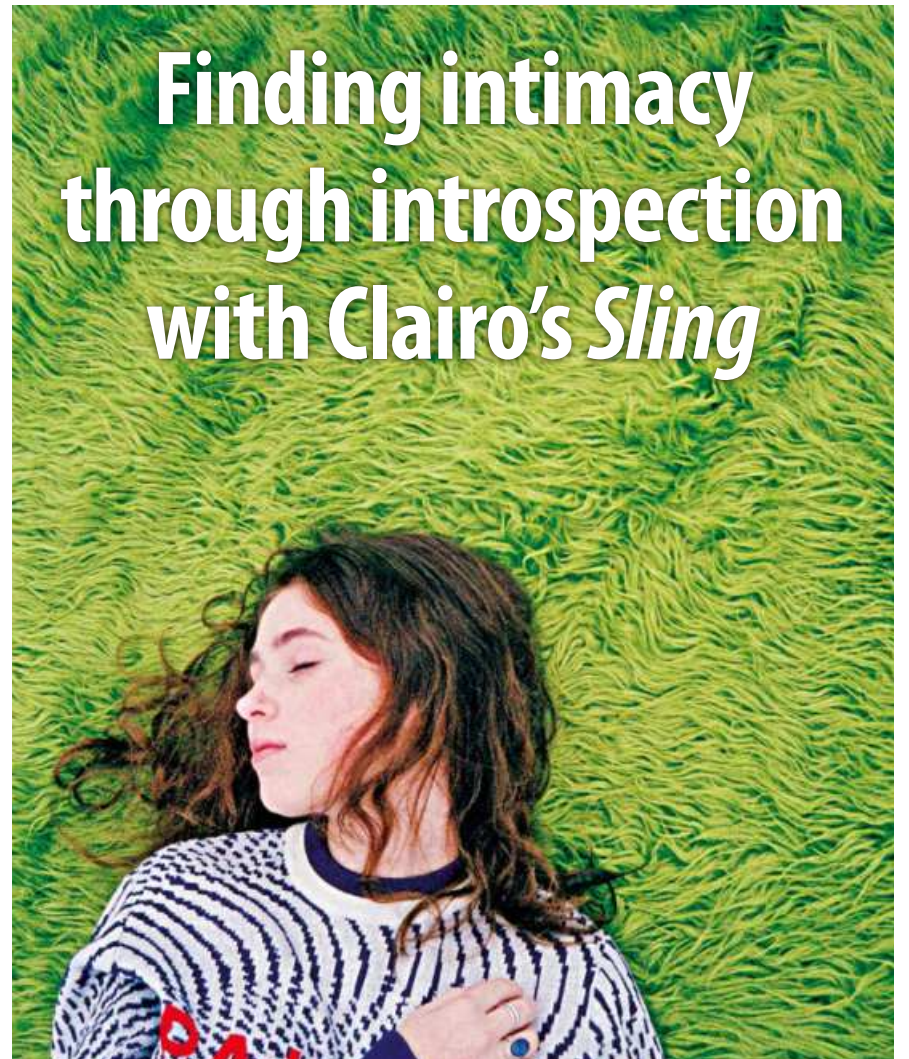


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PLAYWATCH

MUSIC



Finding intimacy through introspection with Clairo's *Sling*

ARYAH JAMIL

23-year-old American singer-songwriter Claire Cottrill, professionally known as Clairo, has returned with her sophomore album *Sling*. The album was co-produced by Jack Antonoff, who has worked with the likes of Taylor Swift and Lorde. Ever-growing and learning, Clairo has been posting covers and music for a decade now. After her 2019 bedroom indie-pop album *Immunity*, the young artist's rise to fame happened fast, and soon she had songs being platinum-certified and charting on Billboard.

With the world fervently awaiting the star's second album, Clairo replies with an almost anti-climactic one. With her almost signature sound set to the background warm melodies and emotional chords, Clairo embraces her indie roots and holds true to herself.

Straying away from her more sonically fluid debut album, Clairo grounds herself to familiar sounds for *Sling*, which swings from track to track effortlessly. Clairo seems to be stuck in this vacuum of her sounds, shying away from the next big step in her music.

Nothing new or astoundingly creative has come off this album. These may feel like harsh words, however this is only in comparison to the precedent Clairo has set for herself. What seemed to be lacking in instrumentals and repetitive

harmonies were made up for with Clairo's lyrical feats. The writing of the songs is one factor of this album that cannot be undermined.

With 1970s country folk at its heart, Clairo creates art, perhaps not as inventive as the tracks from *Immunity*, but a classic sound nonetheless. With vintage piano, acoustic and electric guitars and chamber pop strings blended together seamlessly, Clairo achieves a very retro sound accompanied by lyrics from a modernistic Gen Z musician. It may be a monotonous album, but it still has multiple out tracks. The innocence contrasted with harsher realities makes "Bambi" a standout; it feels so personal while speaking to universal truths. The melancholy "Reaper" and hazy "Amoeba" are my personal favourites while "Blouse" and "Zinnias" shine bright and fit perfectly into Clairo's niche.

Rather than music that makes you want to start screaming out the window and dancing to it, *Sling* brings about a more 'lay around the room on a rainy day while humming along to a tune you can't forget' kind of feel. This album feels real. Down to earth, exploring a life with highs and lows, speaking in the uncomfortable slices with ease.

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



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

There are 5 Types of Bangladeshi Food Bloggers

None of them will surprise you

FATIN HAMAMA

From claiming that the patty is juicy to claiming that the patty is *juicy*, Bangladeshi food bloggers are the most diverse bunch of people on the internet. There are, however, only five notable types.

The Burger Person (Duh)

This one here has probably never been to anywhere but famously overrated burger joints to film the same review that has been produced a hundred times when the restaurant in concern had a BOGO offer going on. These bloggers consider burgers that are soggy with sauce, as burgers juicy and bursting with flavours.

The Food Challenge Devotees

They have yet to learn the difference between reviewing food and trying not to choke on it while attempting to finish 50 chicken wings in 20 minutes. While I respect that they have found a way around having to actually pay for the food they mostly waste rather than eat, someone needs to tell them that I just want to know whether the pizza at the new place is actually edible, not whether they can inhale food instead of eating it.

The Ramenverse Inhabitants

The fire noodle warriors are the only ones who actually shed tears and sweat for the content they create. Why these bloggers, people with the spice tolerance of a toddler, choose to do this every other day is beyond me.

Can they even taste what they're eating if they're THAT busy crying from the heat and trying not to drool all over the food?

I mean, flavour profiling aside, WE GET IT. Buldak's ramen is SPICY. It's now time to stop if you only plan to keep filming yourself suffering for the same genre of food over and over again without ever actually doing the review part.

The PR Gang

Since the term explains itself, one of the many things I'd like to unsee for life is another positive review about an unappetising dish from a mediocre restaurant from paid bloggers who've only been filming cheese pull boomerangs since 2016.

No, Anika. We do not want to see more of the affection between you and pizzas with sad little sausages and capsicum pieces floating in a sea of rubbery cheese. Trust me, the packaging with pop culture references that aren't pop culture references make it worse, if you know what I mean (I know you do).

The Screamer

Let's just say that I would actually try listening to what they're saying... if only I wasn't so busy trying to juggle between lowering the volume and flinching if I fail to, every time they... talk.

Also, can you *imagine* how painful it must be to enjoy a meal at a restaurant properly while someone in the next booth keeps shouting about the *juicy* burger they're having? No wonder Mejhobhai keeps getting weird stares while filming at a restaurant.

I could go on, but all this talk has made me hungry. Time to go comment under BurgerPizz's posts in hopes of free bad pizza!

The Problem with Online Slang

DURDANA KAMAL

Gen Z have grown up with never-before-seen accessibility to knowledge and discourse. While they continue to spread positive messages of acceptance that many of our former generations failed to recognise, there are many problems that are still left unresolved.

One such problem may exist in the way they express themselves online.

Words such as "woke" and "lit" seem to have crept into the day-to-day social media vernacular. They are starting to be referred to as "Internet slang". However, is it correct to categorise these phrases as such?

Last May, Saturday Night Live (SNL) writer and comedian Michael Che got involved in controversy after writing a sketch making fun of "Gen Z slang", in which five people played stereotypical Gen Z characters, speaking in an exaggerated fashion, using words such as "pressed", "stan", and "no cap".

There was an uproar on social media after the live show aired, with people pointing out the fact that SNL had tried to pass off African American Vernacular English (AAVE) terms as Gen Z dialect. Many discussed how the writer's intention was to, perhaps, poke fun at the internet youth's misuse and appropriation of AAVE. That argument, however, was rendered useless when Michael Che revealed in a now-deleted Instagram post, that he actually had no idea what AAVE even was.

AAVE is spoken among the Black community. It is also commonly known as "Ebonics", it is a dialect of American English. AAVE can be differentiated from the standard American English dialect because of its contrast in vocabulary and diction.

In the SNL sketch, AAVE was branded as Gen Z language. It is not just slang, it is a dialect used by Black people to interact with one another. AAVE also has a defined grammar, which was ignored in the sketch as it seemed like there were some AAVE terms sprinkled throughout and being passed off as Gen Z slang.

This has sparked up the age-old debate about cultural appropriation. Black culture, music, and art have been influential throughout the ages. There is not enough acknowledgement of the fact that a lot of modern pop culture takes inspiration from Black culture. Historically, people of colour (POC) have been robbed of opportunities because of negative stereotypes, and cultural appropriation encourages that mindset further.

A lot of people fail to distinguish the difference between appropriation and appreciation. Well, it is perfectly fine to appreciate Italian food, enjoy Korean shows and music, travel to foreign countries and engage with their traditions. However, one has to draw the line, the moment a dominant group steals from an oppressed group, puts their own label on it and fails to understand the gravity of the effect it has on the community.

Sharing of cultures has been perpetuated since the beginning of civilisation, but it is also important to acknowledge and honour ideas, artistry and origins, and to recognise their sources.

Durdana Kamal likes to do things which mostly have no purpose whatsoever. Contact her at kamal.durdana@gmail.com



satire.

Woman Actually Watches Friend's Movie Recommendation

MALIHA MOMTAZ OISHI

History was made yesterday. Ms. Woman, while lazily scrolling through her computer, received a text from a friend who suggested she watch a movie because it's "really good". Woman, without any further ado, grabbed a bowl of popcorn and sat down to watch said movie. This surprised her friend, Friend, greatly.

"People tell you things like 'I'm adding it to my list' whenever you tell them to watch something," said Friend. "But they never do, and you realise that there was no list. They just mentioned that as a decoy so that they could postpone it till you forgot about it."

"I was played for a fool, time and time again," adds Friend. "It changed my whole outlook on life. So yes, I was a little shocked when I heard that she actually watched my suggestion. I guess good people still exist."

Upon being asked about this, Ms. Woman responded, "Well, I figured, why not? I guess it was a little hard at first. Adam Sandler movies will do that to you. His characters are always portrayed as lovable buffoons who, for some reason, are always dressed the same. The character is on vacation, falls in love with a beautiful blonde woman, then it turns out she has



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

children. After that, all of them get up to some wacky hijinks, and then bam, the movie ends on some cheesy note about how family was the most important thing all along. Come to think of it, I'm a little concerned about how my friend thought

that the movie was good." This event has already caused ripples globally. Friend has been ranked #1 on Orbes' Top 10 People Who Literally Changed The World, and awarded the Friend Of The Year title by Puzzfeed.

Here's what some people had to say after hearing of the incident.

"In my 18 years of life, I've never heard of anything like it," said a teen, in a state of total shock.

Another person commented, "We're living in an era where fast food joints won't add the extra cheese that you requested on your burger, where people use ellipses ironically, and where *Glee* is a thing. But when I first heard about the news, I thought, maybe there is some hope left for us."

While signing autographs, Ms. Woman told her fans, "I just hope that I was able to make my family proud, and I want all of you to remember that my book on friendship and keeping promises drops next month!"

We'll try to keep you folks updated on this. In the meantime, stay tuned for our next stories, "Company says it cares about employees, actually cares about employees", and "Teen's life ruined after not forwarding the chain text message to twenty other people".

Maliha Momtaz Oishi is a critically acclaimed writer, if you count full marks on 5th grade English tests. Mail her at malihamomtazois@gmail.com

LIVING LIFE AT 2X SPEED

FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN

My life changed forever when I discovered the power of 2x speed.

I was an average content consumer who used to watch videos at a normal speed. What always bothered me was the duration of the videos. I am the kind of person who looks at how many pages a book has before hopping onto it. So, naturally, I used to opt for 5 to 7-minute-long videos.

Over the years, I trained my brain into squeezing, say, a 10-minute-long video into a short and sweet timeframe.

At first, it seemed harmless. I was consuming a lot more content in a shorter period. It helped me discover more content to watch. On top of that, this crazy habit crept into my daily academic routine. When I watched tutorial videos at 2x speed, I felt like I had a productive time. I could cram in hours and hours of lectures in a few minutes. It helped me focus longer and retain more knowledge.

Personally speaking, it's better to pour 100 percent of your attention into watching a 15-minute-long tutorial than watching a 2-hour-long recording of your boring class lectures. It saves time, helps shuffle through different teaching styles, and shoves in a tremendous amount of productivity in a short amount of time.



DESIGN: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Apart from saving time on unnecessarily long videos with slow speakers, this practice is free from any technical difficulties.

Soon, my focus shifted to entertainment. I gradually started cranking up the

speed so much that I am now comfortable watching Netflix shows and movies at 2x speed. Slow-paced content makes me fidgety and uneasy. How bad can sped-up visual media be? Not that bad, I suppose.

But here's the thing, I don't feel any discomfort speeding things up; rather, it feels good that I can fly through all the long pauses and background music.

What's worse is that I don't get to enjoy a regular film nor sit through a whole movie in a theatre anymore. I miss the joy of watching an actor spew their well-versed lines into birthing an iconic scene.

Music is a grey area for me. I avoid listening to music at 2x because it ruins the temporal arrangement that the song is supposed to be in. I must admit, I have tried to speed up a few tracks from time to time. Podcasts are fun to listen to when sped-up.

My deduction from my eccentric habit is, whenever I listen to something at 2x speed for the first time, my brain registers it as normal. Real-life voices sound funny to me afterwards. The same goes for all the content I watched or heard before I picked up on this strange mannerism, they make me uncomfortable.

Studies show our brains can be rewired in two weeks. And I believe that I have certainly rewired mine. Although it has damaged my attention span substantially, I can't return to being my old self again.

Farnaz Fawad Hasan is a disintegrating pool noodle wanting to stay afloat. Reach her at farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com

How Much Screen Time Is Too Much?

SYEDA ERUM NOOR & HIYA ISLAM

The current pandemic has dramatically reshaped how we interact with the world from indoors to outdoors. Since the past year, there has been a massive surge in virtual learning amongst students of all ages. Learners, especially school students, are getting screen time now more than ever.

Owing to the pandemic, screen time has seen a hike of up to 60 percent. The increased screen time and its potential impact on school children leaves parents questioning how much screen time is healthy and how they could put justified restrictions in place.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has established a set of guidelines that recommends screen time, in hours, as per the age of the child. Generally, for children under five, the limit is less than an hour a day and only under adult supervision. Between ages 5 and 18, the screen time should be tailored to the child's needs.

Although online learning models have made it possible for education to continue in these struggling times, it does come at a price. Excessive screen time can lead to a number of detrimental health effects.

To begin with, too many hours spent staring at a screen affects the circadian rhythm of the body. The blue light radiated delays the release of melatonin, a hormone associated with the sleep-wake cycle and ultimately pushes back the bedtime. With schools starting at strict hours, later bedtimes cause less restful sleep and more next-day drowsiness.

children, and if staring at a screen for hours has any effect on us, we can only imagine what it's doing to our children."

Apart from online tutorials and homework, there is another element vying for a child's attention, often stronger than the former -- recreation and entertainment.

Samah says, "After school, I play online games with my friends and siblings. I often end up spending the rest of the day this way".

It seems that the added stress of online learning has not detached children from using the same devices as a way to get rid of boredom. As both factors are very demanding in a child's life, often kids do not think much about how much screen time is safe and healthy for them. Given the existing conditions of lockdowns, non-device alternatives for relaxation have become limited.

As a result, parents often opt to let their children stay online for longer hours.

When the time comes for limitations, most parents, including Sadia, are faced with the same question, "What should I do, then?"

With entertainment available at our



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

age may be the most connected through a virtual plane, they are disconnected in the ways that matter most. Many studies have suggested that increased screen time can also result in development of social anxiety later on in life which proves to be another matter of concern for the parents.

Sadia gives us some insight about how this is affecting her children's ability to socialise. Their worlds have shrunk down to one small screen. Social gatherings or simply meeting people outside of the ones in their own homes is becoming difficult for them.

"The quieter children are sinking right back into their shells. Without social interaction and a connection to the outside world, some children have more to lose," worries Jannatunessa Muna, a teacher at Stride International School. Several studies and experts discuss the direct relation between social interactions within young children and self-esteem and confidence.

However, she also stresses that it is not all bad, with this much interaction of technology, the children have become more tech savvy than anyone could have hoped, which, in present times is a necessary skill. While some children shrink in confidence, others have found confidence in their new development of skills in dealing with technology. So, as bleak it may seem, Muna chooses to have an optimistic outlook telling us that there is a silver lining.

Parents, however, are still worried. They worry about another impact on the children, this being their now close to nonexistent routines. With so much time spent on their screens, when it comes time to sleep, children often cannot.

Younger children have pent up energy from the lack of physical activity, inadvertently making them restless. Other times, they cannot sleep, despite being tired. This once again, can be directly linked to the amount of time they spend on their screens. In a study conducted by the Sleep Foundation, lack of sleep comes from the delay in the release of melatonin which causes sleep to be delayed along with it. This leaves children staying up for long hours of the night and sleeping through

most of the day which also contributes to their moods and irritability.

With the possibility of schools opening up for the children soon, parents and teachers are in doubt. While they agree there will certainly be a period of time when children will have to adjust to another new change, will things eventually be okay?

"Children will adapt to their new lifestyle, just as they did this one," believes Riffat Jafarin, teacher at an English medium school. "But it's our job, as parents and teachers, to make things as smooth as we can."

Teachers suggest that the opening be done in phases, easing the children back into this routine, rather than thrusting them back into it, which might be overwhelming. As for parents, Sadia suggests, they require guidance as to how to best deal with children, now and later. She suggests that professionals help guide the nation's parents as a whole, as they await schools to reopen and some form of normalcy to return to their children's lives.

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Syeda Erum Noor is dangerously oblivious and has no sense of time. Send help at erum.noor1998@gmail.com

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

MY NANA JAAN, POET ABUL HUSSAIN

ZAARA HUSSAIN AHMED

My grandfather was like a banyan tree, majestic and inspiring in many ways.

At 5 feet 11, he towered physically over many, stooping slightly burdened by age in his later years. His quiet demeanour and slow determined gait belied a steely grit that was evident to those who knew him. His buttercream skin was speckled with reddish freckles that stood out like tiny stars. His gunmetal silver hair brushed back over his crown like a waterfall, never out of place.

My Nana Jaan was Abul Hussain, the first modern Bengali poet in Bangladesh and the author of more than 30 poetry and prose books, winner of the *Ekushey Padak* and numerous other awards and accolades. I was his Nanu Moni.

My earliest memories of Nana Jaan are of him sitting in the library of his two-storied Dhanmondi house, hunched over a grand wooden desk, scribbling in a notebook, surrounded by the smoky, earthy scent of books. I played in one corner of the room not knowing I was in the presence of an extraordinary man.

Even at a young age, I sensed I should not disturb him when he rested the pen on his lip ever so lightly from time to time, as he paused (I assume) to think of a word or a phrase. *How does one sit in silence for so long?*

Silence was his best friend.

He was quiet and unassuming, but never intimidating. He seldom spoke, but when he did, he spoke eloquently. I never heard him raise his voice, even when upset or angry.

Nana Jaan came from a distinguished family. His father was a senior officer in the police department, and his brother, a Supreme Court lawyer and minister in the government. He himself was a senior government official, who travelled the world for work and lived in Thailand for a number of years. My mother and her siblings, barring the eldest, were all born there.

He never had to struggle in life, but I understood from my mother that his real struggle was between living a life doing what he loved (writing) and making a living (holding a government job).

Poetry is what filled him with happiness and joy. His other life that of a civil servant, was mundane in comparison.

He led the life of a simple man, preferring simple trousers and shirts, crisply ironed. He avoided rich food, eating simply cooked rice or *chapatis*, lentils, fish and vegetables, day in and day out. He would go for a two-hour morning walk every day until old age made it impossible. Little did I know this was due to living with diabetes for four decades. He was so disciplined, he never succumbed to the tempta-



The author with her grandfather poet Abul Hussain in 2012.

tions of sugary treats and desserts and never deviated from his routine.

He was similarly measured in his emotions. He refused to wear his emotions on his sleeves, remaining resolute and calm in the face of adversity and heartbreak.

When his father was executed by the Pakistani army during the Liberation War in 1971, he locked himself in his study, not coming out for days. No sound came from the room, no screaming or crying was heard, no pounding of fists. Just silence. When his daughter died a few days after birth, he told my Nani, "The Almighty has taken what belongs to Him. It is not for us to ask why."

Not that he was emotionally deficient, he just did not like drama, or rather he did not allow emotions to take over. He felt one could see things more clearly and from different perspectives when not overwhelmed by emotions. His poetry reflected this side of his personality. He wrote about the ordinary lives of ordinary people and the extraordinary lives of extraordinary people in conversational language, never augmenting their lives or using poetic diction.

Nana Jaan was a private man. He did not need validation from others, nor did he care about feeding his ego. I often saw him shooing away reporters who wanted to interview him, even as they returned without fail. It was both amusing and surprising to me.

He believed all men and women were born equal and died equal. The day he passed away, many people came to pay their respects. He had two funerals. I don't think he would have liked it.

Bury me in an unmarked pauper's grave. Remember me as an ordinary man, he said.

To his grandchildren, he was sweet and non-preachy. He was an indulgent grandfather, as grandparents across the world are, allowing us to be naughty, giving us sweet knowing smiles when we were up to no good. He clearly relished our presence and it broke his heart that his wife wasn't alive to see her grandchildren; she passed away in 1994.

Nana Jaan named the first of his grandchildren after his wife. He wrote many poems about, or for us. A whole book of children's poems, *Shahaner Boi*, is dedicated to the oldest among us. The poem *Dui Bon* (published in *Kobita Shomogro*) is about the youngest of the lot.

It has been seven years since Nana Jaan left us on June 29, 2014. His calm and loving presence remains in our lives, in our memories, pictures and books. I hope he will live on forever in the hearts of poetry loving Bengalis.

The writer is a high school student in Washington, D.C.



ILLUSTRATION: RIDWAN NOOR NAFIS

No Man Ever Steps in the Same River Twice

UPOMA AZIZ

He sleeps on his side, on his right side, to be specific. On the nights the excruciating pain on his right shoulder numbs him, he rolls over to his left. And he lies awake listening to the beat of his heart, aware of the uncomfortable proof of his vitality. In a city clamouring with cacophonous clout, his own rhythmic nostalgia keeps him up. His heart is damp – not the kind that makes moss grow. It's like a wet bathroom floor, with loose hair matted up in a corner and a cockroach occasionally making a run across. He blinks frequently, rapidly, in the fear that the darkness of the room will steal the light of his eyes, and darkness is all he will see. When daylight comes and he stands before the mirror, he is somewhat relieved every time to discover that his sight is intact, though he knows that the light had gone out of his eyes long, long ago.

It was forever ago that someone asked him where he was from. If he were younger, he would bask in the achievement of being

seen as one of the city's natives. Not that he thinks about it, but he does know that there are no natives. They all are people who don't have a story to tell. They don't stand out, they are not camouflaged against the background – they are the camouflage. Something had to be given up for a place in the city, and by default no one ever talks about it. He does not either, but fleeting thoughts get to him, occasionally. In the scalding noons that leave an imprint like blisters on a stray dog's back by boiling water thrown by some barbarian, his fingers click against the calculator buttons grown smooth upon use. The monotony of the routine work lets a fragment of his mind drift to crevices unknown to him.

In the far north of the land is where he was born. It was said to be a place drier than bones, and yet the earliest memory he holds is of a river – one which would turn into a grazing spot for the cattle and a battlefield for the people who wanted to claim it as their long lost land, their Atlantis, to grow crops on. In the monsoon months –

if it came, that is – the barren valley would develop a semblance of a regal pride, with water flowing to the south like words rolling off a preacher's tongue. The river was domesticated; it did not yearn for offerings of human or animal soul every year. The residents would take the river away in buckets and pots to replenish their produce. He did not. He would sit by the river and write poems in his head. One of his teachers believed that only the broken-hearted could write, and hence was deeply concerned about him. He wasn't aware of his broken heart, even when it glowed blue.

The teacher, in a way, was right. Like some law in high school physics that stated that energy cannot be made, only transformed – if people did indeed have souls, it worked in the same way. The artists and the writers took the shards of their own splintered heart and moulded it into their own creation. Some kept their grief burning to experience the joy of creation – a necessary sacrifice in their eyes. Some used up their share and were outlines of people they

used to be, bare silhouettes. The burden of being a shell became too much for few, like Hemingway. And then there were those who could live without living.

He can't remember the last poem he wrote, the last time he scratched furiously to get his thoughts on paper. The nib tearing into the paper, the erratic lines spoke of passion unsaid. His words were disciplined now, all within neat boxes of equal space. The rivulet that flowed inside him was replaced by the offspring of Dhaleshwari, with inky, murky water. He lies between his plush sheets, to his left. The drawer at his feet contained all of his financial statements for the year, which he knows by heart. What he does not know is, whether it's enough to buy him back a river he crossed over, many moons ago.

Upoma Aziz is a slouching, crouching, grouchy goblin with a hoarding addiction. You can reach out to her at upoma.aziz@gmail.com, but there is a possibility it will get buried under the mail she's hoarded.



WAVES

Like boats moving towards the horizon
And ripples that chase after one another
You and I, waves in the world
Will one day vanquish
Till then, we move forward

PHOTOS BY ORCHID CHAKMA
WORDS BY KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

