

# The art of tolerance in Dhaka

Each country in the world teaches its dwellers different things. Parisians are all about romance. The Italians are master chefs, the Indians know how to bargain, and the Bangladeshis know — you guessed it — the art of tolerance.

Some say that living in Dhaka is not easy and for those who have lived here for years, nothing is easy. In fact, living in this city makes it easier to tolerate any other inconvenience with a hair-flip. Someone spat inches away from your feet? Tolerate. It landed on you? Wipe and move on. The world might have a fancy word like noise pollution for needlessly honking cars but we know it for what it really is — soothing white noise that one could even fall asleep to. Which happens often, during the long respites the city graciously bestows on us to and from work every day without fail. We lovingly call them traffic jams.

In a city where basic manners are a luxury and common sense is quite uncommon, you will find famous car app drivers unable to read a map, who will assure you of coming to you and then promptly proceed to cancelling the ride, and who will watch more YouTube on their phones than the road ahead. Of course, you are in safe hands because they all have 5-star ratings. They may casually hit a rickshaw or two, but that is easily fixed with a glare and an occasional fist fight. The passengers can read a book or have a snack while the drivers sort it out.

Did you know that foot-over bridges in Dhaka can be used to show off the city's state-of-the-art infrastructure and you may be fined for actually using it and spoiling its beauty? No? It's sure to be there in some rulebook or another, or possibly in those little books the traffic wardens carry with them. Zebra crossings are used as road



graffiti and they actually look quite cool. Often faded, these signs are largely ignored by drivers — in fact, it's much better to go for street art or *alpona* designs if catching their attention is the goal.

Load shedding has been a nostalgic trip down the memory lane, where one would sit by candlelight and sing songs with the family or go down to socialise with friends and neighbours. Of course, in this day and

age, one does not know their neighbours and the concept of joint families has all but diminished. But that does not mean these hours of heat and dimmed lights should count for nothing. In fact, they offer the best opportunity to go and study under street lights!

Living in Dhaka is a janky rollercoaster ride; you must ignore the stench and the lawlessness on the streets, and the

unending traffic, and instead, pick out the romance in it in the form of street side phuchkas, rickshaw rides in the rain, and shopping at absolute bargain prices at Nurjahan Market. Love it or loathe it, one can never ignore the addiction that is Dhaka city!

By Munira Fidai

Photo: DS Archives/ Biplob Chakroborty

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\*বিউটিনা বডি লোশন ২০০মিলিঃ এর সাথে স্যান্ডালিনা সোপ ৭৫ গ্রাম এবং বিউটিনা বডি লোশন ১০০মিলিঃ এর সাথে স্যান্ডালিনা সোপ ৫০ গ্রাম ফ্রী।