

CHINTITO SINCE 1995

This land is not for sale



This could be a photo of a circular window through which an occupier looks out onto a yard where evicted landlords walk. This could also be a rifle scope. There may actually be no difference between the two. PHOTO: AFP

One could hear rude laughter reverberating around the neighbourhood. Said the attacker-occupier-terrorist, "Who is buying? We want the land. And what we want, we get."

NIZAMUDDIN AHMED

The present landlords have been living on their land, happily, merrily, for eons with their elders and children. It has been so long that neighbours, except the most recent one, vouch even without seeing any document that this land is historically theirs.

Some sinister people, known troublemakers in other regions, have set their ugly eye on the land; their other eye is stone blind. For decades now they have been causing unnecessary noise and disturbances, laced with lies and debauchery.

Initially the attacks were limited to throwing stones, breaking a windowpane or two, hurling abuse and insults. They have been leaving garbage on the landowners' right of way for years. All with the intention of driving away the landowners.

Birds of a feather flock together. At one point, one distant but filthy rich entity, without any consultation with the stakeholder landowners or genuine right, but by wile and weaponry, granted a parcel of one katha to the aspirants

out of pity it seemed. It was their long-term ploy to destroy peace and tranquillity in the affluent resourceful neighbourhood.

Things turned from bad to worse. The attacks increased manifold. Stones and garbage were replaced with gunshots. There were casualties. In defence, the original landowners started pelting pebbles. The local authority banned them from owning guns because stone-throwers are terrorists.

The distant interfering entity made it their business to get angry. They sent truckloads of arms and ammo. They also provided manpower training to the illegal aspirants. It is believed there is business interests involved. They were rich through dealing in clandestine cross-border arms sales.

The humble landowners ultimately appealed to the whole city. Most supported them, a few did not, and a handful were sh*t scared that they may be excluded from the annual kitty party hosted by the powerful distant entity.

The humble landowners asked the sinister people what the cause was for their aggravating behaviour. They replied, "This land is ours,

period."

"But you have already increased your one katha to one bigha, and for the sake of decency we turned the other way," the landowner tried to pacify matters.

The aggressor said, "That was no favour you did. Our decency was we have not yet blown you to pieces."

"Gross mistake," added the distant patron, stars sparkling around him. A smirk plastered on his face.

Over the decades, almost eight, the cause of the landowner lost considerable ground. Neighbours lost interest too. Selfishly they all befriended both the giant patron and the scheming small landowner. Our landowner was left isolated, vulnerable, and poorer. They were left with nothing but the earth on their ancestral land. The scoundrels now wanted more. They created a situation to dupe the gullible into believing they are the victims.

Terrorist activities of the aggressor were harming children and women. The situation had become unbearable.

Yet the neighbours looked on from behind parted curtains. Children of the landowners could not go to school. The sick were scared after a few stones landed on their bed. Water pipeline was damaged. Houses were burning. Ration could not be brought through because the road was blocked.

Finding no other way, their back against the bullet-ridden wall, as a last resort, the landowner put up a notice: "This land is not for sale". Such a notice pops up in several neighbourhoods in the city.

One could hear rude laughter reverberating around the neighbourhood. Said the attacker-occupier-terrorist, "Who is buying? We want the land. And what we want, we get."

"We will go to court," said the desperate landowner.

"No one will take your case. They are all self-seeking cowards," was the audacious retort.

The landowner thought for a few moments. "In that case, we will get someone else to do it."

"Fat chance. Who cares for you? You are unarmed, abused, and without money," one could hear the sardonic laughter from across the river.

A group of conscientious people indeed came forward. They were disgusted at the treatment meted out to the landowner for long. They went to court seeking relief for the landowner.

26 Jan, Al-Jazeera: The International Court of Justice orders Israel to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza.

26 Jan, Reuters: The International Court of Justice rejected Israel's petition to throw out the case.

Bangkok temporarily turns into Dhaka as concertgoers flock to Coldplay

AFIZAN HADIAR

It seemed harmless at first. One could see one or two stories on social media, featuring people by the beach, enjoying the blue waters of Phuket or Krabi.

But things soon changed as the days of the concert neared. Suddenly, almost everyone you know seemed to have dropped in Bangkok, causing waves of changes in the capitals of both countries.

In Dhaka, our correspondent Salty Limon reported that even though a bit of gridlock could be seen at the airport in the early hours of the day, the rest of Dhaka, particularly the areas of Mohakhali, Banani and Gulshan, was relatively free.

He reported that as most people who work in this area come from a higher income bracket and could afford Coldplay concert tickets, office hours, during which people would expect unbelievable gridlock, has lately produced quite the opposite picture.

Meanwhile, their employers haven't been that pleased.

"I have had to sign so many NOCs and leave letters against my will. If it were up to me, I would block out every single one of these requests. How will we keep setting our deadlines as 'yesterday' if our employees return with rejuvenated spirit?"

"How will we keep setting our deadlines as 'yesterday' if our employees return with rejuvenated spirit? A spirit that we've worked so hard to break down so that they may never hope to have fun ever again."

A spirit that we've worked so hard to break down so that they may never hope to have fun ever again. Corporate resources gone to waste – what a shame," said CEO Torchuti Tohamarki, of the global conglomerate CAT.

On the other hand, some visitors have reported that airline staffers, as well as Thai locals, have started picking up bits of Bangla colloquially.

Sumona Yassmin, a concertgoer, said, "The flight attendant literally went 'Shubho Sawadika' when we landed."

Others however expressed their dismay at this change as they couldn't be crass in public.

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Dhaka man loves metro rail so much that it's affecting his relationship

JEAN PAUL SATIRE

The MRT-6 running at near full service has changed the lives of millions of Dhakaites. But for one Mirpur man, the changes have reached his home and private life.

Bijoy Jhikjhik used to travel between his workplace in Karwanbazar and his home in Mirpur 11 on buses, motorcycles, and CNG-run auto-rickshaws even a few months ago. But once the service was open during evenings, he decided to give the metro a go.

"For years, I suffered along with my neighbours from the construction woes of the metro rail. I had a healthy hatred for this project, and I was half certain it would fail. I decided I'd use it once so I could find enough problems with it to complain about for the rest of my life. But that didn't go quite how I expected," he told this reporter during a conversation that took place inside a restaurant in Mirpur 10 overlooking the metro rail.

Bijoy Jhikjhik kept staring longingly at the trains zooming by the whole time.

"When I emerged from the second floor onto the platform on an escalator, the first thing I noticed was the shiny metallic platform screen doors. I was instantly enamoured. Then when the PA system went *"ding ding dong"* and the lady said, "The train to Motijheel station is arriving on Platform 1", I think it was the first time I had ever heard someone say Motijheel with such passion, conviction, and ... and love," said Bijoy Jhikjhik.

"It was a classic tale of romance, from hatred and disdain to a tiny spark, a spark that has now turned into an inferno of undying love for which I'm ready to do anything. Every time the long, slithering train enters a station, I shudder with joy. Every time the thick,



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

undulating carriages leave the station, I find myself in the throes of ecstasy," he added.

Bijoy's wife, Pooja Jhikjhik (aka Poo Jhikjhik) however, has not been a fan of this newfound passion in her husband's life.

"It's like he's in love with these trains. He thinks they're sentient, and that the woman whose voice they use on the PA is the actual voice of the trains. He refers to the metro rail as 'she', his phone is full of selfies he takes with the train, and every evening at 8, he cries because they shut down the metro for the night. It's ridiculous," complained Poo Jhikjhik.

"I think he now loves the metro rail more than he loves me, his actual wife. Last year, on December 28, he brought home a cake and asked everyone to gather around to cut it. I opened the box and it turned out to be a train-shaped cake that he had ordered specially because it was the one year

birthday of the metro. I felt extremely insulted because it was my birthday on December 28 as well, and my husband forgot my birthday but didn't forget the metro rail's opening anniversary. When I started crying, he told me to stop being dramatic and that I was stealing metro rail's thunder on her special day. IT WAS MY SPECIAL DAY!"

Bijoy Jhikjhik doesn't deny any of this but he claims he is a man of love, and his love is too intense to be limited to just one person. He hopes his wife and the metro rail can come to an understanding so he can just love them both forever.

"Yes, I only take my wife to restaurants from where the metro rail is visible, but that's only because I want to be able to look at the two people in my life I love the most all at once. Soon, our little family of three is going to invite a fourth member, once they get the BRT-3 open from Airport to Gazipur up and running," he said.

Girlfriend changes angle, trained boyfriend confused, organises human chain

NUTBOLTU

Ahmed Reza organised a human chain last week demanding the ban of all social media usage for couples in ongoing relationships. He thinks social media hides and distorts reality. It can cause immense disturbance to the mental wellbeing thoughts so popular among influencer reels these days.

"We've been dating for two weeks now. I have checked her profile for months before that and I never saw that side of her. Why now?" asked Reza, shaking his head as he recounted how his regular scrolling of his girlfriend's profile led to a startling discovery. One day, while running his usual checks, he saw an unknown attractive woman's picture on his girlfriend's profile.

He could not recognise the woman and asked if she was someone else. Alas, it was the girlfriend herself and this led to arguments of immense proportions online, offline and in some other dimensions. After more than two days, Reza came to realise his mistake. He was accustomed to seeing only one type of picture of his girlfriend on social media. Radia (name changed for privacy by replacing the N with an R), like all women, had a preferred side when it came to social media photo uploads.

All her photos showed her right side, angled exactly 36 degrees to the camera. As the saying goes, show your best side to the world, something Radia and millions of women on Instagram take to heart. As a result, Reza only ever saw the right side, never doubting it might be the wrong side one day.

After having posted more than a few million selfies, last week Radia decided to spice things up in her life. She posted a picture of her left side. It was never seen before outside real life. Shocked and confused, Reza told reporters yesterday that he wished his girlfriend was open to revealing her multiple facets during their time together online. He is not sure how this relationship can continue. "I have already been trained, now I have to start all over again," exclaimed the worried boyfriend.

It involves Reza taking advanced photography classes to take pictures in ever more creative ways so all of Radia's pictures come out looking properly filtered. As millions can attest, the only thing worse than being an unsuccessful boyfriend is to be a boyfriend who is useless at taking aesthetic photos of his girlfriend for social media. Megapixels are useless. "It's not the size but how you use it [the camera] that matters," said a woeful Reza.



Survey shows 63 percent men in long-term relationships feel they are always on shaky ground. The rest were not allowed to respond to the survey.

PHOTO: UNSPLASH

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