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Recreation in the city: Is it time to think outside the box?

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On behalf of GoKart, Sorwar states, "We know that the youth have interest in racing and we have big plans for it too. Importing these vehicles with the current rate of taxes is a huge drawback that delays, and sometimes even cancels out some ventures. Added to this is the quality assurance and maintenance of these vehicles that add up to the already mounting costs."

Sharing his perspective, Turan says, "While Kayaking is an Olympic sport, our country still lacks proper training centres or associations for it, despite having such an energetic and enthusiastic young population. We will do the best we can but unfortunately, there are significant limitations that cannot be overcome by a single institution."

On the flip side however, the fear of entering a competitive space can be met with the understanding that innovation thrives in challenges. Dhaka's dynamic demography is a canvas waiting to be painted with diverse recreational hues. After all, as an economics textbook would tell you, supply creates its own demand.

THE ROLE WE PLAY

Apart from its dynamic cultural landscape, Dhaka's progress in leisure also reflects the changing role of its people. As consumers, we play a very influential

part on how much demand there is for recreational facilities. However, are we effectively conveying this need?

For us, going out has long been associated with eating out. Although the city is home to a number of art galleries and cultural establishments, it is apparent that the general public is not very keen on visiting them regularly.

Take Bangladesh National Museum in Shahbag for example, or Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum in Dhanmondi. There are many among us who have not visited these places at all!

Although the notion that museums 'boring' is popular, we do not know how amazingly these places have captured and preserved moments of our history until we

set foot in these establishments.

Among the more recent ones we have, Bangabandhu Military Museum, a distinctive place that captures the essence of the army, navy, and air forces of Bangladesh under one roof. Even though this one got a big crowd in the beginning, the hype has phased out in recent times.

We frequently ignore the plethora of options open to us in favour of the ones that are trending for the short time.

The resurgence of theatre in recent times are opportunities to engage with our cultural heritage. Cricket, a sport played in every corner of the street, is also not enjoyed the way it should be. Despite hosting several

domestic and international cricket matches in Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium, we rarely, if ever, find ourselves interested to go and watch it live. With the excuse of no time, we prefer to stay within our comfort zones. And if that's the case, then entrepreneurs have no incentive to come up with unique or innovative ideas for our entertainment.

If we really want recreational facilities to grow, we must first learn to utilise, enjoy, and support the ones that are already present. It is only when each of these places start to receive visitors, however small it may be, that we can expect new initiatives start rising in this city.

IS DHAKA NOT DOING ENOUGH THEN?

While all the talk of 'something new' can get you to think that we are bored out of our minds with the things we have, that is not the truth! At least not the whole truth.

As a Dhaka dweller, you cannot deny the perks of having the choice of numerous restaurants or cineplexes for your entertainment. In fact, with our current pace of life, we don't always have a whole day to spare just for fun, and a 2-hour movie followed

by 1 hour chitchat over coffee is the luxury we would love to have in most cases. However, our beloved megalopolis has indeed reached the point where it has the potential to cater to the whims of its inhabitants, rare as they be.

Just imagine -- a Dhaka where weekends are about parks with outdoor games, cultural hubs hosting live performances, and adventure zones offering an adrenaline rush. The potential is vast, waiting to be unlocked by those who dare to venture beyond the conventional.

By Nusrath Jahan
Photo: Courtside



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