



Do you really need that third pair of shoes?

The ‘No Buy’ year challenge explained

We have all met shopaholics at some point in our lives. Being one of the members of the coveted group, it is safe to say that the word “saving” is the same as asking us to do sit-ups every other minute. Yes, you do come across an offer that you end up believing is the deal of the century. The rush of adding an item to your shopping cart feels almost irresistible, but some brave souls have chosen a more radical approach: a ‘No Buy’ year.

Take the case of Rahim, a 32-year-old corporate professional who buys a new phone every year. “I convince myself that upgrading my gadgets is necessary for my work. But deep down, I know it’s not true. I just love the excitement of owning something new,” he admits. “This ‘No Buy’ thing — I know I should give it a go. Inflation is affecting us all, and I need to stop pretending I’m immune.”

The idea is simple—no unnecessary purchases for an entire year. It sounds extreme, perhaps even absurd to the average person scrolling through online sales. But for many, it’s a movement, a reset button for their relationship with consumerism, and maybe a way to stretch their finances a bit longer during these challenging times.

In Bangladesh, where inflation has risen steadily and devastating floods have turned lives upside down, the ‘No Buy’ challenge takes on a new level of urgency. Essentials—rice, lentils, even cooking oil—are becoming harder to afford, so it’s time to ask ourselves: Do we really need that third pair of shoes when we only have two feet?

Inflation, floods, and the power of saving
Over the past few years, Bangladesh has

seen increasing rates of inflation. The cost of daily necessities is increasing to the point where even a weekly or monthly trip to the store feels like an unfair attack on our



pocketbook. These days, saving is more than simply a decision—for many, it’s a survival tactic. As such, saving needs to be re-examined as a way of life, particularly for compulsive spenders like you and me.

However, the goal of the “No Buy” challenge is to alter our perspective of money and our relationship with it, rather than simply to save money. We all have purchased items just because they were



on sale, rather than because we needed them. Purchasing non-essential products drains your financial account and adds to the never-ending cycle of consumerism, especially with prices at an all-time high.

What happens when you don’t buy?

So, what happens when you commit to not buying? Many who take on the challenge describe it as liberating. It forces a deep, introspective look into what we need, making us more grateful for what we already have. In the process, the ever-present “want vs need” debate becomes easier to settle.

A year without impulse buys can help you realise how much of your spending was about filling voids, not shelves. The thrill of buying something new fades quickly, but when you avoid unnecessary spending, the satisfaction of financial security grows. Plus, there’s an oddly satisfying thrill in saying, “Nope, not today!” to that flashy

new gadget that was just beckoning you to swipe your card.

For someone like Farhana, a university student, minimalism isn’t a choice but a necessity. “I don’t have the luxury to buy things I don’t need. My budget is so tight that I’ve been living this ‘No Buy’ life for a while,” she laughs. “But you know what? It’s not that bad. You learn to make do with less and appreciate what you have.”

A minimalist life is more than just saving money

The “No Buy” year is also about rediscovering joy in the non-material things in life. When you are not distracted by the constant need to acquire, you open up space for experiences, meaningful connections, and a less cluttered life—physically and mentally.

But not everyone finds it easy to resist.

Sheela, a 40-year-old housewife, confesses, “I’m hooked on these live dress showcases on Facebook. I’ve bought the same dress in three different colours! It’s become a habit.” She sighs, “I’ve been trying to stop, but it’s hard when the temptation is always there. Maybe I need this ‘No Buy’ year more than anyone.”

Perhaps, the most sensible, grounded thing we can do in an increasingly unpredictable environment is to concentrate on what we need. We learn from the ‘No Buy’ challenge how important it is to put off momentary pleasures for long-term well-being, something Bangladeshis are more than capable of doing.

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