



Say cheese!

The resurgence of digital cameras, point-and-shoots, and instant cameras

PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

There's a Japanese concept known as *jinbaittai* which translates to the rider and horse becoming one. Similar to this concept, photo enthusiasts want something personal to take photos with. Something they can hold to their faces, look down the optical viewfinder, and capture a moment by pressing down on a tactile shutter button.

MEHRAB JAMEE

Digital cameras, a personal electronic device so popular and widespread in the 2000s, became a relic of the past due to the advent and rapid improvement of smartphone cameras over the past decade. Famous US photographer Chase Jarvis once said, "The best camera is the one that's with you." As smartphones became an everyday carry for us, the digital camera got left behind in the early 2010s.

Fast forward ten years, and now we're seeing a global uptick in digital camera purchases. Be it for the old-school vibes of the photos on TikTok, the social aspect of using an actual camera, or just a sense of nostalgia for a time when shutter buttons physically clicked, consumers are returning to this piece of tech and picking up point-and-shoots anew.

When the smartphone revolution happened, we became obsessed with cramming every possible necessity into this one device. As a result, almost all of us now carry glass-slab supercomputers in our pockets capable of taking detailed photos through a mix of upgraded optics and software enhancements. After tweaking these near-perfect photos with a filter of our liking, they can be uploaded to our social media profiles right on the smartphone. How efficient!

Yet photography enthusiasts yearn for something more personal, removed from the notification boxes of nuisance our smartphones have become. They want something separate to pursue this hobby, but don't want to invest in a heavy DSLR or a mirrorless camera that breaks the bank. They want something small and pocketable. Simple digital cameras like Sony's much beloved CyberShot lineup, Canon's IXUS, or Nikon's Coolpix fit nicely into this niche.

The act of using an actual camera instead of a smartphone to take photos has become so unusual that it instantly feels like an event. It's a definite conversation starter, inciting curiosity and a sense of whimsy, providing an excuse to indulge in memories of family photoshoots and friends' group shots.

Digital or instant cameras have become so obscure now that owning one is cool again. It's so cool, in fact, that Gen-Z wants to be photographed just holding the camera. Instant cameras have the extra advantage of printing the photos out and handing them to your friends right away. A physical gift for a change, not something you Airdropped or sent via WhatsApp.

Fujifilm's Instax mini-series comes in bright colours, while the mini-EVO emulates vintage leatherbound cameras. Polaroid, the company synonymous with instant photography, is still in the game with its recent lineup, including the I-2, NOW, NOW+, and Go series.

There's a Japanese concept known as *jinbaittai*, which translates to the rider and horse becoming one. Similar to this concept, photo enthusiasts want something personal to take photos with. Something they can hold to their faces, look down the optical viewfinder, and capture a moment by pressing down on a tactile shutter button. They want dials, rotors, and buttons that give them quick access to ISO and shutter speed adjustment. They want manual focus to adjust the natural depth of field a lens can produce.

Most enthusiasts and tech aficionados already own DSLRs or mirrorless cameras, but they need something capable and compact. The point-and-shoot lines such as Sony's RX100 or ZV series, Canon's PowerShot G series, and similar offerings from Leica and Fujifilm dominate this segment of the market.

Coming to photo quality, it hugely varies from basic digital cameras to premium point-and-shoots. But across the board, the photos have a more balanced colour science. Photos from the premium point-and-shoots turn out images with a more natural shallow depth of field than portrait modes on smartphones. They look less processed because, in fact, they

are less processed. What you see on your optical or digital

viewfinder is what you get in the photos, and photo enthusiasts prefer this natural look to the artificial tinge of iOS or Android's image processing. On basic point-and-shoots, users get softer images with more vibrant colours and a blurry quality to them, which resembles many of the filters we now use. Instant cameras print out Polaroids with the option to print them with retro filters like sepia, grayscale, or vignette. Most of these cameras offer Bluetooth or Wi-Fi transfer of photos, with brands like Sony, Canon, Fujifilm, and many more supporting smartphone apps for lossless transfer of digital images.

You can buy these cameras brand new from Bashundhara City, Jamuna Future Park, Multiplan Centre, and other tech hubs, or you can buy second-hand cameras from Gulistan, Motalib Plaza, or online. Buying second-hand gear is always a risk, though, so make sure you avoid sketchy places with unbelievable deals, stick to trusted retailers, and test the device before buying it.

Photography is a hobby that demands time and patience. Getting the right camera will obviously put you off to a good start. But at the end of the day, you can take a good photo with almost any camera, and it's more important to have fun with your photography. Instead of getting all caught up in learning all the settings and trying to click professional photos from the start, start taking photos, and the specifics will come to you. Have fun with the trial-and-error process and say "Cheese!" before taking group shots.

Note: We would like to extend our gratitude to The Analogue Cache for providing us with the cameras photographed here.

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On the trips that never make it out of the group chat

NUSRAT MEHERIN FAIZA

Every time my friends and I talk, whether over a cup of coffee, on a late-night group call, or in between class breaks, there's this one ritual we never fail to perform: planning for a trip.

With each interaction, the fervour of planning a trip becomes more intense. The need to escape from the chaos of the city is overwhelming. Thus, we first try to settle on a destination: Cox's Bazar, Bandarban, Sylhet, and if the budget is on the higher end, maybe somewhere outside the country. The next course of action involves looking for hotels, crunching numbers to find the cheapest tickets, and delegating the responsibility of carrying a Bluetooth speaker for the trip.

For a moment, it feels like it's really happening! What could possibly go wrong? Everything apparently.

Every friend group has attempted to plan a trip. Unfortunately, something always comes up, and somehow it just never makes it past the stage of discussion. However, it's not about the process of planning but the friends that make it as entertaining as the prospect of a trip itself.

There is always The Planner – the enthusiastic one in the group – who pushes everyone else as well. They devise the most detailed itineraries, break down budgets, and even have suggestions for outfits. Their dedication is admirable, and honestly, we'd be lost without them.

Then there's the "Always Yes" friend. They'll eagerly agree to every single plan, even that one idea that's exceeding the budget. Why? Because they secretly know it's never going to materialise. In contrast to them exists "The Budget Conscious" one. They are always present to remind us to stay within our limits, even when wanderlust takes over. It can be frustrating, sure. But they are the reason



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

we can't even fathom the idea of going broke.

Finally, we have "The Last-Minute-Bail-Out" one – the friend who confirms till the very end, only to cancel at the last moment, taking the whole trip down with them. It stings, yes, but it is hardly surprising anymore.

The question remains, however, why does the trip never actually materialise even after planning everything out? The trip is usually an escape for everyone from their hectic lives. The throes of adult life, though, come with too many moving parts – exams, jobs, family obligations, and of course, the eternal struggle of syncing everyone's schedules.

Truthfully, the laughter over wild ideas, the argument, picturing ourselves in places we've never been – this becomes our mini escape. Years later, we will still laugh at our infamous Cox's Bazar trip or the unrealistic Bali trip that only lived in our search histories. But maybe, just maybe, we will never really let go of the dream.

What if, someday, we don't just plan it out but also book tickets, pack our bags, and make no excuses? I only have my imagination to think of all the photos, the sleepless nights, and heartfelt conversations by scenic landscapes that could unfold.

Until then, I wait, like countless others, holding on to the hope of a trip that makes it out of the group chat. The day it happens, it will be worth every failed trip that never happened. Regardless, we will find ourselves arguing over the same old plan, knowing it will stay exactly where it always does – in the group chat.

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Navigating imposter syndrome in friendships

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Imposter syndrome is the persistent thought process of self-doubt and inadequacy where people feel like a fraud in their success or relationships. A majority of people tend to experience imposter syndrome at some point in their lives, although the conception is different for everyone. The mainstream media often depicts imposter syndrome primarily within the context of careers or, occasionally, romantic relationships.

However, there is one crucial,

Have you ever wondered whether your friends actually like you? An innocent question, you could say, but is that where your inquiry stops, or do you enter a downward cynical spiral, dissecting every part of your friendship, even parts that do not exist?

A telltale sign of imposter syndrome is when a person self-sabotages their position in a friendship and feel unworthy of their friends' trust or fear being ousted from the friend group. As a result, they become insincere and distant, leading to the end of their bond. A phenomenon seemingly



ILLUSTRATION: AZRA HUMAYRA

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overlooked portion of our lives where imposter syndrome can creep up on and that is in friendships.

capable of destroying friendships. However, what causes it? Well, scientists are yet to discover a certain

reason for it, but many factors may have an impact which include, gender, age, environment, media consumption, and even cultural stereotypes. For some, it may emerge from toxic past friendships, trauma inflicted by former friends may materialise as self-doubt, while for others, it may even simply stem from a simple sense of inferiority that makes it hard to feel like they belong in a friend group.

The internalisation of such harmful thoughts not only ends present friendships but also becomes a hurdle in forming new ones, always in the back of your mind, feeding illusions of inferiority or undeserving of the connection between friends.

If these situations or emotions sound familiar, do not be alarmed – imposter syndrome is not the grim reaper of friendships. There are measures to take back control from your debilitating thoughts

and improve your bond. The first step to improvement is recognition – becoming conscious of your patterns. Instead of burying your thoughts of self-doubt, try to be objective in your approach. Ask yourself: is there real evidence for this thought, or is it simply my insecurity speaking?

People suffering from imposter syndrome rarely give themselves credit, and breaking this chain requires grounding yourself with facts that oppose your brain's ramblings. A practical tool that does just that is journaling. Writing one's feelings of discontent to revisit later in the future when your mind is calm enough to separate reality and your own insecurity may do wonders for people struggling with such thoughts.

Now, it is certainly possible that one makes up scenarios that validate their harmful thoughts. One thing to get rid of this habit is communication. Verbalising one's feeling of self-doubt to others can help provide reality checks that diminish the insecurity. As such, communicating with their friends regarding such thoughts becomes

crucial in bettering oneself. It may seem awkward and unnecessary at first, but there is no need to rush. It is important to start small and create space for difficult conversations but also remain clear and direct regarding the emotions involved. From there, the friendship can progress by all parties involved finding a system that sustains the connection.

It goes without saying, but for those who have been experiencing imposter syndrome to a detrimental degree, and has handicapped their ability to function socially – seeking professional help is the best course of action. It is true that not much research has been done into how imposter syndrome inflicts friendships, but professionals are surely better equipped at helping one navigate their mind's disarray. The process of recovery is gradual; one should not be expected to be cured of such debilitating thoughts within a day. Consistency is how one can slowly build a sustainable system that improves their mental health, helping them retain and build new friendships.