



#PERSPECTIVE

Why every Bangladeshi abroad feels that quiet strangeness in their heart

It is that time of the year when nostalgia hits, reminding us of school days when Victory Day meant a holiday, watching cultural performances on TV, waving the flag at the mela, on the rooftop, or even over the car hood. These small rituals made us feel connected, made us feel part of something shared. Around this time, people living away from their country feel a quiet strangeness in their heart, knowing they cannot be part of this shared experience with their friends and family the way they used to, now that they are miles away from home.

Md Kaushik, a Bangladeshi migrant worker living in Australia and currently working as a cashier at a convenience store, said, "I miss the chaos of Bangladesh — the madness and the rush of it all."

Even in Australia's orderly efficiency, he finds himself craving the unpredictability of Dhaka's streets, where plans change on a whim, and somehow, things still work out. Kaushik also shared that he misses going to New Market to haggle and hates how he has to do everything on his own.

For others, their taste buds yearn for a real Bangladeshi grub.

Sadia Rahman, a resident of Toronto, says she misses the food of Bangladesh. She remarked, "It's not that we do not have Bengali food here. But even the Bengali dishes here are not the same as what you get back home. I miss the variety, the quantity, and the touch of the food. That is why I eat as much deshi food as I can whenever I visit Bangladesh."

It could be said that food abroad is only consumed, but food back home is experienced and shared. For most non-resident Bangladeshis, each visit back home becomes a mission to eat as much Bengali food as possible, to make up for the lost chance.

Upon arriving home, Janifar Kamal, an international student currently pursuing her master's in the US, plans to make the most of her time by catching up with friends and family and eating all the food she has been missing.

Whereas, for others, the homemade food symbolises love. Mahbub Hasan,

an international master's student in the UK, said, "More than anything, I missed the handmade food cooked by my mum, especially her chicken curry with potatoes. No matter how many times I try to replicate her recipe, I cannot recreate the touch of my mother's love."

People miss their country with all their senses. Interestingly, for Mahbub, it was not a familiar sound but the absence of particular sounds that made him miss home even more.

"The next thing I missed was the sound of the Azan," he noted. "I never realised



its significance until it disappeared from my daily life. At one point, I would play the Azan on my phone just to feel that assurance and inner strength."

Something he had rarely paid much attention to before suddenly felt like an anchor when it disappeared from his routine.

In a bizarre turn, he mentioned that he actually misses the cacophony of car horns in Dhaka city, a sound most people are known to despise, let alone imagine missing. "Despite its flaws, the noise becomes part of your senses. And you notice this deadly silence only when you

move abroad," Mahbub expressed.

In the quiet of his UK flat, that absence feels daunting. The constant hustle of Dhaka city — the traffic, the street vendors, the chatter — became something he longed for in the silence of abroad.

For many, they miss the warmth they felt with the people they were connected with, sharing memories that are even more intimate.

Reminiscing the closeness, Ifthaul Islam Muzahid, an international student currently studying in Japan, shared, "I miss the two Eids the most, especially during Qurbani Eid — from buying the cattle at the haat to taking care of them until the sacrifice."

Muzahid lamented, "Now, my family does everything, and I only see our cattle

pointed this out, saying, "There are so many things I miss: my family, culture, festivals, the weather."

He highlighted, "But what I miss the most is the reduced load of responsibility and a simple life back home."

Back home, life came with a lighter load with family nearby, and even the burdens got shared. In a foreign country, everything becomes individual, calculated and scheduled.

Chowdhury says he also misses the comfort of hanging out with friends without planning a week.

Many miss their country for the people they left behind. Tarazi Mohammed Sheikh, an international law student in the US, shared in this regard, "I miss my teachers



just before qurbani through pictures." He added, "I miss visiting the relatives' houses and distributing the meat. I miss the togetherness of that ritual."

What once felt like a burden, like waking up early, the meat, and the mess, is now something he yearns for but can only witness second-hand.

Abu Taher, a construction worker in Malaysia, also shared that he misses the bonding he shared with his relatives, friends and people from his village, where everyone knows everyone.

The sense of responsibility also shifts drastically once someone moves out of their own country.

Muntakim Chowdhury, an international student, currently working as a sales associate at Home Depot in Canada,

in Bangladesh because they shaped the most important phase of my growth. Their guidance played a crucial role in my academic, personal, and professional journey."

These stories should remind us to feel grateful and fortunate to be home, among our loved ones who have seen us through every stage of life, and in a community where everybody knows our name. Challenges exist everywhere, whether at home or abroad, but being able to share them with others makes us feel connected and gives life a deeper sense of belonging.

**Certain names have been changed upon request*

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