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■ OFF CAMPUS ■

# Stuck in traffic? Consider trying these absolutely-not-stress-inducing activities

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If you have ever found yourself wedged between a bus, a rickshaw, and the crushing weight of your own regrets, don't despair. Below are several meaningful and absolutely-not-stress-inducing activities to fill the hours and transform this slow-moving purgatory into a personal growth retreat.

**Reevaluate every life choice**

There's nothing like the smell of overheated engines to make you wonder how you ended up here. Traffic offers a rare opportunity for introspection – mostly because nothing else is happening. Stare into the distance (approximately three inches away, because that's all you can see through the buses) and ask yourself important questions: Why did you choose this job? Why did you trust Google Maps when it said that the estimated arrival time would be 18 minutes? In fact, why did you even leave the house?

**Become an impromptu rickshaw art connoisseur**

Every rickshaw is a mobile gallery, and you are the curator. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: evaluate its artwork with the seriousness of a "seasoned" art critic. Reflect on the symbolism of random tigers, floating eyes, and ponder why a large portion of rickshaws feature Shabana posed dramatically against waterfalls. Is that tiger symbolic of national identity, or did the artist simply run out of paint

halfway through? Why does the back of every rickshaw feature a vague approximation of a Bollywood star from 1994?

**Narrate the traffic like a nature documentary**

Channel your inner David Attenborough: "Here we can observe the majestic bus in its natural habitat, blocking three lanes while communicating through a (not so) complex series of horn blasts. Witness the private car attempting a daring migration to the right... and failing."

**Start a podcast**

Monetise your suffering. Call it "Stuck FM", or perhaps "Turn Signal Confessions."

Although each episode may be recorded at a different intersection, they will all sound exactly the same. Content ideas include rating nearby billboards, interviewing the fruit seller outside your window, or conducting in-depth analyses of the implications of ever-increasing rickshaw fares.

**Rehearse arguments you will never have**

Practice saying why you're late to your faculty. Rehearse your monologue on why Dhaka roads need a more holistic urban planning approach. Pretend you're debating Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) officials on live TV. Win every single argument with flawless logic. You'll never actually use these lines, but you'll feel powerful for 30

solid seconds (or hours, depending on the traffic).

**Accept your fate**

This is your home now. The people in the buses around you are your neighbours. The flyover is your sky.

**Update your will**

Since you now live in this jam indefinitely, you might as well get your affairs in order. Jot down important notes: who gets your books, who gets your mug collection, and who inherits your unspent bKash cashback. Most importantly, should your Facebook account be memorialised with a cover photo of your beloved cat or the Banani traffic?

**Plan to be a better person when this is over**

You won't, but it's nice to dream while imprisoned inside a CNG that refuses to move.

By the time the vehicles lurch three feet forward, you'll have emerged like a butterfly from the chrysalis – older and wiser. And what is wisdom, if not accepting and perhaps even cherishing the things that life throws your way? Even if it's complete gridlock that you've been blessed with, remember traffic isn't a delay – it's a lifestyle. So, embrace the chaos. You were late anyway.

*Nuzhat is a compulsive doodler and connoisseur of bad early aughts television. Send her recommendations at nuzhat.tahiya@gmail.com*

