

Senior Dibya Barua takes trip to Bangladesh

My trip to Bangladesh was a very unique experience. The day after I arrived was the Bangladeshi Liberation War Victory Day, so the general public went to the "Sriti Shoudho" which is a monument built to respect those who have served. Entering the place was a nightmare. My uncle, who is the Dhaka Sector Commander for the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) assigned us two military units for our security.

Our vehicles were unable to enter because of the mass crowd however, our bodyguards from the escort truck got out to "plow" people so we would be able to enter the crowd safely. There were people all around our car and I was praying that the windows were bullet proof. I really wanted to take a picture of it but was unable to because I thought someone would punch open the window to steal my phone.

I will be honest, if anyone gave me a million dollars to drive in Bangladesh I would never take that offer. The drivers in Bangladesh are experts. There is no proper lane system and there are pedestrians everywhere trying to cross the street.

We went to Bangladesh at a very risky time. They were just having their elections which meant it was not safe to be out in public, especially as a foreigner. On their election day, my family went to the election polls to see how the Bangladesh election process works.

Honestly, I knew Bangladesh was a corrupt country, but I've never seen so much corruptness in my life. There were two main parties; the Awami League and BMP, out of these two, Awami League was the party in control of the government. BMP is the more radical muslim party so whenever anyone with a beard would walk in, they would say that the machine stopped

working.

Later, we went to the poll where my mom's friend has great political influence. He took us all the way inside the polling building and showed us the machine. No one stopped him or questioned him, not even the police. We were even able to vote even though we legally were not supposed to.

Other than the city side, I was able to visit my grandfather's village. Which is in Noakhali. I've seen my dad's village many times, but I really enjoyed this trip more. I got to explore and saw the struggles people take every day to make a living.

The time I was in Dhaka, we were all given bodyguards for our protection. Our bodyguards were the best of the best. They were always nice which I really did not expect. They made our trip much easier and I got to play badminton with them.

Chittagong wasn't as fun, but this trip made me realize that people in Bangladesh do not beg, not even the homeless people. Bengali people will do whatever it takes including working and most will refuse to beg for anything. I thought that was really interesting. My trip had many up and downs however, I got to see my family and enjoyed it.