

English translation:

Ishrat (I2): It's so annoying when I have to wear layers and layers of clothes and then a coat over them. It's irritating!

Irena (I): Yes.

I2: It feels uncomfortable.

I: But do you still feel cold now? Or are you used to it?

I2: I'm kind of used to it by now. In the beginning it was hard. But we had a built-in heater in your apartment so it was not that bad. Something fun happened one day. So you know, I always wash my clothes every time I wear them, otherwise I feel weird. So one day during winter, I washed my towel and put it out to dry. When I came back, Pinky, my towel was... what shall I say? ...totally hard! It had frozen! Then people told me that when it snows or when it's very cold you can't put your clothes out to dry. You can wash it, but not when it's that cold. You should have seen it! My towel was like *this!*

I: Yes, clothes do become hard if they're left out in the cold.

I2: All my shirts, trousers, everything had become frozen! Even the stoves are different there. They are not like the stoves you get in Bangladesh. If you leave the stove on for some time, the fire alarm goes off. This is another thing. One day, I came home after work and I was really hungry... I didn't want to cook because then I had to wait for the food to be cooked before I could eat, and I didn't want to wait because I was hungry. So I decided that I would not eat curry with rice that day, I'll just make an omelet to eat with rice. That was at the beginning, when I went. It had probably been only about a week and I had never heard the alarm before. So I went to make my omelet. Ronnie had told me before to turn on the exhaust fan whenever I cooked and to leave the door to the balcony open. When I asked why, he said that the food may produce a smell and other people in the building may not like it and might complain. There was a Sri Lankan living opposite us and an Afghani in the next apartment. He could have just told me that the alarm would go off and I would have listened. How was I supposed to know? Pinky, believe me, I had made such a nice omelet and

I: What happened?

I2: The alarm went off! Then a couple of days after I had arrived, I met this girl. I met her through this aunty. Ronnie calls her auntie. So that girl was that auntie's sister-in-law's daughter. That girl was crazy. She was probably a year or two older than me. And she told me to call her "auntie" and Ronnie was asked to call her "sister-in-law." She used to live in the next building, so I was acquainted with her. So I had made my omelet and it

was even finished! The alarm didn't go off while I was making it. Just when I was about to put the morsel in my mouth! We had two bedrooms and the alarm was on that side, a bit far away. I went to our bedroom and turned on the television and got ready to eat. Pinky, I was sitting on the bed and was just about to put the food in my mouth and the alarm went off! At first I didn't understand what it was and then later when I realized I got really scared! What was happening? I couldn't reach Ronnie on the phone. Then I asked that girl and she said "turn it off quickly!" I was so tensed I didn't know what I was supposed to turn off. Then she showed it [to me], and I turned it off quickly, otherwise the police [fire brigade] might have appeared. You have one minute to turn it off right? How was I supposed to turn it off? I couldn't even jump. I was trembling with fear and I thought to myself that I wouldn't cook again!

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