

EDITORIAL

I could say this about other things too, but yes, graphic design is my passion.

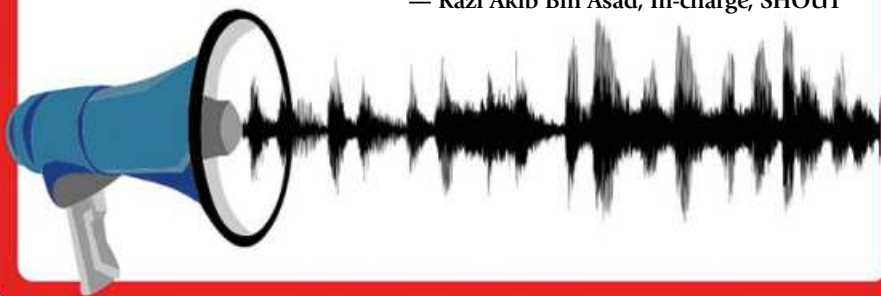
It was born out of necessity, you see. Back when I was a humble member at a university club, the duty of preparing the banner for an event fell on my shoulders. The club didn't have its own graphic designer; we took favours from a *bhaiya*. It wasn't the best experience being a "client" to him. Let's just put it this way: we had our creative differences. And I decided to take matters into my own hands, and my computer.

So I began. My rickety laptop went into overdrive as I churned out Design.ai followed by multiple renditions of the same project until I was satisfied with `FinalestFinalDesignPleaseStop.ai` on Adobe Illustrator.

For me, I realised, it was more than just a creative outlet. Graphic design—or me assembling random things and calling it a logo—is therapeutic for me. What started out as a means to help a cause is one of my favourite things to do now; what's even better is finding my other passions through it.

Hit me up if you want to talk about logos and fonts. Then we'll get talking.

— Kazi Akib Bin Asad, In-charge, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH
 TV SHOW REVIEW



“So much can change in a matter of seconds.”

ANTARA RAISA RAHMAN

After a long night of binge watching season one and waiting desperately for months to watch the second, *The Umbrella Academy* has been in the back of my mind for a while now.

If you've watched season one till the end, you know that Five takes the siblings to a different timeline in order to save them from the end of the world. This time, he and the siblings (reluctantly bringing Vanya along) jumped back to the 1960s. Separated in different timelines, they try to adapt to their new lives while waiting to find each other.

Scattered all over Texas, each characters' life in their respective timeline is shown to be like anyone else's. Yes, they suddenly appeared out of nowhere, but they adapt to this new obstacle. After casually walking into a "whites only" diner, Allison finds shelter in a women's beauty parlour where she gets "heavily involved in politics". Elsewhere, Klaus starts a gigantic cult that according to him is "too clingy", while Diego is locked in a mental institution with a woman who is more than just crazy. Luther, on the other hand, gets comfortable in his 60s life before he finds Vanya living on a farm with a unique family of her own.

I think this season of the show was tailored to fit each character into some part of America's history. Cults were at a rise in the 1960s as the counterculture movement fueled people's freedom of expression. The audience sees Allison working her way through pre-existing racism and becoming part of the civil rights movement. Diego is also seen desperately trying to prevent President Kennedy's death, which puts him in a psychiatric facility

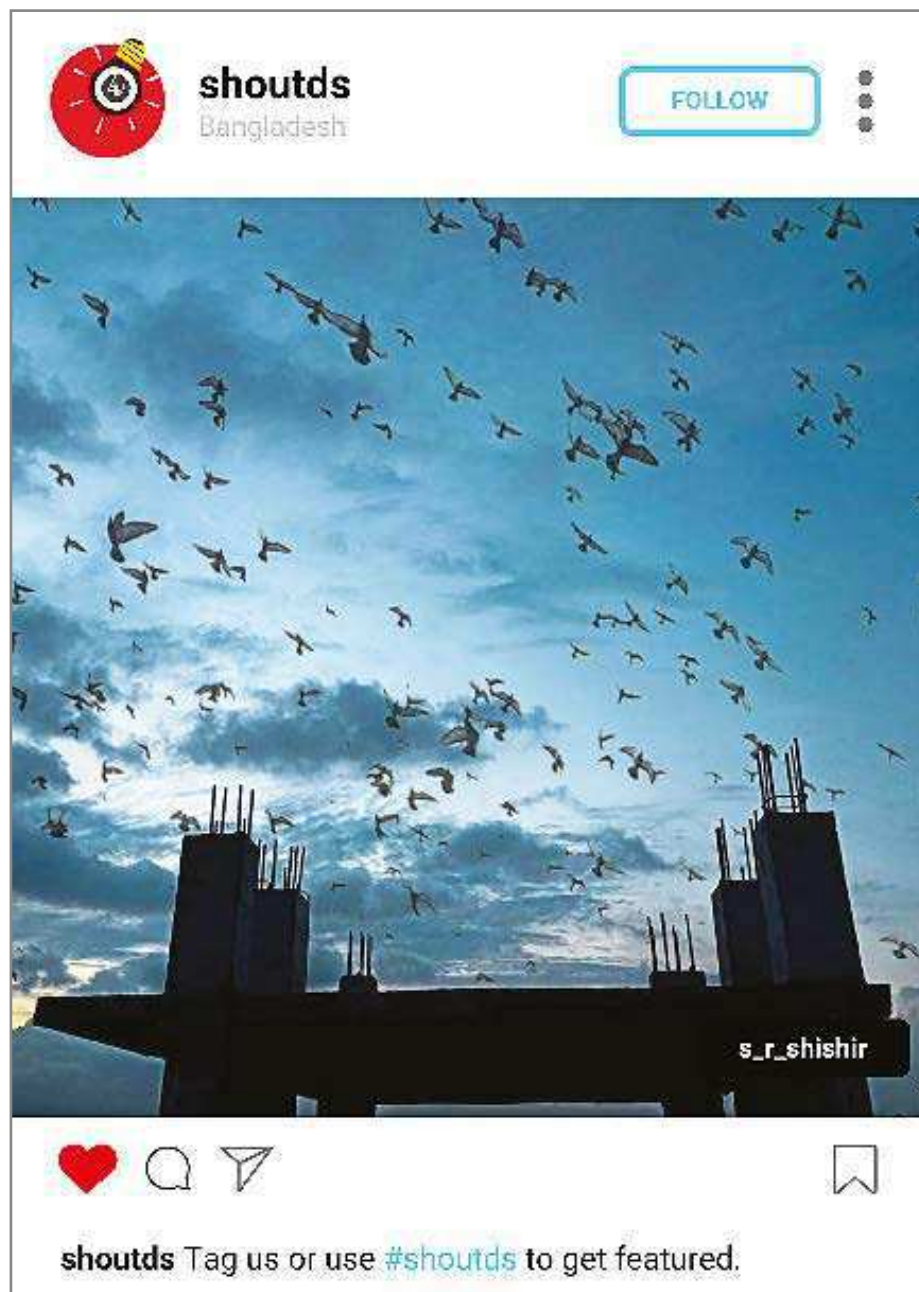
being diagnosed with something even viewers felt he had: a hero complex.

One thing that was brilliantly written was seeing a more humane side of Reginald Hargreeves. He is seen at a bar with Five, bonding like a real father and giving him a piece of advice that changes everything in the finale. Speaking of the finale, the siblings also realise that someone they never knew about is actually one of them. I'm curious to know if anyone else saw it coming, *because I didn't*.

To be honest, I respect how the season finale adapted a beginning-to-end structure starting the episode with a throwback to Ben's funeral. However, the final episode seemed very different from the rest, almost like it was meant to be its own thing. And although it does have intriguing incidents that wrap up this season quite well, there are many scenes that made me cringe. That along with the plot twists that just seemed a little too twisted made me realise that a well written foreseeable development works much better than a mediocre, unpredictable one.

Even with that, *The Umbrella Academy* is one of the most binge-worthy shows on Netflix right now. And because there are still several unanswered questions, I will eagerly wait for another season of this magnificent show. For now, I leave you with a quote from Dr. Hargreeves that is relevant now more than ever: "Even if you know everything there is to know about right now, you could never predict what will happen next."

Antara wishes to conquer the world someday and bring back an alien from Pluto. To know more about her evil schemes, send an e-mail at antara56.ar@gmail.com



HSC and my peace of mind

RAIYAN IBNE HOSSAIN

It was early January when I first got to know about the outbreak of Covid-19 in China. Back then, very few people were anticipating a pandemic, and I wasn't one of them.

Being an HSC examinee, I focused on my preparation as I had been preparing myself for the past two years. When I was days away from appearing for my final board exam, coronavirus first broke out in Bangladesh. Having read news about lockdown in countries dealing with the outbreak, I knew what that meant for HSC candidates: more time for preparation and revision.

While the spread of the virus to Bangladesh did scare me to an extent, truth be told, I was also somewhat happy because an imminent shutdown translated to postponement of HSC and that in turn meant more time for quality revision.

The first few weeks were marked by relaxation and a break from study. I was naïve to think that this indefinitely long pseudo-lockdown would help me in preparing myself better for HSC, but in truth, it did the opposite. I started forgetting most of the material I went through in the past and lost determination to go through it again. With the progression of time, my impatience for taking the exam kept growing since there was no indication of any tentative exam

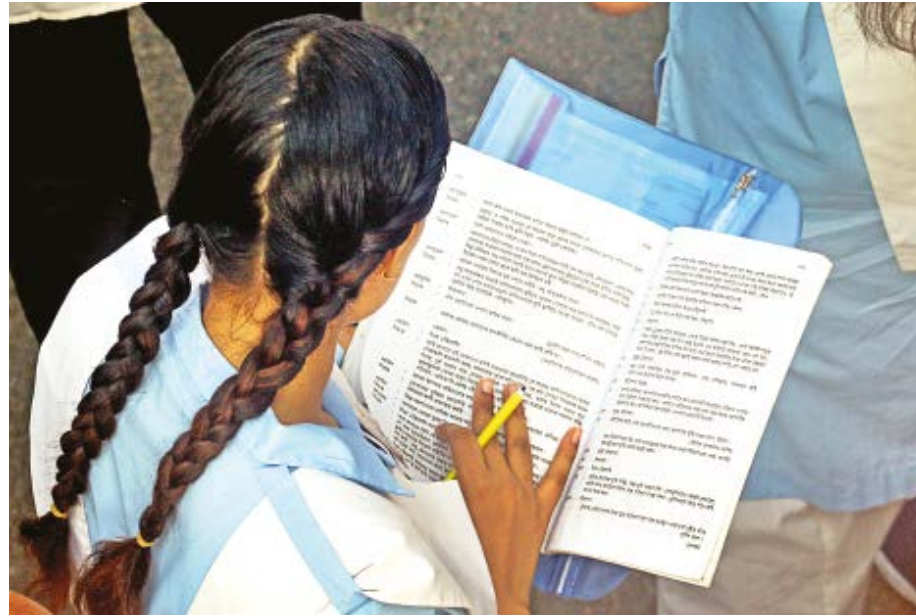


PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

schedule. As no deadline was in sight, any intention of studying for HSC properly was on hold too.

Does studying even make sense if I don't know how long my memory has to retain everything? All of this paved the way for my daily dose of cumulative stress. The fear of losing friends and family was added to it as well since every now and then I would hear news of acquaintances getting affected by

or dying due to Covid-19.

Fast forward to August, I've lost the mentality to appear for HSC. Rumours of institutions reopening amidst the pandemic are circulating nowadays; they terrify me. While I want to see the end of this viral horror so that normal life can resume, I don't want a hurried resumption of normal life either as this would inevitably lead to HSC. I heavily doubt if I can still achieve the result which I

expected from myself before March. If HSC takes place at any cost, numerous students like me would fail to obtain their desired grades and marks, which would further worsen our mental health.

Furthermore, Bangladesh is still in the first wave of this pandemic whereas numerous countries have already entered the second wave. Even if the situation does improve in Bangladesh and the government decides to hold the HSC exams, this might trigger the second wave in Bangladesh and some of the exams might need to be re-scheduled again, and dates being changed mid-exam is the last thing any candidate would want. These are the reasons why I can't stress enough how I wish the authorities seriously considered predictive grades as an alternative to holding HSC (multiple countries have taken similar steps to my knowledge). That way, HSC examinees would have one fewer thing to worry about (as if worrying about university admission season weren't enough).

Only time can tell what lies ahead of HSC 2020 candidates. Perhaps predictive grades will be considered to lessen our burden, or the wait for exam dates will extend indefinitely as everyone's anxiety worsens daily.

The writer is an HSC candidate from Notre Dame College, Dhaka.

THE DISASTER OF A RESULT

BOHNNI SHIKHA

The A Level results came out last week after this year's exams were cancelled due to Covid-19. The grades were given by an algorithm looking at past performances of the students and their exam centres.

For many, grades have been ridiculously downgraded from their AS results or predicted grades. In England itself, 40 percent of the teachers' assessments were downgraded compared to the 2.2 percent upgraded results. The results have invalidated the past few years of hard work on the students' part, as these grades have severe consequences on their futures. They're now dealing with impacts of mistakes they didn't make.

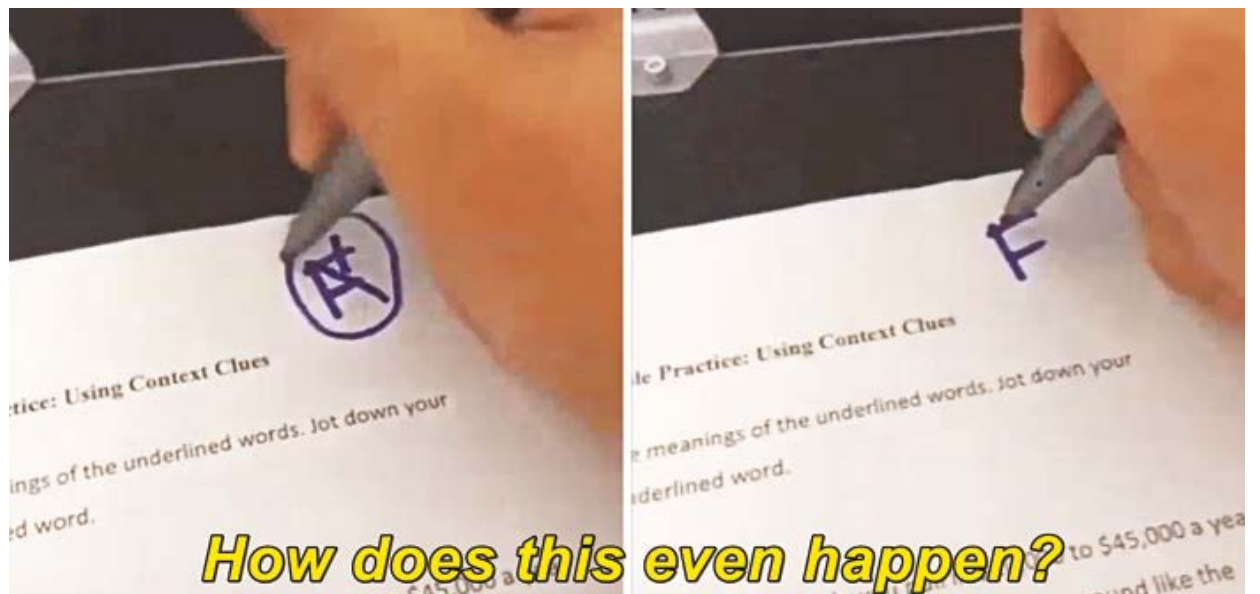
While grades dropping from A*/A to B/C has been a common sight, what left several baffled is a drastic drop to D/E.

Wasif Ahmed*, from S.F.X. Greenherald International School says, "I got an E in A Level Mathematics from a 91 percent in AS which would only happen if I got below 8 (out of 100) in my A2 exams!"

A Levels are defining points for students applying home and abroad. Ahnaf Mashrur, from Scholastica, mentions how he can't apply to most domestic universities anymore, "Given how badly I got downgraded—an A to E in Economics, B to D in Business Studies—I'm incapable of applying to public universities like IBA, DU and BUP, where I'd need at least 2 Cs to even sit for the admission exams. I can't really try for private universities either." Even those who qualify with Bs and Cs will have lower marks because of their lower overall GPA.

Students who got conditional offers or scholarships face the prospect of losing them. Students who opted for gap years can't apply according to their plans. Most universities won't accept Ds/Es for admission.

Purba Das*, from DPS STS School Dhaka, planned on applying to the UK with her AS results, but her downgraded



grades barely meet the entry requirements. "I would require an A in Mathematics for most Russell Group universities, which I was confident about getting as my mocks' average was an A grade. But because I ended up getting a B, I'm now having to look into other courses and universities."

For most students I talked to, their primary choice is going for a re-evaluation. Wasif has the SAT and IELTS lined up, and Ahnaf can't afford to lose months in his academic career. But the process is confusing with loopholes, which feels like the system has been designed to lead the students to retakes in the November session. Individuals can't appeal for their grades to be changed as the entire group would then be reviewed, and Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE) won't change the

rank orders used. Most schools are overwhelmed with the students' complaints, and several teachers have confirmed that students' grades didn't match their assessments. While some authorities are reassuring their students, others have been evasive.

With the lack of proper explanation of the evaluation system by CAIE, looming university applications, and the ongoing pandemic, students face uncertainty from all directions. Retakes call for more money from middle class families who already struggled to pay the registration fees, and there's risk in taking exams in the current situation. On the other hand, there's no guarantee appeals will work.

**Names have been changed for privacy*

Well... that's one way how to grab people's attention. Could have been worse though, could have been Comic Sans.



GRAPHIC DESIGN IS MY PASSION



ILLUSTRATION: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY

TASNIM ODRIKA & FAISAL BIN IQBAL

When we hear the title "graphic designer", we immediately visualise a person frantically clicking on a mouse with their back bent towards a bright screen. Somehow, the frantic clicking produces colourful arts, logos and illustrations, and at first glance it may all look complicated.

Then the question arises, what is *graphic designing*? Although it's a term we hear often, most of us are unaware of what graphic designing actually is and what a job in this field really entails.

Simply put, it is a form of visual communication with the use of typography, photography, illustration, motion graphics, etc. So, your job can include making logos for small and big brands, designing user interfaces for applications or websites, making book cover designs for aspiring authors, album cover designs for your favourite artists—the list goes on.

Now that we know what it is, how do you build a career in graphic designing?

To get an idea of the basic skills required to begin your journey in this field, we spoke to Md. Harun Ar Rashid, Assistant Professor, Department of Graphic Design, Faculty of Fine Art, University of Dhaka.

"In general, most jobs in the field require some use of the various Adobe software available, and Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator are important software to master for any job in this field," he comments. Although Adobe dominates the market, there are alternatives available. CorelDRAW and Inkscape are great substitutes for Adobe Illustrator for vector art; and GIMP can be a great alternative for Adobe Photoshop for raster art. Since Adobe has a subscription fee, newcomers in this field may also be interested in the free

and open-source software such as Inkscape and GIMP.

For learning, various materials are at your disposal online. YouTube can be a great platform for grasping the basics. One of our favourite channels is Gareth David Studio as this channel provides a well-rounded introduction to a lot of Adobe products. If one is interested in earning certificates, they can enrol in their desired graphic designing courses online on platforms such as Udemy and Coursera. There are also multiple books that one can find online. But, throughout the whole learning process it is just as important to continuously keep applying and honing your creative skills.

After acquiring the necessary technical skills, the next step is looking at work. Graphic designing is a vast field with opportunities almost everywhere. If you really consider it, there are few job sectors that don't require a graphic designer. Starting from ad designs for businesses to making a motion graphics video to explain science to school children, almost every field needs their help. As a result, the career opportunities are endless. It is evident that the demand for graphic designers and illustrators will always be there. The visual design industry is growing in Bangladesh, and it is safe to assume that there will be more opportunities in this field in the near future.

"I personally think that this industry will only grow bigger in the future," says Tafsir Ul Huq, a freelance graphic designer. "Brands want to make their social media presence felt, and for that, they need good visuals. Hence, they turn to agencies, or independent designers to get the job done. You could also work for newspapers, and different online media outlets. They too need good visuals to attract readers towards their content."

"In short, there will always be a need for unique and eye-catching visuals," Tafsir adds. "This in turn, will always ensure the need for graphic designers in the industry."

The most important asset at this stage is to have a diverse work portfolio. Harun Ar Rashid shares, "The first thing employers want to see when hiring a graphic designer is how good their work is. A degree or a certificate is of little use to the employer if they do not like the individual's work."

Although there are degree programs for this field, such as the ones offered by the Faculty of Fine Art in University of Dhaka, most employers judge designers on their skills and existing work and not on the certificates they have. This is one reason this field is currently attracting a lot of young designers because they realise that this is a career opportunity they can benefit from without having to pursue an academic degree. They can either take short graphic design courses in different private institutions, or learn as much as they can from the internet, before heading out in search for work or building a career in this industry.

In terms of being a good designer, Harun Ar Rashid adds, "The most important thing to keep in mind is client service. A good design will conform exactly to the clients' requests. Therefore, good communication skills are highly important. Furthermore, some technical aspects must be kept in mind to ensure a clean and crisp production of the design. Aesthetics of the design is definitely important but even if a design is aesthetically pleasing but has a lot of technical issues, it will automatically be rendered a bad design."

Now, as a graphic designer, you have the option to work full-time as well as a freelancer. Each has its own benefits and concerns. The choice will be yours to make.

"With freelancing, you get to work on your own accord, but you don't face many challenges which can deter self-development in some sense," says Harun Ar Rashid. "As a full-time graphic designer, you get to work beside other designers and so you develop and gain more experience in the field."

Tafsir made the huge decision of quitting his full-time job as a graphic designer to focus solely on a freelancing career. He was motivated by the benefits of freelancing, and was ready to take a few risks.

"I moved to



freelancing once I realised that it was more profitable for me," Tafsir explains. "The pay is good, and I'm really enjoying the freedom I have right now. Of course, there's the concern that I might not always have a project to work on, but I've decided to take the risk, and thankfully, it's bringing me good results."

"Life as a graphic designer in a digital agency is quite hard," he adds. "And you don't always work 9 to 5. The work rate varies, and sadly the pay isn't that good in most of our local full-time graphic design jobs."

"Freelancing isn't easy either," claims Tafsir. "If you're looking to work as a freelancer for the rest of your life, you need to work extra hard. You'll also have to struggle a lot at the beginning. Finding clients or projects will be very difficult for newcomers. However, if you're patient and have a good work ethic, you'll find a way sooner or later."

There's no doubt that the opportunities are endless in the design industry, but that doesn't mean success will come to you if you sit idle instead of working hard for it.

"A common trait among new artists or graphic designers is the idea that they're going to get work right from the start," says Junaid Iqbal Ishmam, freelance cartoonist and illustrator, and In-Charge of Operations at Cartoon People. "However, that's not entirely certain. They'll have to fight for their place in the industry, which is already very competitive."

"As a visual artist or designer, your primary concern should be self-development," Ishmam asserts. "Practice a lot, and study the work of others. Once you've mastered the skills, and have a good portfolio that you can show, you don't have to look for work or clients. They'll come

looking for you."

For some people, graphic design is something that starts out as a hobby and ends up becoming a profession. In such cases, it's very important to draw the line between the two.

Tafsir explains that when designing as a hobby, one doesn't really need to work on the advice or suggestions of others. "You can take opinions as they come and go. But as a professional, you can never do that. You need to take criticism seriously, and work on it. There will be times when you need to revise a design over and over again, just to get it in accordance to the client's specifications and needs. If you're not good at incorporating suggestions, or working with constructive criticism, you can never really succeed."

At the end of the day, working as graphic or visual designer seems like a pretty good career choice. For many people, it's a passion for creativity turned into a profession; to start graphic designing as a hobby, and ultimately stick with it for a living. That being said, like all other professions, you'll probably have to deal with a lot of failures along the way before you can actually become an expert of your work. That's all part of the process, and whether you like it or not, you'll need to face it head on before you can fully grow as a successful graphic designer.

Tasnim Odrika has only one personality trait and that is cats. Share ideas for new personality traits with her at odrika_02@yahoo.com

Faisal wants to be the very best, like no one ever was. To stay home is his real test, to survive the pandemic is the cause. Write to him at abir.afc@gmail.com

Work from Home: A problematic convenience?

MOMOTAZ RAHMAN MEGHA

Life, be it personal or professional, does not look the way it used to six months ago. Post Covid-19, the biggest change that has happened is perhaps the intertwining of our personal and professional lives thanks to the “work from home” culture. While some people appreciate this change, others are sceptical about its sustainability.

For most people, being at the comfort of their home and working at their own space is very important for them to work not only efficiently but also in a comfortable headspace. The constant hassle of commuting or even just the preparation one needs to take before leaving the house for work is mentally and physically taxing. Sarwar Khalid, a CSE student from North South University (NSU) who also teaches students from home said, “You don’t have to go through the hassle of going to your workplace and can be at the comfort of your home.”

This personal space, however, comes at the cost of a more disciplined and scheduled life. When asked about keeping up with this new normal, third-year NSU business student and part-timer at a marketing agency Tabassum Mostazir* said, “I feel like I am having to work more hours than I usually do. Since we are not able to get out of

the house, employers and clients assume that we are free all the time and assign us to work at odd times in the day with very unreasonable deadlines.

“Even if we are at home all the time, for students who are part-time workers, it is difficult to always be available given we still have to do online classes and prepare for exams. In fact, we have even more on our hands now as teachers give us more work because they know we will be home all day. This vagueness of work hours has completely messed up my schedule,” she added.

On the other hand, people who usually have to travel a lot for work are cherishing the respite that work from home has to offer. Being able to spend time with their family whilst working can be immensely gratifying for some individuals.

Muktadir Rahman, Director of Transnational Education at London School of Commerce said, “I am connected to all my staff and my CEO from home, whereas it takes a lot of travel time to meet them normally, which has decreased my travel time and allows me to work more effectively while spending time with my family.”

However, this increased family time comes at the cost of accessibility for some. Without proper investment in making technology more accessible and affordable, inequality is perpetuated in many facets of life. This work culture enables individuals, but only the ones who are capable of enabling

themselves with technology and information crucial to facilitate this process.

When asked about her experience, Zarrin Tasnim, a fourth-year EEE student at Islamic University of Technology (IUT) who also works as a content writer for Fraktal Creative said, “While telecommuting has accelerated work pace it has been difficult for others to adapt. I believe it saves time for a student and helps me to do multitasking. I would prefer tele-workforce to be continued after the pandemic but without providing sufficient technical facilities it will become a privilege to few and remain impossible to many”.

There are also certain jobs that just cannot be done from home. For a lot of people, this is the terrifying truth. Looking after your work, or even physical work that requires your presence is a big downside of the current ongoing work culture.

Humayun Kabir Khandaker, Deputy General Manager of Utah Groups Limited, a multinational garments company said, “It is impossible to work from home for people like us who need to look after every aspect of production. Hence working from home is extremely unproductive for us due to the nature of work we

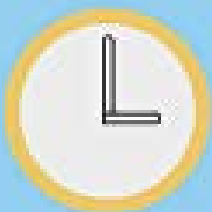
do.”

There is also a group of people who are indecisive about their feelings regarding this transition. They are usually older or middle-aged people who have not retired yet but not also in their prime working years either.

Mohammad Niaz Murshed, a professor of Physics and Mathematics at NSU, said, “My emotions are somewhat mixed. Working from home is fun because it is all done from home, but teaching technical material appears to be challenging (at times) in the online setting.”

So, if we want to give a verdict about the work from home culture, it is probably too soon to tell but one thing is certain, this new normal of work isn’t ideal. It has its good sides, but some changes definitely need to be made to make it more accessible if we are to adapt to this in the long run.

Megha would rather be in a conference room than be in a zoom call. You can tell her about your preference at megharahman26@gmail.com



Since we are not able to get out of



BLINDED

IONEE R. AALAM

The sun had long since left its perch by the time Maia was done sorting things out. She slid open the balcony door, heaving a sigh of relief.

The chilly wind seeped through her t-shirt and blew back her wavy black hair as she pushed the door further aside and stepped out, letting the air freshen out her stuffy apartment.

The full moon glowed softly in the night sky, its light dulled out by the gleaming cityscape. Maia was used to this by now. She didn't know when the constant honking of car horns and the screeches of trains went from a nuisance to her lullaby.

She leaned her arms on the railing and looked out. It was nearly midnight, but of course, the city never slept. People were calling for taxis, pouring into the metro or simply walking. The restaurants and malls were still bustling, and the movie theater a few blocks away drew in hordes of teens and adolescents.

Maia wondered what Mira and Davi were up to as she massaged her aching arms. Her sister and nephew had moved to a small town nearby, but she still couldn't see them as often as she'd have liked. She loved the way her little nephew's eyes lit up every time she visited. It didn't matter if she couldn't always bring him chocolates or toys. His reaction never changed. Maia smiled.

A dull thud and a cry from behind her roused Maia from her thoughts. She turned to find a figure clad in black sprawled facedown on the floor of the balcony. The dark-skinned boy was younger than her — in his early twenties.

"What do you have wings for?" she asked, folding her arms and leaning back against the railing.

The boy groaned, folded his enormous bat wings and sat up, rubbing the side of his head. Blood dripped from the cut on his lip.

"I was being chased when I made the portal. It was too low."

"That, I could tell," said Maia, sparing a glance at the remnants of the pulsing blue portal on the balcony ceiling. "Still doesn't explain how you couldn't fly and break your fall."

"Give me a break. Wings don't work sometimes."

"Whatever. They better not be broken, Mak."

"They're safe," assured Mak, standing up and sliding the protective case off his shoulders.

He set it down on Maia's desk once they were inside. Maia counted and inspected the jars for damage first before moving on to the vials. She set aside the two vials of blue liquid from the eight vials of yellow ones. Once she was sure they weren't damaged, she slid everything back into the case apart from two of the yellow vials.

"I thought you said you were keeping one of them," said Mak warily, dabbing at

the cut on his lip with a damp cloth.

"I lied," replied Maia, scooping up the remaining vials, not even bothering to look at him.

"If he finds out —"

"He won't."

"Besides, what are you gonna do with two of them? One is more than enough."

"Not when they're temporary," replied Maia, locking them away.

The bluntness in her tone made Mak want to fly away right then and there. But he decided on trying one more time.

"But you know it's dangerous. What about the side effects?"

jaw, Mak knew he'd crossed a line. Her eyes set ablaze with rage. And then it happened. Her irises turned white and her eyeballs turned into a luminescent blue, casting a glow over her dark olive skin.

He blanched. Not again.

"Do you think you're innocent?" she spat, advancing slowly on him. "You work for them. Do you honestly believe, nothing you do contributes to this?"

"I didn't deny it!" Mak said, his voice wavering as he inched back towards the balcony. "But it doesn't contribute that much, does it? Most of it doesn't even go to mortals!"

my sight," she rasped. "Before I throw you down."

Mak did not dispute. It wouldn't be the first time he was kicked out of a balcony by superhuman strength.

He folded his wings tightly and inched sideways, away from her, being careful not to touch her. By the time he was standing on the railing he could feel her white irises burning holes into the back of his head. But Mak was equal parts relieved and surprised when Maia didn't push him down to his death.

He was airborne in seconds, speeding away from the apartment as fast as his wings



ILLUSTRATION: RIDWAN NOOR NAFIS

"Worth it," Maia wound her hair up into a bun. She frowned at him. "Not that I expect you to understand."

Mak didn't. He was born with his bat wings. He didn't know what it was like to not have magic coursing through his veins, to live a life devoid of it.

"I don't understand," he admitted, raking a hand through his curly black hair. "But I know what it's doing to you. This needs to stop, Maia. You're turning into one of them."

The moment he saw Maia clench her

Maia's face twisted into a scowl. "You're even more of a fool than I thought," she scoffed as she kept advancing. "You're a smuggler. A thief. You'd have to be a special brand of idiot to believe your work doesn't have consequences."

"Y-you're right," stammered Mak, raising his hands in surrender. His wings were almost touching the railing. "I'm sorry."

Maia's eyes still glowed, piercing Mak with barely disguised contempt. "Get out of

would carry him. The chilly wind greeted him, enveloping his tired, sweaty form.

Mak had been flying for a while when his thoughts finally became coherent. He'd had enough, he decided. He had dealt with enough gangs, mysterious faceless bosses and ferocious glowing-eyed superordinates for one lifetime.

It was time to find a different profession.

The writer is a student of class 12 at Sunbeams School.

Which “Coffee House Er Shei Addata...” friend are you?

ADHORA AHMED

Coffee House er shei addata aaj aar nei... Aaj aar nei...

This timeless song needs no further introduction. Just hearing the first line brings you and your parents back to the golden afternoons spent with friends. Penned by Gauri Prasanna Mazumder, Manna Dey sang about a specific group of people hanging out at a coffee house, but the appeal is universal. Every friend circle has a bit of Nikhilesh, Moidul, D’Souza, Roma Roy, Amol and Sujata in them. Which one are you?

NIKHILESH

They are the talented ones, hiding many tricks up their sleeves. They’re also extroverts, and thus the life of the party. However, these friends are like meteors; they dazzle everyone around them only for a brief time, because they mysteriously lose touch with the squad after settling abroad. Due to their lasting impression, they are missed at every reunion.

MOIDUL

They are popular like the Nikhileshes, but for different reasons. They’re the social justice warriors, posting long statuses on Facebook about various socio-economic issues. Being strongly opinionated makes them vocal in every *adda*, occasionally getting into fights with other friends having different opinions. These fights eventually



PHOTO: AVIPSU ARKO

cause a rift within the group, to the point where they can cut off ties. You won’t see them at reunions. Therefore, the Moiduls are quite polarising figures.

D’SOUZA

They are the wise and quiet ones, never striving to be the center of attention. Instead, they’re glad to be a fly on the wall. They’re also excellent listeners. Other friends, whenever in distress, turn to them for support. These qualities earn them

respect within the squad.

ROMA ROY

They are the hopeless romantics. When they fall in love, they fall hard, but not for long. They celebrate monthly anniversaries with their significant other, because rarely do their relationships last a year. After breaking up over trivial things, they go through a heartbroken phase, until they get a new crush and the whole cycle repeats itself, while the other

friends roll their eyes inwardly.

AMOL

They are introverts like the D’Souzas, but they struggle to fit in with the cool kids. Despite their best efforts, they only exude a weak presence, and are overshadowed by their more popular friends. Hence, they’re likely to suffer from an inferiority complex. Eventually, they become best friends with the D’Souzas.

SUJATA

They are the ambitious opportunists. Their astuteness helps them work any situation to their advantage, simultaneously avoiding bad blood with anyone. In this way, they remain well-liked within the group. You’ll see them sharing motivational quotes on social media. They’re likely to be the most successful in the circle, not shy to show off at the reunion parties.

Each of the characters in *Coffee House* is unique, yet they are bound by camaraderie. This demonstrates the power of friendship to bring people of different personalities together, forgetting about their differences and embracing their common humanity. The next time you listen to this song, become the Sorting Hat and wonder which category each of your friends fit in.

Adhora Ahmed tries to make her two cats befriend each other, but in vain. Tell her to give up at adhora.ahmed@gmail.com

THE TANGENTS OF GRIEF

ROSHNI SHAMIM

A few months earlier, my uncle had passed away. Although him and I were not particularly close on a one-to-one basis, there was something very fatherly about the way he treated all of us children with the same demonstration of love and care. Therefore, when the news of his death reached me, I processed my turbulent emotions in a very alien-like manner.

How do you react to a person’s death who you were not close to inherently, but held strong respect and regard for? Despite processing the sadness that was submerged deep inside of me, on the outside, my face remained impassive. I assumed at the time that it was normal to feel this disconnect between reaction and reality; not everyone reacts the same way, after all.

Yet, my flowing sadness elongated when I spoke to my late uncle’s daughter who also happens to be my childhood best friend. As soon as I heard her cry, I felt something shift within me. The sadness which was previously submerged no longer felt abated, it was now rising in waves. I reflexively touched my cheek, expecting the moistness to make contact with my fingers. Yet, there was none. Only a feeling of utter helplessness kept building up, like an endless pool of darkness you’re infinitely falling into.

This undefined emotion that I felt then is what we collectively identify as *grief*.



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

Growing up, my outlook on mourning always implied a bout of sadness that produced tears. Through the years, I have come to realise that mourning is not complemented by sadness. It is moulded by grief.

In so many different moments and walks of our life, we process the emotion of grief and don’t even realise it. When we

finish a book that we thoroughly enjoyed reading, that familiar feeling of emptiness that settles within us is actually a form of grieving that we do. It is also interesting to note that as human beings, we are very reluctant to let go of people, places, memories and connections-- even when their journey with us ends. So when our regular emotional scale is thrown off balance,

we accidentally end up in an uncharted territory. Here, we do not gush out tears or even heal overnight. We face instead a slow journey ahead, filled with an inexplicable sense of loss and existence.

When grief comes knocking on your door, momentarily, it consumes you. It sits like a hollow weight on your heart, attuning you to constantly feel as if you are sinking. Sometimes, the grief can linger for a long while, invariably becoming your seasonal companion. It often comes and goes, but it is nearly impossible to not expect a single visit of grief in our entire lifetime.

I have come to terms in accepting that not all grief can take the same form and neither can it be healed in the same way. Grief has many tangents and through each one of them, we get to take away a lesson of our own wounds and the ways to treat them right.

In such times of helplessness, my favorite mantra has now become the ever-present reminder that time heals all. Even when it feels like an eternity, we eventually do bloom once again. Inevitably, the only thing that remains continuous is time, and the changes that it brings along. So the next time you feel that insurmountable, invisible pain in your heart but are incapable to react to it, remember that this too shall pass.

Share your thoughts to roshni.shamim@gmail.com