

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE
SHOUT

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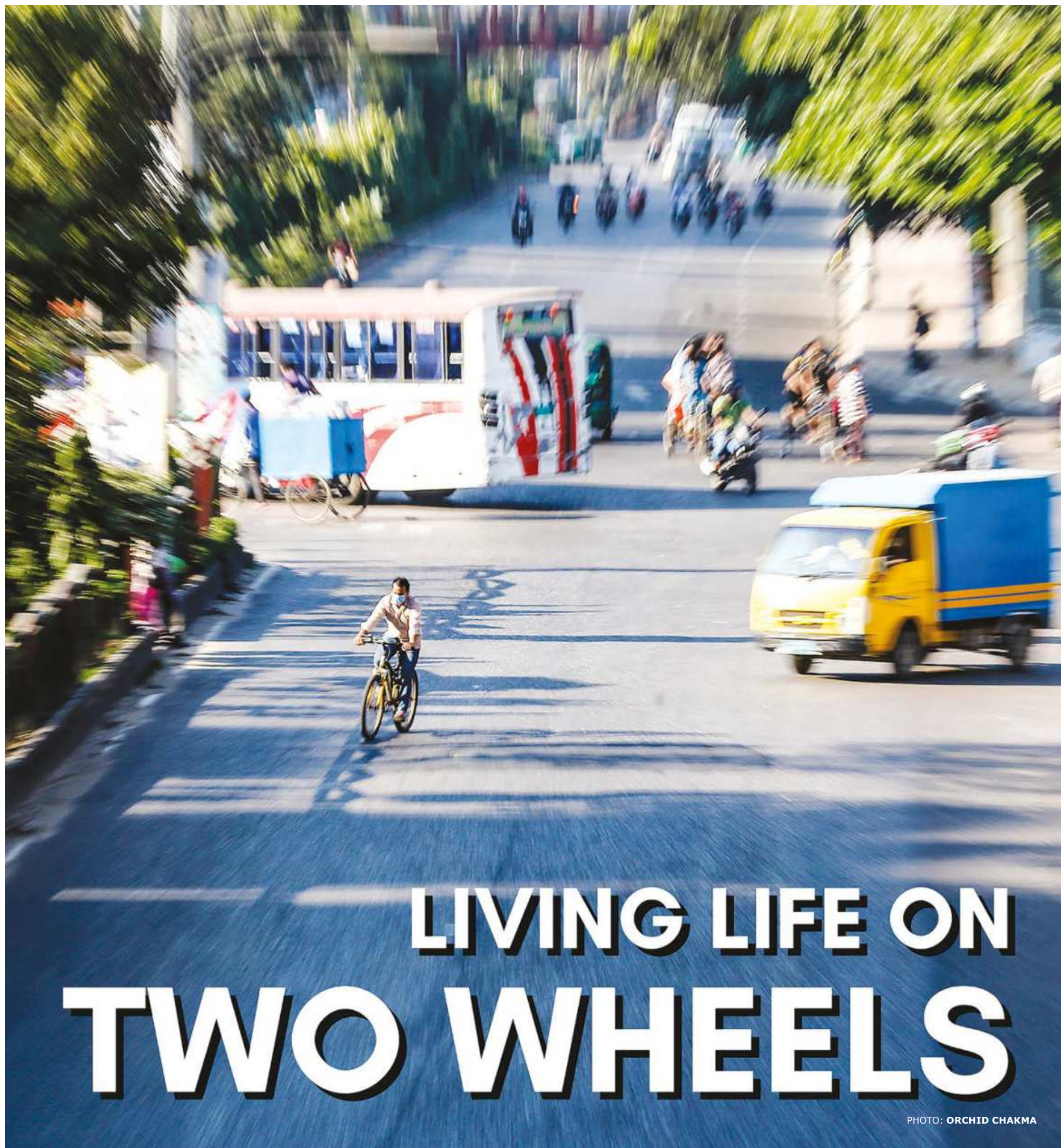


UNSUBSCRIBE FROM
HYPED DIET CULTURES

PG 3

COMBATting PATRIAR-
CHY ON INT'L MEN'S DAY

PG 4



LIVING LIFE ON
TWO WHEELS

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

EDITORIAL

Winter is here! Sure it's not fully here yet but for people like me who wait around for the earliest signs of the seasons changing, I'm content with managing to catch a whiff of winter air.

And it was just a whiff that made me do a quick analysis of all the sweaters from previous years I'm going to re wear. It made me add all the holiday movies I'm going to re-watch to my playlist. It even made me ambitious enough to save a few *pitha* recipes for when I really feel creative in the kitchen.

But this winter will be different. Most years, outdoor picnics and forays outside of the city seem like just the kind of seasonal thing to do, but this year I'm thinking safety first. The pandemic is far from over and as a somewhat informed youth, I take it on myself to tell people around me that putting off their social plans won't hurt them, but Covid-19 definitely will.

And so I curbed my enthusiasm knowing it will be a winter spent at home. That and I'm not too fond of being chased around by mosquitoes either.

-- Mrittika Anan Rahman, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH TV SHOW REVIEW



*Move aside agenda pushers,
this is how you convey
a real message*

RABITA SALEH

Any-Taylor Joy stuns as Elizabeth Harmon in Netflix's latest limited series "The Queen's Gambit". Portraying a genius chess player in the Cold War Era who goes on to battle it out on a global stage with grandmasters of the time, Joy steals the show in almost every scene she's in. She is absolutely riveting, her razor-sharp expressions constantly demanding your unwavering attention, so much so that following her through her life as a child protégée turned chess celebrity for roughly seven straight hours suddenly becomes the most natural thing to do.

Admirable appearances are made in the characters of Benny Watts, Harry Beltik (who regardless of how many years pass will always be little Diddykins to me), Harmon's mother Mrs. Alma Wheatley, Harmon's best friend Jolene, and Mr. Shaibel, the janitor who teaches Harmon the game. It is an absolute credit to the writers that they were able to showcase Harmon adopting so many character traits from her relationships with each of these people -- both good and bad. These characters absolutely mould Harmon as a person throughout the series, putting forth a message of constant change and self-improvement.

There are some ridiculously beautiful shots throughout the series. A stand-out for me was the scene when she moves into her first actual house as a teen and makes sure she can see the ceiling from her bed. The visually stunning and heavily symbolic shadow of the chess piece traversing up her body left me awestruck.

Then we also have all the striking sets of her traipsing around all over the world in gorgeous couture, heavily emphasising her femininity, and driving across the point that just because a woman is into fashion it doesn't mean that she can't also haul you up and down a chessboard at will.

What I really loved about this character is that she's a woman written without the intent of being better than all men. Her sole purpose in life is not to be manlier than every man around her, a trap so many shows these days fall into when writing "strong" women (looking at you, Marvel). It's an absolute breath of fresh air. Harmon never tries to "outman" the men around her. She outsmarts them, outplays them, and generally outdoes them in a million big and small ways without ever coming across as an unrealistically written character. And therein lies the beauty of this series. It conveys a very strong, very simple message:

"Girls can be really smart. As smart as any man. Smarter than any man."

And it does so without ever feeling like it's pushing an agenda. It emerges as an empowering show for women through and through, but it steers well clear of the usual frustrating tropes. This woman is brilliant, and brilliantly flawed, and that makes her all the more suited to being a protagonist that you're seriously rooting for every step of the way.

Rabita Saleh is a perfectionist/workaholic. Email feedback to this generally boring person at rabitasaleh13@gmail.com

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TOP 10 REASONS TO UNSUBSCRIBE FROM HYPED DIET CULTURES

RASHA JAMEEL

Are you trying to lose an unrealistic amount of weight which might require you to chop off a limb to achieve?

Are you trying to adhere to a problematic standard of beauty through means of injecting non-biodegradable acrylic beads in your body?

Are you trying to bulk up in ways that can possibly result in you going blind?

Well then, you're in luck! Because I'm about to prevent you from putting your body through irreversible damage by undoing all the brainwashing carried out by the media frenzy surrounding "the perfect body" which somehow only revolves around one specific ideal of beauty.

First things first, you need to understand that the "diet secrets" shared by celebrities in fashion magazines and personal interviews will probably never work for you in reality. There are multiple reasons behind that, which is the real secret no one likes to address.

Starting with our physical health, we were all born with different body types, different health conditions. There's a very slim chance that the celebrity diet you're rooting for will actually be compatible with your body. Runway models have discussed the extreme diets they often resort to during events such as Paris Fashion Week, where they try everything from surviving on 20 pieces of edamame to eating tissue.

Lifestyle is also another major issue, considering how celebrities have an entire team of professionals assisting them in achieving that seemingly-Photoshopped appearance. There are personal chefs involved, as well as fitness trainers, and diet coaches. Take pop culture icon Beyoncé's "22 Day Diet" for instance, it requires you to completely cut out dairy, carbohydrates, fish, and poultry, coupled with hours of strenuous training routines, as seen to be carried out by Beyoncé. Popular reality TV stars, the Kardashians, are often seen advocating for detox teas and shakes, which do not appear to be approved by relevant authorities due to their dangerous side effects involving dehydration, diarrhoea, stomach cramps, and eating disorders such as bulimia. The only purpose that celebrity-endorsed diet teas serve is that of laxatives.

A regular adult is likely to spend the bulk of their day working from morning till evening outside in an office space. The regular adult has neither the time nor the energy nor the access to necessary health-

care services required to cope with diets that are extremely restrictive and physically taxing, for empty promises of a "fit body".

I'm sure you've come across the word "fit" or "in shape" a lot. I imagine you associate these words with images of a human body that either fits the mould of "36-26-36", or comes with "six-pack" abs. In reality, being fit has little to do with how your body looks or how many conventional standards of beauty it meets. The true meaning of being fit tends to easily get lost in the overflow of fad diets in popular culture, as people forget that while beauty standards change by the decade, the factors responsible for our health do not. Our physical fitness depends on how strong our vitals are, and how comfortable we are in our own skin.

If you live in South Asia, chances are you've been exposed to an extremely hyped diet culture that is Bollywood-centric. There are countless videos and interviews of members of the Hindi film industry speaking in favour of toxic beauty standards defined by a slim physique. It has now begun to weigh on the Bangladeshi film industry where actors

are more likely to be pressured to lose weight instead of being asked to work on their craft, because filmmakers think regular people in our country always look like they go to the gym for 4 to 5 hours each day of the week. There have been earlier reports of Bengali actors collapsing on the set in the middle of shooting, due to restrictive diets required for a "pencil-thin" physique. These actors, in turn, perpetuate the toxicity even further by equating their craft of acting to solely being thin, a phenomenon illustrated by BBC's short film *Leading Lady Parts* (2018), where actor Florence Pugh is asked by the casting directors to be "thin and curvy", "like a twiglet", and without "baby-bearing hips", in order to land the role of a leading lady.

At this point you've probably noticed that I haven't really given you 10 reasons to dismiss diet culture. I mean, do you really need a list of 10 reasons on why you must unlearn toxic practices and prioritise your physical and psychological well-being?

Hey, why strive for uniformity in body types when you can take a leaf out of Lizzo's book on physical fitness?

The author meticulously plans out her 13 daily meals on a regular basis. Drop a 'good luck' note for her overworked digestive system at rasha.jameel@outlook.com



COMBATTING PATRIARCHY ON INTERNATIONAL MEN’S DAY



SHOUNAK REZA

“If there is a women’s day, why can’t there be a men’s day as well?”

It is not uncommon to come across posts and comments along these lines on Facebook every year on International Women’s Day. To the people asking this question, addressing the challenges and obstacles faced by women in the patriarchal world we live in is clearly not important. According to them, the idea that a men’s day doesn’t exist simply diminishes the importance of International’s Women’s Day.

This might come as a big surprise to those people but, in fact, there is an International Men’s Day and today -- November 19 -- is that day. So, Happy International Men’s Day, everyone.

International Men’s Day is celebrated every year in more than 70 countries. Instead of shedding light on its history, I will focus on what we should discuss and address on this day.

First, International Men’s Day is not an excuse to demean and mock International Women’s Day. It is sad to note that most of the people wondering why a men’s day does not exist, do not really want such a day for the purpose of addressing the

myriad of issues faced by men. In this age, very few things are more than just a Google search away and if they really cared, they would just look it up.

Instead of playing the “Why isn’t there a men’s day?” card every Women’s Day, it is important that we mark the actual International Men’s Day by discussing the issues faced by men all over the world and one of the things that needs to be focused on is patriarchy.

This may raise eyebrows. I mean, we already challenge the patriarchy on March 8. Why should we talk about putting an end to it on a day dedicated to men?

We often fail to understand that “men” and “patriarchy” are not synonymous, and just a lack of understanding of what patriarchy means and what it can result in, has led many people to misunderstand feminism and the fight to end patriarchy. In fact, patriarchy does not favour anyone other than those men who are okay with abiding by all of the gender roles it imposes on them.

It is because of patriarchy that gender roles are imposed on people. Thanks to these gender roles, men who express emotions are looked down upon and shamed. Anger, on the other hand, is thought of as a masculine trait. Breaking things and getting

into fights are considered absolutely normal and nobody bats an eye when these things happen because, according to them, *boys will be boys*. They will be aggressive and assertive and they won’t cry. If something saddens them, they will just ignore it.

When people encourage boys to “man up”, rarely do they give a thought about the long-term impacts this will have. Do they think about the traumas the boys who were bullied for not being masculine enough will have to carry for the rest of their lives? Do they think about the effects that repression of emotions has?

I have been asking myself these questions for a long time.

Globally, more men than women chose to end their own lives. Research shows that the differences in the methods used by the different genders is one of the reasons behind this, but another cause has its roots in the aforementioned toxic gender roles. Because they have been conditioned into staying silent about their emotions, many men do not share their pain and worries with well-wishers. They bottle up their feelings and refuse to seek professional help. Not seeking help translates to no diagnosis and no treatment and things eventually get from bad to worse.

The venom of patriarchy affects anyone

who doesn’t comply with it and can, as we have already seen, even lead to violence and death. This is exactly why on November 19, discussions should take place on the ways in which we can raise awareness about how toxic gender roles imposed on men harm not just them, but also the people they surround themselves with. We should also keep in mind that these issues should not just be kept reserved for this date only. Even after this day ends, we will have to keep enlightening those around us on the need to tell their sons that it is okay to be emotional, it is okay to cry and it is necessary to be compassionate and understanding.

Let us start today. Let us talk about the terrible effects that toxic gender roles can have on people. Let us have discussions on the harms of repressing emotions and the necessity of seeking professional help for mental health problems. Let us delve deeper into the need to liberate not only women, but also men, from the clutches of patriarchy.

Happy International Men’s Day, once again!

Shounak Reza is passionate about history, reading, and writing. He can be reached at shounakreza99@gmail.com

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE
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LIVING LIFE ON TWO WHEELS

HIYA ISLAM

There is something inherently pleasurable about riding a bike. Ask any rider, why they do it. You’d meet a smiling face that says “for the love of it”. From speeding downhill to strolling solo, from racing in alleys to wandering in faraway wherever, the joys of cycling barely begin here.

It was not simply love that pulled these cyclists to the sport. For many it was the incentive of cutting back on their monthly transport budget and managing their finances better. Or, to get past the traffic jam.

As Rafsan Zia, 22, puts it “Cycling my way helps beat Dhaka’s insane traffic and is very cost-efficient”.

Teeshad Islam, 19, agrees to the same saying he never really has to torture himself being stuck in the situation. He also added that cycling gives him an edge of independence when he runs his daily errands. Cycling has become a very popular mode of transport, especially now, among students who are always on the run; they hop and pedal away past and in between cars and rickshaws in gridlocked roads. With looming deadlines and overloaded academic pressure allowing very little time for fitness activities, youngsters rely heavily on cycling to stay fit.

Some, like Zia, spare some time in the

morning solely for exercise apart from the daily pedalling. More students, like Raisul Habib, 23, rely on cycles for their part-time jobs such as food delivery services. On average, his job requires him to travel 15 kilometres daily to complete orders.

However, things have changed with the concurrence of a pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. The coronavirus crisis has impacted cycling activities in ways better and worse simultaneously. For the average Joe, the communicability of the disease has significantly reduced the miles pedalled in fears of being infected. However, the sales and use of bicycles has seen a surge; these rides have been strongly heeded as safer than public transportation. But it has become difficult to keep up with face masks on, as many have reported. On the other hand, in accordance with safety measures, adults and teenagers alike have taken the streets by storm. Be it competitive racing or savouring empty roads -- a cyclist’s surreal dream.

Despite cyclists burgeoning in the city there are hurdles to jump. While it is important that cyclists do their part, that is, wear safety helmets and maintain speeding limits, there are matters yet to be resolved which would ensure their safety and ease on road.

The dangers associated are certainly not minimal; road safety issues still

prevail. Ricketty, broken roads and reckless four-wheelers leave no mercy for the riders. Cyclists need to be humanised on the streets.

Towsir Ahad Arnob, 22, thinks, “New laws should be put in place to ensure rider safety, laws that mandate use of headlight, brake light and reflectors.”

These gears are especially important for those who cycle at night as these enable them to be seen in the dark of the night. Parking spots to safeguard bikes is also a massive need. As bicycles end up huddling in the roads anyway, there might as well be a proper place to keep them. In addition, there is the ongoing talk about separate bicycle lanes for riders. Zia comments, “There aren’t many separate lanes for cyclists in and around Dhaka, safe for one in Agargaon.”

Hamida Akter Jeba, aged 24 above, who has won several cycling competitions in the country, too thinks that there should be separate lanes which would also serve to encourage females to partake. In her opinion, women on bicycles are not safe. Apart from drivers threatening to run over anyone, there are men who stare and catcall any moment they spot a female on a bike.

Although, “most women pretend not to hear or try to avoid these occurrences”, Jeba says “This is not the solution.”

She elaborates more on how challenging the activity and even, the sport, is for women by nature. At times, there is a lack of supportive, encouraging family members and peers; guardians often do not approve nor allow cycling for various reasons such as, safety concerns, societal judgement etc. Other times, the male gaze and eve-teasing hinder the decision of using bicycles.

As with every ride, there is always maintenance and repair. Different issues may arise anytime -- tire leaks, loose paddles, dysfunctional brakes, broken lights etc. Ahad suggests that owners do a quick check-up “every 15 days”. Irregularity in maintenance poses risks for the future and makes accidents and injuries likely.

Some started out as teeny tiny toddlers on tricycles, some sneaked out to practice while some skipped a step and rode on the two’s. What’s common among them is the love and zeal they share for cycling, no matter why they started out in the first place.

In the end, it all leads to a rider’s high and a lasting companionship. While problems persist, with more campaigns and awareness, cycling enthusiasts can be positively benefited.

Hiya goes to and fro between boredom and sleep. Talk to her at hiyaislam.11@gmail.com



PHOTO:
SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED,
ORCHID CHAKMA & STAR



ECHOES BY
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

AUCTIONS

Another Nobel Prize in Game Theory

I
My first encounter with game theory was in January 2011 at Economics, North South University. I knew nothing and still jumped into the water. However, I was blessed by a wonderful class that challenged not only themselves, but made me want to challenge myself. Game theory became “love at first sight”.

This year Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for “improvements to auction theory and inventions of new auction formats”. Milgrom (2020) follows Alvin Roth (2012) and Bengt Holmström (2016) as Wilson’s PhD students to win the prize.

Today we talk about auctions, but with no jargon.

II
You’re very thirsty. You want to buy a bottle of water. A standard bottle sells at Tk 15. Would you ever tell the seller you’re willing to pay more than Tk 15? You wouldn’t. That’s *private information* to you only.

What happens if you were selling the bottle? Would you ever tell the buyer the minimum price you were willing to sell at, when you know the bottle will sell at Tk 15? You wouldn’t. That’s *private information* to you only.

Now let’s introduce auctions.

There’s only one seller who will sell one bottle of water where you compete with several other buyers. All the buyers want the bottle. Will the bottle sell for Tk 15? No. Each buyer will slowly reveal their highest



private information as far as possible to win the bottle. This format is the *English auction*.

What if you go to sell the bottle and there are others competing to sell, and only one buyer? Will the bottle sell for Tk 15? No. Each seller will slowly reveal their lowest *private information* as far as possible to sell their bottle. This format is the *Dutch auction*.

III
Auctions make bidders reveal *private information* they would normally never do. Auctions are interesting also because of the *winner’s curse*.

A mango orchard will be sold on auction for five years. No bidder knows how many mangoes will grow over the five years. They can only “estimate”. If I want the orchard the most, I will tend to “overestimate” its actual value.

I may go on to win the auction, and end up paying more than its value. Other buyers may get together to make me over-bid, while they pull out of the race. These and other situations make auctions interesting in theory and also in practice. This is where Paul Milgrom and Robert Wilson stand out.

IV
Borrowing tools from game theory, Milgrom and Wilson pioneered the theoretical development of auctions during the 1960s and the 1970s. They came into prominence during the US radio spectrum auction in 1994. Their model generated large revenue, but importantly showed the public sector how to use auctions to sell goods.

The practical challenge then, and still now, is to devise an auction to find a balance between bidders revealing their private information, not fearing the winner’s curse, and how they would cooperate (or not) during an auction. Milgrom and Wilson influenced theoreticians, and benefitted societies in devising ways to transact goods that was unthinkable even thirty years ago.

To add some icing on the cake, Milgrom is the only Nobel Laureate in Economics to accept a prize twice. He accepted on behalf of William Vickrey in 1996 who also won for auction theory, but died very soon after the prize was declared.

V
The “beauty and the beast” of Echoes is its word limit. We’re approaching those limits. If this Echoes has echoed, you’re ready for a personal journey to learn more about the wonderful world of auctions. A personal journey is always more rewarding.

Asrar Chowdhury teaches Economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com

The Incredible Journey Starts Now

Team from IBA, DU become champions of Unilever BizMaestros 2020

A CORRESPONDENT

After a challenging battle and surpassing 145 teams from 25 universities across Bangladesh, Team “The Incredibles” has won Unilever BizMaestros 2020. Sadia Hasan, Marzina Akhter Prottasha and Sajid Asbat Khandaker from Institute of Business Administration, University of Dhaka (IBA, DU) will now represent Bangladesh at the global platform of Unilever Future Leaders’ League (FLL) 2021 in London, where they will contend against the brightest talents of the world. They will also be forwarded in the recruitment process of Unilever’s Management Trainee Programme, Unilever Future Leaders’ Programme (UFLP). In addition, they will also be getting an opportunity to work on a short-term project at Unilever Consumer Care Ltd.

The first runners-up title went to Team Mudblood from Bangladesh University of



PHOTO: UNILEVER BANGLADESH

Professionals. Team Bus-Hawks from IBA, DU are the second runners-up.

The gala was hosted virtually on November 12, 2020, where the six finalists were evaluated by a panel that

included Asif Saleh, Executive Director of BRAC Bangladesh; Robert Simpson, FAO Representative in Bangladesh; KSM Minhaj, Managing Director of Unilever Consumer Care Limited; and Kedar Lele, Chairman and Managing Director of Unilever Bangladesh. Unilever, staying true to its commitment of giving back to the community, this year, hosted the first ever virtual BizMaestros, ensuring safety of all involved, while helping the students experience the thrill of real business and grooming them for the future.

The theme for this year, “Power the Future” enabled the participants to work on business challenges to steer the business towards growth by leveraging futuristic opportunities. Registered teams submitted ideas in video format to improve health and wellbeing of Bangladesh. After thorough assessment, the top 30 teams move to the semi-finals.

The theme for the semi-final round,

“Channels of the Future”, challenged the teams to come up with solutions to leverage emerging channels to grow the business and serve our shoppers better.

For the grand finale, the finalists were given the challenge to improve the health and nutrition with Unilever’s nutrition portfolio.

Throughout the rounds, several learning sessions were arranged for the teams to have a proper understanding of the challenges and various business concepts that would help them craft their solutions. Each finalist team was mentored by experienced senior managers of Unilever Bangladesh who guided them to hone their solutions.

The BizMaestros gala ended on a congratulatory note for the winners who will be representing Bangladesh at the global platform of Unilever Future Leaders’ League in London and fight against the brightest minds of the world!

MONSTROUS SCALLIPSES

RAISA FARZANA

Monstrous Scallipses only comes out during the night,
It's so viscous, mighty and dangerous to fight.
Had any legend or brave ever told its tale,
There was only one survivor who returned so frail.
It had numerous perceptive eyes dotted around the head,
Two enormous fangs from where poison is spread.
It's always on the watch, its nose is active too,
Not to mention its ears that hear the tap of shoes!
Its body is full of scales, thorns and fur,
This monster is quiet, and barely makes a purr.
It has seven arms in total, with 2 fingers in each,
Ten miniature legs which are barely of reach!
Beware, beware, don't go off wandering at night,
Watch out for the Monstrous and its viscous bite!
It lives in the forests, but its habitats are unknown,
That is because it is huge and is extremely outgrown.
It has special powers that help it to survive.
Camouflage and strength is what it uses to thrive.
There are only five of them left out in the wild,
You better be serious, don't take it so mild.
Beware, beware, I am warning you again,
Whether you kill it or live with the pain.
If you have a brave amongst you, join the battle wing.
Whoever kills the beast tomorrow, will become our king.

The writer is a grade VII student at Sirius College, Melbourne, Australia.



ILLUSTRATION: **RIDWAN NOOR NAFIS**

Memoir of a Songbird Named Childhood

MALIHA TRIBHU

I remember.

I remember that rugged chalkboard by my bedside. Written on it was a rhyme, ABCDEFG... IJKLOMOP... See I knew the alphabets and I'd sing them just the way my mother taught me to.

I remember the broken crayons laying all over the floor, along with some scattered papers and pencils -- I painted a house; a tree; some birds; a river and a sunset.

I've always loved painting sunset as it was filled with so many colours. I loved colours. I'd use as many colours as I could to make the paintings alive.

"Ma! I made another drawing!"

She loved it. She absolutely loved it. I knew it by the look in her eyes. Even with the exhausts of life she still smiled the same. Every time she saw my "red-painted house" she'd give me a kiss on the forehead.

I remember the sparrow on my balcony. We'd play hide and seek but I never won. Every time I caught up to her she was already gone.

I remember those paper made aeroplanes that never flew too far, crash landing upon busy roads, crumbled upon tire-tracks, left unnoticed.

I remember thunderstorms and rain. Me hiding under my blanket, peeking through again and again,

"Will the monster under my bed crawl up to me tonight?"

I remember my brand new Eid dress that I'd show to no one.

"Mine's the best," I'd say.

I remember dreams that came by the

night and I'd write about them lest I should forget the memories that were too precious!

What I can't remember though, how the changes shifted and nothing was there anymore. As if I stood there, quietly observing the fabrications of my childhood slowly disappearing into thin air. And then the utter voidance takes over these four-chambered walls.

Oh childhood! I remember everything about it. Except how it changed, how I changed and became this person.

People exhaust me, mother barely smiles. Even if I hug her tight, she seems weary somehow; aged and weak.

I barely find words to speak as if I've made myself used to being so quiet that even I cannot hear myself. Thunderstorms don't keep me awake anymore, my own thoughts do. The monsters don't live under my bed anymore, they live in me.

The broken crayons remain untouched, canvas unpainted, colours faded; as weary as my mother's smile.

I remember the nightmares that came by the night; never letting me sleep. I try to forget all about it yet end up being completely devoured by them.

Eid feels like just another occasion to stay in bed all day. I don't wish to neither see people nor greet them. I hide away just like my Eid dress. Washed, ironed, and hidden -- never wanting to be worn out.

I remember every bit of my childhood like a distant dream, almost non-existent.

Yet I do not remember how I've become this person.

The writer studies Marketing at the University of Dhaka.



With great power, put great responsibility first

ROSHNI SHAMIM

As a child, I was always taught the merits of helping others in need. It is not uncommon to see that this ideology has been taught and upheld in endless households around us.

In teaching children to have good values and morals, one of the first things that are always emphasised to us has to do with the power of kindness. In most cases, this is an extremely valuable trait to have. For those who end up having an inbred notion of spreading kindness from an early age, it usually manifests as a positive trait even in adulthood. However, sometimes, this can bring its own ringing bells for the said individual.

The identifier problem in this scenario pertains to the idea of “happiness” that individuals form in their minds. It is an endless debate on what kind of goals eventually make us feel “happy” yet kindness remains as a stark denominator in most of these scenarios. After all, helping another person in need helps us feel accomplished; it’s like doing a good deed that nobody asked us to do. The end result therefore, makes us feel warm inside, thinking, “Hey, I helped someone out today for no other reason than to simply help them in their time of need.” All of it sounds great, of course. Most would even agree that regular acts of kindness are totally harmless and to a certain degree even philanthropic.

The issue arises when our boundaries begin to blur with the idea of “helping” others in need. A simple way to put it is in the example of how individuals feel when they are validated through their social media content, whether it be through likes, comments, reactions or shares. Every little click releases a little bit more of that serotonin in our systems to make us feel giddy and delighted. Along the same wavelength of thought, helping others can often become our own dose of induced serotonin. Our fixation with helping others becomes so encompassing that we begin to shelve our own pressing issues and problems, and that is where the real trouble starts.

This projection of burying our own issues by choosing to help others is not unheard of nor is it an uncommon practice. We all deal with our own worries in our own unique ways and for many that means to first, stay in denial of our personal issues and second, to then goad on that denial by fixating our concerns on other entities entirely. We have all grown up watching movies that romanticise characters who always put other people’s needs first. Subconsciously, we often attempt to follow similar pathways in our real lives. However, this can be an unsettling habit to practice especially if it means that the individual in question begins to make this lifestyle habit their primary source of happiness. This can lead to a sense of feeling lost in general with their own lives as well as not being able to find a solid direction of where they want to be in their future.

Therefore, it is important to remember that kindness is not a bad thing to practice regularly. It is the foundation of building humanity in societies and should always be taught as well as encouraged in children and adults alike. That does not however, and should not, diminish the acknowledgement of the more concerning manifestation here that individuals do just to find the escape from their own problems.

Roshni believes a steaming cup of tea can be the solution to most problems in life, save for math. Send Roshni your best math hacks and tips at roshni.shamim@gmail.com

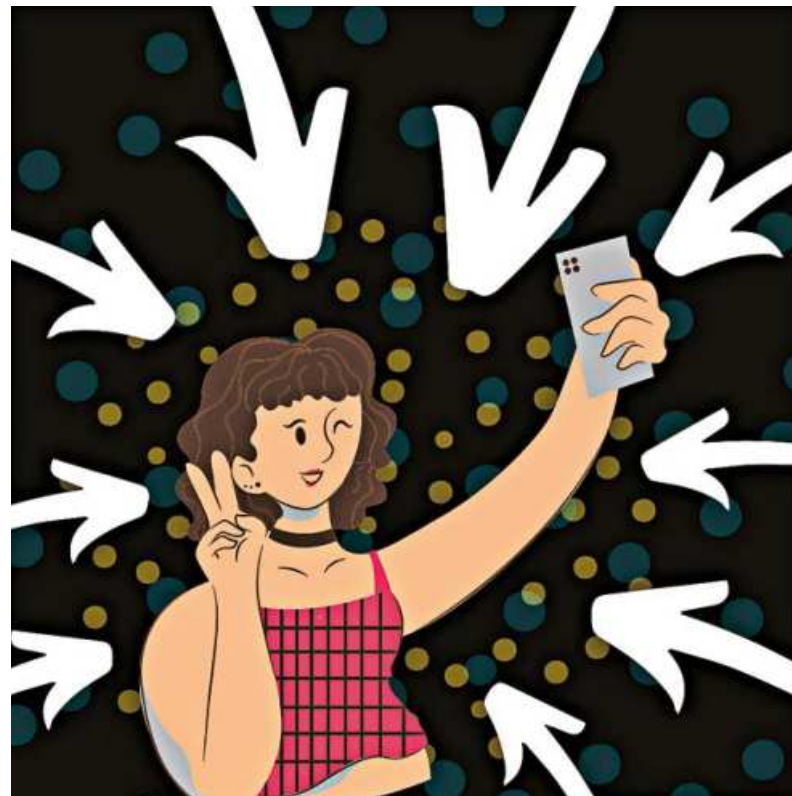


ILLUSTRATION: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

WE NEED TO TREAT OUR FEMALE CELEBRITIES BETTER

MRITTIKA ANAN RAHMAN

There seems to exist a subsection of pages and people on social media whose work it is to ridicule and scrutinise the personal lives of any person who can be called a public figure under the loosest definitions of the term. That would’ve been fine, except, some things are really none of our business.

Scrolling through my feed, I hold my breath anytime a female public figure announces her marriage, a bold new career move, or even states her opinion on a particular matter. Why? Because like the larger framework of the patriarchal society it is a product of, our social media too, has been disproportionately unkind to women.

When our entertainment intake consists of both movies and the lives of those who make it, lines start to blur on what we can critique and pass a judgement on and what we cannot. As young and smart consumers of media, it is up to us to think every time we come across something posted by a troll page.

How do we spot problematic content?

If a post tries to shame or embarrass a person for the decisions they have taken in their personal life, it is problematic content. Pointing out the number of marriages or relationships a person has had, what clothes a person chooses to wear, or how one chooses to organise their family life are the best examples of things we should not pass a judgement on.

Is the post digging up dirt on something this person did years ago to make fun of it now? Do any of the photos being circulated seem like they were taken without the intention of them circulating on social media? Then we have to refrain from liking or sharing such posts and tell our friends that this isn’t funny.

Why? Remember, these aren’t just unfunny memes or jokes. These are products of our patriarchy. These posts are working to shame and pressurise women into confirmative behaviour all masquerading under the pretence of it being a funny Facebook post. Every time we support such a post, we are enabling people to control women and their actions.

So can we never talk about celebrities? Of course we can. As critical media consumers, we must know how to talk about a person respectfully and the fine line between critiquing someone’s work and bashing them for their choices.

Mrittika Anan Rahman is a daydreamer trying hard not to run into things while walking. Find her at mruttika.anan@gmail.com