

# RISING STARS

## Bangladesh: Switzerland of the East?

by Tadib Muktda

**T**HE father of the nation, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, once dreamt that Bangladesh would become Switzerland of the East. Now that I am living in Switzerland I can appreciate why he said this. It has many interesting features.

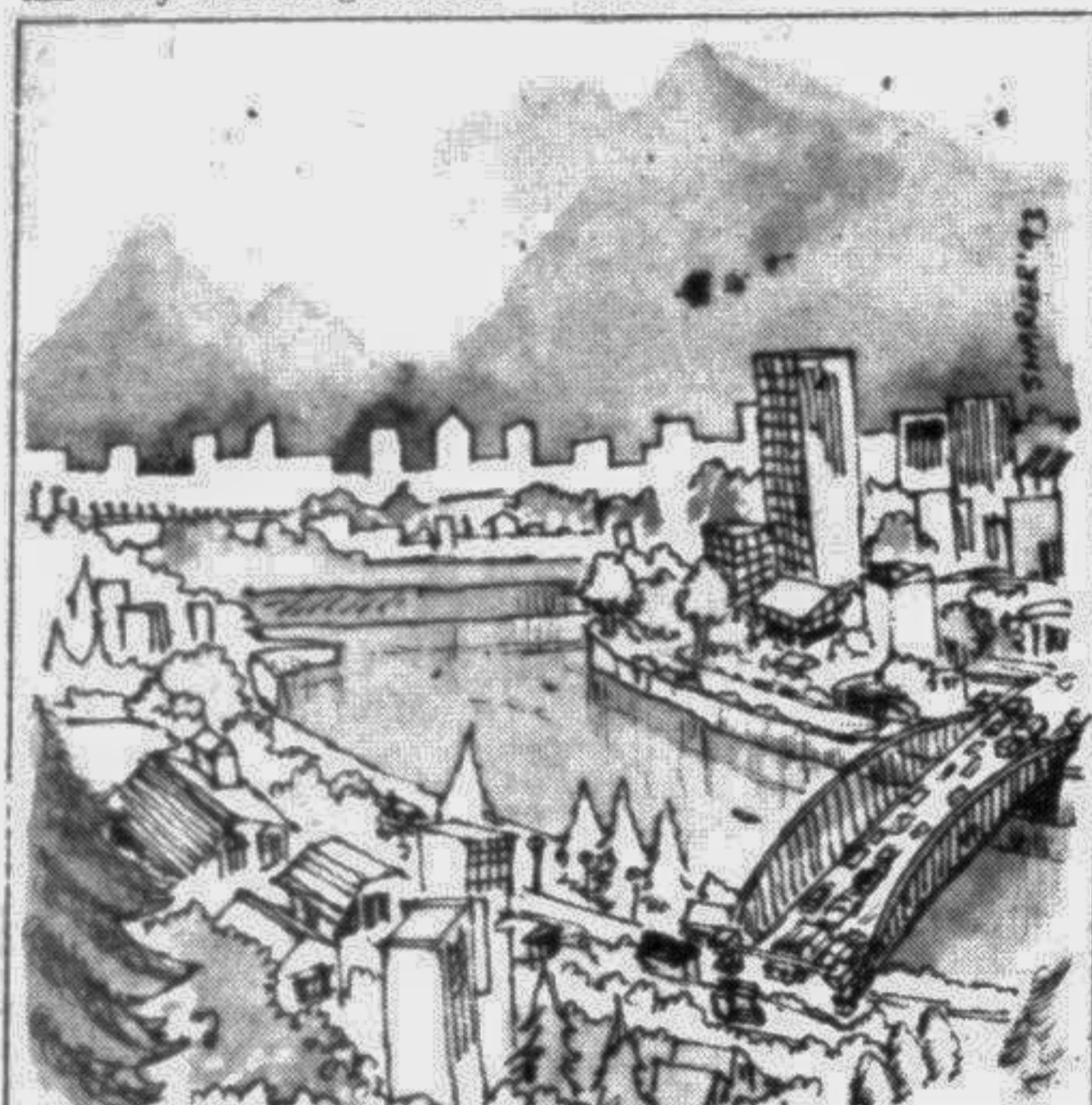
It is very small. It is around 5 million which makes the cities very nice and quiet. There are hardly any traffic jams, and if there is, it only lasts for a short while. Unlike in Dhaka, if

heavy rainfall, it starts to flood the whole of Dhaka city making it like an enormous bath-tub. Switzerland on the other hand is extremely resourceful. In the event of a nuclear war, Switzerland is among the best prepared countries. All the houses and apartments have mandatory nuclear shelters. In Bangladesh people not only cannot afford this, but they also have to suffer starvation during a war.

Switzerland also has the highest per capita income in the whole world. This makes the city really expensive. Anything that is imported from foreign countries are really expensive, the price being doubled or tripled. A hair-cut costs you around 50 Swiss francs. So now while I'm in Dhaka I have already got two hair-cuts within a

month. I also got real excited while shopping in Dhaka because of the big price differences between the two countries. I wonder even though prices are lower in Bangladesh, people still cannot afford to buy anything beyond their bare necessities. Maybe not even that, because you can see so many beggars on the roadside.

There are many other things which you see in Switzerland and not in Bangladesh. I can think of good food, cheese and fresh air. There is, however one thing which makes me feel closer to Bangladesh than Switzerland. And that is the love and care and concern that the people of Bangladesh show to one another. We always keep going back to Bangladesh, our mother land, because of all our friends and relatives and the love they give us which we really miss in the West.



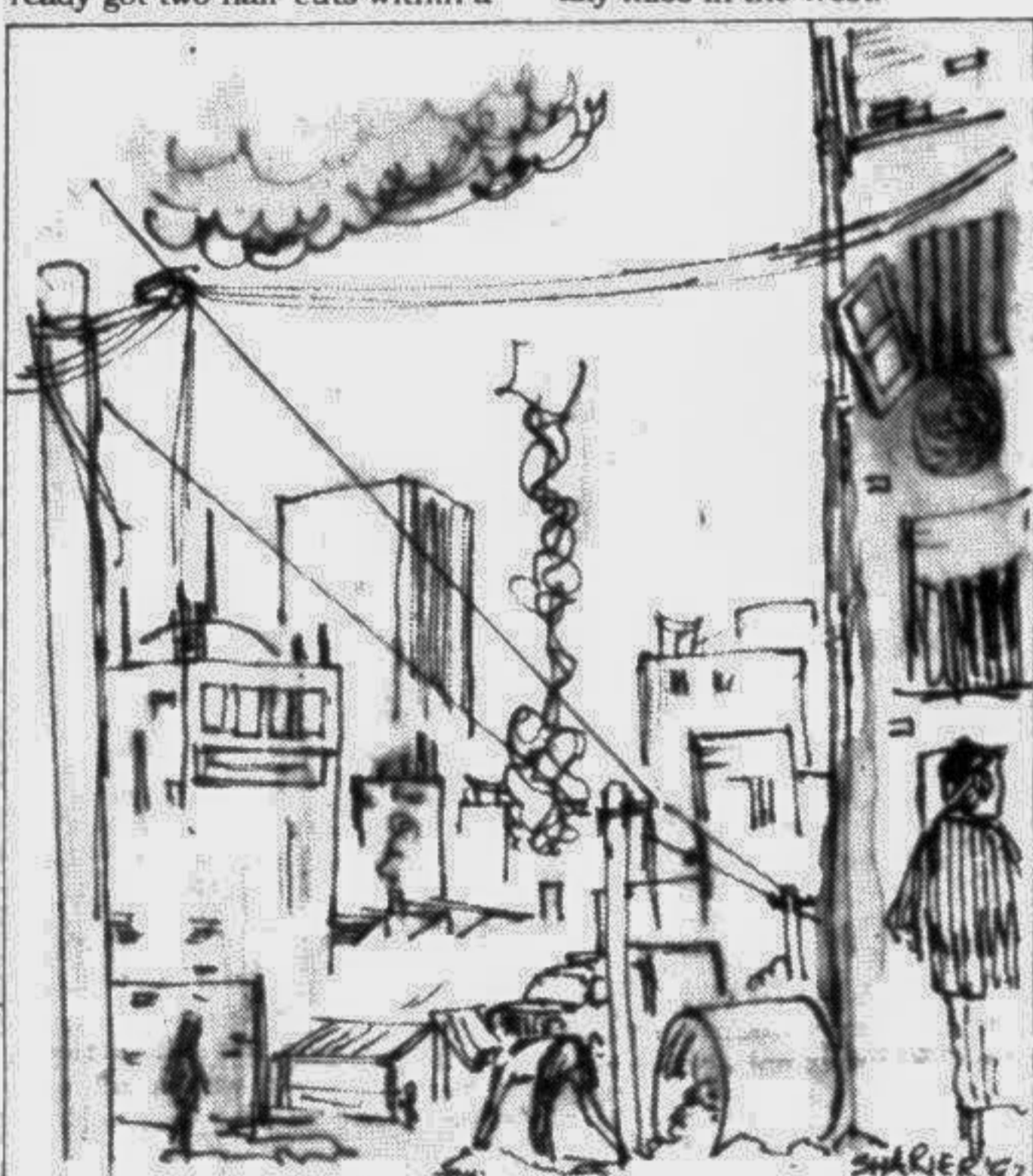
A clean city

First of all, let me start out with crime and murder. In Geneva, Switzerland, crime is one of the last words that people have in their dictionary. Here rules are followed obediently and people have no need for stealing or doing any thing against the law. Police are hardly even visible unless there's something really serious going on. In Bangladesh there's always something going on, like murders, thefts, trucks running over children, military coups, rapes, and such other horrible events. People therefore feel insecure in their day-to-day living. I find this a major milestone between Switzerland and Bangladesh.

Another advantage that Switzerland has is its popula-

tion. You get caught in a traffic jam you'll know that this isn't your lucky day. The last time I got caught in a traffic jam it lasted just a little less than an hour and a half, and then when it finally ended I felt like a boiled egg. You can observe other visible signs of the population growth if you just look at the bus and trains which are not only full from the inside, but they also have people sitting on the roof tops.

Switzerland is beautifully organized, and also richly endowed. The roads and highways are beautifully laid out. People travel in no time from far out in the village to their office in cities every day. Drainage system for floods are excellent. In Bangladesh usually if there's



A dirty city

## STAR PROFILE

Full Name: Michael Joe Jackson



Birth date: 29th Aug 1958 in Gary, Indiana

Did you know: he lives in a flat in Los Angeles city or in the Fairytale Ranch, Neverland Valley.

His close friends are Brook Shields, Liz Taylor and Home Alone

star Macaulay Culkin.

— He is a vegetarian.

— He has different animals: Muscles, the eight foot python; love the llama; deer; fawns; a macaw; a giraffe; Ricky the parrot and Bubbles the chimp.

— Despite signing a huge sponsorship deal a few years ago with Pepsi, he prefers carrot juice.

— He has made a one minute 3d film called Captain Eo, which can be only seen in Disney Land.

## Bet You Didn't Know Handshaking

A world record for handshaking was set up by Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919), President of the USA, when he shook hands with 8513 people at a New Year's Day, White House Presentation in Washington, DC, USA on 1 Jan 1907. Later Mayor Joseph Lazarow shook hands with 11,030 people on the Boardwalk in 11hr 5 min of 3 July 1977 shattering the previous record.

## Tightrope Walking

The world tightrope endurance record is 185 days by

Henri Rochetaud (b 1926) of France on a wire 394ft 120 m long, 82ft 25m above a supermarket in Saint Etienne, France, on 28 March, Sept 1973. His ability to sleep on the wire has left doctors puzzled.

## Greatest Miser

If meanness is measurable as a ratio between expendable assets and expenditure then Henrietta (Hetty) Howland Green (1835-1916), who kept a balance of over \$31,400,000 in one bank alone, was the all-time world champion. Her son had to have his leg amputated because of her delays to find a FREE medical clinic. She herself lived off cold porridge because she was too thrifty to heat it. Her estate proved to be of \$95 million (and now worth \$73 million).

## March Towards Success

by Zinnia Ahmad

**P**OLITICS was never my cup of tea. But all the same I got tangled up in this dirty business. The country was worse enough 90 years ago. The average people lived on hopes. Real life and the thought of future scared them. So, they just concentrated on the present and let themselves be carried away by those speeches always knowing at the back of their mind that these would never come true.

It went on like this for a long time, but the situation got worse. Democracy was followed by oligarchy because the former method was a huge failure and the people were getting lived of it. After a considerable period of oligarchy, plutocracy, for the first time set foot in the country. The poverty line was increasing rapidly but, we were living in heaven, parties, weddings, jewellery, clothes. But the common people had enough of it.

The country split and a civil war broke out. Finally, the climax occurred bringing with itself anarchy. The rest of the world looked down on us. Televisions, magazines, newspapers, periodicals, WB (World Bank), IMF (International Monetary Fund) and all the developed nations laughed at us. The financial institutions collected data on the country. We were the poorest, the most densely populated, the hungriest, the most illiterate and soon they ran out of superlatives. They all got tired of carrying out surveys and preparing reports on the country. We were nothing to them.

They say history repeats itself. And that's what happened here. Autocracy came back to life. The people were actually

quite glad - after all, that was better than anarchy. The president was - no, not Shubhro Chowdhury - as most people thought it would be, but his wife.

My husband was the Chief of Army Staff at that time. Ours was a 'wife-dominant marriage'. Everyone knew our history. It was I who winked at him at the bus-stand, 2 months before our marriage, then I called him, then I asked him out. It was no surprise when friends learned that it was I who proposed to him and it took him 10 days to give a simple, positive reply. He was a weakling and that was part of the reason I decided to make him my life partner. After 20 years of marriage, he learned a lot about life from me but still lacked the tactics. And, so, when I saw the golden opportunity at our feet, I ordered him to pick it up.

In this modern world, money means everything. You can buy all with it - friendship, love, class, even identity. This also the case 60 years ago, we were lost and now we had to make ourselves be found. And money was the issue. But, listen to this: Money's no problem.

Of course, my newly formed ministers asked with saucer sized eyes how that can be. 'Coz, I have it,' I snapped and they dared not question back Madame President. Unlike, the previous days, it was not a great problem sitting on the throne. In this country, the opposition party was the great threat to the government. But after what the country had gone through, they got tired of the ritual harkings, strikes, clashes and gun-fighting. As a result, I received no protests. So, what I had in my hand was a country with too many people needing too many things and of course money.

The money was more like fantasy. And, it was the real reason I married Shubhro. I took life for what it was and took it damn seriously. But after all, one has one's weak points. Two of mine were money and believing in soothsayers - quit a contrast to what I appeared to be. A soothsayer had told me to marry Shubhro because he had hidden treasure which he himself did not know about. So, I got married to him, and no sooner did I.

To be continued

## Walk in the City

by Trishna

**W**ALKING is injurious to health. Now don't get ready to throw your shoes at me but first get out of your house, go outside, on a road in the city and start walking. Look around and you will see the neighbouring houses, the beautiful, free, blue sky but on looking up, your view will be blocked by tangled cables, now it's your duty to save yourself from danger. Do not stop. Proceed. Then you may feel like enjoying the fresh (?) air and observe the beauty of nature. Watch the green trees, the fluffy clouds and the shining sun. As you get lost in nature you suddenly feel something dropping on your head. To find out what it is, look up and you will see that it is the mercy of the most abundant and popular birds of Bangladesh - the crow. Now don't ask why God had not created toilets for them! Its no use fussing, so take out your handkerchief, if you have brought one, fortunately, and wipe it off. Otherwise, just continue walking. Your blood pressure rises and you call out names your brain had stored. But poor you, they cannot reach the deaf crow's ears. If you wisely decide to forget the whole incident, then start to enjoy the beauty around. Look at the traffic jams and then thank God that you are not riding any vehicle. Suddenly you sense something following you. No, its not any stray person but one of the thousands stray dogs in the city. You will be asking for trouble if you are indecent to it and you start something as silly as throwing stones. It will attack you pretty soon. So, instead, be nice to the animal and ignore it, even if you feel uncomfortable.

You may be successful in avoiding stray dogs but may God bless you when stray men are after you. Its next to impossible to get rid of unknown

people to whom you may have to hand over almost everything that you own, except perhaps your clothes, but that too if they are real men. They are experts at playing tricks and the miserable you will be fooled, badly. Do not even think of being rescued, because the people around cannot do more than staring. To save your life, it is therefore the wisest idea to obey their commands.

Now its no use worrying over what you have already lost to muggers, so cheer up and enjoy the walk. Watch the lively children play, if you pass any parks. See the glittering water if you pass any lakes and remember to cover your nose when you pass dustbins; prevent your eyes from looking, if you are not in a mood to throw up.

Try to think of some sweet memories as you walk and after a while you will find your self-falling into a nicely dug ditch in the middle of nowhere or probably an open man-hole. But whatever it is, poor you, will be ready to scream when you see your own image in the mirror. So, to go back home and take a bath will be the best idea.

On your way back, only He can save you from any other misfortunes. It will be difficult for you to carry the pain and the dirt, as you advance towards home but then what to do? Now do not tell me that you want to take a rickshaw! Can you endure the all the hardships of traffic jams, going the long way when the short-cut is blocked for God knows what reason, the pain when stones are thrown at you by unknown people and that too for a cause not known? Can you fight against your fear for frightening processions, life taking trucks and bunch of strangers who may intend to break up your vehicle into pieces? Think twice. Anyway, whatever you may do, I hope you all the luck for your travel in the streets.

## CRAZY CARRIE

by Tanzeem Iqbal Ali

*Carrie's eyes are as blue as the sky; whenever she talks, she sounds like a fly. She lives in the house near by, and the word she often uses is 'my'. She starts to cry, when she sees chicken fry. She is kind of crazy, and loves the flower daisy. She ties up her hair with a tie, and she loves to eat cherry pie. She hates to eat lemon tarts, but she loves to go to shopping marts. She has a pet bunny, and says that its its funny because it likes to have honey. Whenever she sees me she says bye, then she says me sorry, I should have said HI!*

## JOKES

Why does an Irishman look in a mirror with his eyes closed? To try to see what he looks like when he's asleep.

Why do elephants have trunks? Because they have no pockets to put things in.

What never asks questions but gets plenty of answers? A doorbell.

## Theorems and Laws — a Little Differently

by A M M Adeeb

**T**HE other day at school the bell buzzed and the next class was about to start. It was the Maths class. The teacher came in and told us to open our books and start reading the theorem on the page he indicated, and after that came the Physics class. This time the teacher told us to memorize Newton's Second Law of Motion.

After I came back home from school that day, the laws and theorems bugged me till night. I thought if men like Isaac Newton and Euclid could think of theorems and laws then why couldn't I think of some? (quite a thought eh?). I started on making some laws and theorems of mine from little incidents in my life. Here are some of my most recent ones.

**FIRST LAW OF MOTION:** Every action does not have an equal and opposite reaction if you hit hard enough.

**SECOND LAW OF MOTION:** If something is travelling in a straight line nothing can make it change direction. If that something is determined to go that way.

FIRST LAW OF GRAVITATION:

**When a human is in space his body does not become weightless. Its just his imagination.**

**SECOND LAW OF GRAVITATION:** When a man falls from a high altitude gravity pulls him to the ground (ekks!). He can resist this force of gravity but he is too lazy!

**LAW OF EATING IN A PARTY:** When a man is taking food, the quantity of the food must be directly proportional to the volume of his stomach, or else ...!

**LAW OF TRIANGLES:** A triangle can be a four sided figure provided the fourth side is inside the triangle. (I think I'll call this a theorem).

**LAW OF STANDING IN AN AREA WITH TREES:** Never stand directly under a tree. You never know what the crow might have in mind!

**LAW FOR WALKING IN DARK ALLEYS OR LANES,** (specially in Dhaka): Walk very carefully in these places or you might step in something really bad!

**LAW AFTER PLAYING FOOTBALL IN A MUDDY**

## Dude in Green

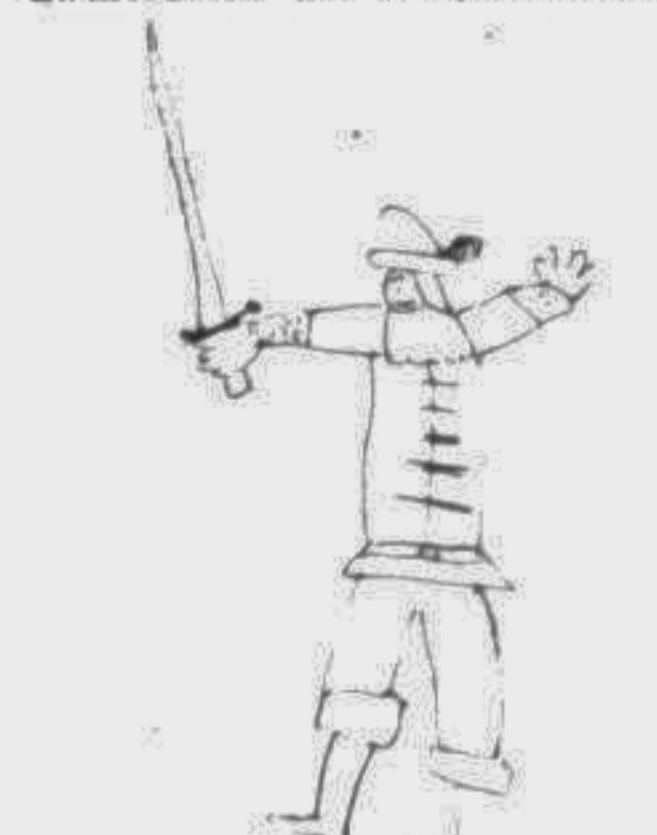
by Ahsan S Kabir.

**O**NCE upon a time, so the story goes, there was a dude in green. His name was Robin Hood. He and a bunch of his pals — such a

the poor and generally made life miserable for then King Jake? Jim? Jonah? John! Why? Because, you see, King John was a terrible king — tyrant! Worse, he usurped the throne from King Riky — pardon-me Richard while the latter was abroad. Robin and his guys, pledged their loyalty to King Richard, for whose return they awaited. In the end, Rick did



jovial lot they were that they were called his Merry men — lived in British jungle called Sherwood forest, just outside of Nottingham. Why any body would sacrifice the comforts of modern civilisation is beyond



come back and all was happily ever after.

The illustrations of Robin Hood are drawn by Prithu Rashid. He is five years old and a student of Play Group in AG Church School.



## Mystery of the Sphinx

by Fermi Nasir

**T**HE Great Sphinx of Egypt sits in a desert about eight miles from Cairo. It is guarding three large pyramids of Giza. The great monster made of rock has the head of a man and the body of a lion. The head of the Sphinx is carved with care but the body is roughly sculptured. The figure is over 18 metres high and 57 metres long. It is believed that the Sphinx is at least 5000 years old.

One piece of evidence we have was revealed from a little chapel situated between the paws of the monster which explains why it was built. The chapel has inscriptions put in it by two Egyptian Kings. They explain that the Sphinx represents one of the Sun Gods, Harmachis, and the purpose of the Sphinx was to keep away all evil from the cemetery around the pyramids. There are lots of Sphinxes in Egypt besides the Great Sphinx of Giza and their head represent Kings. In the Egyptians sacred writing the word 'Sphinx' means 'lord'. In

the primitive religions the kings were believed to be strong and cunning as various beasts. They acquired powers by putting on the beast's heads or their skins. So their sculptures were also made half-human, half-beast.

The idea of the Sphinx was spread to other civilizations like Assyria and Greece from Egypt. In these regions the Sphinxes were represented with wings. In Assyria there were usually male Sphinxes but in Greece they had the head of a woman.

The word 'Sphinx' comes from the Greek. The Greeks had a legend about the Sphinx. She lived on a rock and killed every traveller who couldn't answer this riddle: What walks on four legs in the morning, on two at noon and on three at night? Oedipus answered that it was a man, who crawled on all fours as a baby, walked erect on two as a man and walked with a cane when he was old. This was the correct answer, so the Sphinx threw herself from the rock in rage and died.

