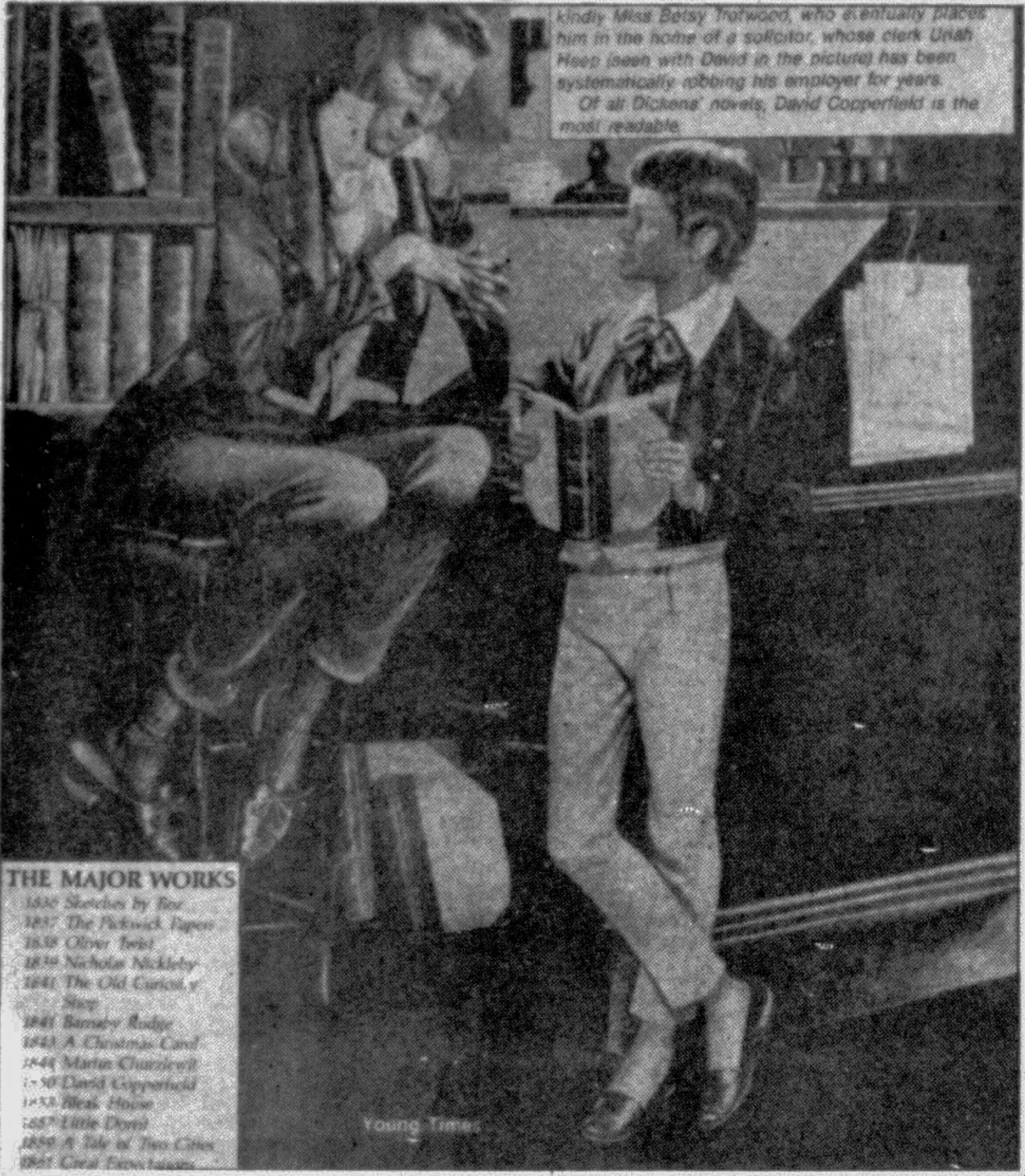


RISING STARS

He fought poverty with his pen



Kindly Miss Betty Threlwood, who eventually placed him in the home of a solicitor, whose clerk Ursh kept down with David in the picture has been systematically robbing his employer for years. Of all Dickens' novels, David Copperfield is the most readable.

- THE MAJOR WORKS**
- 1837 Sketches by Boz
 - 1837 The Pickwick Papers
 - 1839 Oliver Twist
 - 1840 Nicholas Nickleby
 - 1841 The Old Currier's Shop
 - 1841 Barnaby Rudge
 - 1843 A Christmas Carol
 - 1844 Martin Chuzzlewit
 - 1845 David Copperfield
 - 1847 West-Heath
 - 1857 Little Dorrit
 - 1858 A Tale of Two Cities
 - 1861 Great Expectations

It was a year of slavery he was to remember all his life. Every morning he rose with the dawn, washed himself in cold water, ate a breakfast of dry bread and milk, and then left the squalid attic where he was lodging to go to his place of employment at the blacking factory at Old Hungerford Stairs.

Here he worked till late in the evening in a rickety old building overrun with rats, wrapping up pots of boot blacking for the miserly sum of six shillings a week.

On this, he supported himself entirely, spending two pence on his breakfast, a penny three farthings on bread and cheese, with the occasional saveloy or black pudding to vary the diet. He was no more than ten years old.

The boy, whose name was Charles Dickens, had not always led such a miserable existence. Born in 1812, the son of a Civil Service clerk whose annual income of £250 a year allowed the family to live in modest comfort, Charles had spent his early childhood happily enough, first in Chatham, and then in London.

Then suddenly, most likely because of his father's improvident ways, the family fortunes took a change for the worse.

The creditors moved in and Mr Dickens was hauled off to the Marshalsea debtors' prison. Vainly trying to retrieve something from the ruins of her life, Mrs Dickens opened up an 'Educational Establishment' in Gower Street, where Charles helped his mother, blacked the boots and carried some article or other almost daily to the local pawnshop. When this failed,

Dickens was sent to work in the factory.

Happily, an unexpected legacy allowed Mr Dickens to pay off his debts and return to his family. Charles was allowed to continue his schooling, and everything was more or less as it was before. But that terrible period, relatively brief though it was, had scarred Charles Dickens emotionally, and even after he had grown up he could hardly bear to mention it.

Leaving school at the age of 15, Dickens sallied forth into the harsh world of commerce in Victorian London, where, for those who lacked privilege or connections life could be very difficult indeed. For many, it meant working long hours for poor wages in ill-lit and dusty offices, with nothing to look forward to except a lifetime of drudgery.

A short spell as a clerk in a solicitor's office brought this home to Dickens, who escaped from it by learning shorthand and becoming a reporter.

In the meantime he had begun writing some sketches of contemporary London, published over the signature 'Boz', which eventually appeared in book form. He was then commissioned to write a monthly serial to accompany a set of sporting prints.

In 1836, the first number of the serial appeared as The Posthumous Papers of Mr Pickwick, and by the time the fifth issue appeared in book form a year later, Dickens' popularity was made.

The books continue to appear regularly, always first as a serial in a magazine. Although his reputation was now secure, Dickens' pen was seldom at

rest. Hounded by magazine deadlines though he was, he still found time to edit a magazine, preside and orate at innumerable banquets, do charitable work and tour the British Isles.

Already he had set himself on a course that would bring him to his grave from overwork before he reached sixty.

To add to this list of activities which would have laid most men low, Dickens embarked on a series of public readings from his works, which he enjoyed immensely. But it was these public performances, couple with two gruelling reading tours in the United States, which finally took their toll.

The year 1870 began well for Charles Dickens. He had been mixing in the best society, and had visited the Court twice, once for a long-deferred interview with Queen Victoria, who had given him a presentation copy of her Leaves from a Journal of Our Life in the Highlands, with the inscription 'from one of the humblest of authors to one of the greatest.'

In April of the same year, he held a brilliant reception for his friends, and in the following month attended a Royal Academy banquet.

Bored and little tired with all this socialising, he returned to his home at Gad's Hill, at Higham, near Rochester, to continue with the final instalments of The Mystery of Edwin Drood. On the 8th of June, he collapsed suddenly at dinner.

Six days later he was laid to rest in Poet's Corner, in Westminster Abbey.

Courtesy—Young Times

Friends Forever

by Rizvi Ahmed



I was on the roof enjoying the pleasant warmth of the blowing summer breeze. Staring lazily at the azure sky, I was thinking about my life, when something hard fell on my head and made me see thousands of stars at daytime (in fact, I saw the whole solar system). Instinctively I raised my arm to feel the lump that had thrust out of my head and sighed as I realized that I was a helpless victim of a 'trans roof postal exchange.'

'Oops sorry! I didn't mean to hit you,' came the 'euphonic' voice of the 'punk' from the roof behind.

Of course, he didn't aim his 'billet-doux' at me! His actual target was the roof next to mine where 'young members of the hen society' were roaming about. Well, you can't blame a guy for passing his 'heart' around, can you? After all, it's the, so I said, 'It's alright, pal! I'm used to it. What's your name?'

'Romeo. What's yours?'

'Rizvi,' replied I.

'O.k. Riz! Come over to my place. I've lots of VDO games. We can enjoy the afternoon after all.'

Readily I accepted his offer and rushed over to his place. Firstly because I was a VDO games freak at that time, secondly because I'm a glutton and his mother, was an excellent cook (this I knew of course!). Romeo and his folks moved to our neighbourhood a week ago. I saw him once or twice at that time when they were shifting to the house next door. He was tall, handsome and 15 years old — same as mine. I was attracted by his smart appearance but as I was shy I couldn't muster up enough courage to go to his place and make friends with him. It wasn't until that day that we met and introduced ourselves to each other, 'officially'.

Truly he had a large collection of VDO games. He had 'Nintendo', 'Lyrix', 'Sega', 'Genesis', 'Turbo Graft' and what not! He also had a diverse collection of English songs. Of and on, I raided his collections and he also raided my collection of comics and magazines in the similar fashion. In this way, raiding and counter-raiding, we became bosom friends. Many a time and often we played pranks on our other classmates

together and got on the nerves of our teachers. We were so intimate friends that the other students used to call us 'The Heavenly Twins'.

Three years passed by and I learnt who a true friend is and what he does. I learnt that a true friend is a friend like Romeo who stands beside you in good times and in bad times. Romeo helped me with my studies and to overcome my 'girlish' shyness. He and I passed out of school successfully and went to the same college.

I remember that day very well when he came to me and asked:

'Riz, do you know where people go after their death?'

I didn't like the morbid question; I didn't like the tense atmosphere when the question was asked either. To ease it up, playfully I answered:

'How should I know, I didn't die yet!'

He smiled ruefully. He seemed very amused.

'You know, I'm gonna find it out one of these days. You all knew about it, didn't you?'

I knew what he meant. Romeo had an incurable disease.... leukemia to be precise. We all knew about his disease and we all tried our best to conceal the fact from him. But 'Truth is a sleeping dog, it woke up by the slightest footstep of a prowler -- suspicion'. Only God knows when he came to suspect and when he came to know the unfortunate but impending truth!

'Why did you conceal the fact from me? Did you think I'm too much of a coward to face death? You're wrong, I'm not afraid, I'm only regret that I wasn't made to enjoy a full span of life,' said he as tears welled up in his eyes. Tears welled up in my eyes too.

On a fine summer afternoon when the warm breeze nummers pleasantly and soothes the mind, Romeo left this beautiful earth to find the answer to the question:

'Where do people go after their death?'

On such an afternoon three years ago, he and I met to build the eternal bonds of friendship. On another summer afternoon he left for the eternity leaving me engulfed in a sea of sorrow, but will the bonds ever break?

'Down the Memory Lane'

by Rabeth Khan

My mind peeps into the pages of my life, As I walk through my memory lane, All the happiest moments bring a smile on my lips, While the sorrows provoke the tears. The good deeds I have done may be small in number but of greater significance. And the sins I have committed, torment my conscience. I may have to depart either today or tomorrow, Severing my ties with the world and the people. To which and whom, I have bestowed as well as received felicity and distress. Leaving behind the bits and pieces of my reminiscence, Only to engrave my name in my memory lane forever.

STAR PROFILE

Name — Tom Cruise
Age — 30
Marital Status — Married
Did you know that
His fifteen films released so far earned more than 4,200 crore taka.

He entered the film arena with the movie 'Taps' in 1981 at the age of eighteen though his first official film was 'Endless Love' also in 1981, where he had only one scene to perform.

His favorite producer is Billy Crystal. In an advise to his teen fans, he said, in the growing stage of a person the atmosphere in which you mix is vital and try to avoid the bad guys.

During his free times, he along with Nicole Kidman (his wife) visit libraries, museums and gossips with his family and friends.

Sky-diving is the sport he prefers.



"Disney Horror!"

by Ishrat Saifullah

LIFE is full of fun! Almost everyday something interesting happens!

The most interesting thing I have ever done was go to Disneyland!! I went there with three cousins, and also me being the second eldest. First we met Cinderella, Snow white, Peter Pan, the dwarfs in Snow white were real cute!! We met a lot of other famous Disney characters as we wandered around the vast expanse of amusement empire. Suddenly, came in sight the flying saucer!!

Angela, the eldest among us and I decided to take a trip in the flying saucers. The instructor told us how to operate the saucer and asked whether he should come, but we insisted on going alone. He also showed us a button which we were to press if we were in trouble. We all were excited and jumped into the saucer bubbling with anticipation.

What fun we had!! But suddenly something went wrong and the entire flying saucer shook like crazy!! As if on impulse, Angela jumped and pressed the danger signal button!! She pressed again, again and again but it was stuck!!

We went to the only window in the saucer and opened it. Immediately a gush of cold wind greeted us. I don't know about my cousins but it did send a cold chill down my spine. Below us was the mini-forest where Snow White lived. At that time trying to get help by shouting for it was out of our minds. The saucer was quite still and then suddenly it would give some awful shakes!! How do we save ourselves!!

However, we didn't have to save ourselves. Someone from below saw us and help was bestowed!!

Now that I think of it, the panic of the moment was really cool!! I bragged about it at school, on and on until someone complained about it to our class teacher!!

Jokes

What do you get when you cross a bee with a ball?
A real humdinger.

Why did the orange stop in the middle of the motorway?
It ran out of juice.

Customer: I'll have the steak and kiddy pie, please.
Waiter: You mean the steak and kidney pie, sir?

Customer: That's what I said, kiddie!!



The Olympic Games

by Rizwana Azad

THE Olympic Games are held after every four years in some important city of the world. These Olympic Games had their origin in ancient Greece. The Greeks celebrated their religious festivals with great pomp and show. One such festival was held for the first time in 776 BC (about 2750 years ago) at Olympia, a city situated near their sacred mountain called Mount Olympus.

According to Greek legend, the Olympic Games were started by Hercules, son of Zeus who was the king of the gods. The Olympics was a grand games contest. Of the many athletic festivals, the oldest and most important were the Olympic Games. After that, this games contest was held every four year at the same place, Olympia. These games became one of the national festivals of Greece. The four years in between were called Olympiad.

The first Olympic Games were first held in the Temple of Zeus at Elis. They were held in full moon period in the last month of the summer season (September or October) and lasted for five days. Thousands of people came to attend the games and hundreds of athletes from all city states came to take part in the games. Nothing was allowed to interfere with holding the Olympics; if a war hap-

pened to be going on, the war was stopped!

Only young men of pure Greek descent who had undergone ten months of training could compete. The first day was for the opening ceremony, sacrifices and the day when the players took oath. The last day was for feasts, closing ceremony and prize giving. At first the games were just contest in running and jumping but later on footraces, wrestling, boxing and discus throwing were also added. The prize of the winner was an olive branch cut with a golden knife. The announcer proclaimed the name of the winner, the name of his father and the city-state to which he belonged. A garland of flowers was also placed around his neck.

The poets composed poems in praise of the winners while sometimes statues in their honour were made. When the winners returned to their city-states, they were given many gifts and had special privileges. This shows that the winners were highly honoured by the Greeks.

This festival of the Olympic Games continued to be celebrated for about eleven hundred years until in 394 AD until the Romans abolished them under Emperor Theodosius. The festival of the Greeks show how fond they were of games.

Love

by Shahed Latif

WHAT is love? I do not believe there is anything called love? If there is then why did Sharmila leave me. I wanted her to be mine for ever, but may be, we were not made for each other. Sharmila was my classmate. I remember when we were in school we used to roam around together and we always used to be on the same side when we played games. But if once or twice we were in the opposite side I tried my best to get caught. She never understood that, I am sure if she did she would not have liked it. But now in real life when I need her the most she is gone. I remember when we were in class nine we felt a strong attraction towards each other and by the time we passed our SSC we were deeply in love with each other.

We were in the same college and as the days passed by my love for her grew strong and everyday she seemed new to me. There was something about her I could never understand. I was never attracted to any other girl, the mischievous smile of my Sharmila was enough.

Then one day she came to my house and said, "I am going to Amsterdam for higher studies." I am going to come back after five years. But now thirty years have gone by and she did not return. I heard she got married with a movie star there. Though I am now married to a lovely woman whose love for me has helped me recover over the years, but she could never win over Sharmila. Deep down, the core of my heart remained empty for Sharmila. May be it will always remain empty.

The Transylvanian Twins Sticker Competition

The winner is Sabrin Shamum Khan of Mirpur, Dhaka. Please come to our Dhanmondi office to pick up the stickers of the Transylvanian Twins. To the other participants, don't despair, get ready for more competitions yet to come!

— Shahed Chowdhuri

