



I must say that I am a lucky person, because I have fought to liberate my country from the Pakistani regime. But now when I look back to those days I see that there is a big difference between yesterday and today. Because yesterday we were united, we promised that come what may we will free the country from aliens. And together we fought for nine months and we liberated our dear motherland Bangladesh, whereas today.....?

Whenever I remember about the war, many things big and small come flashing into my mind. I was about 18 years when the war started. Hot blood, and sometimes fanatic. I have just passed my SSC & got admitted to a college. Already I felt that I have grown up and should do things what I think best. My parents were always against the Pakistani force and for that they had to pay the price from time to time but still they did not bow down to pressure. They did not bow down to injustice, inhumanity, they fought against all these and I guess I inherited their hatred for them.

So when the war started I told my parents that "I would fight for the country and liberate it", but they told me "that war was no game and I was too young to join, but I was determined and told them that "our country comes first and nothing else matters. I would go to the war with or without this permission so seeing my determination they finally gave up and consented to the idea."

I began to contact my friends some of them who were in training camps, some who were planning to go, they informed me that after every two weeks a mukhtabahi comes to the village and takes those who want to go. I told them to inform me the next time they come. Two weeks did not seem to pass, it felt like two years. In the meantime we heard about the news of Pakistani armies systematic butchery and genocide, as each day passed the news continued to shatter our hearts, but ignited in us the fire of revenge.

"Ma, can I have a new dress?" Jashu asked her mother. Her mother looked up from poking the fire, staring at her blankly. "What are you saying?" "I wanted another dress, ma. I have only one - it gets dirty." "But don't you share Rezi's dress when yours is dirty?" Rezi was her younger daughter.

"Yes Ma," admitted Jashu, looking at the fire, unable to face her mother's piercing eyes - "but it is... sleeveless. And so short it doesn't even cover my knees. And... I'm growing, Ma." "But you can't have anything right now, dear," quipped her mother. "I don't have enough money. And I haven't yet paid last month's rent." She got back at poking the fire - or was it just a way of avoiding her deprived daughter?

Jashu was the eldest of the

## We liberated our little country

by Shahed Latif

to do what they did to us.

When I was a little boy used to play with all my friends in the bank of mighty river Jamuna, we played football, cricket, kabadi our favourite game and many others. Then we began to grow up from small boys we turned into teenagers, we became more reserved, more calm like the mighty river.

We have seen this river's uproar as it plundered its bank and expanded and we have seen its calmness too. We felt like the Jamuna, we felt that this was not the time for calmness, this was the time for uproar to break and liberate. Many a days my friends and I walked along the side of the river and we talked about our future, our childhood and of our bond to our beloved motherland. Many a days we sat in the bank of Jamuna and passed our time gossiping enjoying the cool fresh evening breeze and the setting of the sun in the distant water. We saw the boatman going home after long days work. I guess I can never revive those lovely days again, that full moon night in the bank those childhood days.

Two weeks passed by and the time came for me to go to the war. I bade good-bye to my parents, relatives, then I went to the river bank spent some times before I bade farewell to my beloved childhood entertainer. I felt a deep lonely pain in my heart as I said good-bye to Jamuna but sometimes you have to say goodbye to your most cherished things in order to keep them forever.

I spend nearly four days in the jungle before coming to our training camp. After a tough training for nearly two months we were prepared for the real battle. We were trained for guerrilla war, which means that we would attack the enemy destroy them and run, without being caught. There was always a danger of being captured but then the only solution was to kill your ownself.

Our job was to blow away the military store house in Chittagong cantonment which was under tight security. There was no way we could have entered the cantonment let alone blowing up the warehouse. We heard that the Pakistani armies were coming from sea with highly sophisticated military equipments. But this mission seemed impossible we had only determination and courage as our weapons.

A month have passed in Chittagong but we did not achieve what we wanted, time was also running out. It is not that we did not take chances to enter the cantonment, we took our chance, came close to getting caught many a times. But finally we made up our mind that on 2nd December we would blow the warehouse. What ever happens will be dealt later. Because the war was at full momentum and we were gaining grounds and also support from the world community.

On the 2nd of December we went towards the cantonment, we were stepped by the security guards there but we showed them the identity cards and said "we work for the Pakistani government", so after much fuss we were allowed to enter our destiny. We reached the warehouse nearly unnoticed but as we came towards the gate we were again stopped by the guards. They asked us all sorts by question tried to puzzle us, tried to confuse us, tried to play tricks

on us but nothing worked, we learned their language. Urdu, quite well and returned puzzle with puzzle, confusion with confusion, tricks with tricks but suddenly one of the guards said they knew who we were.

That sent a cold shiver down our spine. But was relieved, when he said, "you are rafakars who work for us, right." We gave them a hearty laugh and said Oh! yes". Then they allowed us to enter the premises. One of us asked were the toilet, was. They showed the way, Talah and Rehan went to the toilet actually that was the back of the warehouse and planted the bombs just according to plan. Then came the part to implant a bomb in the front of the building, this was tough, but some how the first we managed to get it done.

We left them a letter in which was written "Operation successful" and asked one of the guards to give it to their base commander after he comes, they said that the base commander was having an emergency meeting with his Generals in the warehouse. Our heart leaped, the base commander along with the warehouse what a success it would be, the bombs were timed to blow thirty minutes after being planted, so we had time to hurryout. We bade them good-bye and left.

Next morning in the newspaper we read terrorist blows away warehouse in Chittagong cantonment to them be were 'terrorist' but to millions of people of Bangladesh we were heroes. There was a red alert in Chittagong to hunt us down but we mixed with the crowd, asked them how the mukhtabahi's blew up the warehouse. In the mean time Pakistani armies were falling apart and they were in an absolute fix.

On the 16th of Dec they surrendered to the mukhtabahi and on from that day a new country emerged in the world map.



## A Dress For Jashu

by Sanjida Shaheed

six children. Her father who worked on contract was often jobless. The rent gobbled up almost the whole bundle of her mother's earning as a housemaid. But she did not want her parents' money. She earned her keep. It's been six months now since she joined the garments factory. There had been an augmentation in her salary - now the garments factory rewarded her with a good 500 taka for each month's hard work. And all the money was used to feed eight hungry mouths.

Many a hot night, when she can't sleep in their stuffy shanty one-room house, she wonders out. She dreams of having a better life. She didn't mind supporting her family.

In fact, nothing made her prouder than bringing rice, salt, onions, chillies - sometimes even as far as vegetables - for her expecting family. In better times she also bought a dress or two for the 'sibblings. She's been making her family smile for the past six months - perhaps it was time she satisfied her own needs?

The next day was pay day. As she scurried out of the garments factory, she had 500 taka in a tight fist and hundreds of thoughts on her mind. Her father had a job now, of breaking stones. Perhaps this time the burden wasn't completely on her shoulder?

Everyday while walking home from work, she comes

across a pavement where various vendors sit with their goods. A barber, the dress-seller, a cobbler and a few others - all served the needs of the lower class of the community.

Everyday when she comes across the dress-seller, she looks at the dresses from the corner of her eyes and sighs - and then walks on. Today as she neared the vendor, her pace slowed down. After a long moment, she walked towards him. The array of shalwar kameez bedazzled her. Mixed feelings boggled her mind. Could she really own one of those beautiful outfits? Maybe the price was too high for her reach?

At last she meekly asked, "How much do they cost?" "It all varies - first you choose and I'll tell the price," came the husky voice of the owner. The least cost 100 taka Jashu had no intention of blowing more than 100 taka on a dress. Buying dresses for the siblings brought her experience - she knew chaffering.

A small boy, thin as a toothpick - probably the owner's son - was standing on a stool, straightening out the stock. The clothes were hung on a line nailed to the wall behind. Jashu found it hard to choose a dress. They all looked so beautiful - and she felt shy about what she was wearing herself. But she didn't have to choose for long - 'cos there was only one dress that cost the least. After a hectic bargain - which was more like a verbal war - the shop-owner let it go at 70 taka. How about that! - she thought to herself. She actually saved 30 taka!

The boy got the dress down from the line. She examined the dress, holding it loosely between her fingers. Perhaps she was afraid the delicate thing would come off the stitch at the touch of her bony fingers?

Much to her delight, the peddler even put the dress in a polythene bag - she sensed a feeling of dignity within her. As she walked away from the shop, she hugged the bag tightly to her bosom. Perhaps she was afraid the bag would slip through weak grip? For reasons unknown to her, the dress did seem to weigh at least a ton.

As she kept on walking, she came across the sandal vendor. But no, she won't spend any more on herself today. She whispered to herself silently - maybe, just maybe, one of these days, there will also be a pair of sandals for her weary feet. All she had to do is wait and wait, wait. Oh, why was the journey so long? One day, may be one day.....



## Loneliness

by Shaheen Munir

Another withered petal of the red rose fell on the table. The room was lighted only by the sun light that could enter through the one little window. Hardly any air came inside my room. I was in need of air, freedom and a companion.

I had been alone in this cell for years. No one to talk with, no one to share secrets with. I have been locked from outside and therefore I am bound to stay inside this room, which is no less than hell. Some people call me a 'witch'. Some named me a 'beast'. Some think I am a 'cursed' brought to this world. No one knows why I am locked up like this. Why I stay all alone? why I do not show my face to anyone?

A little bird sat on the window. I stretched my hand to touch it. It looked at me with a shadow of fear on its face. It instantly flew away. I guess even the little bird thinks I am a witch or a curse.

The room was filled with mosquitoes, rats and cockroaches. And I had to live with these pesky creatures. Well, on the other hand I had no other choice.

I heard some people laughing. I looked outside the window. There - there goes a bunch of guys laughing and talking. Laugh! Life is great to them. They have each other, they have their parents, brother or sister - at least someone to talk to. Me? I have no one in this wide world. I could feel tears rolling down. It was normal for me - I always cried. I wiped my eyes. Life! It stinks! I wonder what it really means. I have been living like a 'dead person' since.....

No! I do not want to review those things again. That incident took away my happiness, my parents, my laughter, my everything. It was so, so long ago since I last talked to someone. After that I had continued life only by talking to myself. I want a friend, a company.

The last withered petal fell on the table. Another day of my life had come to an end. A new day started - just the same way. A silent atmosphere and me, all alone, sitting in the room.



## THE PIED PIPER OF BUENOS AIRES

by Gazala Yasmin Haque(Urmi)

MARADONA came and went from this World Cup USA '94. He came with the hope of winning the Cup for the third time as this was to be his fourth and last World Cup appearance. I am sure if he wasn't expelled from this tournament, he would have made the 30 million Argentines back home proud of him.

The last-robin league match against Bulgaria was to be his 22nd appearances in a World Cup but all their dreams went down the drain only hours before the Bulgaria match when he tested positive for ephedrine, a stimulant banned by FIFA. They then lost to a weak team such as Bulgaria 2-0, who finished fourth in this tournament. The Argentine team were flying high, scoring goals in their first two matches but overnight they lost Maradona to a failed drug test and the team soon followed him out of the World Cup as surely as if it were following his lead.

Many people in Bangladesh also stopped watching the World Cup and the reason simply was that, "since FIFA banished Maradona from the tournament, what is the use of watching it without one of the best player on earth?". From old to young, everybody adored him immensely. About 500 to 600 Maradona fans even staged a procession in Dhaka, Pabna and elsewhere, but why??

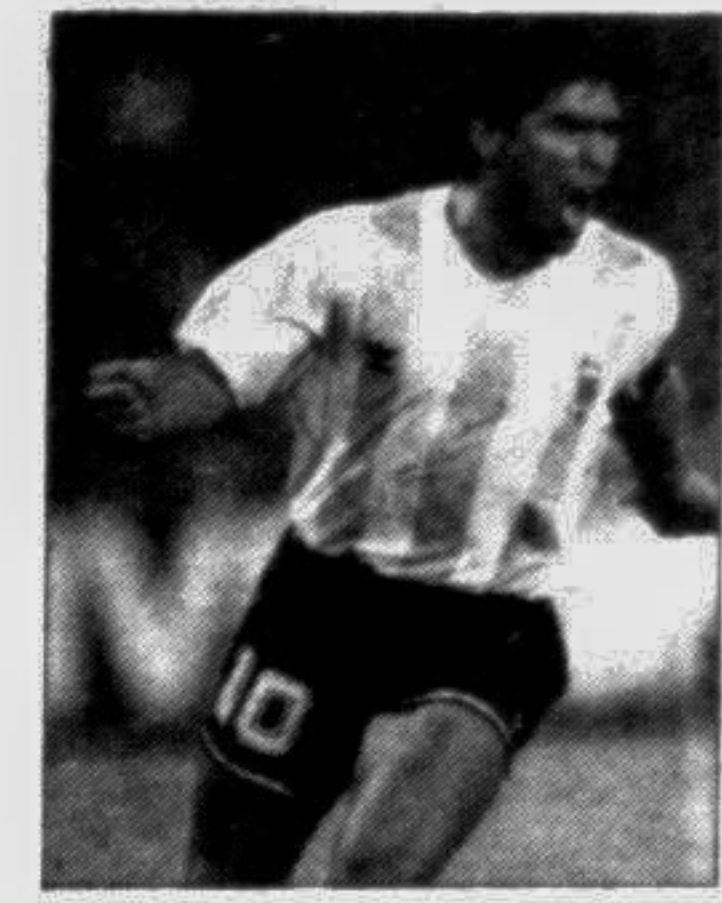
Diego Armando Maradona was born on the 30th of October, 1960 in Buenos Aires and the fifth of the eight children. His father was a factory worker and a poor man who could not afford to feed his family. Despite being poor, Maradona loved football immensely and used to sleep with it at night. He got a chance to play for Buenos Aires Club at the age of ten. Ten days before his sixteenth birthday, in 1976 he started playing in the First Division League. He was omitted from Argentine World Cup squad for the finals in Argentina, 1978 because of being underaged. He was 17 years and some months old at that time.

He led Argentina to victory in World Youth Cup in Japan 1976. In 1981, he won the first and only Argentine league title with Boca Juniors. In 1982, Spain's Club Barcelona signed him for \$10 million to play for their club. He transferred to Italy's Napoli in 1984 where he used to get \$435,000 weekly. He made Argentina a World Cup Champion for the second time in Mexico '86, where he was voted the best player of '86 World Cup in which he scored five goals in all, one less than England's Gary Lineker.

He received the "Golden Ball" at that World Cup which was later stolen from his bank in Italy, 1990. The quarter-final match against England was a re-match of the 1966 World

Cup held in England where England's Manager Alf Ramsey had called the Argentinians "animals". They eventually managed to dump the English by 2-1 and in the final defeated W Germany (at that time) by 3-2. It was probably one of the best World Cup in the soccer history.

In June 1987, he lead Napoli to their first Italian



league title and in May 1989 he helped them win the FA Cup and then was absent for two months in Argentina and refused to return for the start of Italian league season. He later demanded to be transferred to a French Club. In 1990, he lead Napoli to their second Italian title. Argentina was the first team to be runners-up when the World Cup officially started in 1930. In Italia '90 he captained Argentina in 1-0 defeat by West Germany in the final. In the second round match against arch-rivals Brazil his pass to Caniggia who scored the only goal made them go to the quarter-finals where they met Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia really played well but could not really get to understand the Argentine's tactics and were eventually beaten by them in a penalty shoot-out.

Goalkeeper Sergio Goycochea had to help Maradona's Argentina by making spectacular saves. In the semi-finals they had a dream meeting with the hosts, Italy which they also won on a penalty shoot-out and Argentina really had to thank God that they had such a good goalkeeper. Probably one of the best at that time after England's Gordon Banks. For the first time in a rematch in a World Cup final, they had to bow down to Lothar Matthaeus's West Germany by a solitary penalty kick by Andres Brehme.

I am sure nobody failed to notice the good relationship between these two captains, Maradona and Matthaeus. In March 1991, he failed a dope test for cocaine and was banned for fifteen months. After the end of the fifteen months ban, Spanish Club Sevilla signed him for \$7.5 million. In October, '93 he joined Argentina's Club Newell's Old Boys and in that

same month played a vital role in the first and second leg of World Cup play off against down under Australia. After a 5-0 thrashing defeat to Colombia in the qualifying round, Alfio Basile had no option but to call Maradona to the scene.

In June, '94, he appeared in his fourth World Cup, only to go home empty-handed for his positive dope test which really hurt his millions and millions of fans around the world. If he had played against Bulgaria in the last match at the first round he would have broken the record of 22nd appearances. Both he and Germany's captain Lothar Matthaeus are tied down to their 21st World Cup appearances with Germany's Uwe Seeler and Poland's Wladyslaw Zmuda. Against Greece in the first round, there was even a spectacular goal scored by Maradona. Striker Gabriel Batistuta scored the first hat-trick and Claudio Caniggia scored the 1500th goal in this World Cup. Batistuta scored the first goal against Greece in 1 min and 20 secs, the fastest in this tournament.

The 33-year old midfielder began training only seven weeks before the tournament started and had lost 12 kilograms (26 LB) for his fourth World Cup. In Argentina's first two games at this World Cup, he proved that even without the speed and strength of old age, he could make or break a game with a few brilliant moves or passes. He showed his touch of old by slamming in a goal in a 4-0 thrashing of Greece. Again, Nigeria, he set up both goals for Caniggia in Argentina's 2-1 win. For a place in the last eight, Romania's Dumitrescu and Hagi throttled them out of the World Cup.

From this World Cup, I am sure Argentina learned a lesson, by not depending too much on only one player but by depending on at least five to six players as is the case with some of the European teams. Maradona regime ended and the path has been opened for someone who can be a play-maker like him.

So, who will be the lucky person to take his place, Batistuta, Caniggia or Ortega (Maradona look-alike)? Maybe Daniel Passarella, Argentina's 1978 World Cup winning captain and now coach of River Plate has the answer if he is nominated for that job to guide Argentina to new horizons.

I am sure Maradona fans all over the World especially in Bangladesh would love to see him play again in the 1998 World Cup to be held in France even though if he is going to be 37 years old. At the end of August, FIFA will take a decision about his dope test, so let's hope it will be a minor punishment and he will still be able to play after his punishment ends.

## Freedom

We all need freedom

And liberty to live;  
For freedom and liberty  
There's nothing I won't give.

We all need freedom  
To live a happy life;  
Slavery cuts through the heart -  
Like a sharpened knife.

If I had to chose between  
Slavery or suicide -  
With a smile adorning my lips,  
I'd take hemlock or cyanide.

Freedom is like a bird -  
So happy, so free,  
But imprisonment has no life -  
It's like a dried-up tree.

We have so much freedom -  
We take it for granted.  
But look closely at the mirror -  
You'll see where freedom is wanted!

All join in the chorus!  
"We want to be free!"  
We can't be unjustly imprisoned!  
We're not crooks who flee!

Kazi K Arafat

## I Think of You

by Zinnia

When the wind whistles  
I think of you.  
When the dark clouds  
gather,  
I think of you.  
When lightning strikes,  
I think of you.  
When the thunder arrives,  
I think of you.  
When the skies cry,  
I think of you.  
When the world gets wet,  
I think of you.  
When the shower stops  
I think of you.  
But when the rainbow appears  
I wonder,  
If you ever think of me.

## Just For You

Dearest Gwendolen,

How's life in the city? Have you succeeded in making uncle Jack look at you and not at the sky when he's speaking? Algernon is doing great - to great. I think I'll have to look at the hazy (you know why) audience while he's speaking to keep myself from laughing. Anyway, could you do me a favour? Save a seat for me around you in M's class, coz I can't see anything from the back.

Thank you, love,  
Your Evergreen Friend,  
Cecily

## Jokes

What would the duckling say if it saw an orange in its nest?  
Look at the orange marmalade (mama laid)!

Man in lift : Sixth floor, please.  
Lift man: Here you are son.  
Man in lift: How dare you call me son!  
Lift man: Well, I brought you up, didn't?

Customer: Have you any cheaper rings than this?  
Jeweller: yes, sir they're stitched to the top of the curtains.

## Unknown Journey

by Tasin Ahmed

The time is over  
Cater pillars attacks in the tired body of life.  
Takes away with him -  
The remaining oxygen stored in the heart.

The clock moves on -  
Like that of a sprinter.  
Or a derby horse who has a bet over him.  
It runs to an unknown world -  
Where there's everything but -  
Long period of waiting.

Memories lies in the patterns of white coffin.  
Memories of the younger days.  
When there was fun, life and happiness.  
But they have all died with the person.

The charm of the last bath -  
Did little to remove the outburst tears.  
Fresh smell of tea leaves in the heart of ice -  
Lovely smell of Rose water -  
Nothing seems to touch the feeling.  
But hearing the scream of lonely daughter.  
His heartbeat tries to gain conscious.  
Wants to stop her outburst with love.

The time is over  
The heart-water has stopped beating.  
Only the ticks of the old black clock on the wall.  
This is a tribute to K M Shafi, father of Kazi Salahuddin, who died on the 21st of this month.