

# TEENS and TWENTIES

## Children at War

### World's Wars Devastating for Children

by Edith M Lederer

FROM the battlefields of Bosnia to the killing fields of Cambodia and Rwanda, more than 1.5 million children around the world have been killed by wars over the past decade, reports AP.

The millions who survive face an often uncaring world that cannot cope with their wounded hearts and shattered lives.

They cry out for parents who are dead or missing, for homes that have been blasted into rubble, for stolen childhoods filled with gunfire instead of laughter.

Mohammed Ajmal, 12, was trying to forget Afghanistan's civil war and indulge in one of the joys of childhood — flying a kite — when a rocket exploded in the yard of his house in Kabul, ripping his chest with shrapnel.

For more than a month, he has lain in the Indra Gandhi Children's Hospital, which was hit by 62 rockets earlier this year. There is no chest surgeon and his family has no money to go abroad for an operation.

When Nepra Sprzo was 15, her mother put her, her brother and five cousins on a bus from Sarajevo, Bosnia, to Zagreb, Croatia, where their grandmother lives. Her mother promised Nepra they would be back in a week and she would get a new dress. That was more than two years ago.

Last April, when telephone lines to Sarajevo were finally restored, Nepra told her mother: "Mummy, I'm not your little girl anymore. Don't worry about us. We learned

how to take care of ourselves."

Beata Uwimana, 11, is one of an estimated 100,000 Rwandan children who are separated from their families. The youngest of six children, she lost her parents and five brothers and sisters in the chaos at the Rwanda-Zaire border when 1 million Rwandans fled the civil war in July.

Ruth Nyirandenzi, 29, found Beata wandering on a road near Goma, a Zairean border town, and took her to the Mugunga Refugee Camp to share a tiny hut with her two children. Shyly, Beata said she wants to return to school — but most of all she wants to find out if any of her family survived the cholera epidemic that killed an estimated 50,000 refugees in the Goma camps.

"Nine out of 10 casualties of war are civilians, and children are very often the main casualties," said Mike Aaronson, overseas director for the relief group Save the Children.

Four million children have been disabled, maimed, blinded or brain-damaged in over 100 conflicts during the past decade, the group said in a recent report. "Children at War," Twelve million have lost their homes. Five million are living in refugee camps. One million are separated from their families.

During rebel sieges of cities in Angola, relief agencies were so flooded with starving children that only the severely malnourished — "those a step away from death," said Ronald Fourcaud of Doctors Without Borders — could be given a bowl of corn meal a day.

Some 7,000 children live on their own on the streets of Angola's capital, Luanda, scrounging for food and falling prey to drugs, sexual abuse and disease. "We're seeing 14-year-olds turning up with gonorrhoea," said Barbara Reynolds, an official with UNICEF.

In Afghanistan, where children have one of the world's lowest literacy rates and most schools are closed, many youngsters take terrible risks to survive. Some have taken on adult jobs at metalwork shops. But running food and other supplies across the front lines is the main way to make money in besieged Kabul, and up to 3,000 people, many young boys, risk their lives daily.

"I am always afraid of the rockets and mortars, but my father does not make enough to feed the family," said Shiralam, 13. He works with his friend, Aziz, 12, so they can carry more on their bicycle, which was laden with a huge bag of flour.

Shiralam can make 7,500 Afghanis (almost 2 dollars) a day. His ambition is to go back to school, but if he had more money he would like to buy a kite and move his family somewhere safe.

Many Afghan teenagers become soldiers, and most military checkpoints around Kabul are manned by illiterate youths.

Child soldiers have been reported in 35 countries over the last decade. Estimates put the number at more than 200,000, including thousands

of girls. In Liberia, UNICEF estimates 6,000 children under age 15 are among the 60,000 combatants in the 5-year-old civil war. They are used as cooks, front-line soldiers, executioners and spies.

Human rights groups say most of Liberia's child soldiers were forced into combat roles. The rebel groups deny that, claiming they help youngsters by giving them meals, clothes and protection, but children tell of being flogged, raped, drugged and tortured to ensure obedience.

Magne Raundalen a child psychologist who is president of the Norwegian UNICEF Committee and has been visiting war zones for 10 years, said children in southern Sudan are traumatized by long separations from their families.

For six years, at least 20,000 Sudanese youngsters have trekked long distances across the vast African nation to escape fighting. Lions and crocodiles devoured some. Bombs and bullets killed others. Many starved to death.

In most countries at war, children name one or two close family members who have died, but many Rwandan children can name 20 close family members who were slain, said Raundalen, the UNICEF psychologist.

Helping the children of war takes time and training, Raundalen said. Children who have lost trust in the adult world need "kind adults who can represent stability and continuity and commitment to the child."

"WHO killed JR," the question was heavy on the air. "Who else?" President Bush joked. "Democrats probably!" Back in the late eighties the television spectators began to demonstrate in front of Whitehouse after JR's famous character from TV serial "Dallas" had been assassinated.

Just imagine, how we ride on a wave of ecstatic emotion by this square shaped magic-box — television? Recently by means of dish antenna, we can now watch Star Plus, Prime Sports, Zee TV, DD metro channels, channel V, ATN, EL TV etc. The teens naturally swallow the romantic scenes of the Star Plus or Zee TV or channel V, even though the scenes are not much comfortable specially when parents are around.

"Bhai, what are they doing?" the innocent questions of the small brothers or sisters are sidelined by the reply. "Come on, its time for your bed." The housewives do not

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want to negotiate anything with the programmes (specially movie) of Zee TV or ATN. They go to the kitchen growing when their husbands shift their favourite channel to Prime Sports to enjoy the live coverage of the cricket match. In India, some guardians feel that the Satellite TV programmes are spoiling their

### The Fever of Sattelite TV Programmes!

by Anam Mahmud

Kid's study. "Our kids cannot wake up in time for school because of the late-night TV shows", they complained. "We've thrown away our TV sets in the bin", they added.

The viewers often face a serious problem in selecting the appropriate channels. They are puzzled holding the remote control in hand. Students of the residential halls often toss a coin to find the final solution of dilemma. The enthusiasm

another goal to make his hat-trick, and you get up shouting "Goal, goal.....!" in the process kicking your wife off the bed. Can you imagine what consequence awaits you next?

Now with the arrival of dish antenna, it seem that people have forgotten to watch typed programmes of BTV. Often people "swallow" the programmes of BTV as an alternative to the sleeping drugs. Apart from watching the local

"Dynasty", "Alien Nations", "Star Trek", "Picket Fence", "L.A. Law", "Moonlighting", "Remington Steele" or different concerts performed by the rock stars in Channel V?

Recently "Star Movies" another available channel have further enhanced the passion for the satellite TV programmes than ever before. With trailers of "Cocoon", "Alien", "Speed", the teenagers along with their fathers are



of the students to rush to the common room to avail a seat for enjoying Philips Top Ten in Zee TV is a common picture.

On one Friday night, I said to one my friend, "Come on, let's play international Bridge. Surely my friend was thinking that how on earth someone can avoid watching "Did Tera Debor...", "Amma Dekh" or "Tu Chishe Bade Hai, Masti".....

The wisemen advice not to watch Soccer in Prime Sports at the late hours of night. Suppose in your dreams Romario is on way to score

news, the spectators have almost buried the BTV channel in graves. But the officials of BTV still believe in "Patience" is bitter, but its fruit is sweet.

They are working keenly to make the programmes attractive to stay in the competition with other commercial channels. Recently they have initiated making some "package programmes".

But the suspicion still remains whether the ghost of STAR TV network will ever come down off our shoulders? How can we substitute "Baywatch", "Riviera",

looking for cable connection to this extremely entertaining channel.

A newspaper of China said that pet dogs become frivolous unless they are brought in front of the TV set to watch evening programmes. They shake their tails incessantly in pleasure when they watch some romantic scenes, become terrified while watching a violence scene. So there we are with the Star TV network lever going all over the world and our country. Who knows where this fever will take us?

## Waiting for You

By Rabeth Khan

WALKING along the long shores,  
Our hands tightly clasped  
singing the melodies of love...  
These are the visions I have,  
When I close my eyes.

Whenever I thought of you,  
I drifted to the world of fantasies,  
Love was an unexplained mystery  
Before you solved it.  
Your eyes gave me the love and happiness,  
I earnestly desired,  
Your heart gave me the abode of  
romance I needed,  
While your shoulders let me rest.

All the dreams would have turned into reality,  
If the reality had not turned  
my life into despair.  
The liberation of my motherland  
was to be initiated,  
He wanted to share the honour  
by joining the battle of freedom  
my heart felt an unusual hollowness,  
Letting him go might have been the  
end of all my aspirations,  
While keeping him to me would have  
meant dishonouring my motherland.

Inspite of my pains and tears,  
I bade him goodbye,  
With a sweet, little kiss on his lips.  
He promised me,  
"Rakhi, please wait for me, I will come to you,  
With victory at my side."

Nine months of war elapsed  
The sounds of victory were humming in the air,  
The heroes who escaped the wrath of death,  
Came back to their beloved ones,  
He also came to me keeping his promise,  
In a box draped with the flag in red and green.

Tears ran down my cheeks,  
I lost to reality,  
But with all the sufferings, honour found  
a place in my heart,  
We sacrificed our happiness  
To liberate the nation.  
My dreams will always be in my heart,  
With him singing the tunes of love and victory in my ears.

## I was Older Then

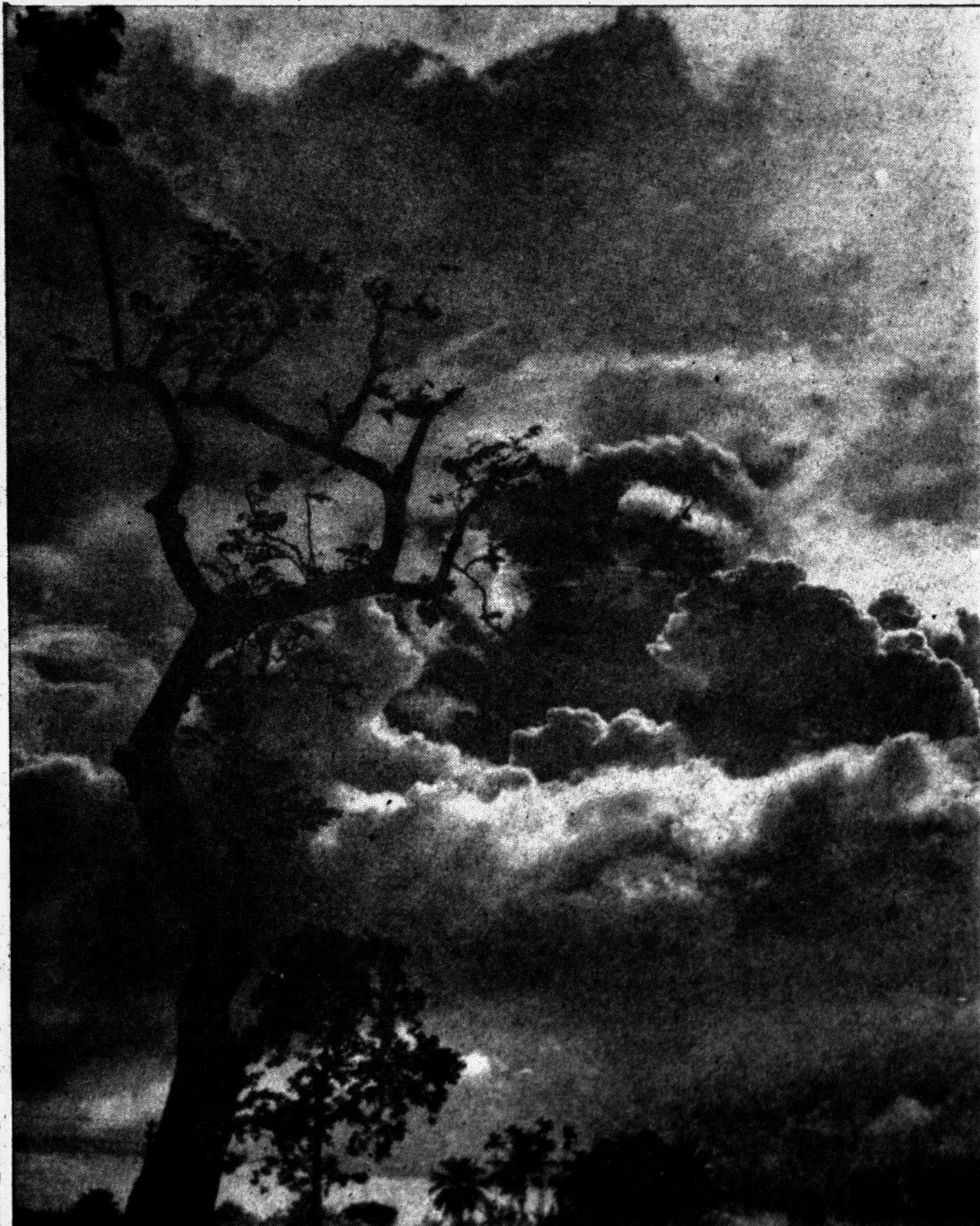
by Shamsad Mortuza

I was older then, but still a child  
A trench was dug in my playground  
And in that borrow, my younger brother was born  
I was older then, but still a child  
My father listened to the hushed radio  
And stormed over cups of tea.  
I was older then, but still a child  
Everynight, I had the same nightmare:  
The Biharis were chopping our heads off  
And the Pakistanis drinking blood in cups.  
I was older then, but still a child  
I played with a empty shells and helmets

left in our garrage by uncle Mukti dear,  
I was older then, but still a child  
I heard who looted the banks  
And what Midis touch swelled the ghost thumbs.  
I was older then, but still a child  
My mother gave me fruit juice and double eggs  
Which she couldn't afforded for her younger ones.  
I was older then, but still a child  
Everyone rebuked my father  
For being too naive and not gaining and enemy plot.  
I am a man now, but still a child  
I dream of my playground  
and think where the new trench will be dug.

## Time in Frame

'Time in Frame' is for those interested in photography. Send us your best photograph with a caption (if required) and a small technical detail of the shot taken. Show the others what you see through the lens. Your coloured or black and white photographs could be on campus politics, every day Dhaka, of course beauty and anything different that your creative mind captures which others hardly notice. Every week the best entry would be published in this new column — introduced just for you. Send us your work in time for the next issue.



Come rain, do come and pour, The earth's bosom is split. By the sun's parching heat, Do come in showers, O rain. Folk Son. Courtesy — Bangladesh by Ahmed and Ahmed.

## On The Road

by Sharier Khan

HERE is a compilation of the true incidents on the roads of the city:

1. Afifa, a smart young lady in her twenties, was driving her "Beetle" voxwagen one afternoon. She was wearing shirt and jeans (that matters). Incidentally, the head light was on. When she stopped her car at the Science Laboratory Crossing signal point, a young traffic sergeant at first noticed the head light and then looked at the driver of the car. Then, hesitantly he approached Afifa, removed his sunglasses and said, in English, Madam, you are Onning the headlight of your car."

"Really?" Afifa wondered and turned off the headlight. "I have just offing it."  
2. Babu, an amateur motorcycle engine expert, has a Negroid complexion and hair. Moreover he loves wearing bright and loud coloured dresses. Apparently, strangers think he is foreigner from Africa. He drives motorcycles in the city but never carries papers. He is never caught by sergeants.

Yet one day, while he was driving through the Mirpur Road, a sergeant gestured him to stop. Babu stopped. When the sergeant was approaching him, in his mind Babu was preparing an excuse for not keeping the papers with him. He even thought of bribing the sergeant, in case of dire need. But the sergeant came, inspected Babu's appearance thoroughly, coughed and said, "You Sudanese?" Babu could not prepare an answer to this question for a while.

"You understand English?" the sergeant questioned again. Babu nodded his head, it was true after all. "Okay, you always carry paper... Okay?" the sergeant suggested "You go, Okay?"

Babu left the spot without uttering a single word.  
3. It was a sultry evening. The Mirpur bound bus was jam-packed. The bus conductor was having a hard time collecting the fare from passengers. As usual, the front rows of seats in the bus were allocated for ladies and the other rows for men. In this particular crowd, one passenger had decided to stand beside the ladies. Often, as the bus was putting on a brake, this fellow was falling on the sitting ladies.

The bored and tired bus conductor at first gently asked the passenger to move to the men's quarter. There is no space, I will not go from here," the passenger insisted.  
On various bus stops the conductor repeatedly asked the man to leave the "ladies

corner," and the man angrily refused to give up the occupied territory.

Finally, at the Darus Salam bus stoppage, the bus became almost vacant. The bus conductor, as he developed a hostile relationship with the passenger, angrily said to this man, both looking other way, "It is already dark outside... why are you still hanging around the women's corner, we'd like to know."

At the Zia International Airport bus stand, hundreds of prospective passengers are waiting for Gulistan-bound buses. Suddenly a rushing minibus stopped there. The bus helper got down from the bus shouting, "come on, come on (ayya poren in Bangla), we have seats! we have seats!"  
So everybody rushed in the minibus, only to discover that all the seats were occupied. An angry passenger caught the helper by his neck, and said, "you told me that this bus had seats!" "Yes, I did, I didn't lie. I did not claim that the seats were empty," the skinny helper shrugged.

5. This is an old story, which took place during the Ershad regime.  
The sergeant had seized the papers of a bus coming from Tangail. The heat at the Zia Airport area had already affected the mood of the sergeant. The unkempt bus driver, looking like a cretin, put on a silly grin, begged the sergeant, "Saar (sir), please return my (fake) driving license."

"Stop blubbering, you will never get the papers. You will be fined, you culprit!" the sergeant angrily told the driver who was peeking through the window.

"Saar! please saar." The driver continued to beg," the bus owner will kill me!

"Just the thing I want!" the sergeant replied and looked the other way. "If you ask for the paper again I will simply push it in your throat."  
"Saar, my owner will kill me, I beg you."

"What's the name of the owner of the bus?" the sergeant reluctantly asked.

"Saar, Mahmudul Hasan saar."

"Mahmudul who? the minister?"  
"Yes saar, the minister Mahmudul Hassan saar!"  
The sergeant, simply handed over the paper to the driver. The driver, little perplexed, asked the sergeant, "what am I going to do now?"  
"You can go. But if you prefer, you can push in the paper in my throat," the frustrated sergeant, with a deflated ego replied.