

LIVING

Women's Perils on Public Transport

by Rahat Nilofer

TRAVELLING by public transport in the Dhaka metropolis is something of an ordeal; more so if you belong to the fair sex. How exactly does one commute everyday to one's office, school or college? If the distance is not too much, one takes the inevitable rickshaw. But if you reside in the outskirts like Mirpur, Uttara or Jatrabari, then you take a bus or a minibus and if your pocket allows it, a baby-taxi. (I've often wondered how these noisy things acquired this suffix) whatever your mode of transport, the hazards are many.

I remember when I was a student, the BRTC authorities had introduced a ladies' bus service commencing from Pal-

labi, Mirpur and terminating at Gulistan. The journeys were ordeals to say the least. These services were basically introduced for the benefit of the students and working women.

How these buses became the sole properties of beggars and pick-pockets is another story. As one lady wisely remarked, "They are also a large part of our society and have every right to travel in these buses." very logical isn't it? During these journeys my pocket (or rather my bag) was picked twice and I was relieved of my spectacles on both occasions.

The cases were mistaken for wallets. I had hoped at the time that my kind pick-pocket was also short sighted like me.

She sure could use spectacles to determine the difference between a wallet and a spectacle-case! Anyway, after much pushing and jostling we somehow managed to disembark in one piece. In the process we would invariably be late for classes. So much for the ladies' bus service!!

Some of the braver women tried to avail the general bus or mini-bus service in vain. Firstly, all the ladies' seats (a meagre number) would be occupied by haughty looking men with brief-cases, looking out of the windows. The conductors and helpers would give helpless looks and say, "Aa, now it is office time". So the ladies are only going shopping or visiting friends. To ask one of the

gentleman to give up his seat marked "ladies" would be sacrilege! If, one the other hand, you are lucky to secure a seat during the so called "office time", just relax until the bus reaches Gulistan or wherever it is scheduled to make its final stop, even if your office or college is in Moham-madpur. For no amount of physical strength can part the sea of humans blocking the door to make way for you.

For the students of the Dhaka University, the university buses came as heaven sent gifts. Now one could really relax and concentrate on the more pressing needs e.i studying. Alas one cannot remain a student forever. And as all good things must come to an end, so did my student days.

As a working person, I decided to dispense with all of the afore mentioned means and try my luck with the baby-taxi. It couldn't be so bad, I argued with myself, it one can hear the noise (you actually have to shout to give directions) and a few bumps. After much hassling over the fare which the driver insisted was cheating an honest hard-working fellow like him, you try to make yourself comfortable on the stiff seat. You notice immediately the wise saying inscribed right behind the driver's seat, "Shomoyer cheye kboner mullo onek beshi" ("Life is much more valuable than time). Ah, here was some one who really cared about human life! You couldn't be more wrong, for the minute the baby-taxi purrs to life, the driver rushes through the traffic as if his life depended on it, while you are trembling with fear in your seat. And you remember lines from "From a Railway Carriage". — "Faster than fairies, faster than witches; Bridges and houses, Hedges and ditches....."

By the time you reach your destination, you are out of breath and left wondering about the inscription. Who's life are they talking about, anyway?

"Enfant Present," a Unique Kind of Creche

by Christiane Shombeau

It is not that easy to innovate and Christine Auguin, a social worker by training, and Francoise Gerber, a psychologist, know what they are talking about. Together they have created "Enfant Present" (child present), an original kind of creche.



A creche that remains open for 24 hours for 7 days a week

In fact, "Enfant Present" is original from a dual point of view. Not only does it stay open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, but it also mainly takes in children whose parents are going through psychological and social difficulties (3/4 of the intake). Today, everybody acknowledges the relevance of their undertaking. Its success makes people forget the three years that it took to set up the project and the following four years (from 1987-1991) spent persuading Paris City Hall, the main source of funding, of the seriousness of their purpose.

Christine Auguin remembers how she and Francoise raged against Paris creches which, with their strict opening hours, did not cater to the needs of parents working unusual hours (firemen, policemen, air-hostesses, waitresses, etc.). They also grumbled at the lack of facilities to accommodate children whose parents were going through temporary difficulties and found it hard to play their role of parenthood correctly.

Their idea was to set up a creche which could serve preventively and could be used

flexibly to help men and women for whom the task of being a parent was not innate, before relations deteriorated and the law had to intervene in order to separate the children from their parents. One day, in 1987, they just decided to go ahead. They set up an association called "Enfant Present" (child present), found premises in a working-class district in the east of Paris, in Menilmontant, and obtained financial backing from the "Fondation de France", Paris City Hall and the Family Allowance Office.

Rather than having a general creche, they prefer to have nannies look after the children: "We deal with children whose parents find it difficult to maintain a regular rhythm of life or who lead a complicated one, often on the fringe of society. The nanny offers a stable and balanced relationship and provides points of reference which are indispensable for the healthy psychological development of the tiny tots." Madame Auguin, who had become the manageress of the creche, explains.

There is no set way of receiving a child but a range of

possibilities within a defined framework. The minimum demanded is that the child should be with his nanny from 10 am to 4 pm 5 days-out of 7. The maximum is taking total care of the child, day and night every day of the week. Each child has a project. It is determined from the very first day, together with the parents, by the technical team which comprises a child-counsellor, a psychologist, a doctor and a social worker. It depends on his family situation but also on the parents' wishes.

The maximum admission framework is chosen in the most difficult cases such as for the young parents, both of whom are on the fringe of society and are still being helped by their own counsellors and who found themselves at a loss by the arrival of an over-idealised baby.

Whatever the system chosen, links with the parents are always maintained, but the purpose is to give parents the time to recover and to be helped by specialists while, at the same time, guaranteeing the child a stable framework to live in. Once a week, the nannies are invited to come with

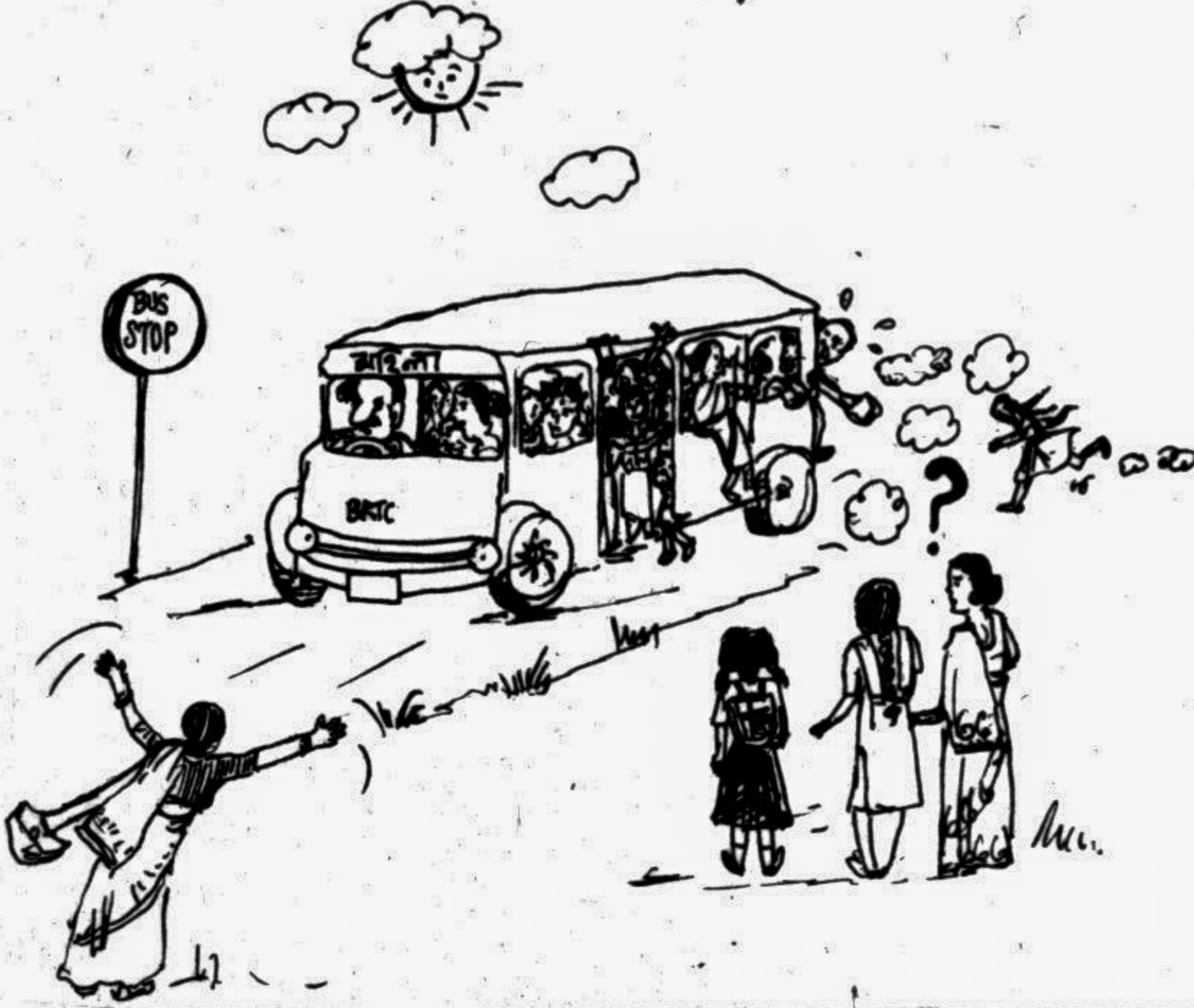
the children to the creche where some rooms have been equipped with various games for children. This day allows direct contact to be made between the technical team, and the parents are warmly invited to take part in these get-togethers.

There is a permanent night-time service for distressed parents but, until now, relations between the staff at the creche and the parents have been so positive that it has nearly always been possible to detect a need before it comes up as an emergency. It is a success for the team as is the very low percentage of children who finally have to be handed over to the welfare authorities when they leave the creche at around the age of three.

The requests for admission that come flooding in to "Enfant Present" show that there is a real need. At the moment, the creche can take in fifty children including twenty-five at night. That is all. But those in charge of the creche do not wish to enlarge it, perhaps because they feel that the positive results obtained are due to the reasonable size of the establishment, but also because such an undertaking demands great personal involvement and availability and they hope to calmly take advantage of the brand new premises that the City of Paris has placed at their disposal.

After all, they only managed to stabilize their budget after a lot of discussion and many administrative procedures. Their budget amounts to 5 million francs. Most of this comes from the City of Paris budget for young children. The Family Allowance Office provides one fifth and the parents participate (to a very small extent) depending on their income. Obviously caring for a child in this creche is more expensive than in an ordinary one but, as Madame Auguin points out, it is also considerably lower than if the child were being cared for by the child welfare department. There is just one single "Enfant Present" in France, but Christine Auguin and her partner Francoise Gerber are most willing to help anybody tempted by this adventure.

— L'Actualite en France



Selecting Hair Style

by Blossom Kochhar

IN hairstyling, there is no such thing as "one style fits all". Every woman is unique and special in her looks. A hairstyle is designed to befit the face shape, body, relate to the lifestyle and more.

While selecting your hairstyle, there are a few principles to remember. They can help you to choose a style that is more becoming for you.

Head Shapes

Hair designers are often asked questions about head shapes and their proportions to hairstyling. Keeping in mind the below mentioned relationship to body height and styles, the following considerations can give the illusion of the classic oval shape face.

Generally, height or fullness is added to areas that fall short. Closeness is created where the arc is extended. In this manner, a balanced look is achieved. It is important to increase or decrease the right amount of hair needed to cre-

ate the proper hair-face relationship and to adapt the hairstyle to the general shape.

Style and Balance

Keep in mind that the normal proportion of head size to total height is measured at 75 heads of height. Regardless of height, the head can be put in proportion with the body by controlling the size of the head form. Whatever the fashion mode of the day, hair should reflect its proper proportion in relationship to the body. To achieve the proper form, consideration must be given to the density, texture, and weight of the hair and the process it must undergo.

What to look for in a Hairstyle

Although only you, with your individual taste and preference can dictate the style you want, a consultation with your professional hairstylist is highly recommended. However, the finished product should be attractive, healthy looking and

easy to care for.

Triangular face: The triangular face usually displays a jaw line that is somewhat pointed. In order to balance and detract, widen silhouette in symmetrical (balanced) form, and ease more hair onto the face to correct the irregularity.

Square Face: If the face or jaw is square, add height in the centre of the style to minimize the squareness. Add slight width to further narrow the jaw. This also eliminates any chance of a square silhouette in the upper part of the style.

Long Face: In dealing with length in the facial structure asymmetry (unbalanced form) will detract from the length of the face when the line of vision moves horizontally rather than vertically. Do not add height, but do add some hair on the forehead to aid in creating a pleasing shape.

Round Face: A round face can be improved by moving hair on the face to break the round hairline growth. Hair on the forehead should move horizontally to contrast the rounded chin line. Asymmetry (lack of balance) in form, creates horizontal lines to contrast roundness.

It is with the aid of proper cosmetics and through the careful placement and proportion of hair fashions that facial irregularities are minimized

and do not become dominant characteristics.

Every face has some imperfections. The best part is that most of these imperfections can be corrected by styling your hair well. Here are a few suggestions to deal with some of the common irregularities of the face.

Receding Forehead and Chin

If the forehead and chin recede, fullness over the forehead creates balance with the nose line and conceals the extreme slope.

Long Jaw Line

If the jaw line is long creating a great deal of facial area, it must be balanced with the proper positioning of the hair. Lower the side-hair motions on to the face to decrease the facial area in view.

Low or Small Forehead

Design a style with hair off the face and create height in the style. A short hair-cut in front will give the forehead a higher look.

Ears that Stick out

Avoid a short hair style. Design hair that slightly covers the ears and masks the problem entirely.

In creating a hairstyle, it is important to remember the objective, i.e. to ovalise the face shape.

COOKERY

Apple Souffle

- 1 1/2 pints milk
- 1 oz. castor sugar
- 1 teaspoonful rice
- 1 oz. butter
- 1 lb. apples
- 2 eggs

Boil the rice in the milk until tender, then add the butter and the egg-yolks, without allowing to boil. Stew the apples with sugar to taste and put them at the bottom of a buttered pie dish with the rice on top. Bake in a cool oven until set. Beat the egg-whites to a stiff froth, fold in the sugar, pile on top of the souffle and bake till golden brown. This may be eaten hot or cold.

Australian Pudding

- 1 lb. flour
- 8 oz. butter
- 4 oz. currants
- Pinch of mixed spice
- 2 oz. candied peel
- 1 teaspoonful bicarbonate of soda
- 4 oz. raisins
- 8 oz. sugar
- Salt
- A little grated lemon rind
- 1/2 pint milk and water

Sift the flour, add the suet, fruit, peel chopped finely, lemon rind, sugar, salt and spice. Mix well together. Warm the milk and water and pour on to the soda so that it froths up well. Pour at once into the dry ingredients and stir thoroughly. Put into a greased basin (it should come only two-thirds of the way up because it rises), cover with a double piece of greased paper and steam for 3 hours, or bake for 1 1/2 hours in a moderate oven.

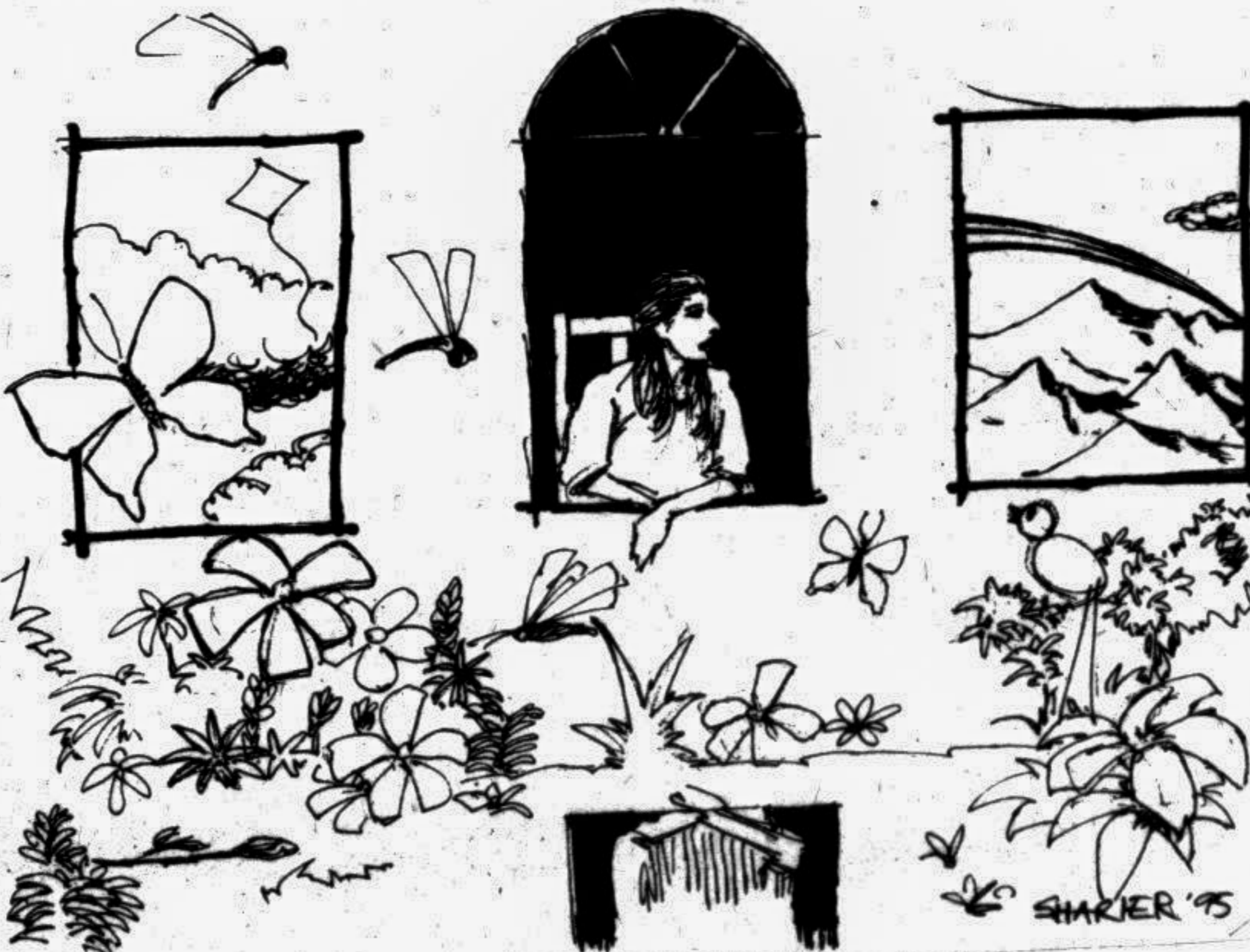
Baked Banana Custard

- 3 eggs
- 3 bananas
- Nutmeg or cinnamon
- 1 oz. castor sugar
- 1 pint milk

Break eggs separately into a basin, add sugar and beat thoroughly, then add the pulp of the bananas and the milk. Pour this into one large or two small buttered pie dishes, grate over a little nutmeg or powdered cinnamon and bake in a moderately heated oven (in a tin containing water) for about 35 minutes. Dish up and serve hot.

Are You Afraid of Failure?

by Farhana Ahmad



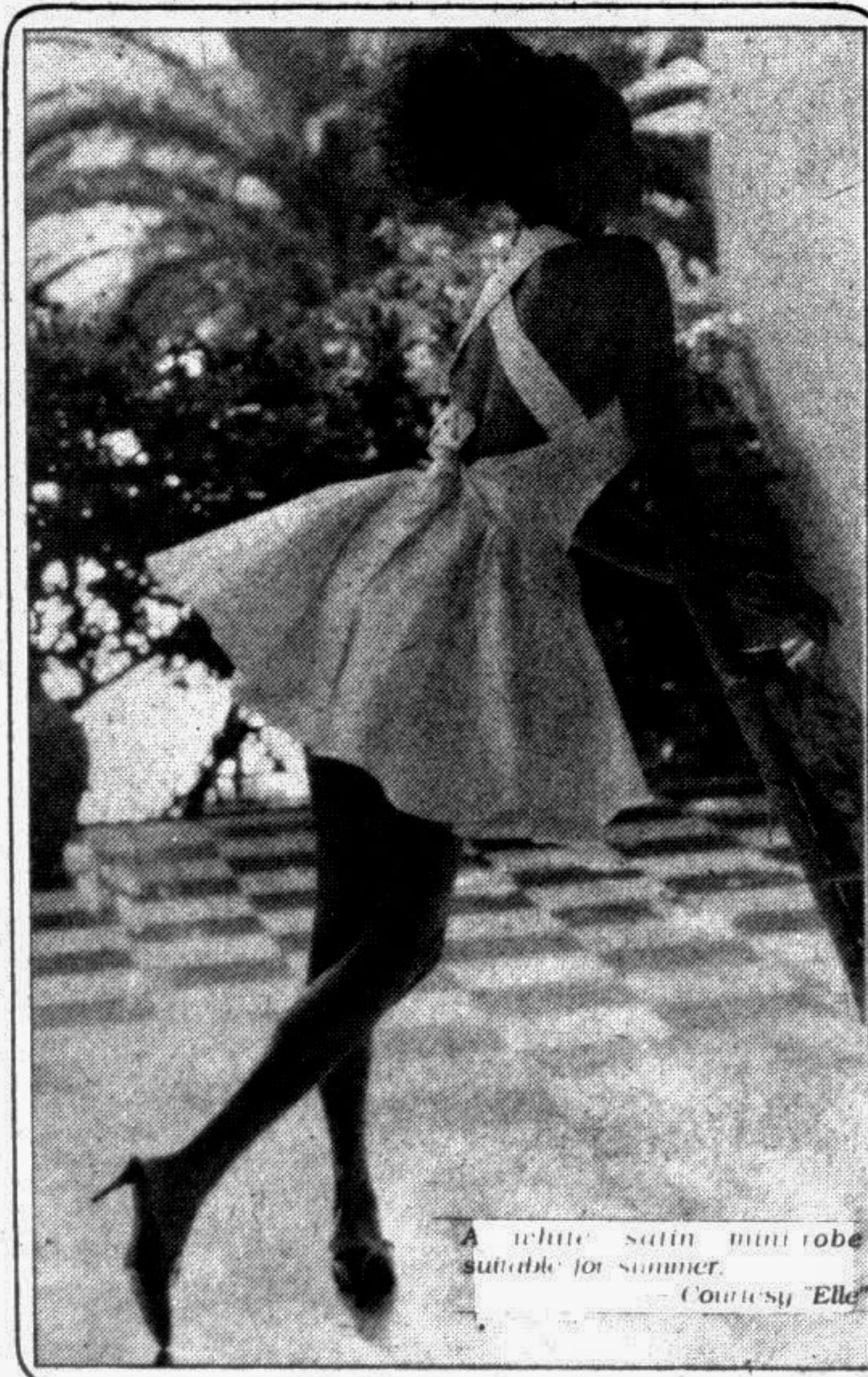
WHEN God closes all doors somewhere He leaves a little window open." My mother loves to quote in times of crisis. I found out how totally wrong the saying was when I failed for the first time in my life. I found to my amazement that God had not only bolted and padlocked all doors but He had also sealed the smallest cracks, so that not even a little ray of light could enter my dark, dreary world. I saw my orderly, trouble free world crumble into tiny fragments before my very eyes. In its place was left a total mess, a disharmony, a chaos which I had no way of knowing how to put back together. I found solitude a thousand times more comforting than people's solicitude for me. I ended up alternately crying and talking to myself. I found "everything will get better soon" just a stupid and irritating cliché. In short, if I had gone to a psychiatrist he would have diagnosed my case as a nervous breakdown.

Has something like this ever happened to you? Have you ever failed with life in general and something very dear to you in particular? Failure comes to us in all packages and parcels, in a variety of shapes and sizes. The intensity of sorrow, of course, depends on that particular person's depth of feeling. You can fail in so many different ways. For example, you can fail in a major exam; fail to reach your goal; fail to live up to expectations; fail to get a job; fail to make ends meet; fail to bring up the kids properly; fail to make your marriage work; fail to cope with the stresses and hardships of life; fail to make any kind of relationship work; fail to keep in good health; fail to face the death of loved ones; fail to get a life partner; fail to study; fail to have a child; or it can simply be failure to be on time; failure to meet the deadline; fail in a test; or maybe an everyday mundane failure like failure to get a rickshaw home so you have to walk all the way;

failure to get along with people etc. The list is endless. Some people don't regard the little failures with much importance. But like the psychiatrists say, the little failures are sometimes more damaging on the nervous system than one big failure. They all add up in making that person get a monumental inferiority complex so that slowly day by day he slips deeper and deeper in the world of gloom from where soon there is no return. What does a person who has failed end up doing? Again it depends on the person and the type of failure involved. There can be a depression of a varying degree of magnitude ranging from mild to severe, which may end up in the taking of one's own life. Can you prevent this from happening? What can you do, you say, to prevent fate from claiming your life as its next victim? One thing fate loves doing is dealing the worst kind of blow possible on the least wary. So, act according to the

slogan by the World Health Organisation: 'Should disaster strike be prepared'. The optimist rarely suffers. So chin up, try to be a positive thinker. So you failed, so what? You've still got your health, your wealth and your wisdom. Or maybe you've lost one or more of these, it's still not the end of the world. Learn to psych yourself. What you can do for yourself is the best policy in the long run. Hypnotise yourself. Look in the mirror when you get up in the morning and say a few times out loud, "I am a success." It is sure to make you feel more confident. One weird way of making you feel better is trying to find more people who have also experienced your sort of failure. Finding out you're not alone, that there are people out there who share your particular brand of misery will have a way of cheering you up instantly.

If you can afford it one of the best things to do is talk to a psychiatrist. Though it's expensive, pouring out your heartfelt sorrows on a sympathetic listener is by far the best therapy. The problem of surviving after a major failure often arises because we have no one to talk to, no one to share our woes, no one to curtain, shield and protect us from the big, bad, cruel world. And no one can be expected to bear the great burden of his failure on his shoulders alone. Even if you can't afford a psychiatrist try to find a friend, family, husband or wife, teacher, anyone who will lend a kind ear, who is caring and consoling, who won't rebuke or scold or worse, panic and make you feel even more low than you already are. Learn to share. That's what society is here for. Whatever you do, don't keep everything bottled up inside you. That's when they turn nasty. So slumped up shoulders, dejected, defeated look of a war-weary soldier tired of fighting. Square your shoulders, head up and face the problem and work out a solution. Have faith in yourself and your abilities. Don't die a mental death. Live with a vengeance. Be a winner. All you need is the right kind of attitude. Remember, Robert Bruce and the old maxim: "Failure is the key to success". The sun shines on him who smiles. So keep smiling. No matter how bad today is, tomorrow is always another day!



A white satin mulleobe suitable for summer. Courtesy: Elde