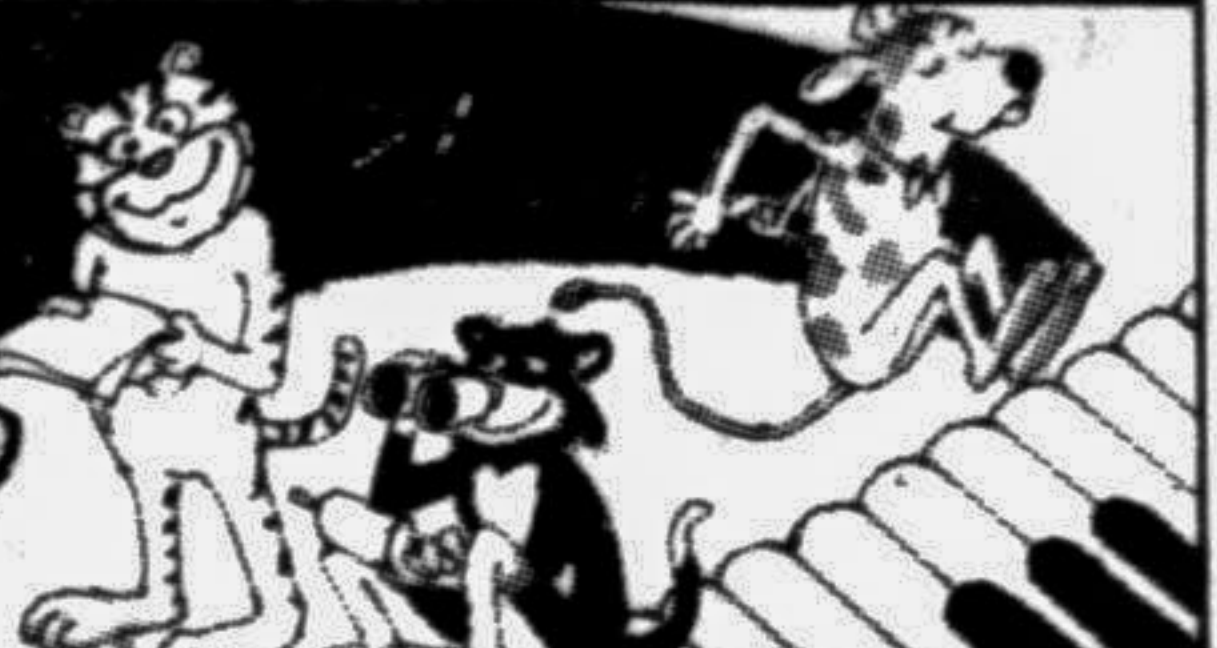


RISING STARS



'Feeling Sorry — For Them?'

by Susmita Roy

I feel sorry for these street kids. Don't you think it's inhumane that they have to beg, rummage bins or work to support their families? They ought to be able to go to school and play like the rest of us... Ria was going on and on about the subject of children's rights and her friend, Mitu was yawning for the hundredth time.

Mitu had (happened to) read about all that same old stuff in the previous day's paper. People had been writing and lecturing about deprived and uncared for street children since she could remember. It was obvious nothing was being done for them anyway. If Ria could never do anything about it, Mitu didn't see any point of her blabbing about it. All she could think in that heat outside Labramba was to get away from the pests' annoying her with their moans and groans. At least Ria had agreed to avoid giving any alms to the brats at their elbows. Why encourage them to beg?

"What a day! It's so hot that anyone could fry an egg on a car left in the sun... Renu! Renu... oye RENU!" Ria was on her feet, arms akimbo, prepared for battle with the servant.

"Yes, apa, were you calling?" Renu, a maidservant of ten or eleven, had run up to Ria and asked with an apologetic and fearful voice.

"Calling? My vocal cords were literally tearing off! You little lazy rascal! I bet you were sleeping your head off. Speak up girl, or I'll slap you silly!" Ria stormed madly at the frail body which shrank away from her. "Well what are you standing here for — go get a glass of cold water — on the double."

AVIK & THE MISSING MACHINE by Sharier

JOY in



A Youngster's Escapades

by A S M Nurunnabi

IN some measure or other, boys are supposed to have a naughty streak in their nature. But in Babul the naughtiness is so much ingrained in his mental make-up that all who came in touch with him did not have any occasion to know that he had any other identity.

Babul is a lad of ten years in age. His young head is so filled with naughty thoughts that his neighbours were never at ease with him around. There were incessant complaints from his neighbours. This phenomenon became so disturbing that his father asked his mother to prepare a daily list of such complaints. At the end of the day when his father came home from work, he would take up the list and sit in judgement over him. But this procedure had little impact on Babul's ways of life. One day the list of complaints turned out so long that his father decreed that Babul should be denied his mid-day meal the next day.

The next day dawned with Babul knowing nothing about his father's decree. He went to school as usual, but on his return, a surprise awaited him, he found the cupboard containing his food locked up and his mother taking her mid-day nap. What could he do? He felt terribly hungry and this led him to adopt a desperate strategy. There was a tin shed attached to the house. He climbed to its top with an empty kerosene can and a piece of bamboo stick. Thereafter, from his perch on the tin shed, he began beating the empty kerosene can with the stick and addressed the passers-by in this manner: "Hello everybody, listen to my tale of woe. My mother has denied me food. I am extremely hungry. Please help me out of this predicament." Hearing his piteous appeal, a small crowd assembled in front of the house.

Meanwhile the shrill beat on the empty can awoke his mother. She was embarrassed by the sight of the assembled crowd. To get out of the awkward situation, she called back Babul with endearing words and allowed him to take his mid-day meal.

There were other episodes. There was a pond near his house with pucca ghat and sloping cement work along its steps running from the top to the edge of the water. Babul would make the sloping section slippery with water and enjoy slipping down the slope. However enjoyable this game might be, it played havoc with the half pant Babul wore, which gradually torn by the friction with hard cement surface. One day a servant of his household came to the spot and warned him that his father would be very angry if he persisted in playing in this manner. In reply, Babul defiantly declared: "I'm not afraid of my father." The servant reported it back to the house where his father was present. At the end of his play when Babul approached the house, he found his father waiting with a cane.

When Babul drew near, his father came forward demanding to know "Are't you afraid of your father?" Finding the situation difficult, Babul quickly withdrew shouting "Yes, I am afraid, I am afraid." And began circling around the outer boundary of the house, with his father chasing him. While making the rounds, he kept repeating "I do feel afraid." At last when his father got tired, he gave up.

Babul had a private tutor to coach him in his lessons. The tutor used to come in the evening. As there was no electricity in that mofussil town, hurricane lantern was in use. But Babul, taking the plea that he could not see clearly, raised the flame of the lantern to such a degree that the lantern got covered with black soot, rendering it unfit for further use.

One day, for some reason, the tutor pulled at his ear. Enraged at the humiliation, Babul faced his tutor with these words: "My father gives you a salary to teach me and not to box my ears." The teacher felt so much upset at Baul's remark that he ceased coming from the next day. Thereafter, a succession of private tutors came and went away in the face of Babul's barrage of outspoken comments.

Whatever might have been the magnitude and scope of Babul's naughtiness, there was one redeeming feature. He was intelligent and sharp which helped him grasp his lessons quickly without his much labouring on them. That is why, in spite of his many escapades, his teachers had a soft corner for him in their heart.

The Rescue

by Miifta N Huda

IN 1994 on January in Malaysia five of my friends and I decided to go to Malaka which was twenty kms away from the city. We took this as an adventure. My friends were Assad (shortest with 'Alo Alo' shoes), Azmat (tallest and knows too much about science), Rafi (can think of nothing but Star Trek), Umar (better known as oogle with curled eyelids) and finally the maddest and best movie watcher Waqas Kler!

That day at 10 am we hit the highways. We were to spend a night there. After we covered two kms Assad said, "It's a good thing we didn't bring Mashfiq". "Ya! Otherwise we would have to go by car" I agreed. To this Waqas added "Two he meant."

After about 15 mins Umar pointed out the clouds emerging from the southern sky. We had to hurry and get some shelter even though we had our raincoats. But around us was only green. After we covered eight kms it started to rain. And it rained cats and dogs. The roads became as slippery as an eel, the sky became dark but as dark as a dungeon. We put the lights of our bikes on. We were in the middle of no where. We had to keep our fingers crossed and keep biking. Another problem arose (I was expecting this problem). Guess what? From one corner Assad was crying out "I want my mummy!! Let's go home" and from another corner Azmat was trying to stop, use and test the rain water. This made us have a quarrel. As we were quarrelling I suddenly noticed a long truck heading towards us. Worst of all, we were heading for a bridge. Waqas told us to slide under the truck. So we did it. But Assad, Rafi and I slid out of the bridge and managed to hang on bent thin small rod. Assad and I were hanging on the rod but Rafi was on the further end almost about to let go.

They first pulled Assad who hung on the rope tightly. After him it was my turn. "Hey! I can't hold on any more. I'm slipping Ah-hhh!!!" cried Rafi. We kept shouting, Assad, Azmat, Waqas pulled me up. Rafi kept shouting, "I can't hold on, I'm falling. Ahhh!!!" "Got U", said Azmat and I. Rafi caught the rope in the nick of time. Thus he didn't fall. We pulled him up. We were safe. But Alas! where is Umar. We looked for him hear and there, but couldn't find him. At last we saw him in the corner of the bridge with his leg soured badly. Now we couldn't carry on with our trip but were happy that we all were safe.

Now we had to wait hours for a lift. We waited on the bare ground. After at least two hours 30 mins we got a lift back to the city.

We failed to bike to Malaka but had a deadly adventure and a rescue. Thanks to Waqas' movie trick.

What Lies Within Us

by Rumana Tasmin Khan

OUR tiny planet is growing old. Even the day when Adam and Eve inhabited Earth for the first time, the planet was fit to be called old. This far, time has not been able to leave any spot of age on its face. But many of us are learning that our deeds today will be able to leave such a mark.

When we shall leave Earth, we shall leave behind the question of survival of our descendants. It is up to us not to leave such significant a question which can put an end to our entire civilization.

The question of survival is included in the laws of nature. It is there in every prey-predator relationship, in every natural calamity that occurs, in our complicated social lives that lead to crimes, violence and wars.

Further analysis of the concept can bring out the other emerging reasons which can engulf us. The roots of these reasons are linked with man's 'contribution' in population explosion, species extinction, pollution and nuclear weapons. These lead us to food crisis, destruction of wild life and greenhouse effect to complicate our struggle for existence.

Population explosion is one of the greatest challenges ever faced by mankind. It requires a surplus amount of food and more land for shelter. To keep up the production according to the requirement, pollution is caused. Due to the ever increasing demand for land, deforestation is taking place, which entails species extinction. Not only has man destroyed habitats of animals to solve his own problem, but has indulged himself into opening up markets for trading animal products. The international trade of animal skins, tusks, horns, bones, teeth, paws, shells, eggs, feathers and many more — is another good reason behind endangering and extinction of numerous wild animals. Then, destruction of vegetation together with over-exploitation and the business of flora are pushing a huge number of plant species to the verge of extinction.

One of the 'gifts' of an advanced world is pollution. It seems that the more advanced we become the more we get to make mistakes. The examples are CFCs, asbestos, plastics, polythene and numerous others. It is true that financially we can afford to continue polluting our environment. But we overlook the fact that in the end it is us, along with our species that have to pay for a poisoned Earth.

By endangering wild species we tend to endanger ourselves. The ones who make up the food chain, the basis of an ecosystem, are being removed from nature by our threatening acts. Without one particular species, a gap is formed in the chain and the harmony of nature is disrupted. Later this causes extensive damage to the high tropic levels. And thus man, being one of the consumers occupying the higher tropic levels, is led to the question of survival.

Another harmful effect of our overall destruction in the biosphere is the climate change brought about. Desertification is replacing green savannahs and rainforests where the monsoon used to caress the plain, eventually there will stand a desert instead, unless we prevent desertification. Besides losing the fertile land we shall have to live in extreme weather conditions.

There is still enough time for us to control our population. With all our efforts put in together, we can accomplish a state more stable than "zero-population growth" before the next century ends. Then, the number of endangered species is huge. But it is definitely larger than that of the extinct ones and, fortunately, smaller than the ones still living out of danger. We can always save such species before they disappear by re-establishing their population in their natural habitats. As for pollution, our technology, together with awareness, can solve it all.

We should fight the disease in our society, the disease that can terminate our hopes to survive another millennium — nuclear weapons. It will be only a matter of time to make our dreams become true if we can achieve world peace and unity. Again, our toying with such deadly things can cause us to vanish from the face of the earth in a matter of moments. With our intelligence and determination as the tools, we can easily stop that from happening.

Like walking in light and shadow, man and other creatures have been struggling in the midst of life and death. We all are in an inescapable grip of these two. Our duty should be to face the question of survival boldly, with dexterity. We should not find extinction engulfing ourselves as it did the dinosaurs. If there are any guardian angels of our beloved planet, they are hidden in the depths of our minds. Like the germination of dormant seeds, our planet saving concepts should be unfolded for the future generations. The future of planet Earth lies in our hands. What lies within us is the capability to keep Earth in good hands.

My Pet Cat

by Sabahat Navreen

I have a pet cat. Her name is Pat. Sometimes she knocks down by bat. She is not too fat. But likes to eat rat. She is also fond of eating fish. And cleans up her dish. She likes to play with wool. And to jump onto my tool. She is fluffy and brown. The prettiest in the town!

Labour of Love

A house-wife is worth £19,253 a year, or 19253xTk 65 = Tk 12,51,445. According to a survey by the life-insurance company Legal and General. Her worth is calculated on the basis of an 87-hour working week — No day off — with responsibility for shopping, waitressing, nursing, driving, cleaning, cooking and childminding.

The survey shows Mrs Average's day starts at 7 am and ends at 9 pm. Based on employment agency rates for the different she undertakes, her "fee" for a 14-hour day could be as high as £ 56 or £56x85-Tk 3640. Even on a Sunday her earning power could be £30 or £30x85 = Tk 1950. The British house-wife therefore has a commercial value higher than that of some Army majors, a bishop or a second-division footballer.

Adapted from the "Daily Telegraph".

by Zahid Anwar Haque (Shagor)

The Tune O'clock News

by Zippy Z

NO, folks, I am not a relative of the rapper Easy E, but I do have some news for you music enthusiasts. The biggest news is that there are some new releases from two of the most popular singers of our time, Michael Jackson and Jon Bon Jovi. 'Scream' is the title of the first release from Michael's new album History: Past, Present and Future: Book I, which is due June 20. It is a duet with his sister, Janet Jackson. The new album is a double CD comprising 15 new songs and 15 greatest hits. Tagging the greatest hits along with his new songs was a marketing masterstroke. Even for people who will not like the new songs, the album will be a must-buy. This album is seen as crucial to his career. In recent times, scandals and allegations have been dogging Michael Jackson and this new album is seen as a litmus test of his popularity. To prove the scandals haven't hurt him, his recording label Epic Records has launched a \$ 30 million marketing campaign — the biggest in history. The album is also seen as his reply to his critics concerning his recent fall from grace. With the media feeding frenzy he has gone through, letting out some steam would only seem natural. Epic Records hope the album, which many think could also decide the fate of his marriage, will sell at least (?!!) 20 million copies worldwide. As for the song itself, in 'Scream', the King of Pop does not have anything new to say, or sing rather, it is different from the 'Bad' and 'Dangerous' albums, but it only follows the trends set by Janet Jackson and other contemporary artists. As one critic put it, "For a long time, Michael was a visionary, but this is not a futuristic record".

The same can be said for Bon Jovi. The title of his new song is 'This ain't a love song'. It is gently paced and tinged with sentiment. Jon has come a long way from the likes of 'Livin' on a prayer' but his new song just follows in the footsteps of 'Always', but it is enjoyable nonetheless. The final opinion rests with the listener and the same is true regarding 'Scream'.

Singles Charts:
In the US Bryan Adams and Montell Jordan swap places as Adams goes to the top spot. "Have you ever really loved a woman?" is Adams' fourth US No. 1 and replaces Jordan's "This is how we do it" which ran out of steam after 7 weeks at No. 1.

One this side of the Atlantic, it is three weeks running for Robson Green and Gerome Flinn at No. 1 with 'Unchanged Melody'. This is the seventh cover for this classic song. Runner up this week is the song 'Common people' by Pulp while the instrumental 'Guaglioli' is third.

US Top Five		UK Top Five	
1.	Bryan Adams — Have you ever really loved a woman?	1.	Robson Green and Gerome Flinn — Unchanged melody.
2.	Montell Jordan — This is how we do it.	2.	Pulp — Common people.
3.	— I'll be there for you.	3.	Perez Prez Peido and Orchestra — Guaglioli.
4.	Nikki French — Total eclipse of the heart.	4.	Scatman John — Scatman.
5.	Boyz II Men — Water runs dry.	5.	Baby D — I need your love.

