

# RIISING STARS

FOR thousands of years man has been fascinated by his own imagination. Through imagination he has made the greatest discovery of all—the discovery of science. In return science has given him the power to harness nature and mold it according to his own desire. But most important of all is it has given man impetus to explore the undiscovered territories of his own imaginative mind.

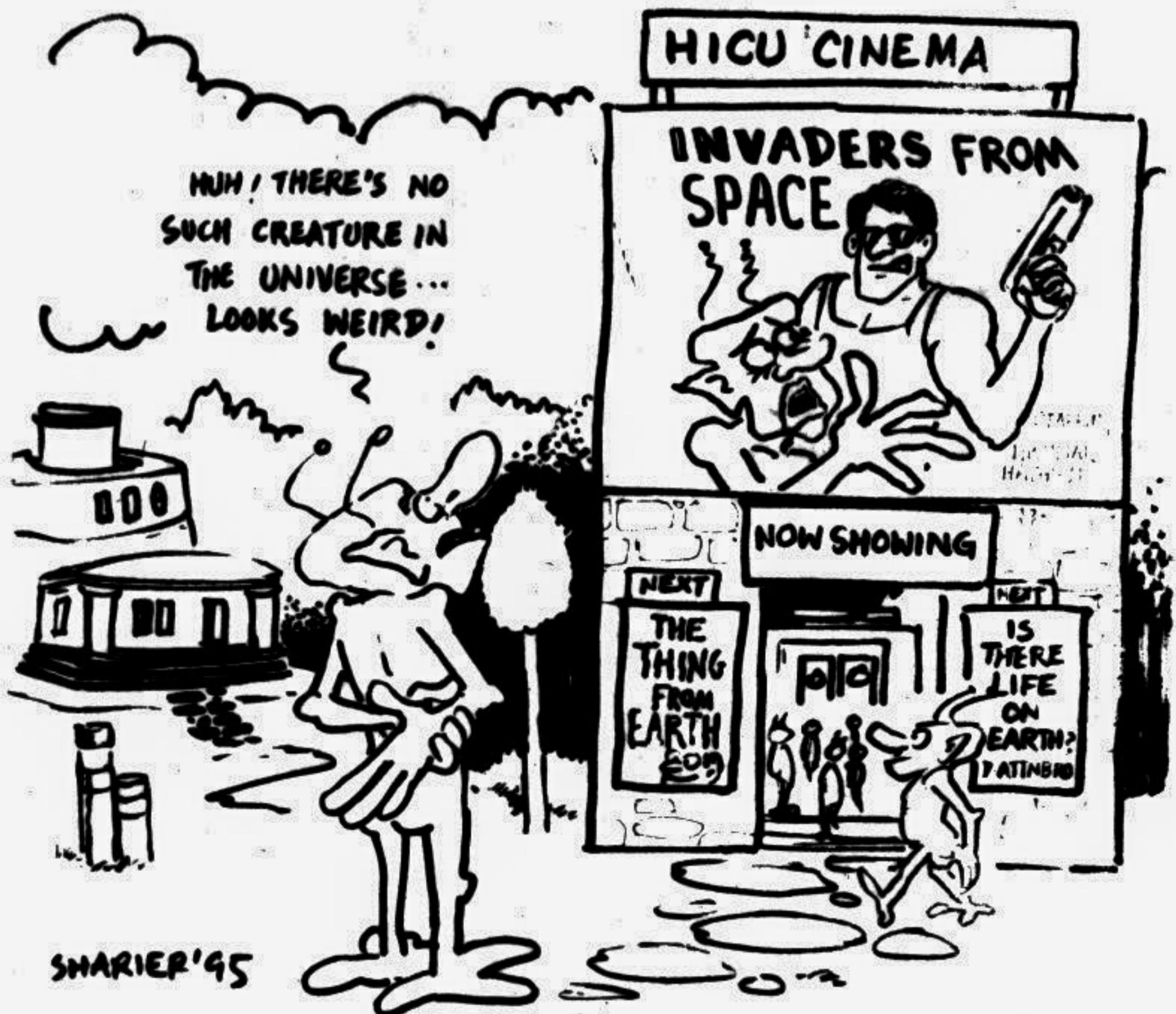
Fantastic imaginations gave birth to fantasy. Fantasy merged with the logic of science to give what we call science fiction. There is much dispute as to the origin of science fiction. Many claim Plato's tale of Atlantis (350 BC) as the origin while some side with the Epic of Gilgamesh (2400 BC). The desire to make it seem that this form of literature is very old is quite tempting. But one should remember that stories without the involvement of science are nothing but fantasies even if they involve trips to the moon or distant planets.

The beginning of science fiction coincides with the onset of Industrial Revolution. Mary Shelly's Frankenstein has a slight tinge of science but it must be considered as more of a Gothic tale. Jules Verne seems to be the first to hit the jackpot with his "Five Weeks in a Balloon". H.G. Wells followed him with his fantastic story of time machine.

Although the early science fictions were very fascinating they had serious flaws. For example some stories had giant spider like creatures devouring entire cities. One with a little knowledge of biology would immediately question the size of the creatures since spiders and insects breathe by diffusion—they can never be very large. Another serious flaw of a H.G. Wells story is the existence of anti-gravity mineral covarite. How can exist on earth is quite incomprehensible. Some times the writers go too far with their imagina-

## Science Fiction Explore the Undiscovered Territories of Your Imaginative Mind

by Tamzid Farhat



SHARIF '95

tions and make a fool out of themselves. Richard Trumbull in his "Silent Running" depicts space borne ecological systems with trees which are dying; the reason—the brilliant scientists who built the stations forgot all about inverse square law and the process of photosynthesis!

Writing a superbly constructed sci-fi story requires vivid imagination and intuition combined with clear understanding of the physical laws of the world. That is why

most of the famous sci-fi writers have science or engineering backgrounds. Isaac Asimov was a biochemist while his rival Arthur C. Clarke is the pioneer of satellite telecommunications. Kurt Vonnegut who wrote the brilliant story "The Sirens of Titan" was a physics graduate of Cornell University. Leading physicists, chemists, astronomers and biologists have enriched this new domain of literature.

Isaac Asimov's

"Foundation" is still the most widely read fiction. The story is set in the distant future where humans inhabit twenty five million planets. The capital is Trantor with a population of forty billion. The whole population is devoted to the administration of the empire. Thousands of ships are required to bring food-products from twenty agricultural worlds. Despite its magnificence and complexity, the empire is crumbling and the future of the empire

rests on Hari Seldon, a mathematician who has discovered the mathematical laws required to predict the future. Although futuristic, the Galactic Empire is a reminiscence of our Imperial Roman Empire.

Frank Herbert's "Dune" focuses around on only one planet—the planet of Arrakis. Three houses—Atrides, Ordo and Harkonnen fight for the power to control the planet. The planet's surface is covered with deserts and spice fields. With the intention to seek revenge for his father's death, Paul Muadib and his newly found friends, the Fremens, fight against the evil Baron Harkonnen and his son. Most of the battles take place in the desert dunes. The whole story deals with the very basic human emotions—love, hate and revenge. Frank Herbert's "Dune" seems to be the answer to Asimov's all too mechanistic "Foundation".

A total contrast to Dune and Foundation is Brian Aldiss' "Hothouse". The story is set in the far future where the human civilization is completely destroyed and the whole planet is covered with banyan trees. Exotic insects and ants inhabit the forest; and man is in continuous struggle with these creatures for his survival. Humans undergoing a process of 'devolution' has forgotten all about civilization and only more, a fungus which can read the human minds and which struggles to unravel the mysteries shrouding the past of the homo sapiens.

The reason for citing a few examples is to show how far the novelists can push their minds to produce such vivid and diverse works of imagi-

nation. And the most interesting thing is that a clash of opinions and imagination of these writers give birth to stories which are more subtle and fascinating. With their brilliant works, they never cease to amaze us.

Science fiction stories are not only astounding but also very informative. Through them a vivid picture of the universe opens before men. He learns that there are more dimensions than three, that it might be possible to travel back in time, that there might be parallel worlds where duplicates of his own self might exist and that he might not be the only intelligent life form. It is not possible for a person to study all the details of scientific discoveries but through sci-fi stories he realizes the complexity of the universe and his position in this mysterious world.

The popularity of science fiction is increasing very rapidly. This has its advantage as well as its disadvantage. Although people are more conscious than before and are aware of what the future might hold for them, they are still vulnerable to superstitions. Pseudoscience has not lost its grip on the human mind. Extra terrestrial influence in the construction of pyramids, life after death, telepathy and telekinesis are some of the false conceptions gaining popularity through pseudoscientific fiction.

The variation and the originality of science fiction stories is slowly disappearing. So far, hundreds of stories involving time travel, miniaturization and exploration of new worlds have been written. It seems the sci-fi writers are in a crisis for new ideas, but the end is not near. More golden ages will come with scientific revolutions similar to the one that marked the beginning of the twentieth century. Science fiction will only come to an end when there will be a halt in Technological advances or innovations.

## Quiz Club

DEAR Quiz Cracker! Your responses to our quizzes are accumulating day by day! Keep it up! However, we must reiterate that prizes are awarded only to the participants who answers all 10 questions correctly. In most cases, what happens is that owing to a single mistake, we are unable to award a participant. Here is a tip for you regarding statistical questions: provide the latest figures!

- This week's ten quizzes, exclusively Bangladesh, are ready to be cracked. And with the revelation of the secret, we are sure that Quiz Club will declare a couple of winners next week!
1. What is the country's population growth?
  2. The country has an area of — km as the land portion.
  3. In 1990, which female writer won the Bangla-Academy award on literature?
  4. Who is the writer of the book, 'Gitobitan'?
  5. What is the name of the largest mosque?
  6. Which jute-mill is the largest one?
  7. Who was the first speaker of Jatiya Sangsad?
  8. What is the length of the Meghna Bridge?
  9. The national cricket team won two consecutive matches against an international team from —
  10. Where is the country's fifth largest gas field?

Answers (17.11.95)

1. 72% (approx.)
2. 6
3. Bhutan
4. Bangladesh Bank
5. Salman F Rahman
6. 2
7. Dhaka Cantonment
8. Prof Emajuddin Ahmed
9. Myanmar
10. Yasmin Bilkis

## Competitions of the year

WITH the advent of our Independence Day, The Rising Star, your favourite weekly page, has set a number of competitions to commemorate the martyrs of the Liberation War.

### Competition-I

OPPORTUNITY across the board! Special prizes will be awarded to winners chosen for their writings on either of the following topics. Furthermore, those writings will be printed on this page. So just pick up your pen and start writing!

Topic 1: Imagine the nation's president speaking on the Television, "My fellow citizens..... the country is at war and the sovereignty of the nation is at stake..... I call on you, responsible citizens, to take part in the war....."

In no more than 800 words, write a story telling your initial reactions to the President's call and then your involvements in the war, if any you care to make! Involvements could be either direct, that is going to the battlefield and fight against the enemy, or indirect and that is donating blood or providing services to the injured.

Topic 2: Relate a true story regarding somebody's participation in the 1971's Liberation War. The protagonist of your story, however, has to be someone of your own family, or you know personally had taken part in the war, in that case we give you an opportunity to write your heroic involvements. (World limit — 800 words).

We allow you to attempt both of the above topics if you wish. And you should send your stories to Daily Star no later than 7th Dec '95. So, hurry up and Good Luck!

### Competition-II

(For children under 12 years)  
DEAR Kiddies! Want to win some prizes before the new year? Well, just pick up your crayons and draw anything that comes to your mind about Bangladesh or Bangladeshi people. Don't forget to mention your name, and the class and the school you read in. Send the drawings by 7th Dec and wait until we call the winners!

## The Factory Near the Brook

by Reshmin and Jesmin Haq

IT was raining as any September afternoon. I was standing by the window observing the view outside. I could see the faraway sea, its waves hitting all the reefs near it, the reefs being wet with rain water. I could also see the high hills covered with yellow and green grass. The motorway was filled with a dozen of cars. There was no other passer-by walking on it. Soon as the motorway was built two years ago, people started to buy cars and day by day cars became the only transport people used. There were other changes in our town too, and now I'm going to give a description of the changes that took place very drastically.

One day after work, my father came home and changed, after having his tea, he said, "I've some news. I've just been passing the moor near the brook. I saw a sign-board there declaring that soon there is to be a factory established here."

"Its construction would start sometime next week."

"What kind of factory shall it be," I asked. "I don't know, I asked the men who were near the place who I assumed to be working for the man or organisation. But when I asked them they avoided me," replied daddy. "I won't like having it here," I commented.

It took two and a half years to be built. Soon a tall seary tower which occupied two acres of the moor dominated every thing around. Nobody knew what kind of factory it was.

One day I took my brother Tom (a three-year old) for a walk, as soon as we come near the moor, where the factory is, when we walked past the brook, we were received by a terrible odour. I wanted to know what made the place smell like that. I took my brother in my arms and went closer to the brook. There I discovered something terrible. The stream was full of dead fishes. Thus I discovered that the water had been contaminated with poisonous material, which I presumed had come from the factory. Then I saw that some earthworms and some grasshoppers lying dead. I decided to return

home. When my father came home. I told him what I saw. He was quite surprised and shocked.

"Well it is quite strange. I wonder what's causing the deaths," said my father. The next day I went to the brook again. Where I found more fishes and insects dead. While I was looking at things somebody called out "Hey! what are you doing there?" It was one of the workers of the factory. He came to me and said, "Oh, it's you dear."

It was Hanks Jones, one of the workers of the factory. I was quite surprised to hear him talk to me so nicely, because he never did like me. "Hello! Hanks how are you doing?" I said, "I was just wondering why these fish are dead, is there a problem?" "No, not at all," said Hanks. "I thought you as a trespasser." "Well I'm not. Do you have any idea how are these dying?" I asked. "I think I do but I won't tell you. I have to talk to your father first, as I'm having some health problems, do you think he can help?" said Hanks.

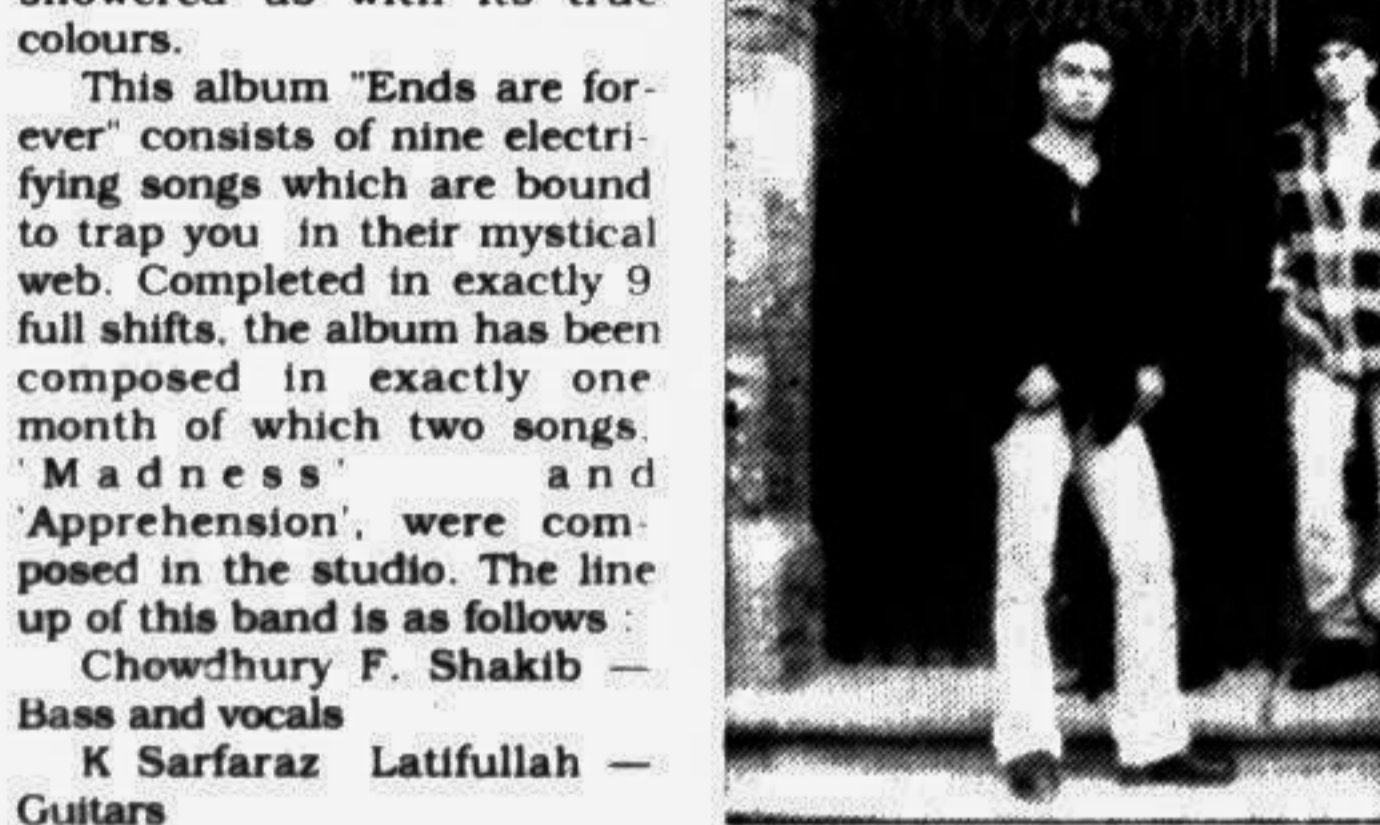
"He is a doctor you know, but it depends what kind of problems you are having."

"Well what brings you in today," asked daddy. "We are having some problems," said Hanks. So my father took them to his medical room, where he kept his medical things.

Soon there were more complaints of health problems, fishes, insects and grass, shrubs dying, the problem was reported to the authority and the community took actions against the factory. Five months later, the factory was closed down.

## Yet 2 B Discovered Cryptic Fate

by Nishat Hussain



Have you guys performed in concerts? Actually we have performed in many school functions and parties.

Do you have anything to say to your fans and well-wishers out there? For the Fans — Keep on hanging from the ceiling! For the well-wishers — Keep on digging the well!

15 candid questions & answers with Cryptic Fate  
Describe yourself in 3 words.

SL: I am good.  
FM: Smart, intelligent and arrogant!  
WK: Friendly arrogant but good.  
CS: Witty, good and conceited.

What do you hate?  
SL: I..... (thinking)..... hate so many things. Wasting time, reading books, and....  
FM: Bangladeshi traffic.  
WK: Seeing other guitarists playing better than ME.

Ha, Ha!

What does the Indian ghost live in?  
A creepy tepee.

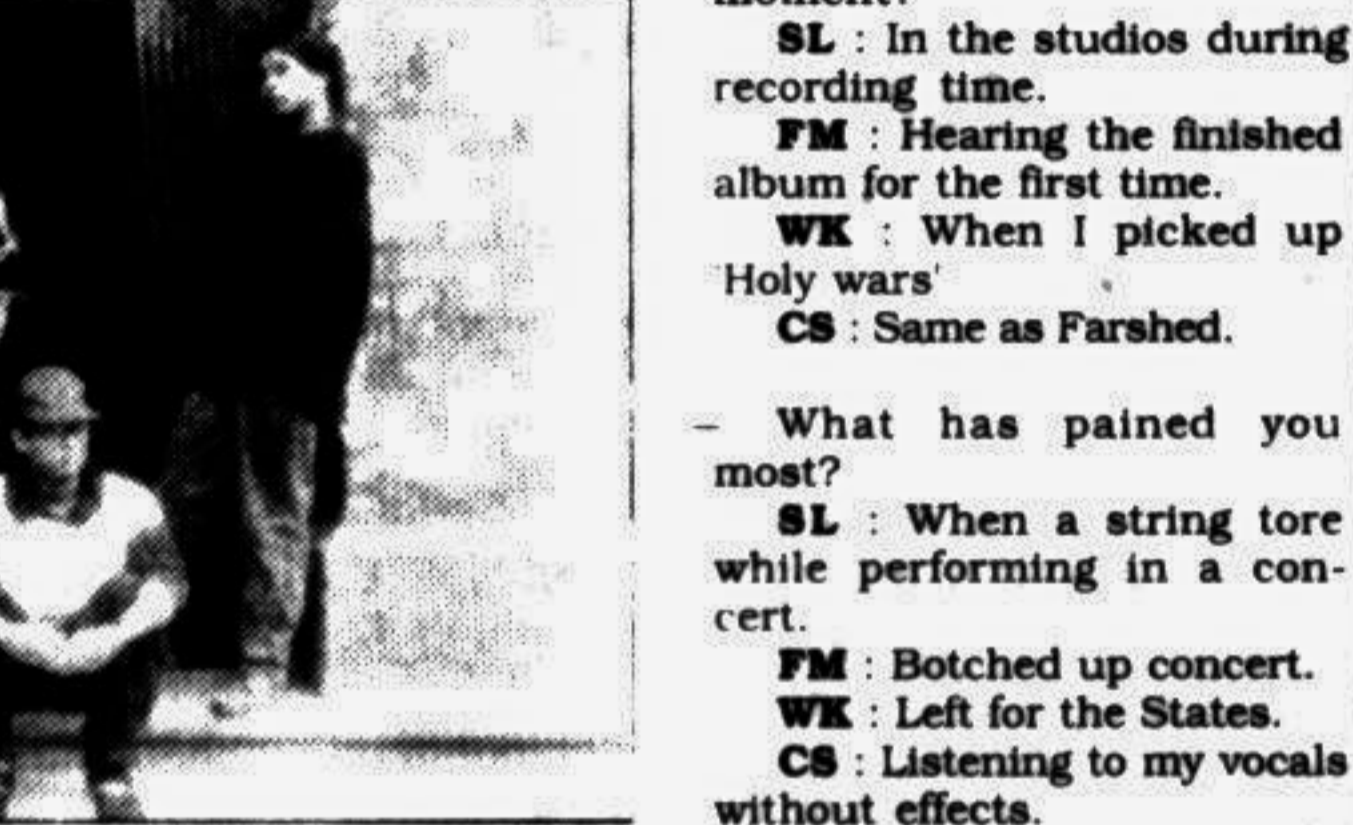
How do ghosts get through locked doors?  
They use skeleton keys.

Where do ghosts go at Christmas time?  
To see the Phantomime.

Where does Dracula always stay when he's in New York?  
In the Vampire State Building

## Yet 2 B Discovered Cryptic Fate

by Nishat Hussain



What do you love?  
SL: (laughs) I love not to hate.  
FM: Parents/Kimu.  
WK: Playing the guitar before going to bed.  
CS: Our fans.

You enjoy?  
SL: I enjoy? Ummm..... Playing the guitar.  
FM: Life in Amherst College.  
WK: Picking on people.  
CS: Shwama house pizza!

What turns you on?  
SL: Chocolates!  
FM: Ironmaiden  
WK: Psychedelic songs  
CS: Coca-cola

What are you embarrassed by?  
SL: Bad reputation  
FM: When friends act stupid.  
WK: When I play the wrong cords on the guitar.  
CS: Excessive adulation from friends.

What's your strongest desire?  
SL: To play like Marty Friedman.  
FM: To see Iron-maiden's concert.  
WK: To bring out our next album.  
CS: To be rich!

Do you have a knack for calming hysterical people and frightened children?  
SL: Well.... kind of sometimes.  
FM: Not  
WK: Nah  
CS: I make them more hysterical.

Are you a sorehead when neglected?  
SL: (laughs wickedly) Sometimes.  
FM: Naw!  
WK: No comment.  
CS: I'm never neglected.

What are your future plans?  
SL: To finish my BBA, start my own business after that, and of course to bring out another album next year.  
FM: Bring out our next album.  
WK: To bring out our next album.  
CS: Same here.

What's your motto?  
SL: Life is like an ice-cream cone (giggles) so learn the art of licking it.  
FM: Try to be the best in whatever you do.  
WK: It's alright!  
CS: Always look on the bright side.

Your birthday?  
SL: 21st January  
FM: 28th June  
WK: August. I keep this a secret coz I don't want any presents.  
CS: 7th June.

One afternoon the new liftboy was required to take the managing director from the twentieth floor to the ground floor. In the lift's inexpert hands the lift roared down the shaft and came to a shuddering clattering halt at the bottom. "Er — was that stop too quick, sir?" he asked nervously. "No, not at all," said the managing director heavily. "I always wear my trousers round my ankles!"  
Courtesy — Young Times

## UGLY

by Kazi Khaled Arafat

THE world's a kaleidoscope of a million rainbows. For the beautiful things in it. But I ain't beautiful. And I want to be nice to look at. You're so damned sweet. It's nauseating. The friends I have say I'm the ugly duckling. And there's a swan hidden somewhere inside. But I don't want to be a shadow in the sun. I don't want to be a secret hero. I want money and Beautiful rich skindeep divinity. I'm jealous of you and I want your envy. When I gave you my friendship You didn't shake hands with a faceless nobody. My Grand Canyon Is a dried-up rut in your rusty village street. I'm my own superman. The hero in my dreams. Where I fly high up in the sky — But in the end even the clouds give up on me.

## My pet bat

by Tapas Mandal

I have a bat. It is not fat. It sleeps on mat. It fights with cat. It likes (to) eat nut. It likes to cut. It tears net. But is my pet. It looks like umpire. But is not vampire. It does not like fish. But I like it very much. (The writer is a student of class VI of St Gregory's High School)