

# RIISING STARS

## 'Agoon Jalo — Direct Action'

by Adnan R Amin

As we, the Dhakaites have already experienced a long and boring spell of relentless hartals; such hartals and the simultaneous processions indeed, have become rather common. Much has been written, said and published about the upsets caused by such activities — be it in politics, education system, our economy or our social life. I myself being a very ordinary and average individual dare not lengthen the debate on the hackneyed, yet controversial matter.

To try to locate unimportant sides of hartal and constantly coming and going processions or 'michhils', as they are commonly called, is not an easy task. But however I have stumbled upon some interesting incidents. First,

these. While the man who was leading screamed, 'Paliye Gelo' meaning 'has ran away' the others shouted in unison, 'HARTAL!' So it would seem that the hartal itself was running away! Had that been the case, the Dhakaites would have definitely sighed out of relief.

Our veranda offers a very extensive view of the Mirpur Road as it perches quite high up in the air. I, being fed up with living in confined to my home, often go there to have a look at the paralyzed city during hartals. Yesterday, as soon as I went there a micro — procession emerged. The people of the front row hold a yellow banner, with words criticising the roles of a major opposition of the country. They were chanting, 'Joy Bangla, Joy Bangladesh' sud-

tion, these processions have become a showy display of vulgar power, which is gradually tarnishing the image of processions as a political weapon.

It is strange to notice that 'michhils' today, tend to block the whole road as they pass, often causing much inconvenience to the public even when they have the option of making a little room for the rickshaws and other vehicles to pass. Isn't this an inconsiderate practice? The 'lokais' or street urchins are also being exploited by luring them in political activities and acts of violence, the causes for which they hardly understand. Their age is now that of receiving education. But unfortunately these tiny tabs, and other lads who were barred from manual



the processions, for some strange reason, tend to come along at stranger times. There are invariably a lot of 'Agoon Jalo — Khaleda/Hasina Bhalo' — like slogans just when I lie down to enjoy my siesta or sit down to study. During the last years, I have often mistakenly said the wrong 'duas' in my prayers or sat down after the very first 'sejda', forgetting the sacred words due to the powerful voices of the people. These processions are usually accompanied with really weird slogans. The other day my brother called me to our veranda to listen to one

denly one of them spurted out a loud 'Agoon Jalo'. I jumped up, horror-stricken at the appalling possibility that the people in front of me, may well intend to set fire to either Bangladesh or Bangabandhu. Instantly, I realized that and my mistake. Man! What a slogan! Another thing that has attracted my attention is the fact that apparently nowadays processions are only being used to gain party-publicity. The people are chanting the same inefficient 'Agoon Jalo — direct action' without being sure where to set the fire or against whom to take the ac-

labour in order to acquire proper education, are being selfishly used as political chesspieces.

It is everyone's wish that our politics should be healthy and non-violent. Coming back to the topic of processions, I would like to add that they should be led by learned people who know what they want. A procession is not just a vulgar and ostentatious display of power; it is the civilized and non-violent way to protest or press for one's demands. That is why it should be used as a weapon properly without exploiting or tarnishing its image.

## THE ENIGMA OF LIFE

by James Onirudhya Zaman

WHEN Forest Gump's mother said that 'life was like a box of chocolates, you never know that you're gonna get' she perhaps pronounced the truest proverbs in all of time.

It was only the other day that this saying hit me like an axe striking a tree. Yes, it hurt very much because I had just lost my best friend. Lost him not to death but to something worse: it is called Deceit.

Do you know the kind of friendship in which two people are as close as or more closer than brothers? Well, that was the kind of bond we shared. We almost did everything together and everytime was better than the previous. Then one day the comedy became a tragedy.

We both went on our summer vacations. We both returned a month later. But somewhere along the journey, someone had stolen my friend's heart. This really hurt him. I was depressed and worried. Who could be so cruel as to steal one's most treasured possession? I shouted, 'How would he survive without his heart?'. Then one day my friend received a package and in it he found his heart. My best friend's heart had been returned!

I thought everything would be as it once was. We tried to sail together, just like before but somewhere on the way we drifted apart. I reached out. I think he did too. But it was too late. He was too far away.

I am still searching for him. I always will. The event has made me wonder about things I have never seriously considered. One never really knows what is going to happen next. Life is like a never ending soap opera: characters come, characters conquer, characters die. The unpredictability of this existence of ours often drives me mad. But it is also this fickleness which keeps me going.

The variable behaviour of life sparks hope and faith into the dimming light of my spirit. My encounter has taught me something: one should live life as well as he or she can, but not at the cost of others. Value every moment of your life: to people male or female, happy or sad, do not let trivial matters destroy the bond you share with your family and friends. The enigma of life is the puzzle which we have to put together. This is one of our tasks. And we can only do this in unity. And with unconditional love.

## A Long Tug-of-War

by Asrarul Islam Chowdhury

I have played Tug-of-War for too long  
Many things have slowed down my speed.  
I tried very hard to get free  
But I failed each time  
And now I realise where I was wrong  
I should have done this a long time ago  
So now I am letting the rope go.

## Is It Crossing The Limit?

by Iftekhar A Rashid

IT is the only country where anybody calls a hartal and everybody has to accept it. It is the only country where a person is stripped naked for attending office. It is the only country where one can create any disorder as to his/her desire. Truly, this is 'democracy'.

O.K, they have the constitutional right to call hartals. But do they have the constitutional right to obstruct peace and strip one naked? O.K., they have the right to demand free and fair elections, but do they have to right to damage our vehicles? O.K., they are democratically elected government, but does that bar them from a compromise?

The opposition and the

government seem to be 'hell-bent' to frustrate the people to such an extent of egotism, that the people will lose faith in democracy. It is not only those expatriates, but all of us who want a solution to the impasse.

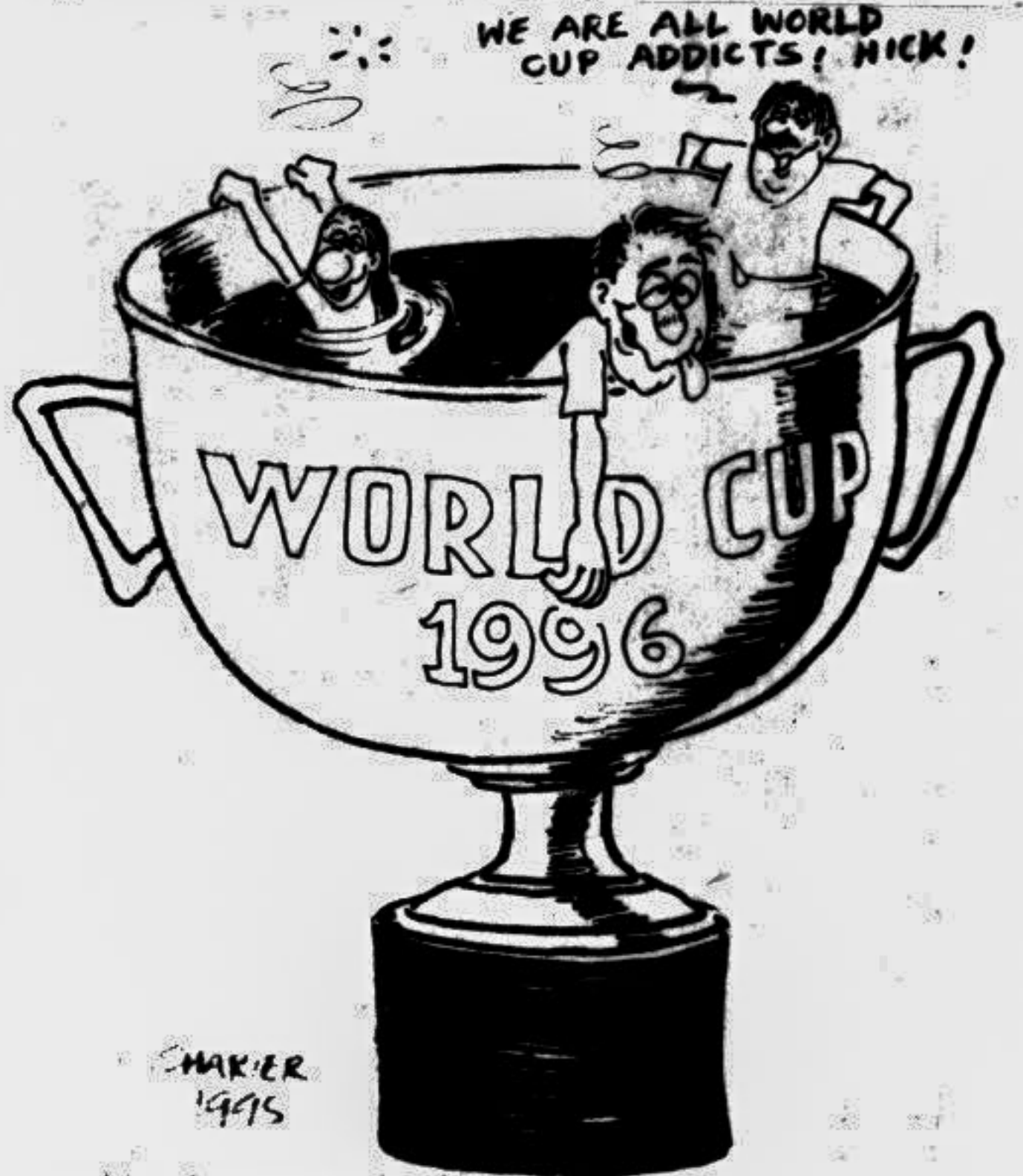
Nowadays, instead of counting the hartals, we count how many days there are no hartals. During the 9-years of autocratic rule, there were about 52 days of hartals, while during the five years of the democratic government, we had more than 62 hartals — more to follow. Moreover, we made world records like 96-hr hartals. This is the Bangladeshi form of democracy. Would I be wrong to say that we are hypocritical?

## The Final Countdown

### The Preparation For The 1996 World Cup

by Ishrak Ahmed Siddiky

JUST after few days the Wills World Cup cricket is going to start on this sub-continent. The 6th World Cup is going to start in Calcutta on the 11th of February. For 1 month everybody is going to enjoy this sporting fiasco. All the twelve countries are on the verge of choosing their teams. Every team is now playing their warm up matches before the World Cup.



For the first time 150 million viewers is going to see the world cup live on television. The matches have been fixed to be played in 25 different stadiums in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India. And all over the world viewers would be able to see.

For this sporting gala, the stadiums are being made colourful. Many new stadiums are also being built in these three countries. India will hold 17 matches from 17 different places, Pakistan will hold 16 matches from 6 different places, and Sri Lanka will hold 4 matches in 2 venues. And in all these stadiums electronic score board is being fixed. Now let us see how the 12 teams are preparing themselves:

In John Kings computer ranking, India with 1168 points are likely to win, the second spot goes to West Indies with 1160 points, third position goes to England with 1116 points, it is Australia in fourth position 1080 points. The world champion Pakistan are in the fifth spot with 968 points. According to world famous Grame Pollack of South Africa, India is most likely to win the World Cup, his logic beside this prediction is that India is the most balanced team in all the departments of bowling, fielding and batting. But the English Star Jan Bothan predicted that England is going to win, because he thinks that England has most of the experienced players, who are extremely

capable of giving England its first World Cup.

New Zealand this year also is very strong. Last year they played excellent and nearly went to the final. Glen Turner's team is not at all performing well this year. They are having problem inside the team. But when there are players like Adam Parore, Mark Grebatch and Martin Crowe no one should underestimate them. Then comes South Africa, after a long absence in Cricket they came back last year, and performed quite well. But still South Africa is having internal problem and their batting line up is not so strong. But they have very talented players like, Jonty Rhodes and MacMillan.

In one day games, everyone is familiar with one team, and that's West Indies. Though at the present, they are having problems, but it is for sure that, they will perform well in World Cup.

Richardson's men are already aware of their task. And to fulfil their task they have dangerous weapons like, Brian Lara, Curtly Ambrose and Carl Hooper. They have a very strong batting lineup.

Then comes Sri Lanka who at the present are in excellent form. They should never be underestimated. They are always improving. And proved that by beating West Indies. They have very good players like, Tijekaratne, Aravinda de Silva and Mahanama. Then comes Pakistan, and anything can happen with them, they are unpredictable. They have a killer instinct, though at present, they are in bad form. But with batsmen like, Ramiz, Aamir, Basit and Inzamam everything can be expected. There is also the bowling spearhead of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younus.

Last comes Taylor's Australian team, who in my opinion is most likely to win the cup. Because they have a tremendous team spirit. There is a strong bowling line up of MacDermot and Shane Warne. And other teams like Zimbabwe, Holland, Emirates and Kenya may show us some brilliance of theirs, (for they have the capacity to do that) by beating the big teams. Altogether this years World Cup is very hard to predict, for no one knows who will win this year's cup?



## A Thrilling and Scary Experience

### Solar Eclipse

by Rayyan Piara Nahas

ON the twenty fourth of October something happened which I will never forget. It was a total solar eclipse which could be seen from the whole of Bangladesh. It was the last total solar eclipse of the century. The total eclipse could be seen from the Heron Point of Sundarban. 90 per cent of it could be seen from Sylhet. Well, my friends and I saw it from school. Dr Zafar Iqbal sent equipment with his son to see the eclipse. We saw it through the exposed X-ray plates put together.

I saw it three times.

The sky got quite dark as if it were either dawn or dusk. Then after the third

position, it suddenly got sunnier and the moon slowly moved away.

When I saw it the first time, I felt so thrilled that I couldn't quite stand still. One of my friends got a slight pain on the top of her eye that she thought she was going blind. She wept a bit and that scared me. My silly cousin teased my poor friend that she was ever more scared.

Well, I hope I will be able to see the next total eclipse again fifteen years later. A solar eclipse takes place when the moon, sun and earth are in a straight line with the moon in the middle. The sun is hidden by the moon and only a glow can be seen around the moon.

## A Rare Marvel Of Nature

by Sabeth Nayeem

THE last solar eclipse of the century took place in Bangladesh on Tuesday morning October 24. How lucky I was going to witness it!

I came to school around 7:30 am. My friends brought equipment such as sunglasses, X-ray plates etc., to notice the solar eclipse. First we saw a little portion of the sun hidden by the moon. Then we went to our class and heard a cock crowing at top of his voice. Perhaps he thought it's getting dawn now! After a few minutes ev-

erything became a little dark and we noticed the temperature had dropped suddenly. Then from class II to class IV had a look. Then I went outside and had look again and this time it's more than half covered. We thought that it will be covered entirely but oh no after a few minutes everything was brighter.

After witnessing it I was sad, I calculated and found out that the next solar eclipse will take place in 2009 and I will be 27 years old! I considered myself very lucky to have seen the eclipse.

it, we had to start our classes. I only got to see it two more times. But at least I saw it. Yahoo! I am so lucky!

In case you don't know, this is how a solar eclipse is caused. Sometimes the moon casts its shadow on the earth when it is in the new moon phase. At this time it is positioned between the earth and the sun. Therefore the sunlit part of the moon is turned away from the earth and the moon's shadow falls on the earth. That is a solar eclipse.

This particular eclipse could be seen from northeast Africa to Malaysia. People from all over the world came to these areas to view this eclipse.

In Bangladesh, it was a total eclipse at the Heron Point in the Sundarbans. The temperature there dropped down 20 degrees and it became as dark as midnight. All the other parts of the country had to see a partial eclipse. But at least we saw it! A truly remarkable experience! Yes, a truly remarkable experience!

## "Witnessing a historical event"

by Sudeshma Amrita

THE last Solar Eclipse of the century took place on the 24th of October, 1995. I was in my school during the eclipse. Our teachers, encouraged by Dr Zafar Iqbal, the father of one of our schoolmates, (who provided us with the materials to see the eclipse) made an arrangement to show us the eclipse of the sun. This was an interesting sight. First we saw a tiny portion of the sun being darkened. Of course, we couldn't look at the sun with naked eyes. We had to look through a pair of sunglasses and two exposed X-ray films. After looking at the sun for the first time, we came back to our class. Suddenly I felt a pain in my eyes. I told this to my classmates. One of my friends, who thinks quite a lot of himself, started telling me, that the colours of my eyes were changing into green! Imagine that! To tell you the truth, by this time, I was starting to feel a bit scared. Now I really thought I was getting blind. I ran to one of my teachers and asked her whether my eyes were really green. She laughed at me and told me that my eyes were absolutely all right. Now I felt very angry at that "smart" friend of mine, but, at the same time felt relieved.

Now, let me tell you about the attitudes of the people of olden days towards the event of eclipse. According to lore, eclipses were considered God's curse. Because of the sudden change in the atmosphere, night birds and animals came out calling and howling, glow worms lit their light. Cicadas started singing, giving the feeling as if the doom's day has arrived.

All these made people believe all the stories even more strongly. But the truth is, eclipses are purely scientific occurrences. A Solar Eclipse occurs only when the sun, the earth and the moon are in a straight line. Sometimes the moon casts its shadow on the earth when it is in the new moon phase. It is, at his time, positioned between the earth and the sun.

The sunlit part of the moon, therefore, is turned away from the earth and the moon's shadow falls on the earth. So the people living within the shadow region, see the moon hide the sun for a short duration.

So you see, the Solar Eclipse is a natural phenomenon. Those of you who were scared to look at such a remarkable happening must not miss it next time.

## What It Was Like?

by Nabil Iqbal

I arrived at school at the usual time, my book bag heavy with text books, exercise books — and instruments for viewing the eclipse. Since the moon, like every other object (in space) casts shadow, there are times when the moon (during the new moon phase) manages to cast its shadow on the earth. The moon gets directly between the earth and sun, casting its shadow on the earth and blocking certain parts of the earth from getting sunlight. In other words, the moon's orbit takes it between the earth and the sun and the moon blocks out the sun's light. Sounds simple?

Anyway, we (class 6 and us) marked the position of the sun on an old chocolate box. After a few minutes, the position of the sun had considerably changed. The

eclipse was starting.

A few minutes later one of the teachers told us to come outside, and view the eclipse.

Our shouts of delight echoed throughout the classroom. We all lined up in the shade. A teacher gave the person at the head of the line a pair of sunglasses and two X-ray plates. He put the glasses on, then held the X-ray plates in front of the sunglasses and looked up at the sky, probably at the eclipse.

It seemed like thousands of students and teachers saw the eclipse before I got my turn, the eclipse was only beginning, so there was only a dark slice darkness at the edge of a yellowish orangish sun. It was still pretty awe — inspiring though. A few minutes later we saw it again, the last one was the most spectacular.

## What An Experience

by Resalat Rasheed

AT last, the great day had arrived! Excitement crept up to me like a wolf at its prey! We are going to experience a Solar Eclipse! I have been waiting for this day, to arrive, for a long time. I thought to myself a billion times how lucky we are that it can be viewed from Bangladesh! Well, its over now. The sun's back to normal again. But we have seen it! Yahoo!

Just before coming to school, I snatched my sunglasses and took it with me. On coming to school, I found that my friend, Nabil, had brought some equipment to witness the eclipse without ruining our eyes. Instead of studying, our class, class VI, went over to Nabil's class, class V, to watch what he does.

The sun had sent one of its rays through the ventilator of class V. I followed the ray with my eyes and saw that it landed on a flat box Nabil had

put there. We waited patiently. The time was 8:03.57 am, 8:03.58 am, 8:03.59 am ... this is it ... 8:04.00! Slowly at first, but gradually, the light on the box began to fall down. Then at last the light was twelve inches in front of the box. Then it stopped and suddenly our teacher ran in and declared the eclipse can now be seen.

I ran to the queue and found that nobody was there except my friend's dad with two X-ray prints in his hand. I was told to get my sunglasses and when I did I had the pleasure of being the first student in our school to view this phenomenon or whatever it is. I put on the glasses and then covered it with the print. What a sight! It was ... it was like a bright orange biscuit with a bitten end on the top. I longed to look on but other people had to look at it too.

So I gave it back. After everyone had finished seeing

