MUKTIR GAAN

A triumph of the Bangladeshi Spirit

derful emotional parts in the

film. None more so than the

point where the group returns

to Bangladesh for the first

time. Even though I did not

witness the war, the sheer

emotional triumph of the mo-

ment brought tears to myeves

TAG has been one of the

most important involvements

in my life, and it was because I

tially wanted to see the film

Muktir Gaah". I felt that

watching a film on the war of

independence would provide

was a TAG member that I ini-

Climbing The Ivy

By Aiyaz Husain

HE lvy league of universi ties in American's northeast region comprises some of the finest academic institutions in the world. Undergraduate education from such elite colleges both provide extensive opportunities for intellectual growth and the chance to "network" with heads of large corporations, national leaders, reknouned scientists and other prominent alumni. For those awarded the privilege of admission, the potential is great for rapid career advancement.

But the process of selecting an institution can be challenging enough for domestic students, let alone those applying from distant countries. Early action/decision plans cause even further confusion beyond the somewhat non-trivial application requirements, and for most Bangladeshi students, campus visits are not feasible. Here are some tips for applying which I have collected from various sources and personal experience. Keep in mind the difference between Early action and Early decision, Early Action Programmes require perspectives to enroll if admitted, as opposed to the early decision system, which (guarantees a more prompt reply Jan. notifications for approval filed by

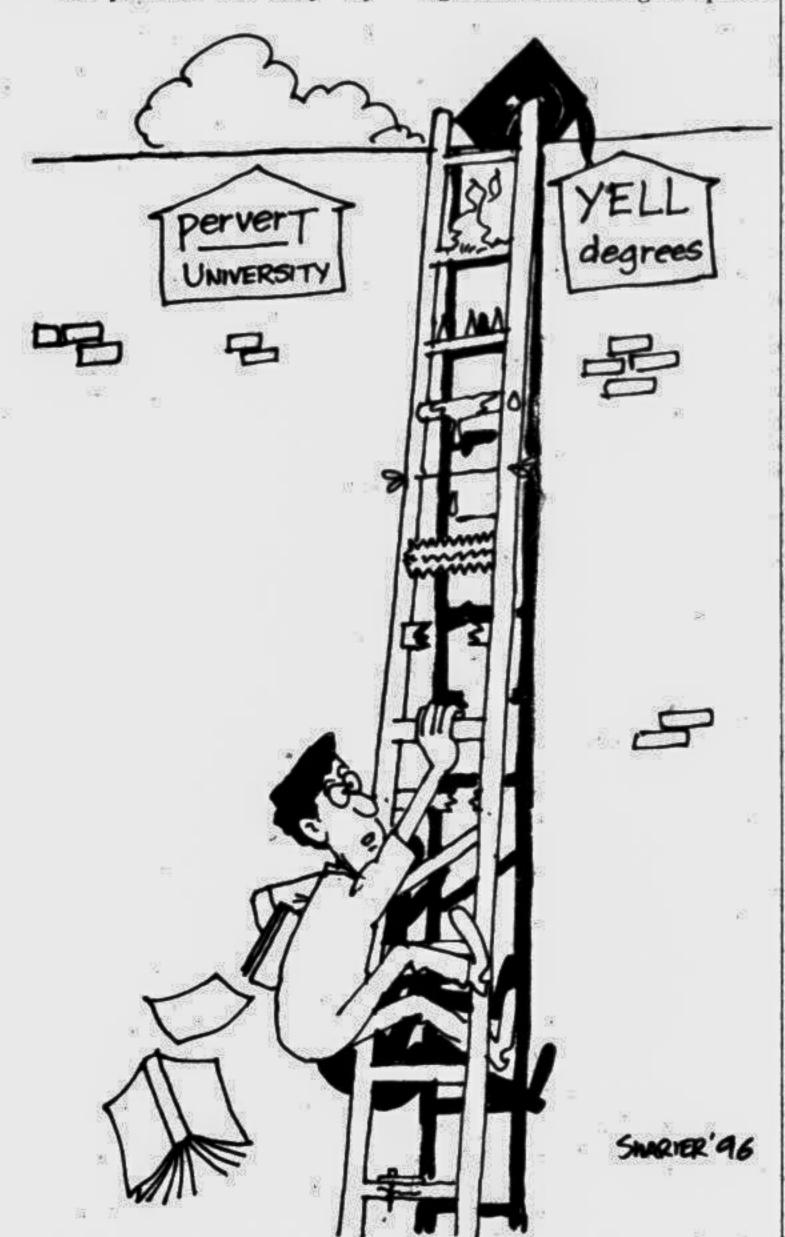
Oct. 31) At present the only Ivy candidate with a poor transcript will rarely be given a second look by an admissions committee. Its really the lowest common demonstrator of

may be damaging. For example . MIT's 33% acceptance rate may seem infected as compared to Yale's 19% or princeton's 15% but, factors which need to be taken into account include self-selectivity of the pool for specialized programs' class size and popularity /PR for certain school's.

Competitive colleges are always looking for multidimensional undergraduates. Any special talents interests you may possess are a great selling point. Remember, if you have it, flaunt it!

I hope these tips are helpful for anyone applying to the lvy league. But perhaps the most important consideration is the collecting position of the applicant and his /her family. Leaving to study in the states is a significant decision which requires much deliberation. And picking a school is a rather personal matter. So think hard, study hard, and goodluck.

A common misconception about Ivy League campuses is that they're all alike. An contraire! The sprawling lawns and Georgian splen-



League Universities colleges offering Early Decision are Harvard Colleges and Dartmouth.

* Send in the forms as early as possible, and try to establish personal contact with an admissions officer. Such initiative. on the part of a prospective student draws attention.

Many admissions offices claim that they place equal emphasis on grades, test scores, essays interviews, and extra-curricular activities. But remember that your grades are always first and foremost. A

dor of Harvard are a far cry from the urban jungle that is Columbia. And Corell's rolling fields. Contrast rather sharply with Brown's own Providence, RI . So think long and hard about setting first, before you

Talk to faculty members in the dept's which offer majors you're considering.

This kind of direction delineates between serious, motivated applicants and others Being unsure about a major at 18 is five, but focus of course is a sign of maturity.

can't really remember the exact date when I met her. However, I'm sure that it was in June of 1991; as 1991 was the year when I got admitted at the Law Faculty of Dhaka University. But I surely do remember the day as her name was very familiar to me. When I heard that she was from Chittagong I asked her if she knew one of

my cousins. She said yes. I remember that she used to come to my uncle's house Remember that statistics regularly from Chittagong. However, at that time we hardly spoke to each other, let alone knew each other. I grew up at Jahangirnagar University and so knew no one

at Dhaka University. When I came to know that she lived with her brother at Dhanmondi I was extremely happy because I was living at New Elephant Road at that time. I thought that we could go together to the Department and, if things turned out well, gradually become friends. She also liked the idea as both of us wanted a "friend" to go to the university. She used to ring me before she started for the University, then I would go to the veranda and wait for her. stlil remember that the rickshaw fare was eight Tk. We would spilt the fare. After coming home we used to talk over the phone for hours. Come to think of it now, I really miss those days very much.

Our group was seven in number; Sharmin, Mishti. Shilpi, Sarwat, Shathi, myself (Bindu) and Papia. The students, even the teacher's, noticed our friendship. The happiest part is that all the groups which were formed in our class from the 1st year broke up. But then, our's never did. This was a surprise also for many. May be we didn't have a guardian angel smiling over us after all; because heaven only knows why our group had to

break up in the end! Meanwhile, Sharmin's mother came from Chittagong. Aunty was suffering from diabetes and a heart problem. So, she had to spend most of her time at home. I used to spend time with her too. Sharmin also used to come to Jahangirnagar also to spend the night. This is how we became close with each other's families.

Memories

by Farzana Chowdhury

In 1992, 28th October, the first shock came. Sharmin's mother passed away in our very hands. This was in fact the first death I observed so closely, which really affected me mentally. After aunty's death. Uncle (Sharmin's fa-

ters were always longer than my one's. She always used to say that she missed Bangladesh and the seven of us. Then came the final examination. As her brother went to England for higher studies, both of our families decided that she'd



The Author and Sharmin (Leff to right)

ther) received an opportunity to become the Bangladesh High Commissioner to England. Sharmin took the decision of going with her father and thus lost one academic vear in the process. As couldn't take the pain of saying goodbye to her, I deliberately didn't meet her before she went. In the mean time, knowing that Sharmin would not be in Bangladesh, I started to stay at Jahangirnagar with my family.

She used to call me from London every week. Her let-

Inside the tampoo, the two

sick fellows exchanged views

on the danger of having heart

problems. "No, you can't work

with heart problems in your

heart.." argued Bangu. "This is

Khorshed opined, giving a wise

the worst of all diseases,

sick fellows.

Scene 2.

stay- with us until her exams were finished. I was extremely happy because I knew that, in that way, we could spend time together just like the good old days. However, for what reason I don't know. I saw a change in her. She always used to talk about her mother and how much she missed her. She also worried about her father's health and always thought of being with him even after her marriage. Finally, came to day to go back to London.

Then came the year 1995. She left for London in March

after completing her LLB and also completing the arrangements for appearing in the BCS from London 1 couldn't. in my wildest dreams, think that this would be the last time I was to see her. As usual, we talked over the phone regularly and wrote letters. We even used to parcel dresses so at least we could think that we are wearing the same dress as we used to. Then she became very sick and needed to be operated. I received a call from her on 30th September learning that she'd be operated the following day. She wanted to see me, but as my LLM exams were going on, even if wanted to go, it would not have been possible. Her operation was successful. I talked to her on 3rd October. She was very weak and couldn't talk. However, she promised to call me when she reached home. On that very date. Sharmin's cousin called and gave me the news that her whole body had been toxicated; both her kidneys had failed working, she was being kept alive artificially and was in a "deep" comma. After twenty three days, fighting with death, she passed away on 25th October 1995. She was brought to Dhaka on the 27th. I couldn't ever think that it I would put the sheet over her khatia and bury her with my own hands at Banani.

W ENITH

Eventually, time is the best healer. It has been almost a year since she has left me and everyone else. But it seems to be a decade for me. I miss her voice; I miss going to the market with her: I miss sharing my feelings with her; I also miss making the wild plans and going on with them. I remember the day when we went to a Saree shop at Bailey Road having only 20 Tk in our bags and pulling down sarees costing 2000 Tk. Lastly saying that the colours don't go.

Sometimes I believe I will see her again at 'New Market or at the Department. Many of my friends and relatives say I'm not practical enough which may be right ... but then, how am I supposed to live if I don't have a dream to drive me ahead?

The author is a Staff Lawyer at the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA)

look well dressed during his

death claimed (verbatim):

sleep tight. You don't have a

heart problem." Being put

down by the doc. Bangu was

walking out of the hospital

when Khorshed said," But we

bought your ticket. If we don't

use it, the doc might get free

medicine against your ticket

and sell it outside. We can't let

ticket counter (he was totally

healthy by then) and told the

ticket clerk," take this ticket

"Then cut down his name."

"Well then," Khorshed took

"It ain't possible either."

out a pen and wrote "patient

did not get any treatment". on

Bangu's ticket and pinned the

ticket on the clerk's registry

who was nearby, said.

get your treatment."

this hospital.

just fine."

"Hey what is this?" The doc.

Khorshed told him that

The doc had it. With his

The doc did not bother to

they were POLICEMEN who

did not get full support from

hairs raised he held Bangu by

his hand and said, "come and

hear Bangu's details. He

dragged Bangu to the bed and

made him open his shirt.

Quickly he fixed the plugs and

wires on Bangu's chest and

started reading the compli-

cated ECG devise. Bangu was

happy — if not by 100 per cent

Within few minutes, the angry

doc pulled out the plugs from

Bangu's chest - giving him

REAL pain and said," you are

"It ain't possible sir."

Ok. Ok. what do you plan to

Khorshed went back to the

"Huh! you go home and

Same Case!

it happen."

back."

I cannot feel how emotional i me with good ammunition to must be for those who actually increase awareness among English Medium Students witnessed and took part in the about the history of war. There was a different Bangladesh. I did not have any kind of emotion in the part preconceived notions or exwhere the Artists leave for pectations about the film and India because of worsening that probably worked to in-

I saw Muktir Gaan in the Public Library auditorium. The tremendous turnout surprised me. There were a significant amount of people who were willing to stand throughout the entire film. Even before the film began I felt that I had gained something. The avid in-terest of the people to watch a piece of their own history was very inspirational for me since it is this very idea that TAG

crease my appreciation of

"Muktir Gaan.

wants to promote. The film itself is a little different from all the other films made about the 71 war. There are no actors. The whole story is played out by real characters who were involved in the war twenty-five years ago. It is about a group of singer and artists called Muktir Gaan who traveled all over Bangladesh and some parts of

condition. The despair and uncertainty felt by the characters about whether they would ever see a free Bangladesh powerfully eaptures what must have been the general emotion among the people of Bangladesh at that time.

Given the circumstances the film was made under, it would be acceptable even if it was nothing more than a home video. What actually makes "Muktir Gaan" even more amazing is its quality as a piece of cinematography. The American director Lear Levine does a wonderful job of amalgamating the reality with sublime touches of cinematic art. The film is a must see even just for its artistic value.

"Muktir Gaan" is history in its purest form. There is no propaganda, no exaggeration just the events as and how they were. The directors hands does not distort the events but



inspiring the Muktijodhas. The whole film is comprised with snippets of this group's activities during the war. Their activities are then related or rather used to portray the actual proceedings of the war itself. One or two characters in the group are highlighted. Notably the character, Tarek, a youth desperately trying to join active battle but rejected by the Muktibahini for his bad eyesight. And those of the sisters Naila and Lubna, mere teenagers searching for their brother but not foregoing their actual contribution in the process. Naila and Lubna's roles touched me the most. Seeing two girls near my age giving up so much and working singlemindedly to free their land was both amazing and inspirational. Inspirational in that it was evidence of how much anyone can do for his or her country only if he or she wants to. It also made me realize that I had the potential to achieve a lot more than I had previously

thought I could. There are some truly won-

with the colours of art. There are shocking pieces of reality like portrayals of common people who were actually killed later on during the war. Anyone with any interest in the creation of Bangladesh has to find the film a "gold mine." There is no political bias in the way the events are described and in the day when almost every portrayal of our past is tinged with political interest the film is a rare piece of unalderated history.

There are not many instances that I can recall when I felt as proud to be a Bangladeshi as I did after seeing "Muktir Gaan". "Muktir Gaan" is a testimonial to the courage, resolve and patriotic spirit of the Bangladeshi people. It provides hope for those who have lost faith and respect in our nation. It is also an emotional triumph over the cynical outlook about Bangladesh's past that prevails in certain segments of our so-

- By Nusrat Sharmin Haq with Iresh Zaker.

TAG (The Teenage Awareness Group) has made all the necessary arrangements to show the documentary movie, Muktir Gaan, exclusively for English Medium Students, at Russian Cultural Centre on August 10, 1996. The first show will be held at 11:00 a.m. and another at 2:00 p.m. An open discussion among the actors, the students and other notabilities will follow after each show. Tickets are available at English Medium Schools, throught Dhaka.

eart Attack someone (healthy?)." So the by his waist so that he would

station recently had heart problems. I will not go for any introduction but go straight cut with the OC assigned Faruq to assist the

The heroes of the incident: Bura Khorshed (actually) he is 38, dark and little bit on the bulky side — a touchy soft guy who is always the target of colleagues' jokes. He is hard working but sometimes feels ·like bunking office.)

incident.

2. Bangu Sharif (he is 32. pichchy, recently married, hyper active movements of hands which dance when he talks. Innocent type but dirty mouth) and co-starred by Raruq (he is 27. Laughs loudly like woody woodpecker).

Scene 1: Bura Khorshed was working. It was 11.30 pm suddenly he started shouting: oh! oh! my heart I am dying ... oh!

He was almost slipping from his chair when he drew the notice of the Officer In Charge." what is it?" said he. ,! Khorshed said that his heart was aching: he believes it's heart attack! "So you too are having this pain?" suddenly intervened Bangu Sharif. Khorshed, with a question in his face, said," yes, why?"

"I am having this pain every night." Bangu declared with sufficient amount of pain in his

As Khorshed's exclusivity of heart attack was shattered, he almost broke down, "Hear, hear, don't worry. We

have official tampoo outside. Why don't you rush to Suhrawardi Heart Hospital?" said the

Both the heart patients showed signs of relief. The OC then pointed out,"

since-both of you are sick, you

may call them the Three Stooges) came down from the scooter. Khorshed almost fell He was trembling with pain. You could see the whites of his eyes. However. Bangu looked by Sharier Khan

much stronger. Firstly, before one could see a doctor, he should buy a ticket worth Tk 5. Faruq bought two tickets. Then Khorshed approached this doctor and said in a trembling heavy voice: Doctor, I am a police officer. I am having problem in my..." Khorshed's voice chocked. The doctor asked Khorshed to sit but ignored Bangu completely. "Your



Scene 3. The three fellows (some

The doctor, for the first time looked at Bangu with a midnight contempt in his eyes. Measured Bangu's height with his eyes and concluded: "you ... you are polapan.. you can't have any heart problem. You go from here." Being shocked by the doctor's behaviour, Bangu already felt that his heart was not aching now. Instead he was feeling the urge to kill the doc. Khorshed interrupted," he is a cop too. He was having prob-

The doc did not bother, he dragged Khorshed to a bed and ordered him to open his shirt and to lie down. Khorshed did so accordingly. The doc produced some wires and plugged them on his body. Then meticulously, the doctor checked him while Bangu angrily watched the whole procedure. After 15 minutes the doctor angrily announced that Khorshed's heart was never better; he does not have a

heart problem therefore he could go. But what about my colleague?" Khorshed said. "Him? What's wrong with

"Age?" Faruq intervened with a devilish smile "56 or more..." The doctor did not bother to query his actual age but took the briefing on what Khorshed was feeling. "You see I was working, suddenly I had this ache in my heart..." Bangu reminded Khorshed of his existence by giving a cough. Khorshed continued," and same to my colleague here."

Bangu got down from the bed and asked the doc, who was emphasising on looking the other way, whether the pain originated from gas. "Who knows.. it might be. I don't know what strange pain you've got." Both came back to the office healthy again. However, for the next seven days Khorshed did not come to the office -- his wife called the OC and reported that Khorsh-

ed was suffering from Cholerie Hill Traxi- an acute form of diarrhoea. (A. genuine 90 per cent true story with 10 per cent colour. Some lines may differ from the defensive versions of the two sick guys. The story has been approved by Faruq. The names and actual designations of the people of the story were, however, false as they have their right for privacy).

NB - upon hearing that his journalist friend was writing is the killer.

should be accompanied by A Wackier Letter in Answer to the Wacky Letter to the Editor of T'N'T

Subject: Is it Digital? Yes, it is !!!

Dear anonymous reader, (he/she/it)

your article a bout my article, and am wonderstruck by the facts that not only has the name of a simple band raised questions about ing of my intestines. the meaningless existence of modern man over which the likes of Aldous Huxley or Albert Camus could have (and most probably, did) ponder, it where so many others have failed. You shall be pleased to know that I have given your cure for constipation to a doctor acquaintance, as a Digital's digitally recorded albums and the municipality's my part, acknowledge your ar-

just gone through know), teaching me what to do when Pepto Bismol doesn't work, and providing the piece of paper which served the purpose of cleaning the clean-

I was a little curious about some men in trenchcoats wearing dark sunglasses at midnight trying to read comics over my shoulder, swearing has also succeeded as a laxative the neighbourhood nerry kutta to secrecy, swiping the garbage can to analyze it's contents, dusting, the ceiling for toot prints, tripping over furniture, and generally creating a result of which the sales of racket in an effort to stay hidden. They must have been the undercover agents you were work are soaring. The band- talking about - I would really members told me to be sure to appreciate it if you would call thank you for that; and I, on them off, because one of them is a kleptomaniac and my ticle for giving me a very im- magnifying glass is missing; portant lesson which I'll never also, the police have been have forget (just what it is, I don't looking for them, along with

some men in white coats with straitjackets. What's more, "undercover" trenchcoats in summer usually tend to overcover and get their wearers sweaty, and this batch of Gestapo graduates stink even more than your article. The next time you send your operatives to spy on someone, please supply a deodorant.

Don't be mistaken into thinking that I'm hostile toward your agents, even though they are necrophiliac with insects. Actually, they gave me something to laugh about while I was reading your article. By the way, I enjoyed read-

ing your cute little piece too. Wasn't it a poem. "Happy", by someone the great? Oooooops..... wrong person. What the heck. Anyway, after the secret agents discovered stuff about me which I didn't know myself, I have decided to start listening to Micheal Jackson and Madonna and even Hindi movie tracks. However, I have a problem

with dancing along to those songs, since I happen to be very fat (though thinner after excreting in tempo with Digital), and only capable of banging my head, which I can't do with the aforementioned numbers. I would therefore request you, my anonymous pen pal, to teach me some of your Hindi dance moves, which, I've heard, you're famous for. I regret wasting your money

on a worthless, tape which is apparently good only for raising philosophical questions and removing bowels. However, if you would be kind enough to consider it a lifetime supply of Milk of Magnesia, I'll be really grateful. yours truly.

Kazi K Arafat PS- I've set some detectives to work, too, they tell me that you are especially mad at the numerically named band Digital because it implies digits and you're sore because you can't count. Is it true?

Bangu was patting his shirt

this story. Khorshed called me. printed he will simply kill me. So if I am killed after the pub-

He clearly said if this story is lication of this, you know who