

Competition  
Dhaka 2015

Begging For A Sanctuary

by Rumana Tasmin Khan

'BANG! Bang! Bang!' A not-so-happy New Year for the nine crows who just left their cosy shelter of the sunshade. Although it has been raining acid (pH level 5) all day, indoor parties have been carried out since last night, everywhere except for my place.

'You're my girl! You're my baby!' There goes the next door New Year's dance party. It is more noisy than anything else, especially with Rock Monster's latest single on the micro CD.

At the knock on my door I detached myself from the PCLDR-2015 I had been operating, the latest computer in the market. On opening the door I got a micro LDS delivered. This LDS 'thing' will serve as a party companion to me for the rest of the evening. Switching it on I got linked up with my 'buddy' Shumi.

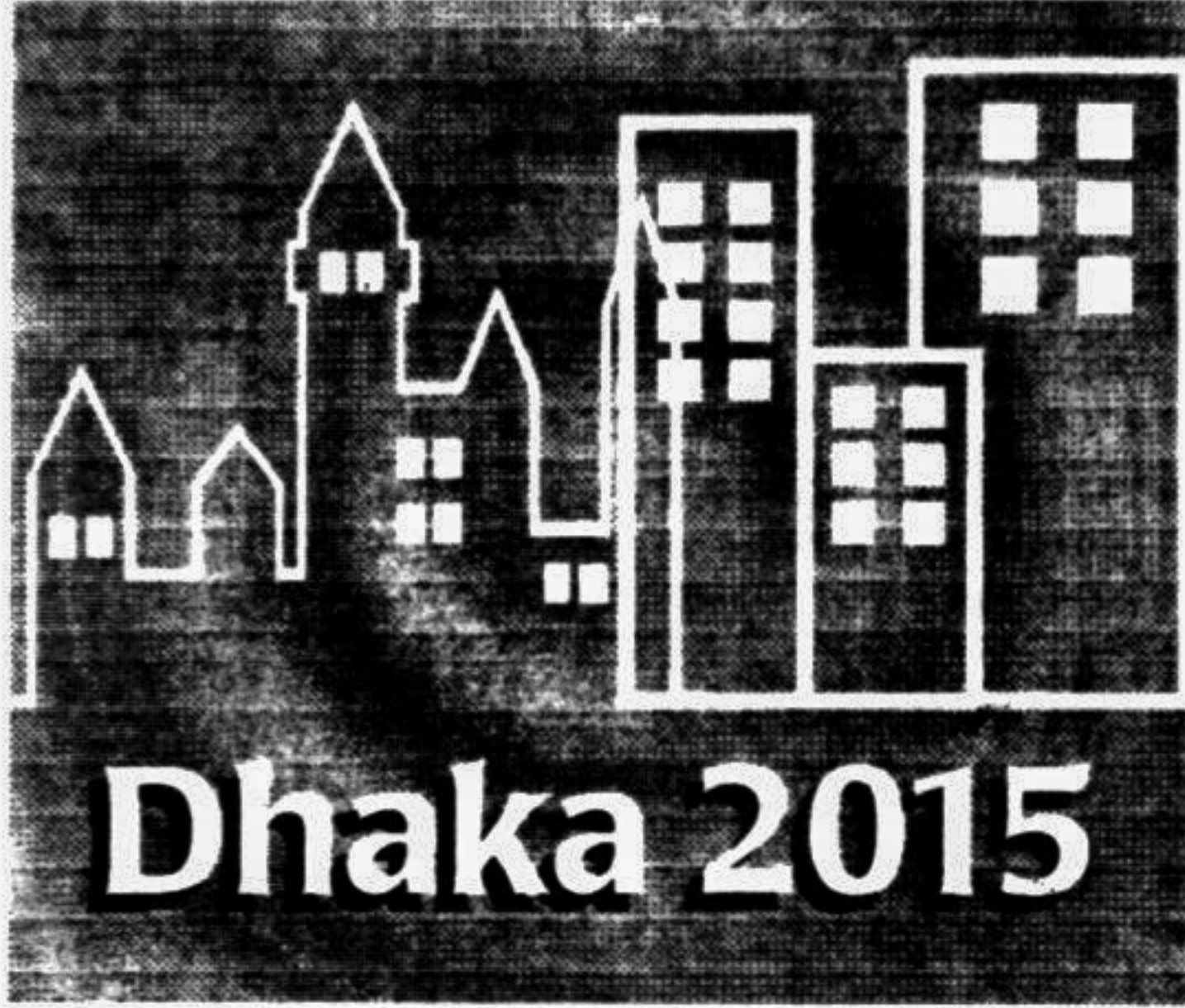
'Happy New Year, Rumu', printed out on the screen. 'You broke in the middle of my diary writing', I complained.

'I called up to discuss 2015. What's your opinion?'

Swallowing a calorie tablet, I pulled up my chair and started typing. Considering the economical state, Bangladesh has just upgraded itself from the list of the twenty poorest countries. Technologically? Well! Let me see.... I fondled with the keys to print out. We have tube-train systems with 75% efficiency, sanitation system of the fifth best in the world, information services that will prosper enough in an estimated four years to compete with the 'Global Net' at an international scale. Moreover, we have good supply and storage units in every alley. The last sixteen of a total thirty three fuel resources have been opened up on the Bay of Bengal only this year... I mean, last year.

'That is a whole lot', an answer came. 'Not quite so. Our train jams in the subways has increased by 35%, the density of concrete buildings in the capital has gone up by another 5% from the 2014s, smog formation has become as usual as pH4 acid rain, our attempt to genetically engineer back the Bengal Tiger has ended up in smoke.'

'Did you just conduct some kind of a survey?' 'If you've just asked me about the country, let me tell you about Dhaka only. You are lucky to have been living be-



Dhaka 2015

The Winner

yond the edge of Dhaka. In here, as it has been for the last five years, people do not use streets but the tunnels joining the buildings. We live scooped up in apartments all day. All transactions and official works are done through any standard PCLDR, only if the suitable LDS are supplied. The lowest paying job is delivering the LDS. School education means pressing keys and turning knobs of computers. Before walking we learn how to type and before we are two feet in height, we know everything about a PCLDR. To go across the city we take the subways, the streets are too polluted, dark, dirty and are full of crows and stray dogs near sewage chambers.

'Is it that bad?' 'Worse! At home our potted plants are those which require minimum sunlight. We are not allowed to keep pets. We hardly ever move around. The computers seem to do all that needs to be done. People like myself don't even know what 'outside' looks like.'

'Outside' looks like water from my window. Only a misty image of Dhaka coats the horizon — from a distance it is a concrete jungle, at a close range it's a junkyard. Shumi typed back.

'I heard there aren't any trees. The only trees are the mangroves growing around your area.'

'Due to global warming the

Bay of Bengal has spread out this far. It destroyed almost all of our wild life.' I could almost feel her sadness in the typed words. 'Our wish to become technologically advanced had cost us a healthy environment. All our economical advancement has been due to mass industrialization and environmental declination in the recent decades. The main effect of this is the present Dhaka city. Outside Dhaka it is at least breathable, but Dhaka seems to have come to its end.'

I have no idea how much longer I discussed 2015 with Shumi. But before I switched off my PCLDR to crawl onto my clumsy bed, I took up my nearly concluded diary entry. The conclusion followed.

The more I reflect on my yesterdays the more I am led to think of the unwanted tomorrows.

On the process of advancement we have introduced ourselves as parasites to Dhaka city. This far we have treated Dhaka as a sanctuary for ourselves. At present Dhaka is begging us for a sanctuary. The other large cities are soon to follow Dhaka, and then the rest of Bangladesh, the rest of planet Earth.

On the new year I wish for a whole new Dhaka city. I wish for a sanctuary for the city itself.

Growing Up

GROWING up! It's as hard as catching a star from the sky for myself! There are tons of problems in our daily life which we have to come across. Parents nag (advise) us at home, friends betray us outside, relatives keep poking their noses in all our affairs whether we like it or not and at the top of everything, today's world doesn't give us a chance of growing up free from pollution.

I experience a new problem everyday. Sometimes life seems to be in the pits when I can't find a true friend beside me when I need one. Parents aren't friendly enough to share my problems unless they concern them. No one is perfect but that also doesn't mean that we make mistakes at every step of our life. My friends aren't trustworthy enough to share my secrets though they are not that secretive either.

Things were fine when I was an only child. The minute I had a sibling brother, there was a dramatic change in the atmosphere. My toys and dolls were not mine any more, they were 'ours'. As if this was not enough, my room became a nursery with a destructive toddler ruling supreme in it. I found out, to my great disappointment, that gifts meant for me were to be shared equally with him and if I dared to refuse then my room would become the field of 'Panipath'.

In my parents' eyes I was growing up; so they expected a certain degree of decorum from me. I did not even know the meaning of the word! And so there followed a period when I did not comprehend what they wanted from me. I was a great disappointment and a sore trial to them. Thank goodness, I have come out of that and now understand the privileges and responsibilities of a first-born.

When I look back, I do yearn for my childhood days, days when I had no care in the world, no examinations to prepare for, all in all, a very joyful existence. Though that was a very happy time of my life, I wouldn't want to go back and be a child again because 'growing up' is a part of nature. I have gathered some experience and with my parents' guidance and love I hope to progress through life successfully.

by Nazia Ahmed

An Attempted Ode

: Someone the Great

**Hold you in my arms  
Take you on my lap  
& kiss you  
till you died  
as prettily as you smile ...**  
Don't worry readers  
save your blushes for Walt Disney  
Cuz this is G-er rated stuff

The reason why this poem is anonymous is that everybody would be able to agree with it  
Instead of a lone smart alec teenager shouting his lungs inside out.  
And it would hurt the image of a hard-core power metal headbanger with a good dose of chauvinism thrown in to admit that a baby — and a girl at that — could be sweeter than any Maggot-infested teddy bear, Tweetie, Pebbles, Dogmatix or Eddie the Head  
I know, Daneesha, that you ain't old enough to read

or appreciate this, since you've just been added to our future, and you're suffocating in love and will, if we could read your thoughts, be glad to be rid of this stupid sweetness that makes strangers want to irritate you —  
But even if this piece of newsprint is only good enough for you to dribble on —  
Remembers the fact that lots of loony laureates have wasted their sociopsychotic nursery rhymes on unimportant things like Nature and Eternity, ignoring the end product and glorifying God's assembly lines;  
And have cheaply peddled their divine talents for small things — like maybe a couple of million bucks or the occasional Nobel Prize — Well, I have my Noble Prize  
And even though I don't even pretend to myself that

I try to like to try to hope to try to be like them, I haven't sold the wares of my mental teal'n' wear at a discount wholesaler of soul — Instead I went for the highest prize any man with a little self-respect and a doggie bag of dignity would clamour to be allowed to aspire for — why all those martyred knights, and not-so-martyred-but-nonetheless-heroic Green Lanterns fought all those dragons with unflouridated chromium teeth (EEEEEE). But — as life, that great sewage system would have it — I failed in all my attempts  
When all the armour & making faces looked like they would work — and your mother let me carry you — you started crying.



Tanzir's Food Problems

by A S M Nurunnabi

TANZIR'S problem is not one of food deficiency but rather the other way around: he remains in constant fear of the pressure that is put on him by his mother for taking more food than he likes. His mother got the notion that he has not been getting proper nutrition from his foods and so there is no escape for him from partaking at intervals of every kind of nutritious food.

He is only six years old and when he started going to school, his mother began to fill his tiffin box with big portions of snacks that his mother expected him to like. But Tanzir has his own principles. Much of the food in the tiffin box remains uneaten, for he feels no appetite for it. His mother noted it and pressed him hard for eating his tiffin. Thus cornered, Tanzir felt that a way must be found to deal with the situation. To his great relief, he found a way. There was a she-goat with a couple of her young ones which were kept tied to a wooden post in the open space in the play ground of his school. Whatever food is left over in the tiffin box, and there was much left-over food in that box, the beneficiary was the goat and her babies.

This state of things continued for sometime. But one day the 'bua' of the school detected it and reported the matter to his

mother. Thus ended his free lunch offer to the goat. Then Tanzir resorted to another strategy: when he feels really hungry after his school by school bus, he does not immediately enter their apartment; he would wait on the ground floor stairs for sometime to finish the contents of the tiffin box and afterwards, with an easy gait, would make his entry into the apartment. His mother would feel that his food habit has become normal.

Then there was a lucky turn of events. He managed to know from his mother through a newspaper report that a tiger cub at the zoo died from over-eating. This knowledge threw his mother into a quandary. In desperation, his mother ran to a child-specialist doctor and sought his advice whether she is over feeding his child. The doctor gave a patient hearing to Tanzir's case and finally gave his decision in favour of Tanzir's freedom to choose his own food according to his needs. This greatly relieved Tanzir. Though feeling sad at the death of the tiger cub from overeating at the zoo, Tanzir felt that, had the tiger cub not died from such a tragic event, his own trial of overeating would have continued.

This taught Tanzir a good lesson. When he visited the zoo next time, he found a group of

boys feeding peanuts to the monkeys in the cage. He felt apprehensive that if the group of boys continue to grow in number and throw peanuts to the caged monkeys, the surfeit of such food might make the monkeys sick. He was just a young boy and his pleading might not dissuade the visiting boys from the undesirable practice, but the fear continued to lurk in his mind.

When later Tanzir came to know that the goat with her young ones which used to graze on play ground of his school has been sold out by the school gardener, he felt sorrow. Though he might no longer attract the goat with his uneaten food in the tiffin box, he felt sorrow for the loss of her company. This sorrow was also shared by his other class mates who all used to love that animal.

This sorrow is somewhat mollified when he views cartoons on TV or on the cartoon network channel. Here also there is some restriction, as his mother feels that too much viewing of cartoons on TV is undesirable. Thus Tanzir has lost the company of his favourite goat with some compensation allowed by way of restricted viewing of TV cartoons along with some amount of freedom in the choice of his foods according to his needs.

'Space Jam' an Animated Animation

by Bob Thomas



BUGS Bunny never had it so good. With more than a little help from his friend basketball star Michael Jordan, the debonair hare launched Warner Bros. Feature animation program with a smashing dollars 48.5 million two-week take for 'Space Jam.'

The achievement marked the first time Warner Bros. has made a serious dent in Disney's virtual monopoly of the feature animation market.

Former Disney senior animator Don Bluth's 'An American Tail,' sponsored by Steven Spielberg, had a spurge in 1986 with an overall box-office gross of dollars 47.5 million, but most other animated Disney rivals have flopped.

Max Howard, president of Warner Bros. Feature Animation, said he didn't expect such an impressive showing for 'Space Jam,' despite an estimated dollars 20 million promotional campaign and extensive tie-in merchandising.

The cartoon characters hadn't been known for being in a feature. Michael Jordan had a following, but not as an actor. We were happily surprised that it has attracted a wide audience,' said Howard, who

wouldn't reveal the film's budget.

The British-born Howard, an animation veteran at 44, dodged the analogy of 'Snow White and the Dwarfs,' the 1937 film that launched feature animation for Disney.

'We were lucky to be able to use all the classic characters of Warner Bros. cartoons,' he said. The longtime goal is to produce one feature a year, or at least every 18 months. Aside from choosing suitable subjects, a major concern is finding enough talent.

Bluth led an exodus of animators from Disney in 1979 in protest of what they considered a moribund atmosphere at the studio at that time. Today, the animation business is anything but sleepy.

'Talent for animation films is at a premium today, because so many studios are making them,' said Howard, a Disney executive who ran the studio that produced 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit' and worked on other Disney features until moving to Warner Bros. 18 months ago.

The talent pool is very small, although there are a lot of artists coming into the business,' Howard said. 'The success of animated films is at-

tracting a whole new group of artists who want to have careers in this medium.

Warner Bros. has been in the cartoon business since 1930, when the company released the first 'Looney Tunes.'

Over the years the casts were augmented with Porky Pig, Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, Tweedy Bird, Pepe LePew, Wile E. Coyote, Speedy Gonzalez, Foghorn Leghorn, Sylvester and Road Runner.

The legendary Mel Blanc provided most of the starring voices, and Warner Bros. developed a style: violent, irreverent, hilarious.

Three years ago, said Howard, Warner Bros. recognized there was a market for well-made animation features. 'I think Warners realized that if you wanted to get into the films, you had to create the structure for them,' he said. 'That meant building a studio and permanently employing animators and artists.'

The company now employs more than 550 at its southern California animation studio and one in London. And while computers supply the colors, Howard emphasized that animation is mostly done the old-fashioned way: by hand. — AP



Our 29.11.96 issue of Rising Stars ran a poem 'Fox Mulder' without the writer's name. It was mistakenly dropped, we regret the mistake. It should have read as Fox Mulder by Ilaf Sattar and Syeda Tesrin Afzal.