



IN the days when, "Dish" hadn't invaded BTV, we used to watch our national channel a lot. I was in school then. I bet, you've had a chance to watch the following kind of ad on TV which read — "Blood needed — emergency — required blood group — O-ve — please contact: — I don't know, how you felt then; all I thought was — I'll be a doctor someday and help them out. Then gradually I came to know, that a medical student can join SANDHANI and help blood banking. So, my passion for medical college increased. Now, I'm a DMC student — just first year — on the way to fulfill my dream of being a Sandhani. But the first two months in college — I was so shy and yes, I was very afraid too, to enter the Sandhani (DMC unit) room — it was so grave, so graceful and so quiet. In my view, it was a place occupied by seniors. We juniors (i.e. juniors) seemed to have no permission to enter.

Then suddenly one day, the diving urge inside me pushed me hard and I just dashed through the Sandhani gate; I became a member — I got my blood group typed — i.e. I got to know my blood group. The first step of learning started. The office work — preserving blood — how to deliver, groupings and last but not the least — our passion, briefly known as "pricking" — which actually is phlebotomy, the term used to denote the process of collecting blood from the donor. Believe it or not, you might think, that we were at war if you saw us arguing over the logical(!) reasoning why Rones should do the pricking and why Tupu or Partho or anyone else shouldn't do it. And, sometimes, during these serious fights, the seniors would brush us off and say "oh you juniors! You're inexperienced, we must do it." We first years then became united protesting the unfavourable decision. Boy! When are we going to be become seniors!

Until now, I've been telling you just about my Sandhani life — but actually I wanted to tell you something else. The year 1997 is going on right now. This year on the 5th of February Sandhani has celebrated its 20th birthday. (Although,

Sandhani is going to celebrate the foundation more elaborately on April). The idea of Sandhani came up 20 years ago, on 1977, February the 5th in the DMC campus. Six enthusiastic medical students — Mustafiqur Rahman Swapan, Mosharaf Hossain Mukto, Md Idris Ali, Md Abdul Quyum, Mustafa Salimun Hossain and Khurshid Alam Apu — were longing to do something worthy for the people — they wanted to meet the dire need of blood.

The professional donor's blood carry a lot of pernicious germs — such as HIV, syphilis, Gonorrhea etc. Thus, the transfusion which is meant

1977. The whole team of Sandhani works along with their studies. We have a great big syllabus and we in cur. at a loss going through the books. But our study is not limited to books any longer. Because, Sandhani has made the field of study more vast, yet more valuable. Everyday a lot of people come to us in quest of blood. We know their needs, we learn to communicate, we learn to assure them, we learn the "patience" — a quality most essential for us. During Sandhani's 20 years, I guess, about 17 batches of students have come out as doctors. Sandhani has been able to give the country some humanitarian

have got the legal permission. Another milestone in Sandhani's long journey.

But the toughest of all battles, regarding the blood banking, is the blood collection problem. People don't want to donate blood for so many peculiar reasons. Like, one day, a man came — he wanted blood for his wife. Fortunately — his blood group matched his wife's. We asked him to donate blood and take it for his wife. Guess what his reply was — "Boulter laigga rokto dia ki hobbo?" (What's the use of giving blood to the wife? We guessed our anger — because, it was no use blaming him. He was an ignorant, illiterate per-

on one day when there hadn't been any donation camps for weeks — come, see the situation. see the mother (a widow) cry for her only son suffering from renal failure, see the 4-year-old girl's pale face — all desperately needing blood. Its not that we don't have people donating blood voluntarily but the number has to increase — as the lives at stake due to lack of blood are increasing rapidly.

Actually, its not your fault, it may be our fault — we or may be our Sandhani hasn't been able to reach you.

Once we needed 10 bags of blood for an emergency open heart surgery. In the whole DMC everyone having that blood group had already given blood — one or two months earlier. It was Ramadan, so blood collection was even scarcer. So, finding no other alternatives we went to BUET and Architecture Dept; contacted our 1st year friends there.

They helped us out — they spread the news among others. We got blood — even excess. It was a relief. It made us aware of the importance to reach people. That day, we were able to break the barriers of communication gap — our urge, our anxiety seemed to spread out among others. Sandhani's importance, Sandhani's role in people's life became clear. I do hope, this article makes it clear to you too.

Sandhani: a blend of Joy, Duty & Pride

by Samia Israt Ronee

to save life causes the death of the recipient due to the 'affected' blood. The six people worked hard and then onwards, Sandhani has grown up bit by bit. Once the 'aamtola' (Mangogrove) of DMC campus was their discussion place; meetings were held in the Anatomy dissection room too. And now, we have two rooms — the Sandhani office room and the Sandhani blood distribution room. Sandhani Central Office is at the IPGMR. The central committee of Sandhani comprises of 27 members — 3 members (Central Representative, President and General Secretary) from each unit of Sandhani. Sandhani of each medical college is a unit and not branch of the Sandhani Central.

Sandhani is not only connected with blood collection but also with posthumous Eye Donation. Sandhani is the only organisation which is formed by students, which is maintained by students and which is helped by students — but which works for the whole nation.

We have achieved a lot since

doctors, who know the people better, their pains better — because, being connected with Sandhani, they come very close to people's sufferings. Isn't this a great achievement for both the country and Sandhani? Sandhani hasn't yet been able to meet the total need of blood in our country. But yes, Sandhani is working to ensure "Fresh blood for all by the year 2000."

Due to some reason or other, our parents and also many of our society including some of you readers, think that Sandhani is a place where the students chat, have tea and do nothing. Some of our own college students think the same too. For this peculiar thought and also because of some other complicated problems, we face a number of difficulties. Like, we weren't given permission for Blood Screening, a test very much important to know if the collected blood is infectious or not. For a long time, we had to distribute unscreened blood — a disgrace for the graceful Sandhani. But our battle in this regard has finally ended — we

son. He didn't know that any healthy person weighing more than 45 kg, who isn't taking any antibiotics is capable of donating blood. In fact, as a portion of the existing blood in human body, that degenerates in every 120 days, a person can donate blood once in every 4 months. It doesn't mean any harm, rather it helps the body physiological system. Although, knowing these stuffs, some people are so arrogant, better say 'snobbish.' They just feel 'ashamed' to think of their royal blood flowing through the vessels of some poor patient! But when the same blue blooded person is in need of blood — he can do anything for blood!

Sandhani's war is not hot — its a mild cold war, against the ignorance, fright, false sense of ego of people. Their spirit seems to wake up only during the 'Ekushhey' or 'Bijoy Dibosh' blood collection programmes. I don't discourage their swarming up like bees in the camps to donate blood — they are at least donating one bag once a year. But what happens the rest of the year? Please come to Sandhani

"Sandhani" is not only an institution, its a — what I'd say? Sandhani has a soft corner in everyone's heart. To us Sandhani is our duty — our joy — one place where we don't deny to learn. We don't mind even if someone calls us 'vampire' when we pursue to donate blood! Sandhani has made us more close, more in contact with people, with sufferings, with relief.

We don't sell blood — we give what you need — Sandhani is open for people of every walks of life — Sandhani's help is a right for all. Sandhani fills our souls with a sense of pride. Too much pride is not good — but to me, to us, 'Sandhani' is itself a pride. We love Sandhani. Long live Sandhani, long live our 'bloody' donors and long live we, i.e. vampires!

Sam Wasser of the University of Washington is busy recruiting 1,000 infertile couples to the test the theory in humans and investigate how best to incorporate stress reduction into treatment. Over 10 per cent of infertility problems in women stem from inadequate levels of progesterone, the hormone that prepares the lining of the uterus for pregnancy.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Babylon 5

THE craze for aliens, starships and paranormal activities has given birth to a good number of movies and TV series like the X-Files, Third Rock from the Sun (comedy) etc, besides, of course Star Trek. In the line of this trend, the Warner Brothers launched TV series Babylon 5 a couple of years ago and now this series has captured wide spread attention. Babylon 5 has not been transmitted in this region by the BTV or the satellite channels so far. But it might attack our home TV any day as a hit TV series. Here is a little about its cast.

Bruce Boxleitner
(Captain John Sheridan)

Bruce Boxleitner is probably best known to television audiences for his starring role in the popular series "Scarecrow and Mrs. King." Boxleitner co-starred on Danielle Steele's "Zoya", an NBC mini-series in which he co-starred with his real-life wife, Melissa Gilbert. He has also starred in several mini-series including "Till We Meet Again," "From the Dead of Night," "Bare Essence" and four of the five "Gambler's." Among his numerous telefilm credits are "Wyatt Earp: Return to Tombstone," "Gunsmoke V: One Man's Justice," "House of Secrets," "The Secret," "The Town Bully," "East of Eden," and "Double Jeopardy", in which he also served as an executive producer. On the big screen, Boxleitner starred in the feature film "Tron", and has co-starred in "The Babe" and "Kuffs". Among his achievements, Boxleitner shared "Best Actor in a Television Series" honors with David Duchovny of "The X-Files" at the annual Sci-Fi Universe Magazine Reader's Choice Award.

Claudia Christian
(Commander Susan Ivanova)

The multi-talented Claudia Christian has starred in over a

dozen feature films including "The Chase," "Hexed," "Clean and Sober," and "The Hidden." Among her numerous television credits are starring roles in Danielle Steele's "Kaleidoscope," "Columbo," "A Masterpiece for Murder," "The Woman Who Sinned" and "The Calendar Girl Murders." Christian has starred in the television series "Black's Magic," "Berenger's" and "Highwayman" in addition to her guest appearances on shows including "L.A. Law" and "Murder, She Wrote." Christian's talents extend into the musical arena, and her first techno-dance album, "Taboo," is scheduled for release in late '96. Christian provides the cartoon voices for several children's shows including "Itsy Bitsy Spider," "Little Wizards" and "Hyperman," and she has completed writing a series of children's books entitled "The Misadventures of Emma Bradford."

Jerry Doyle (Security Chief Michael Garibaldi)

Jerry Doyle has guest-starred in the television series "Homefront" and "Reasonable Doubts" as well as the daytime drama "The Bold and the Beautiful." His stage work includes "Searching for Good Dough" for the second City Comedy Troupe.

The Creators

Douglas Netter (Executive Producer) Douglas Netter is an accomplished television executive and producer. He served as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at MGM Studios from 1970-1975. During that time, he produced over 75 feature films, numerous television programs and was instrumental in the construction of the MGM Grand Hotel in Las Vegas. He was involved in the production of "Lawrence of Arabia," the "Matt Helm" films, starring Dean Martin, Jack Lemmon's "How To Murder Your Wife," "April Fools" and "Porgy and Bess."

In 1978, Netter formed Rat-

lesnake Productions, specializing in independent theatrical and television production. Among Netter's most recent executive producer credits are the Emmy Award-nominated 10-hour documentary/mini-series "The Wild West," the "Babylon 5" telefilm, "The Spirit of Flight" and "Black Wing" (promotional films for Lockheed and the US Air Force), the television movie "The Legend of Captain Power" and the syndicated television series "Captain Power and the Soldiers of the Future." Other projects include the series "Five Mile Creek," the pilot "Cherokee Trail" and the mini-series "Roughnecks" and "Wild Times." Netter also executive produced the award-winning mini-series "The Sacketts," based on Louis L'Amour's novels.

J. Michael Straczynski
(Executive Producer/Creator)

J. Michael Straczynski has a long relationship with science-fiction and related genres. He has previously been the story editor and primary writer for the syndicated "The Twilight Zone" series and his adaptation of "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" for Showtime earned him both ACE and Writers Guild Award nominations. He worked as a story editor on two animated series, "Captain Power" and "The Real Ghostbusters," as well as the live-action series "Jake & the Fatman." He served as producer on the hit series "Murder, She Wrote," the "Babylon 5" telefilm and created the "Babylon 5" series. He has also written short stories, an anthology and two dark fantasy/horror novels.

John Copeland
(Producer)

John Copeland began his filmmaking career in 1973 as assistant to producer Euan Lloyd at the Twickenham Studios in London, England. Two years later, he was assistant director of the feature film "Paper Tiger," starring David Niven. In 1977, Copeland began his association with executive producer Douglas Netter and together they have produced the mini-series "Wild Times," "Roughnecks" and the Emmy Award-winning "The Sacketts."

Science Briefs

Going For The Kill

THE controversial rabbit calicivirus will be let loose on purpose in Australia, end of September, to decimate the rabbit population which has caused havoc in the island continent. Amidst fears that the virus could jump species, the Australian government announced that the virus would be released once the approval of all the Australian states and territories and the New Zealand government is received.

Two US scientists have cautioned against the move. Alvin Smith of Oregon State University and David Matson of the Centre for Pediatric Research in Virginia state that other caliciviruses have jumped species and the rabbit calicivirus would be no different and would especially be a threat once it gets mutated.

Australian virologists contend that these fears are baseless. They had injected large doses of the virus into other native Australian species — koala, echidna and wombat — and their tests reveal that the virus did not affect them.

The plan is to release 20 rabbits injected with lethal doses of the virus across Australia to ensure that the virus has a maximum impact on the rabbit population.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Tiny Trouble-maker

SCIENTISTS at the Annual Congress of European Society of Cardiology in Birmingham believe that the *Chlamydia pneumoniae* bacterium can cause heart attacks, according to a report in the *New Scientist*.

People with coronary artery disease have high levels of C.pneumoniae in their blood. The inflammation caused by the bacterial infection is said to lead to the narrowing of the coronary arteries. This inflammation also causes a raise in the blood pressure encouraging the formation of arterial plaques.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Gone For A Duck

EVER seen a chicken transform itself into a duck? The discovery of researchers at New York's Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre and Cornell University Medical College, both in the US, seems to have done just that.

On injecting a mutant gene for bone morphogenetic protein (BMP), a growth factor involved in bone and cartilage formation) into the right leg of two-day-old chicken embryos, the chicks developed webbed toes on their feet. This explains the mystery of cell demise in webs that join our digits inside the womb. Researchers say that we emerge without webbing because the cells in the webs die due to the BMP.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Friendly Jaws

MECHANICAL jaws with multiple uses are set to eliminate many back-straining farm tasks by adding versatility to the standard farm tractor. An Australian farmer, Geoff Lucas has designed the "Lucas Grabber," which can be fitted to any make of tractor to grab, lift, carry, hold and dump heavy loads. It can lift bales of hay, rocks and log, fuel and chemical drums and even animal carcasses. The maintenance-free Grabber's clamping force is gravity applied. The jaws are placed on a telescopic arm which allows objects to be lifted to different heights or dragged from inaccessible places in the bushland.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

No To Stress

A study of yellow baboons suggests that environmental stress leads to infertility in them. Like in a season when food is scarce, conception rates halve. Scientists could correlate the environmental stress to low levels of progesterone in these primates. The study strongly suggests that reducing stress levels could be a powerful therapy for some infertility problems.

Happy Tidings

THERE seems to be some good news regarding the most imperilled marshlands on the earth, the Florida Everglades. The South Florida Water Management district, which undertook studies of the delicate ecosystem, reports that farmers have achieved a 68 per cent reduction in the amount of phosphorus fertiliser discharged from their fields.

Excessive phosphorus runoff has led to the growth of exotic pests and plants like cattails which have choked the Everglades. The massive restoration programme seeks to redress this imbalance and could take some 20 years of continuous operations to clean up the human-made disaster. Plans for the restoration include not only forcing farmers to clean up their runoff, but also the creation of filtering marshes which will clean up the farm water even further.

CSE/Down To Earth Features

Friendship

LILY started to cry as she ran to her room and gazed at the moon, her true friend, a speechless one though. The window in her room was her true asset, the view from it took her to her friend within seconds. The thing that she admired about the moon was her patient hearing — she was never bored heard Lily's complaints.

Her sparkling eyes, full of tears, reflected the moon's light and she felt as if it carried the message that she dearly wanted her friend to know. She looked in the sky and wondered how she could possibly achieve the love that she greatly desired? The love she never got from her mother.

Lily had never known what a mother's love was. In school, she would envy her friends and thought what wrong she had done that God had entitled her to such a harsh punishment. She found it difficult to realise how the outset of her life took away from her the thing that she misses the most.

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The Intolerable Girl

by Nabila Ali

I couldn't tolerate it anymore. What rights does my parents have to ground me? I am a free woman who has the will to do whatever she wants. Why does my parents have to be so nosey?

"Cher! No more televisions! You don't study!" Screamed my dad in rage.

I as usual shouted back.

"What right do you have to ground me?" I cried out.

"As long as you are living under this roof," said mom.

I giggled a little bit. I never took mom seriously.

"Well I will climb on top of the roof then," I said.

My two younger sisters stared at me for some time. Then suddenly my youngest sister gave out a loud giggle. It came out as a squeak. Mom thought that I was beating my little sister again. She rushed out of her room and smacked me hard.

"Why did you smack me for?" I asked in shock.

"Why did she shout?" asked mom.

"She didn't shout mom, she gave out a squeak," said my younger sister, Torry.

None in our family ever took mom seriously. I am one of the most disobedient daughter in mom's theory.

"I don't know what I am going to do with the eldest," mom would say to my dad at night.

Dad as usual was more worried about his business affairs. He would snore while mom would give out her long lists of complaints. Everybody was scared of dad though. Mostly because he threatened to shoot us with his gun if we didn't do our homework. Sometimes he would take my youngest sister on his huge shoulder and threatened to drop her if she wouldn't do her homework.

That night I was grounded for the first time in my life. I was sent to bed without my dinner. As I sat on my bed I fantasied that I was putting arsenic in everybody's dinner. After sometime I imagined my mom as a fly. I would be the big fat spider who would squash the big juicy fly in her mouth.

In the morning before going to school, dad and I had one of those heart to heart conversations.

"I decided to cancel your membership in the video rental shop," he said.

"What?" I squeaked.

"Don't you know that there are no good programs on Bangladesh television?" I asked annoyed.

"Watch the dish," Dad said.

"My sisters watch cartoon network on the dish," I said angrily.

"That is good. It is about time you start watching Bangladesh television," he said.

"Dad I don't understand all the talk," I said.

On my way to school I crept into my younger sister's room and smashed her vase and tore off mom's shalwar kameez. I pictured dad as the vase and mom as the shalwar kameez. It helped to cool off my anger a little bit.

After school I quietly had lunch and kept into my room. I kicked hard at a small ball lying beside my piano but it gave me no satisfaction at all. I then smashed my pencil case. I quietly took it on the roof and smashed it with a stone. I looked delightedly at the broken crumbs of pencil case. I smiled and cursed my parents.

Sometime later than day I decided to buy new tapes for my recorder.

"Why can't I go alone?" I asked dad.

"It is because the city is unsafe with young girls like you," he replied.

Dad decided to send our guard with me. He went to any shop I went to. It was like some-

body was following a criminal at work. After I came home I was sent to bed early. Plans for revenge rooted in my brain all night. I would run away or be more intolerable.

Next day I skipped classes and came home early.

"Was it half day at school?" asked mom.

"Yes. Only for Middle Schoolers," I said for my sisters were still at school.

I stayed most of the time in my granny's room and quietly did my math homework. Suddenly an idea came into my mind. I would wear my granny's *borkha* and creep out of this house to the market place. A *borkha* is a black garment. Muslim women wear it. Only a portion of your eyes can be seen and the rest of the part of your body would be covered by *borkha*.

"Grandma can I borrow your *borkha*?" I asked my grandma who was quietly meditating on a chair.

She nodded and I crept out of the house and quietly jumped over the gate. The garment tan-

mangoes," I said.

"There aren't any. Mangoes grow in the summer time," He said.

I sighed in relief. I wasn't suspected but from then on that mango tree was guarded carefully.

"You can climb out of the school gate," Akasha said.

"That is easy," She added.

"But there is a guard on the other side of the gate," I said.

"Then go out pretending that you work here at school," She said.

"Would you come with me tomorrow when I skip school? I swear I got to skip PE," I said.

"You know that I am scared, Cher," Said Akasha.

"Pussy," I said mockingly.

Akasha never agreed to escape from school. She was an student and never liked ditching classes like me.

The aia's in our school wore a light coloured shalwar kameez. I skipped school after the following week with some of the aia's outfit. I found lying wet in the worker's bathroom. The guard on the other side of the gate thought that I was on of the aia's. Some of the boys in our



gled with the iron gate but I managed to go out successfully. As I took a rickshaw I heard some of the older men say.

"It is not good for a priest's wife to go alone on a rickshaw," I overheard them muttering.

After buying some cosmetics I headed my way home. I crept my way in but I realized that I was caught.

Mom called dad from the office and told him about my escape from the house.

"She is impossible," Said mom.

When dad arrived from the office he lectured me in behaving properly. I didn't listen but swore never to go out alone wearing a *borkha* again.

I don't have much friends at school. My best friend is Akasha. She marvels at my disobedience towards my parents.

"That was so brave," She would tell each time I finished a story about creeping out of the house.

I used to creep out of school too. Sometimes I would climb on a mango tree and jump over the walls. One day as I climbed over a tree the guard caught me.

"What are you doing mam?" He inquired.

"I am trying to get some

grade were standing outside the gate. They didn't recognize me for I had a cloth wrapped over my head.

As I took a rickshaw I observed men from a tea shop observing me. I realized after sometime on the rickshaw that I was being vain. The men following me took a rickshaw and kept on following me. The men followed me as I went to the drugstore too. I felt scared as I walked on the department stores. Suddenly one of the men following me stepped in front of me and punched me in the belly. I wailed in pain as they tore off my gold chain. A few men observed the gangsters and ran for help. I was bleeding for they cut my wrist to get the gold bracelet off my hand.

The gangsters escaped. Some of the men from the drugstore took me to the hospital and called my parents. My dad refused to come and see me but mom came in to the hospital in tears.

"You should be glad that they didn't kill you," She said crying.

I hated to see my mom cry.

"Promise me that you would be a good girl from now on," Said my mom.

I promised, as she bent and kissed me on my cheeks.

A Little Girl's Wish

by Kazi Farhan Zahir (KFZ Rooster)

LILY started to cry as she ran to her room and gazed at the moon, her true friend, a speechless one though. The window in her room was her true asset, the view from it took her to her friend within seconds. The thing that she admired about the moon was her patient hearing — she was never bored heard Lily's complaints.

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thoughts, a hand touched her little shoulder. She turned round and saw a tall figure whom she had been calling her father from the day she started to talk. He quickly took her in his lap. A great abrupt feeling came over her, which she never felt before. The pain vanished momentarily. All she had against her father seemed to run off her heart. Her father then carried her to her bed and kissed her good night. She felt as if all her wishes gathered and took the shape of her father, and she had nothing else to desire. She felt lucky for having someone who thinks of her and thought how horrible it must be for those who did not have either parents in their lives. From where these feelings emerged, she had no idea. As she looked through her window again, she noticed a shooting star pass by the moon. She knew now, from where the feelings had come... She thanked her friend, closed her eyes, and awaited another day of her life that she thought would bring to her lots of joy and happiness.



scenes from Babylon 5: Ivanova in space gear (above) The Shadow entity wakes (left).