

RS Mailbox

SEND us all your love, hate, queries, news, contributions etc, etc to risingstars@thedailystar.net

It's going to be alright

Like everyone here I'm also a regular reader of RS. In the last issue there was this article titled "I want her back" by Nayema Reza. I was really touched by that article. I want to say something to Nayema.

I understand how you feel, believe me. I also do have a similar experience, which has been bugging me till now. I used to be very depressed most of the time. But I started getting it off my mind. It was going pretty well but after reading your article I had that feeling again. And the worst thing is, I don't have any such friends with whom I could or can share these feelings. At least at sixteen you had a best friend, which on the other hand I didn't have, not even now that I'm one year older. Actually at this stage of life most of us teens get to face some kind of... depression when there's a sudden... loss. So you see, you're not the only one who's had a loss. And there are always your parents. I recommend that you talk to them openly about everything. I'm sure it would make you feel better. So cheer up and don't feel bad.

OK?

Samin Riasat

This one's for Osama

I was just checking through some recent issues of RS when a reader's comment on the mailbox section caught my eye. Curious, I quickly read through the article 'Are you a crack, man?' and decided to put my 2 cents in.

First of all, I agree that a person should not be wearing revealing clothes in Dhaka just because the public would stare. They should not be wearing revealing clothes anyway! Now it may sound like a conservative person but there are norms in every society, and these norms must be respected. One's definition of revealing attire might differ but I think I could picture what the writer was getting at and I wholeheartedly agree with him. And this goes for guys too! (Rupa advertisements on Indian channels are bad enough, no one is curious to know which brand of Boxers make you comfortable). I respect personal freedom, but not to the point where it threatens other people's freedom to roam about in a visually comfortable environment. And human biology lessons in the middle of the road is just not my cup of decaf either.

While I agree that Dhaka should become a friendlier place for people in love, I do not think that PDA (Public Display of Affection) is the solution. In fact, the type of PDA that Osama refers to in a place like Dhaka is utterly gross to say the least. I agree that people should not stare or pass lewd comments just by seeing a girl and boy walking down the street holding hands, or stuff like that... But mutual indulgence in salivary produce in front of a lady old enough to be your mom deserves a good spanking in the rear end.

Lastly, I must say I enjoyed reading 'Are you a crack, man?'

Tausif Salim

From the RS Desk

Dear Readers,

We've been getting a lot of mail recently, which is always a good thing, because your feedback only helps us improve. We're particularly happy with all the contributions we get for our Nano Tales section, and we've decided to make the Readers' Special nano-tales a regular monthly feature. Even though we are essentially a teen magazine, we frequently get bombarded by contributions and e-mails from our younger readers, and since we believe in encouraging young talent, we have decided to start a monthly section called 'Kidstars' in which we print their poems and stories on the first issue of every month. Here's to more fiction and fun in your favourite youth magazine!

The week in re(ar)view

Show me the money, and more

A 24-member official delegation from Bangladesh will stress the need for increasing the climate change adaptation fund at the Climate Change Conference on the Indonesian island of Bali.

Question is what will we be using the fund for? Possibly to fill up more water bodies and build more high rise apartments for people to live in. Or maybe it's to build short flyovers over which people can stand and watch as rest of the roads are stuffed with traffic. Or it could be used to pay off people like us to shut our mouths and stay, well, shut.

According to UN Human Development Report (HDR), climate change will hit the poorest countries the most by breaking down agricultural systems, worsening water scarcity, increasing risks of diseases and triggering mass displacement due to recurring floods, and storms like the recent Cyclone Sidr.

Snappy matter

BTTB has an optical fibre line 433 km long that we use for a lot of our internet purposes. In a country where manholes, metal guard rails firmly attached to the ground, light bulbs stuck high up in the sky and other obscure items get stolen, the submarine cable is easy picking. Heck, even dead people can't get any respite buried six feet under without getting themselves stolen. The cable is installed a few feet below road-side surfaces and that in itself is an open invitation...

The Bangladesh Telegraph and Telephone Board (BTTB) invested \$35.1 million for the submarine cable and it will earn nearly Tk 200 crore (\$28 million) from it this year alone. Despite all this revenue, net service was disrupted 22 times so far. Each time BTTB loses \$70,000 revenue per hour.

Despite such losses BTTB won't go for a backup which is pretty much free. It's a swapping deal with a private phone company Bangla Phone Ltd. Basically, BTTB and Bangla Phone can automatically swap their cables when any one is disrupted.

But this cannot be done because Bangladesh Telecom Regulatory Commission (BTRC) asked BTTB not to sign a deal with Bangla Phone. Apparently the latter violated contractual terms by installing optical fibre lines "outside" its licensed area. Bangla Phone argues installation of the lines was its contractual obligation. All this happens while we the general public are disrupted from our P2P downloads.

What's in a name of a crustacean?

Nicknames are a thing of presence. It is supposed to instill fear or awe



into the hearts of people. People have names like Shark Ali, Bulldog Babu, Scorpion Kuddus or even Tiger Woods. What gives with a name like 'Kakra' (crab) Manik? Apparently he is a businessman with wealth beyond counting. Actually it was counted at Tk 150 crore according to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC). The nickname could be a result of the fact that he never made money in the straight and narrow way. He went sideways looking for other options.

Currently he is serving time scrabbling sideways in a jail cell.

Who to trust

Robbers in police and army uniform on

December 1 looted local and foreign currencies worth over Tk 17 lakh from a money exchange firm in city's Purana Paltan. A gang came by microbus demanding to "search the office" identifying themselves as members of the joint forces. At one stage, they blindfolded two staff and made off with a good amount of loot. Locals said over one hundred people gathered in front of the building to see the "raid" of the "joint forces".

This will keep on happening as long as the real security forces continue conducting their raids in similar manner where they hardly give people time to understand what is going on. People are too scared to even exclaim, "Duh?"

By Gokhara and Mood Dude

The ultimate index of Bangali lifestyle

F for Fuchka

This is the staple of the Bangali diet. It means more to the Bangladeshi than anime is to the Japanese. Everyone, rich or poor, fair or brown, Abahani or Mohamedan runs to the fuchka mama at the first pang of hunger. From expensive eateries to roadside vans, fuchka is available everywhere.

G for Gaudy

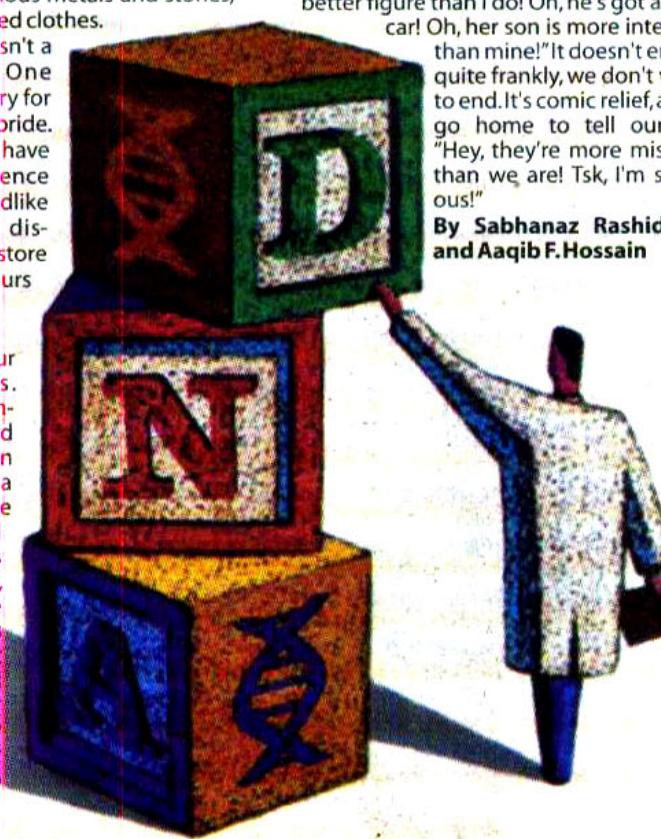
Bangalis women love gaudy clothing and excessive jewellery. They will be wrapped from head to toe in gold (real, fake and a combination of both) at any available occasion. Every wedding is pageant where bhabis compete with each other to see who is more heavily laid in precious metals and stones, and brightly coloured clothes.

Needless to say, it isn't a pleasant sight.

One cannot, but feel sorry for the typical Bangali bride. She must indeed have superhuman patience (not to mention, godlike strength) to be displayed as a gold store mannequin for hours on end.

H for Hero

Hero is one of our favourite terms. From cycles to general stores, the word 'hero' gets thrown back and forth like a ping-pong ball. The typical Dhaliood 'hero' with his grizzly chest hair, thick moustache and the first 4 buttons of his shirt undone stands ready to sweep our fair and lovely baalikaas off their feet. So ladies, keep watching!



I for Igloo Ice-cream

Igloo ice-cream can be considered the god of Bangladeshi dessert. A box of Igloo is the perfect end to any family reunion. It's inexpensive, food and available almost everywhere. It's considered to be common courtesy to bring 2 litres of Igloo on any dawaat. The ridiculously expensive Swedish and Danish ice-creams simply cannot compete with this home-grown goodness. (These writers would much rather have Movenpick on the two days of the months they can afford it.)

J for Jealousy

We are one jealous nation! Every Bangali is jealous of every other Bangali. "Oh, she's got a better figure than I do! Oh, he's got a better car! Oh, her son is more intelligent than mine!" It doesn't end and quite frankly, we don't want it to end. It's comic relief, and we go home to tell ourselves, "Hey, they're more miserable than we are! Tsk, I'm so jealous!"

By Sabhanaz Rashid Diya and Aaqib F. Hossain

Forgive Me

I do not mourn you for your fetters
But because I placed them there
And helped you try them
Out of foolish curiosity

And I think that down the hazy lines
We forgot our roots, squares
And those simple solutions to 1+1
Now, I only know how to dig your grave
But I think I already did

So when I look at you
I see you look back with mournful eyes
You love me
And I smile, because how
Can I disappoint you now?

By Alaka Halder

Unanswered questions

What have I done, Where had I begun
I want salvation, to get rid of this
frustration
the results of war are fruitless
but reality demands I still be ruthless
this vicious cycle is never-ending
but what message is it sending
destruction everywhere, is nothing fair?
Why is all fair in love and war?
can you see, it leaves our heart-
branded by a scar
nothing can make this pain go away
so why are you aiming your pity my
way?
our souls are tainted by hatred
is that why we are so frustrated?
maybe the answers lie elsewhere
are there anymore who care?
to find the answers to all the questions
the answers which might ease our
frustrations
we have to end this meaningless war
or else we'll never go far
Believe - and Peace can be found
Be silent - you will hear the sound
that will tell us to bond as one
and look with hope towards the sun...

By Raiyan S. Hossain