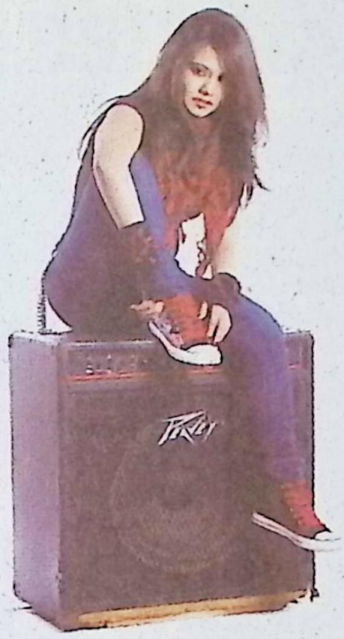


Petting a Panda

Mila
talks to Sarah Z H

WHEN I think about my childhood, the carefree years spent in the openeness of the hilly areas, traveling around with my family from one place to another in Bangladesh, I come to believe they were truly my glory days. If I compare my days now and my days then, I would be compelled to decide that the joy of skipping school and the idle climbing of trees was all the more fun than anything I ever do now.

My father being in the army had to travel a lot to the furthest corners of the country. He would obviously drag his family everywhere he went. The idea of having a home in many parts of the country would probably seem slightly tragic to many, but to me it was like an adventure exploring new places from time to time. Due to my father's work, I had grown up mostly in Bandarban and Rangamati.

I was never an unfair student but I could hardly be listed as a loyalist when it came to attending classes! I used up my time running around, aimless and content. I am remembered to be someone very, very hyper with a limb all over the place. In fact, even now, a few of my close friends still comment on my thought process and activities as being ultra-hyper, especially when we are hanging out and spending quality time.

Music has always played a very important role in my growing up years. Even in school, music was forever my thing and I played a leading role in all the competetions and school functions. Following my mother's footsteps, who herself is a trained singer, I would take music lessons at home as a child. I have been singing since I was three years old and raised by the power of music, I was rooted into the love of performing on stage, an activity which later became my way of life. I looked forward to the many occassions arranged by the army community that allowed me to get up on stage and show my devotion towards music, as I was so young. I picked up guitar playing when I was sixteen and still include it to be my favourite past times. My earliest influence was Michel Jackson and to this day I find him as gripping as a good story. I listen to all genres sometimes drifting towards alternative music.

By the time I was in high school I was back in the city and had left the beautiful weather-beaten places where memories rusted with time. My years at Shaheed Anwar were not unkind but I yearned for the spiritual intentness of the days put behind. It is so difficult to choose one story from the millions of memories that I built while growing up with my family! But I do remember having a very unconventional pet once. My father had a Japanese friend who had once brought home a baby panda when we lived in Rangamati. Both my sister Misha and I were very excited! We had him for only three months, as it was difficult for him to sustain himself in the foreign weather.

Because I had gone to school in so many places, I had obviously made a lot of friends, who I still remember from time to time. Undoubtedly, the growing up years were the best years in my life. I hope to cherish them forever and think about them from time to time.