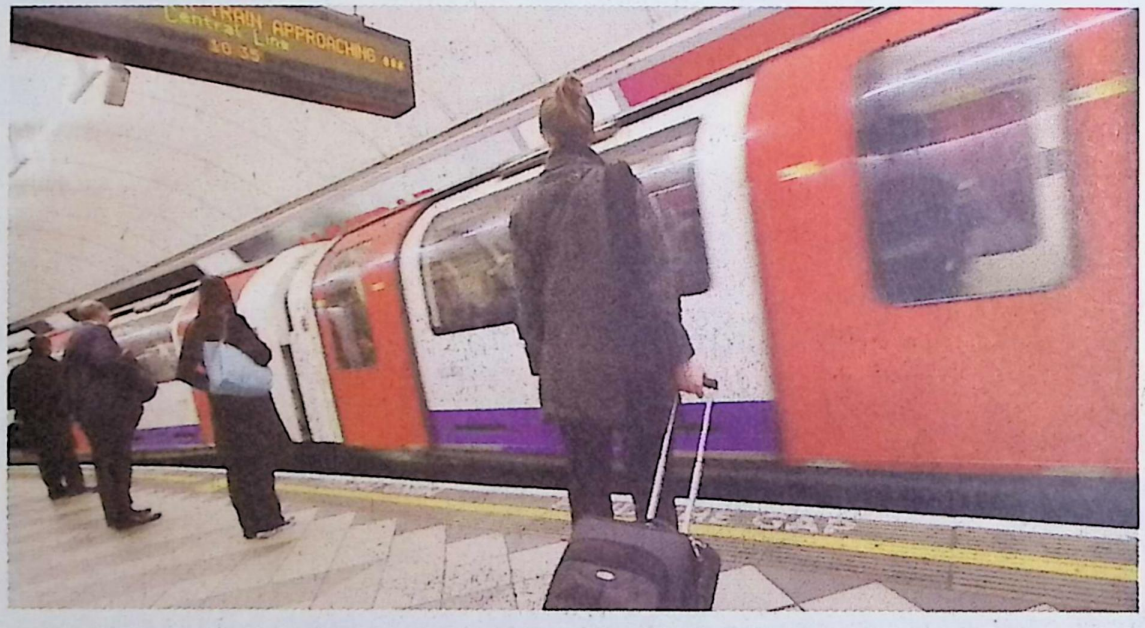
There are a few topics the British especially those residing in London love to discuss and have become part of our daily repertoire. The first one has to be our strange obsession with the weather. "Too cold", "too wet", "too grey" are some of the comments we tend to hear and frequently repeat. Give us a gloriously sunny and warm summer and we are very likely to complain about it being "just too hot!" I'm not sure why but this country seems to come to a standstill if we have a few centimetres of snow and heaven help us if it rains more than expected or is particularly windy. Anything like that and our public transport is thrown into chaos. But it does give us something to talk about.

However, if we were being completely honest, we are secretly rather pleased with the ease with which one can travel within and around the city. Even for tourists, the underground system is relatively straight forward and a great way to get about. The bus routes can be a little trickier as you need to know which direction you should be going to and which stop you need to get off at but it is still a fairly efficient mode of transport. What I find fascinating and far more entertaining is observing the different people you encounter on public transport. I have seen people fall asleep with their head on a complete stranger's shoulder, women apply a full face of makeup oblivious to the gazes of fellow passengers, youngsters singing louder than they



Encounters of the Unusual Kind

NADIA KABIR BARB

Public transport is second on the list of things we like to talk about following closely on the heels of the weather. We love to complain about the unpredictability of bus timings and moan about being packed into an underground tube compartments like sardines during rush hour. You also become very good at a playing the game of musical chairs as the moment someone spots an empty seat, it's a case of rushing to get it before anyone else. Darwin's theory of "Survival of the fittest" can be modified here as "survival of the fastest".

realise with their earphones on....I could go on. You get to meet people from all walks of life, old people, young people, people of all nationalities and religions, friendly people, rude people and it is impossible to be bored by this huge cultural, social and economic melting pot.

One aspect of travelling on public transport that I do have a major gripe about is being trapped on a bus or train with someone suffering from excessive body odour. Only the other day, I got on a local bus to find my olfactory senses being assaulted by an