

Straight Talk

# TIME TO CHANGE

NADIA KABIR BARB

There is a saying that "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes", but another thing I think that we can be sure about is that change is inevitable. Given time, the weather, people, places, fashion, you name it – they all change.

However, there is one area that desperately needs to change and isn't (or at least not sufficiently) and that is people's perception of and attitude towards rape. It is often a topic that is taboo or something people are uncomfortable talking about. But it is an issue that has to be addressed. It is time we stopped looking the other way because it offends our sensibilities.

According to World Bank data women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, car accidents, war and malaria.

Quite frequently victims end up never even reporting the crime to the police or in fact to anyone due to the social stigma attached to rape victims or for fear of the repercussions they may face.

It is difficult to gain accurate statistics on rape as different countries have different definitions of what constitutes rape. Also there is a discrepancy between true numbers of rape cases and those that are officially documented. Quite frequently victims end up never even reporting the crime to the police or in fact

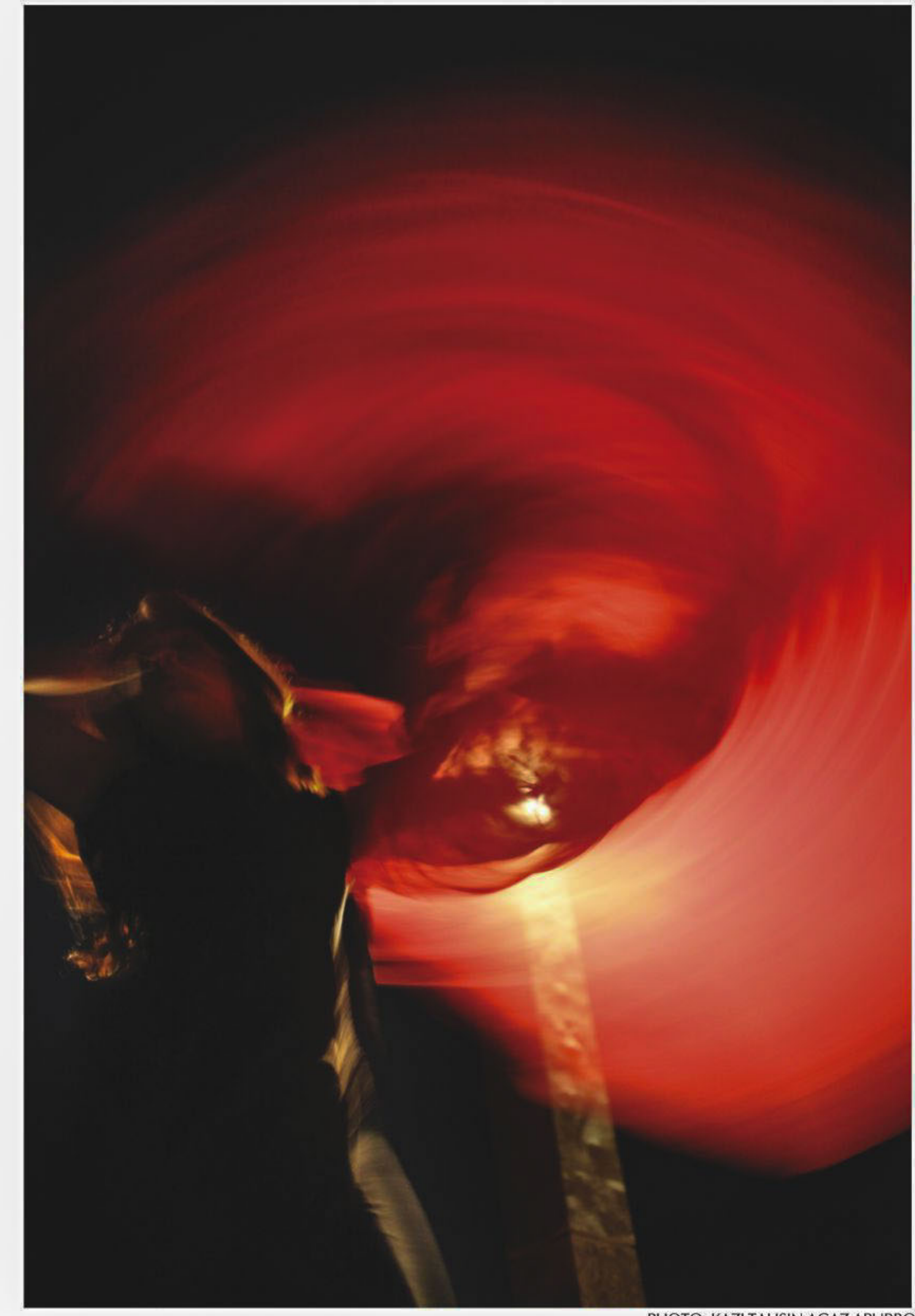


PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

to anyone due to the social stigma attached to rape victims or for fear of the repercussions they may face.

In January 2013, in its first ever joint Official Statistics bulletin on sexual violence, entitled 'An Overview of Sexual Offending in England and Wales' the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Office for National Statistics (ONS) and Home Office in the UK reported that approximately 85,000 women are raped on average in England and Wales every year and over 400,000 women are sexually assaulted each year.

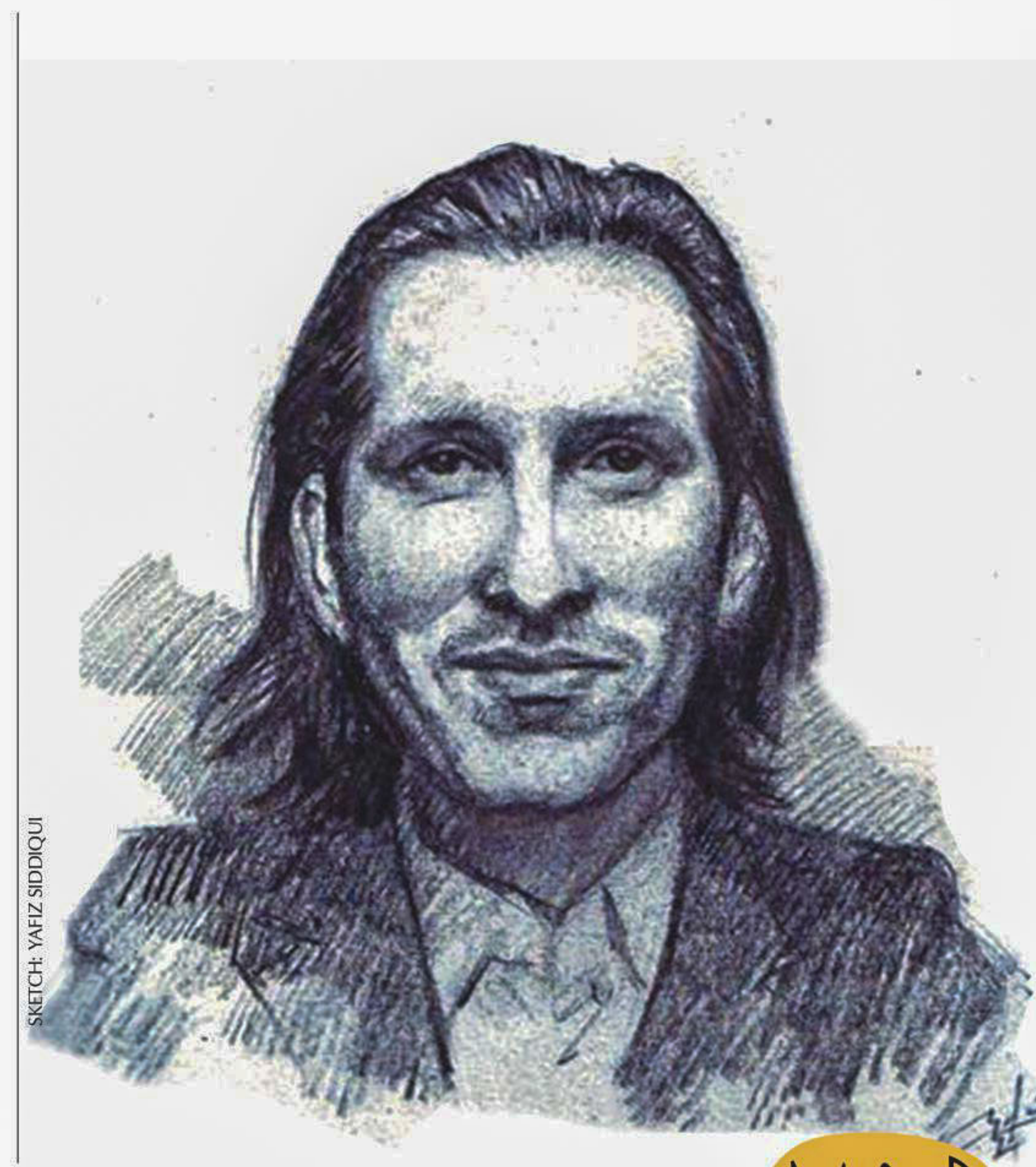
In India, rape has become one of the most common crimes against women. According to the National Crime Records Bureau almost 25,000 rape cases were reported across India in 2012. It is also estimated that a new case of rape is reported every 22 minutes in India and in the United States it is every two minutes. Just to put things in perspective, by the time you finish reading this article odds are that a rape will have taken place in the US. These are frightening statistics and it is only the tip of the iceberg.

In a recent interview, Mukesh Singh convicted of gang raping a 23-year-old woman in 2012 in Delhi, says that they had a right to teach her a lesson for being out at night. According to him, she should have put up with the rape and not fought back. If she had she might still be alive today. Sadly this kind of attitude is not the exception but prevalent in many societies around the world where women are both blamed and shamed for being raped.

How many tragic stories have we heard where families have disowned rape victims or where the perceived shame has led to honour killings taking place. There is also the fact that women are not always taken seriously when they have come forward and the age old "he said, she said" scenario is played out.

To improve the situation we need a better support system for the victims but perhaps more importantly, to educate men to respect women and to understand that any form of sexual harassment and assault is unacceptable.

As my sixteen-year-old daughter pointed out, shouldn't the message going forward be "don't rape" instead of "don't be raped"? No one deserves to be sexually assaulted regardless of who they are, where they are or what they happen to be wearing at the time. ■



## WES ANDERSON

May 1, 1969

MAD GENIUS

Wesley Wales popularly known as Wes Anderson is an American film director and screenwriter. He has won dozens of awards but is best known for his distinctive contribution in changing the cinematic narrative style and visual form.

He was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay for The Royal Tenenbaums in 2001, Moonrise Kingdom in 2012 and The Grand Budapest Hotel in 2015, as well as the Academy Award for Best Animated Feature for Fantastic Mr. Fox in 2009. He received his first Academy Award nomination for Best Director and won the Golden Globe Award for Best Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy for The Grand Budapest Hotel in 2014. He also received the BAFTA Award for Best Original Screenplay in 2015.

“That's the kind of movie that I like to make, where there is an invented reality and the audience is going to go someplace where hopefully they've never been before. The details, that's what the world is made of.”

When you're 11 or 12 years old, you can get so swept up in a book that you start to believe that the fantasy is reality. I think when you have a giant crush when you're in fifth grade, it becomes your whole world. It's like being underwater; everything is different.”

- Filmography**
- 1996- Bottle Rocket
  - 1998- Rushmore
  - 2001- The Royal Tenenbaums
  - 2004- The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou
  - 2005- The Squid and the Whale
  - 2007- The Darjeeling Limited
  - 2009- Fantastic Mr Fox
  - 2012- Moonrise Kingdom
  - 2014- The Grand Budapest Hotel
  - 2015- She's Funny That Way

## STARDIARY



## A SHOCKING DECEPTION

My family has been renting out an apartment in Dhanmondi for the past one year to an elderly lady and her two daughters. For the past few months, they have been irregular with their rent so my mother sent me there to speak to them. When I got there, the apartment door was open and I noticed a few men sitting in the living room and they asked me to wait my turn, which confused me. The tenants had never met me so I was hoping to introduce myself before there was further confusion. As the elderly lady stepped out of the room she saw me and asked me which "package" I wanted. Terribly confused now, I asked her what she was talking about and she gave me a catalogue of sorts, with pictures of young women with prices listed next to them. I realised with horror, she was running a brothel in our apartment. We took the necessary actions to remove them from the building. I wanted to share this story so that other landlords do a thorough background check before they rent to people. The most innocent faces can be deceiving.

Arafat Hossain  
Uttara, Dhaka

## SECOND CLASS?

I work at a mid-level position in a company where my supervisor and most of my colleagues are foreigners. I have always been treated with respect by everyone at my workplace. Last month, I accompanied my supervisor to an expat-club (I will not mention which one) for a meeting, for which we arrived early. While my supervisor was invited inside (although he is not a member), to wait for our host in their air-conditioned waiting room, I was asked to wait out on the street till he arrived. Needless to say my supervisor was very embarrassed and failing to convince the manager to let me in, he waited with me on the sidewalk. Our host was equally embarrassed and I believe he placed a complaint. This incident stayed with me because for the first time in my life, I was treated as a second class citizen in my own country— something to think about.

Anonymous  
Dhaka

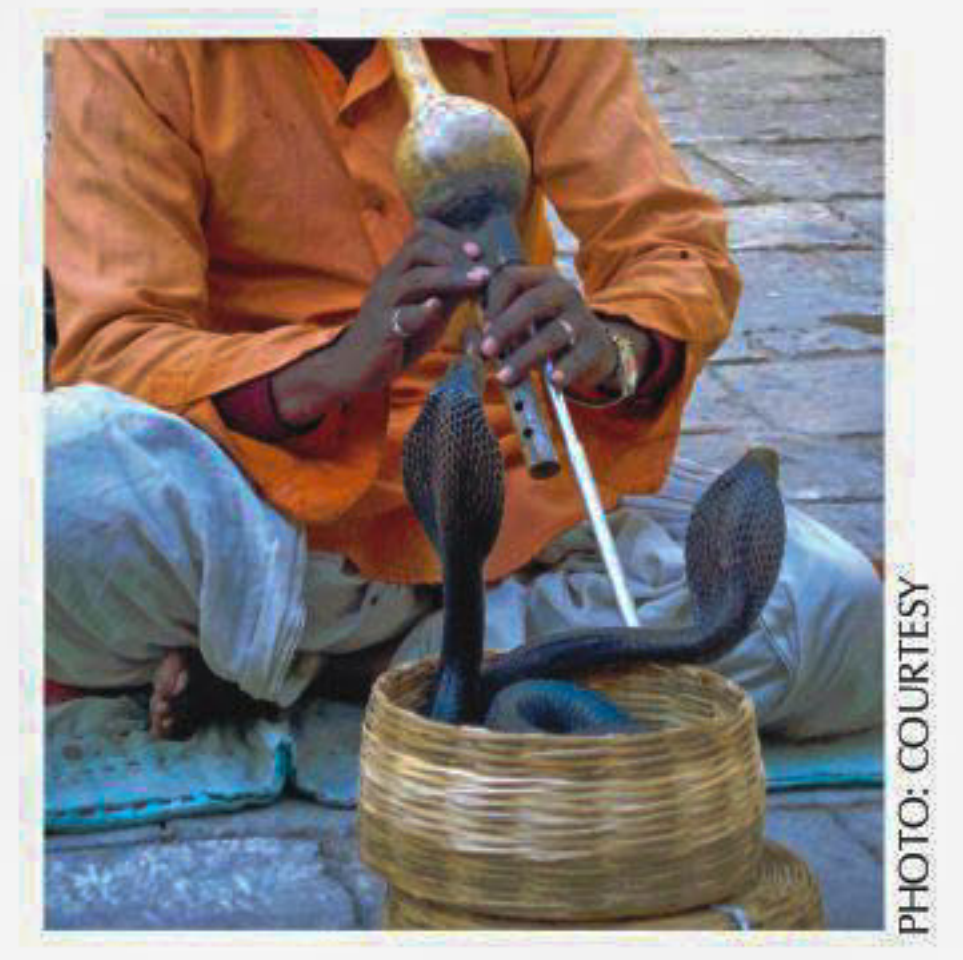


PHOTO: COURTESY

## STROLL IN THE PARK

Like every morning, I was walking in Ramna Park with my elderly uncle. After covering a few miles, I slowed down while my uncle went on with his walk. All of a sudden, I saw a man clad in a bright yellow shirt and lungi walking by casually. And that's not all – upon closer inspection, I discovered that the man was covered with snakes! Clearly, he was a snake charmer and was probably looking for work in the city. But I did not see him carrying a snake basket. Instead, he had probably decided to wear all his snakes around his neck! Was he trying to take them out for a walk, I wonder!

Siam Rahman Shuddho  
BRAC University, Dhaka

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SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINY QUOTES