



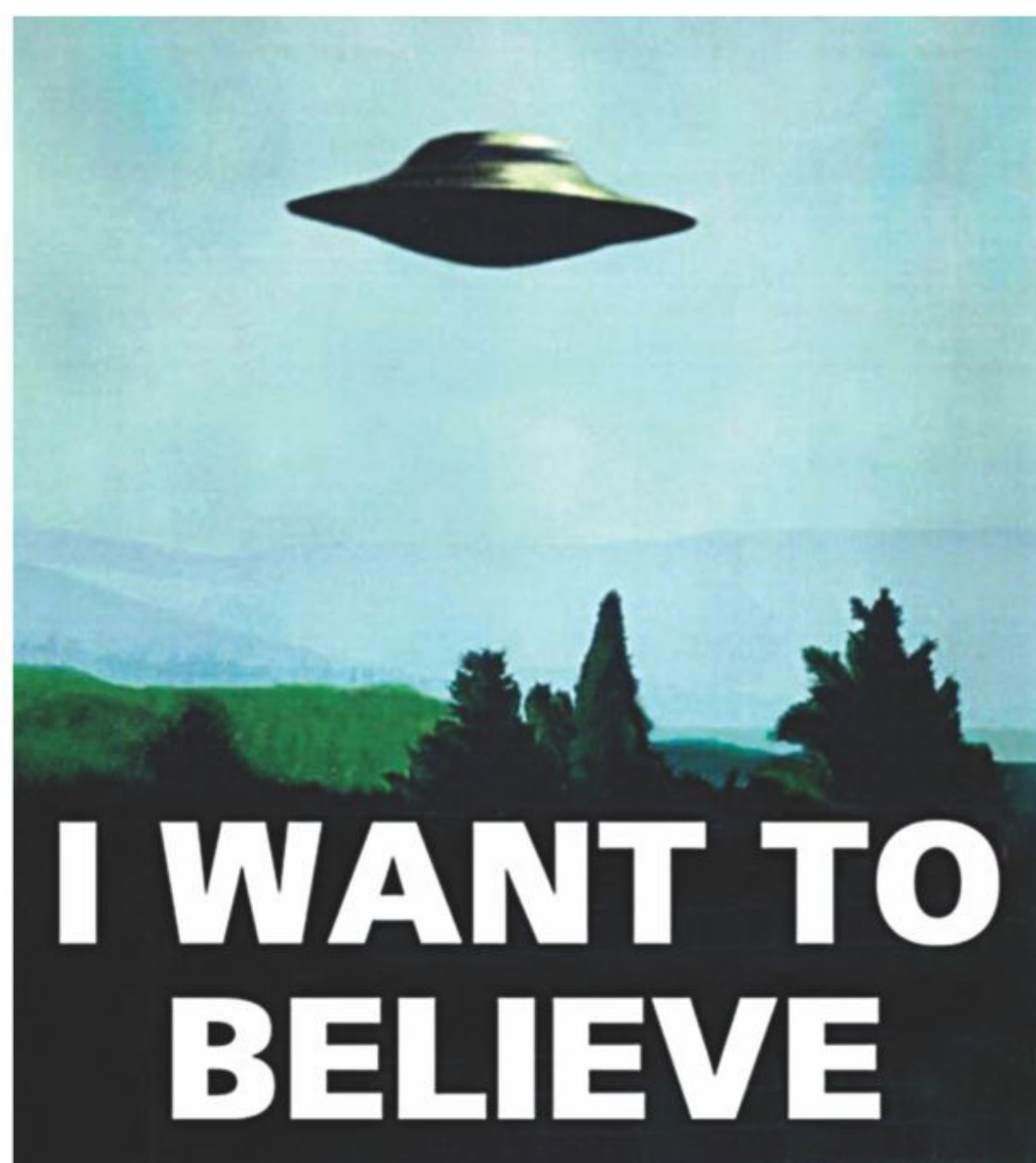
A day in the life of a deshi conspiracy theorist

IQRA L. QAMARI

The day starts with me suddenly waking up in puddle of my own drool on the table. The laptop screen is frozen. The title on the webpage reads "Alien sightings in Dhanmondi!" I still haven't managed to crack the last case about Hatirjheel being the gateway to Atlantis, but I have decided to give it a rest for the time being. The place discharges a foul stench of waste that lingers in the air like the thick, malicious smell of Mordor.

Every day I get out of my bedroom with hesitation, sniffing for danger. However, the dining room is only reeking of fried eggs and *porota*. I spot my domestic helper, Tuni khala, who I believe colludes with the Illuminati. What else can explain her disappearance every other day? There was also that time when she had missed work for a week and had claimed that she had to go to her "village" on an emergency basis. But, I had spotted her a few blocks away from my house during that same timeframe. I had articulated my concern to my family only to receive a strange look in return.

Another agent that is surely working under the wings of Tuni khala is the wretched cat who I'm sure is hatching a plan to take my life. She sneaks into my room when she pleases and stares unblinkingly at all the pieces of evi-



dence that I have taped on my wall. To enhance my suspicion, my mother has named the cat Bloody Mary, thinking it's fitting because her ginger colour. Her staring competitions with me are intense on a sweat-breaking level, and I can decode only one message from this: my time is near. Maybe I am close to the truth after all.

Matrix or not, I am not being able to fight with this simulated reality called life. I was against institutional education so that I could take my stance against the demands of the society. However, I learned my lesson when I realised that such uprising will not be possible in a family where ideas are responded with smacks from angry parents. Speaking of which, I am not sure if they have a clean slate as well. They have recently been asking for my opinion about the neighbour's daughter; they consider her to be "very eligible" for me. As of now, I am quite certain that they want me to get confined within a utopian institution in order to distract me from my agenda. Perhaps, they fear for my life as well, so can't really blame them.

I am now in a dilemma. Should I give in to this societal pressure or should I just recall the famous lines of the great bard? All of the great humans were extra-terrestrials, I believe. I am also expected to fall in love, which is the greatest instrument made to prevent us from reaching the ultimate truth. Butterflies in the stomach have been the end to many great minds. It's getting hard to keep up this act of pretence like everyone else. Even memes fail to cheer me up now.

It's actually sad to see how the entire population has been injected with an utter sense of indifference. I mean, does no one else see the ROBOTS coming? We have been compromised. Mayday!

Iqra suffers from wanderlust, dreams of discovering the Loch Ness Monster and occasionally complains about Economics. Tell her to get a life at iqra.kashmir53@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/iqra.l.qamari