

ENTERTAINMENT

We are a culture of stories, and for centuries, we have looked for occasions to speak of these tales. Be it the age-old *geets* about the romance between a soldier and a princess that are sung during weddings or the tales of sacrifice and martyrdom on which religious holidays are based, the people in this region have always been the best storytellers. While every occasion in Bangladesh calls for showcasing and reproduction of these age-old tales, the two Eid festivals every year also provide platforms for storytellers and young makers to showcase a fresh perspective.

After these tired and uninspired years, during which the large number of existing TV stations would showcase fictions and serials of sub-standard quality, the industry finally seems to be undergoing a positive change, as seen in the last couple of years. Very recently, stalwarts and like-minded corporates came together to create and deliver quality content, not only to get a hold of the younger Bangladeshi audience, but also to make a mark on the international platform. One such project that caught the attention of many is Bhai Brothers Express launched this year by the famous production house Chabial, for Eid al Adha. The project came up with tele-fictions made by storytellers and directors, both established and novice. However, three tele-fictions have been doing the rounds on social media, once they hit the online platforms after Channel i telecasted them.

Pata Jhorar Din, a story of a daughter looking for her lost father, is based on true events. An old father suffering from dementia loses his way and is seen wandering about the slums of Dhaka, taking refuge



Pata Jhorar Din

PHOTO: COURTESY

THE THREE STORIES THAT CHANGED THE NARRATIVE

ELITA KARIM

an otherwise happy and content family, also decides to follow the friend's family and buy leaked question papers the following year. What follows is heartbreaking—while the father is caught by the police, the daughter, to escape the humiliation and depression, kills herself. The story is simple, yet filled with emotions that touch the heart of every Bangladeshi trying to survive the present times. The elements that are particularly touching include the uncut scene where the daughter feeds dinner to both her parents, who have otherwise refused to talk to each other or interact because of a fight, the love story that grows between the daughter and her school mate, played by Abir Mirza and, of course, the very end where Raisul Islam Asad breaks down at the sight of his lifeless daughter.

One of the most talked about tele-films this Eid is probably *Ayesha*, a story based on the book written by Anisul Haque. Directed by internationally acclaimed director Mostofa Sarwar Farooki, the film takes one back to the era of oppression and tyranny. A young wife played by the famous actor Tisha is seen wandering from one place to another looking for her husband, played by yet another talented actor, Chanchal Chowdhury. Made in two parts, the films speak of fear, of an invisible voice that seems to control the lives of innocent people and, of course, of dictatorship. But the story also depicts the rise of conscience—where a simple girl from the village eventually finds the strength and confidence within herself to speak for her husband, refusing to bow down and give up.

What is different about the three mentioned fictions and films is how each of them tried to change the conventional narrative, when it comes to storytelling



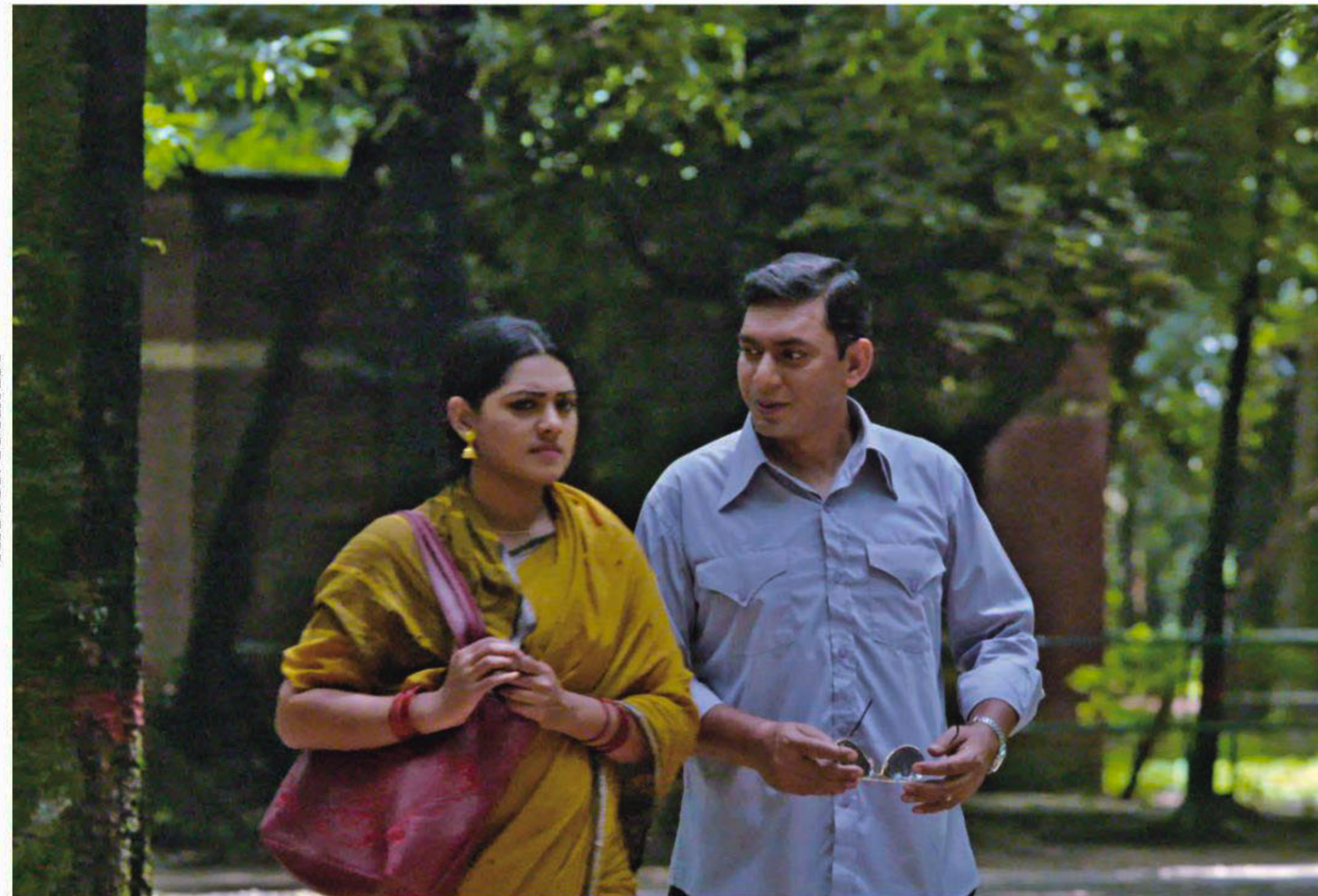
Shonali Danar Chil

PHOTOS: COURTESY



wherever he can—a railway platform, street corners etc. Played by the legendary actor Syed Hasan Imam, the character also meets strangers who give him refuge. The plight of the daughter, played by popular actor Rumana Rashid Ishita, gets worse as the nights go by and she prays for her father to be well and healthy. Written and directed by Redoan Rony, this is probably one of his best works. The story turns out to be much more than a daughter looking for her lost father. Rony successfully incorporates the basics of human nature, highlighting the complications of simple relationships and also the helplessness that the strongest of us sometimes go through.

Yet another tele-fiction from the project which caught



Ayesha

the attention of many is *Shonali Danar Chil*, written and directed by Ashfaque Nipun. Based on the recent issue of question paper leaks, the story revolves around a middle class family, whose world suddenly turns upside down in a matter of days. The father, played by the famous actor Raisul Islam Asad, is a respected teacher known for his honesty in the locality. He and his wife, played by the talented Saberi Alam, dream of making their daughter, played by Mehazabien Chowdhury, a doctor. Surprisingly, the daughter, who is a brilliant student, fails her medical entrance examinations whereas her friend passes with flying colours, thanks to the leaked question papers that were provided to her. That is when desperation seeps in, and

and filmmaking in Bangladesh. Even though the stories were made for the television audience, with proper preparation and funding they could easily be made into stories for the silver screen. Also, each of the films spoke a common language that can be understood by Bangladeshis living anywhere in the world. Not only did they cover real landscapes and locations, they also spoke of the unique issues that we face in the many spheres of life—social, political, emotional etc.

Maybe it is this change in the otherwise common plot and the courage to bare one's heart out is what we need for the deshi audience to return to their local channels.

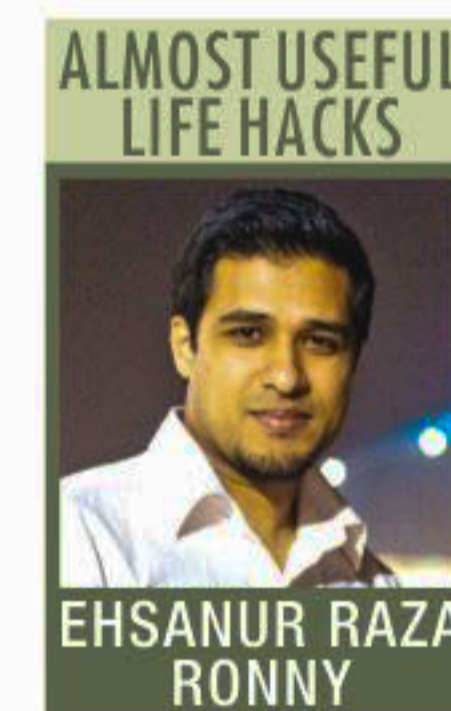
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I am a Master Of Improvisation. That is a title I have imposed upon myself alongside Masterchef and Coffee Bae. No one artfully sprinkles chocolate dust over coffee like I do. That is a how-to for another day.

Back to improvisation. We are not always equipped with the proper tools. In fact, we are rarely ever thus equipped. Early man crawled out of the ocean (or the trees depending on which theory you want to hang from) and stood up confused. He saw wild, furry, sharp-toothed animals and picked up a rock to attack. He was probably promptly eaten. That is what happens when you first attempt using the wrong tool. Over time, you become an expert. Early man eventually picked a bigger rock and succeeded. What he really, really needed was a gas pressurised harpoon. Here's how we improvise every day.

Spoons are universally for everything

A spoon and its lesser cousin, the fork, are perfect for almost all tasks. I remember the countless scolding I received for bent spoons that my mother suddenly discovered. It is not my fault that she kept various qualities of spoons in store: okay ones, good ones and really good ones. The okay ones would easily

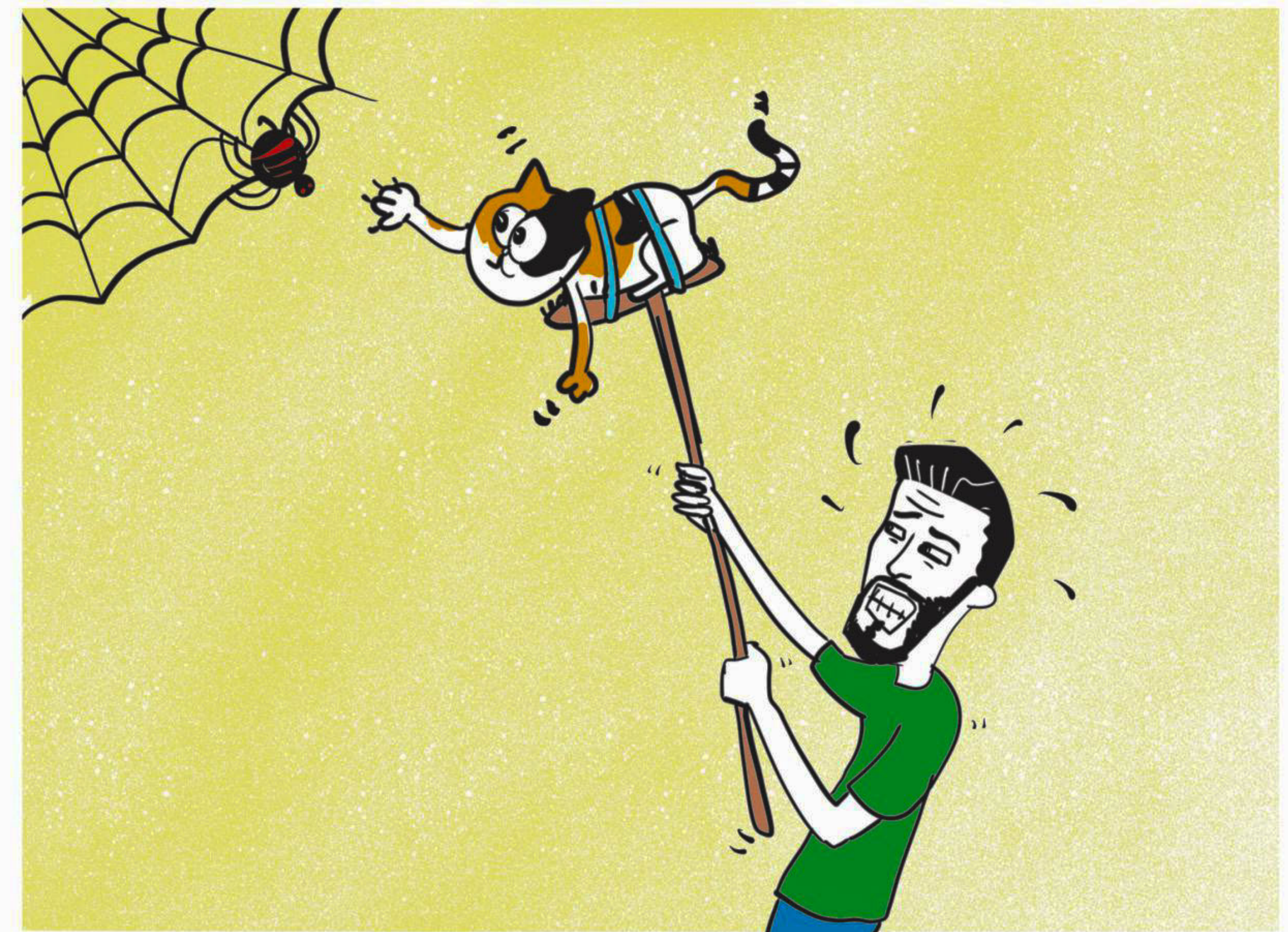


bend because spoons are universally meant to open anything that refuses to open: paint cans, jars, stuck drawers or your stingy school friend's unwillingness to pay up for a shared lunch. A fork can do wonders for the latter. Movies have shown us that a prisoner can dig his way out using a spoon. It can also defend you against wild animals like crows that refuse to leave you alone when you are up on the roof trying to reach into their nests.

How it backfires: Spoons can bend especially the 'okay' ones. And the really good ones? They can chip and scratch. Mothers and wives do not like it at all. But what is a man supposed to do? Search for a screwdriver or can opener?

Hammertime

Yet another tool that everybody owns. And by everyone, I mean EVERYONE. Parents, children, teachers, bus drivers, politicians and their university going supporters. Everyone has a hammer. Because the hammer can beat an idea into you like nothing else. If a drawer refuses to go in, hit it with a hammer. Refuses to slide out? Hit it again. Car not



E. RAZA RONNY

CARTOON: E R RONNY

HOW TO USE THE WRONG TOOL FOR THE RIGHT JOB

your finance manager that you actually do not have space to sit when the entire team is at work. You can live stream how people are standing, walking, sitting on laps, lying on the floor and so on because there are only four desks for seven people. It worked though. New desks were arranged the next day. Based on a true story.

How it backfires: when you participate in the Ki-Ki Challenge (and other online viral activities) way past its expiration date.

Being a friend to everyone

Being a friend is a great wrong tool. I have seen bosses get employees to do a lot of work for little money by being a friend. Co-workers get others to cover for them by being a friend.

How it backfires: Ask all the guys that have fallen for a girl and have opted for the friendship approach. They thought they were on the right path of winning the maiden's heart. Three years later they discovered the friend zone, a place they can never leave.

Selfies will make you popular

To be popular, the right tool is to be the best at what you do. Alternately, you can

look like Ryan Gosling. Or you can upload selfies. This is a tool that has subtle nuances that add value to your life. Or so you think. Posting your mug on social media is the biggest activity these days. 300 million photos are uploaded to Facebook per day. You would think that seeing one face everywhere would get tiring. Turns out Instagram photos get 38 percent more likes when they have a face in them. Wow. So is the selfie your end-all tool for popularity?

How it backfires: When you are trying to show cool places you have travelled but the screen is filled with a close-up of your pores. How to do it right? Stand behind the camera for a change and let us see this amazing thing you are breathless about.

Before improvising, ask yourself one question. You will often be left with a bigger mess that will take up more of your time to fix. Can you blame it on the cat or not?

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