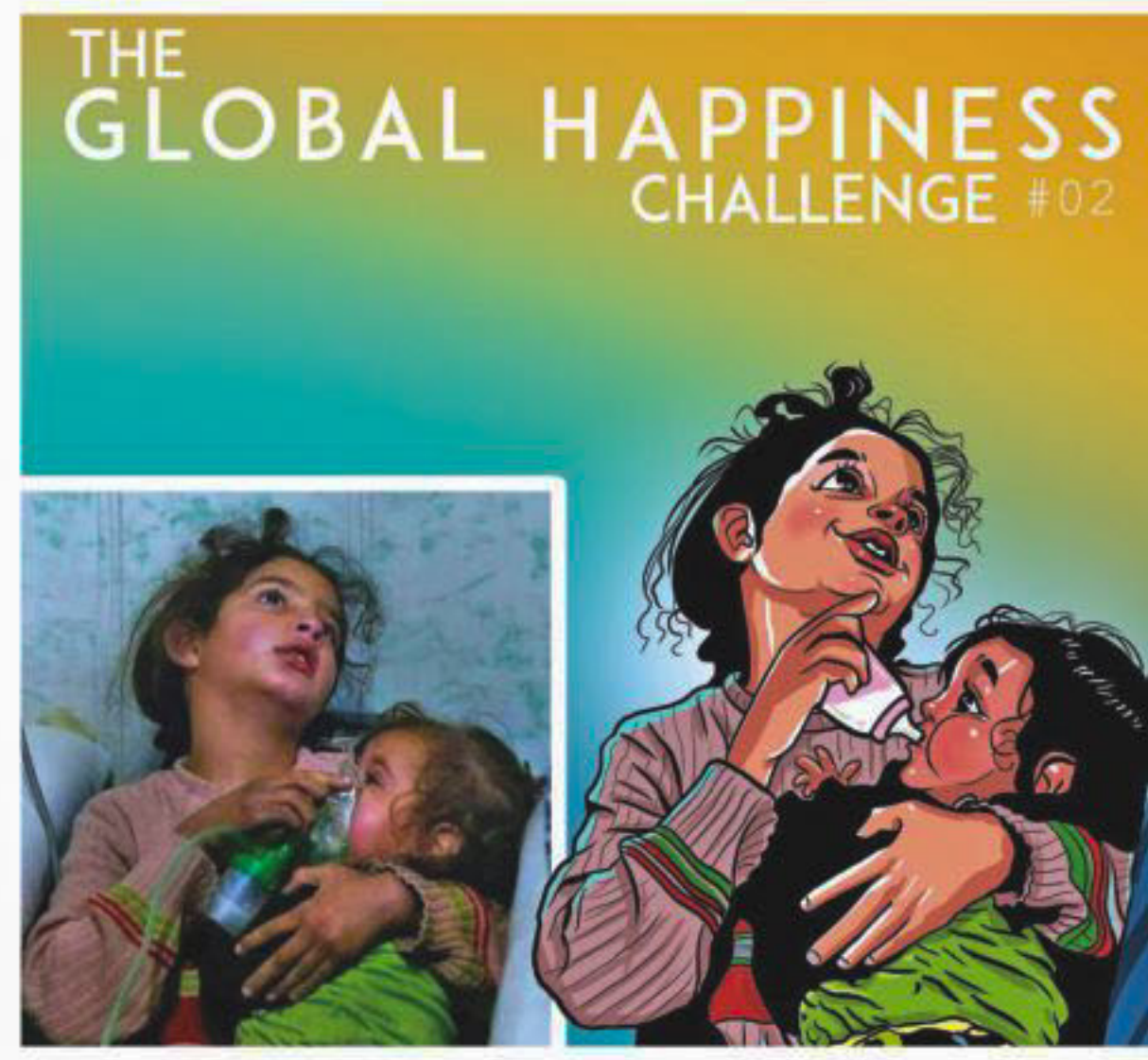
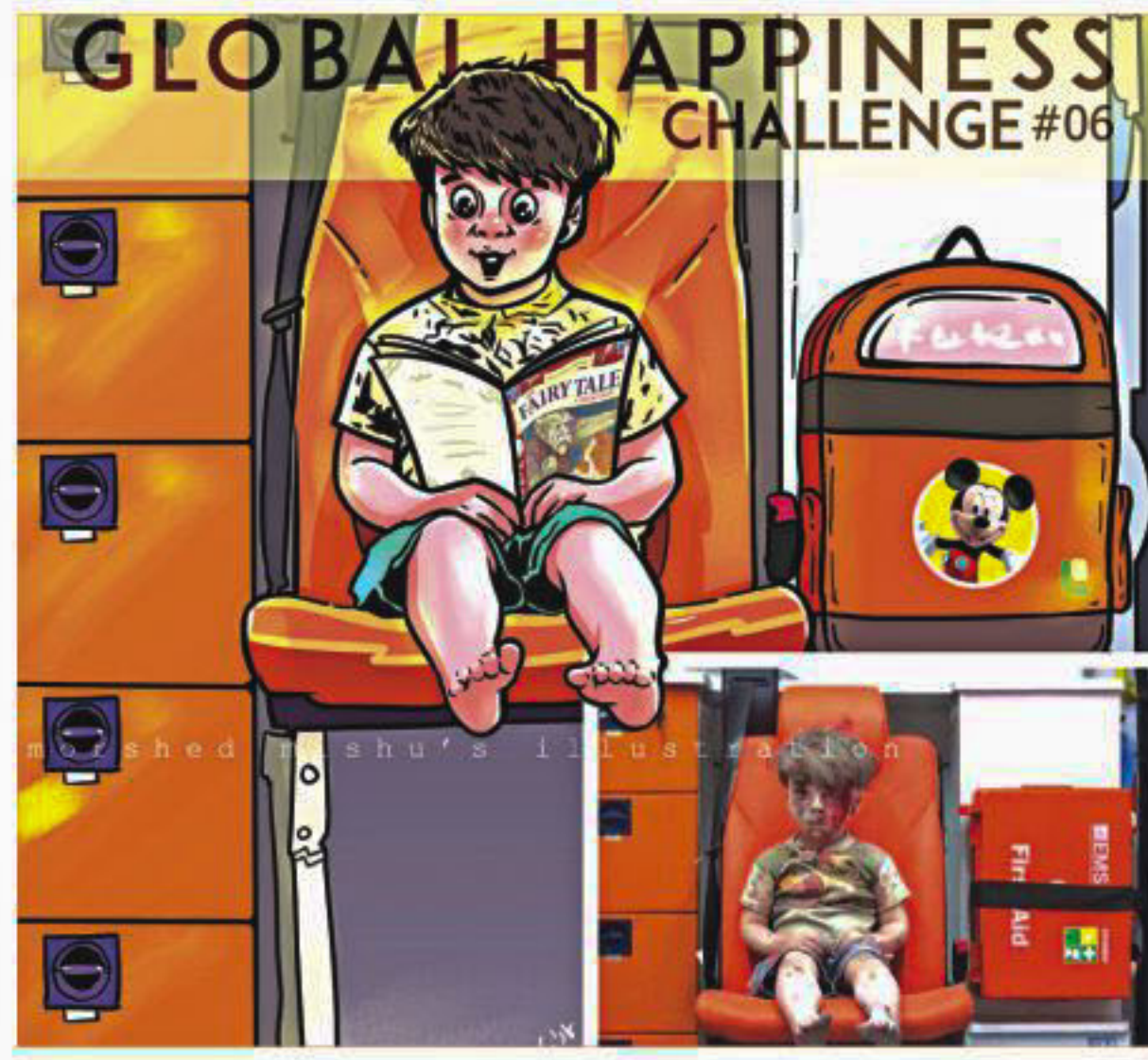




PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED



Art as a path of happiness in a violent world

SHABABA IQBAL

From a young age, Morshed Mishu was an avid fan of comic books, so much so that he grew a knack for drawing comic-book characters, with the guidance of his brother. Apart from comic books, one of his biggest sources of inspiration for becoming a professional cartoonist was the popular satire magazine, *Unmad*. He has worked in many newspapers in various capacities and is currently an assistant editor at *Unmad*.

Mishu's artworks have been featured in a total of 15 to 16 group exhibitions so far, including one in Berlin and another in London. In July 2018, at the 40-year celebrations of *Unmad*, the cartoonist was honoured with an award for The Global Happiness Challenge, his project that turns heartbreaking photographs into happy art. Mishu conceived the idea for the drawing challenge after coming across gruesome photographs of tragedies and wars on his social media feeds. "I found those photo-

graphs so jarring that I started having sleepless nights, and as a result, I would just ignore them," says Mishu. "Then, I decided that I do not want to look at excruciating suffering. I want to see a world without violence, where everyone is happy, and that is how I was compelled to initiate the drawing challenge."

At the beginning of this year, Mishu started out by transforming the photograph of a tearful son, in the arms of his helpless father in a warzone, to an illustration of the same father and son laughing together in a beautiful field, surrounded by flowers and sunshine. Anik Khan, the executive editor of *Unmad*, is Mishu's mentor in this endeavour. He came up with the tagline - *Ami shudhu aakte jaami, koshto gulo dhaakte jaami* (I only know how to draw, how to cover the gloomy sorrow), for the project.

The Global Happiness Challenge has seen a tremendous reception from different corners of the world. So far, it has garnered recognition in the media

of Afghanistan, Albania, Bangladesh, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kurdistan, Turkey, and Vietnam. Popular internet media and news companies such as AJ+, Bored Panda and Buzzfeed have also featured the project. "The greatest achievement for me is when people tell me that they find my illustrations for The Global Happiness Challenge touching and thought-provoking," asserts Mishu.

Currently, The Global Happiness Challenge consists of nine artworks and Mishu hopes to produce 25 to 30 more. As his way of making a difference, he further aspires to host a solo exhibition on this project by next year in Bangladesh, and then take it beyond, to both war-ridden and developed nations. "This drawing challenge is not categorised by any country, borders, class, race, or religion. My aim is to spread the message of peace, positivity and happiness across the globe," says Mishu, before taking a phone call from the Syrian media for yet another chat about his project.

'BIOSCOPE PRIME' arrives with premium content



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

The on-the-go entertainment platform, Bioscope, has come up with a new feature named 'Bioscope Prime'. Customers will be able to enjoy new and exclusive movies using this feature.

The feature will also contain two exciting television channels: Zee and Colors Network, entertaining music and various sports channels. Viewers will be able to enjoy newly released movies such as *Poromon 2*, *Inspector Notty K* and *Bengali Beauty*. A special feature of this particular platform will be short films directed by four popular directors of the country.

Source: Grameenphone Ltd



'Detective Pikachu' trailer released

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

In a trailer released by Warner Bros, Ryan Reynolds is heard voicing the CGI-rendered Pikachu, in the first ever live-action Pokemon movie. A young man named Tim, played by Justice Smith, will be seen teaming up with Detective Pikachu, to find Tim's missing father, detective Harry Goodman, in the film. Tim is the only person who can hear Detective Pikachu. The film, directed by Rob Letterman, is scheduled to release next year.



Jaya Ahsan's 'Beauty Circus'

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT DESK

After the huge success of Jaya Ahsan's production, *Debi*, the leading lady has now moved on to another upcoming project. *Beauty Circus*, a movie that started filming in 2017, is set to release next year. Directed by Mahmud Didar, the film will

look to shed light on a woman's struggle in the circus. "Working on this film has been nothing short of exhilarating," says Jaya. "Acting can take you to places where you never imagined in the first place." Alongside Jaya, Ferdous, Tauquir Ahmed and A B M Sumon will be seen as the lead characters in the film.



PHOTO: COURTESY

'OH MY SWEET LAND' staged at Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy

AFSANA AZIZ NITOL

"I used to cringe thinking about Syria. Now I cringe because of Ashraf," said the actor, who is in search of her refugee activist lover Ashraf, in the play *Oh My Sweet Land*. How war and conflict can dilate any memory, even the ones cherished with love, into nothing but bitter nostalgia - is reflected in the play, staged by Goethe-Institut, in association with Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy.

Corinne Jaber, a French actor of German and Syrian descent, portrayed the wretched situation of the Syrian lands because of the ongoing war in a one-hour act, on Monday evening in the Experimental Hall of Bangladesh Shilpakala Academy. In the play, she cooked Kubah (a traditional Syrian dish) in her apartment in Paris as she narrated the stories of people she encountered in Syria, while looking for Ashraf.

She compared the process of preparing Kubah - the blending of raw flesh, the sound of boiling oil, to destroying human bodies in bombings of the war. The scene of raw flesh kept inside the fridge with the sounds of sizzling oil, as it boils, cannot help but get under the skins of anyone experiencing the play.

The actor's restless demeanour throughout the play was contagious. Her trying to make the perfect Kubah, seemed like an obsession and only way of coping with the anguished memories.

Oh My Sweet Land, directed by Amir Nizar Zuabi, showed how the viciousness of war spreads beyond borders and affects people all over the world. Jaber, with her stories, took the audience from Paris to Lebanon, Jordan and Syria.



PHOTO: SHEIKH MEHEDI MORSHED