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YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY MARCH 18, 2021, CHAITRA 4, 1427 BS

A PUBLICATION OF *The Daily Star*



THE KIDS ARE NOT
ALRIGHT

PG 3

STYLING YOUR
SHORT HAIR

PG 4

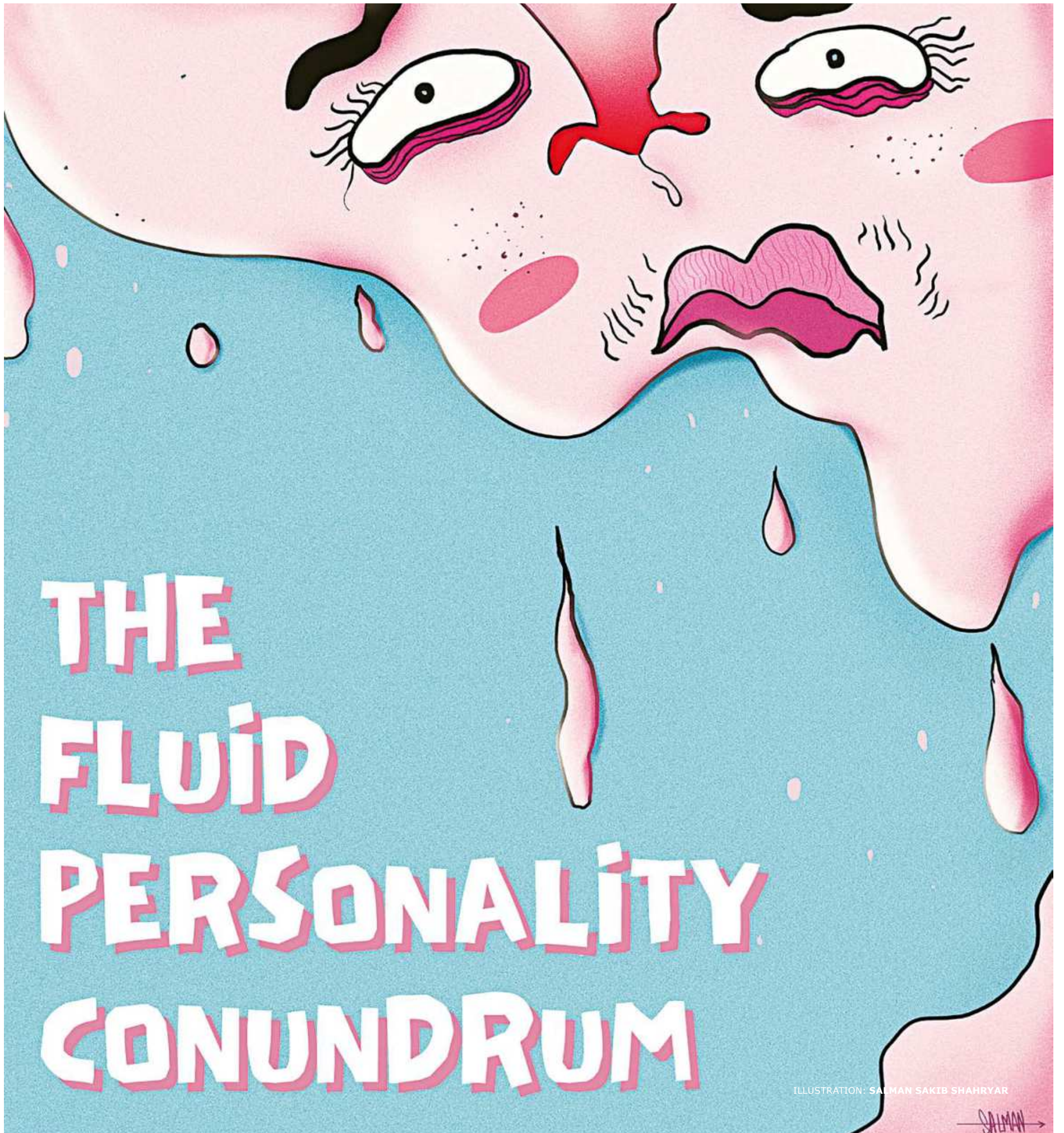


ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR

SALMAN →

EDITORIAL

Think about it. Are you the same person in front of everyone? I really don't think there's a chance for debate here because you probably aren't.

A more formal way of introducing the topic of having different personalities would be to refer to the fact that we have different "circles". Let me help you set a scene: think about a wedding ceremony, and the couple getting married. Who are invited? The family; relatives – close and distant; neighbours; friends – childhood, from college, from university, and from that solo trip you took; colleagues – from your internship, the first job, the second job, your current job; and oh, the new in-laws. Talk about juggling greetings and forced selfies, the couple will have to interact with each of these "circles". And they'll have to juggle being different with each of them.

However, this isn't necessarily a disapproving human trait. It only goes to show you can read people, and can respond according to how you feel. This is (almost) a survival instinct.

As long as you can be you, who cares?

– Kazi Akib Bin Asad, Editor In-charge, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

TV SERIES REVIEW



K-dramas for the Non-romantic Souls

BUSHRA ZAMAN

A lot of the time when I try to introduce my friends to the world of Korean dramas, I hear, "I'm not really into TV romance." Here is my list of recommendations for K-dramas where romance is *not* the main focus.

HOSPITAL PLAYLIST

Five individuals become best friends while studying to be doctors at a medical school. The contrast of the gut-wrenching moments of guilt and sense of reward when patients heal show insight into the amount of around-the-clock emotional and physical distress doctors go through. Their hangouts and weekly musical band meetings look natural and therapeutic. Everything feels real despite the simplicity of the plot, which is what makes this show stand out.

PRISON PLAYBOOK

When unlikely circumstances places a baseball celebrity in prison, how he forms friendships with other inmates and adapts to prison life is the story of *Prison Playbook*. It beautifully portrays how strong bonds can form in the unlikely of places; a combination of both heart-warming and comical scenes keeps the story realistic.

CLASS OF LIES

A lawyer goes undercover as a high school teacher to unravel the truth behind corruption that led him to be fired. Teenage criminal psychology is portrayed so well by the concerned cast that it seems genuine. Certain scenes are surely going to send a chill down your spine.

STRANGER

A prosecutor and a police officer risk it all

to solve multiple related cases involving corruption, murder, and mind games. Bae Doona portrays one of the coolest female leads I have ever seen. The honest morals maintained by the leads against all odds is the most inspiring thing about the whole show.

DESIGNATED SURVIVOR: 60 DAYS

Yes, this is a Korean-remake of the American TV show, but not everything is the same. It portrays the growth and struggles of an introverted man with zero thirst for power, who is suddenly made the president after an extremely unfortunate occurrence. The character development of the man from a shy individual to someone who has full faith in himself leading a country to the best of his abilities, is pleasing to watch.

CONFESSION

As you may have deduced by now, K-dramas involving court law or crime can be pulled off extremely well if the plot is well written. This is one such K-drama concerning a miraculously healed heart patient turned lawyer. It is interesting to watch how the story unfolds, and the manner in which the lawyer proves his worth despite having a past which has unfairly affected his profession as well as his determination to his father's innocence, is inspiring.

Honourable mentions include one of the most beautiful dramas I have ever seen, *Hi Bye Mama*, which is mostly concerned with a general appreciation of life and understanding of death, and *Lies Within*, which although initially has a slow pace, has a good overall plot.

You may now start binge watching (please).

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THE KIDS ARE NOT ALRIGHT

FARIHA S. KHAN

When I envisioned my first year of college, I saw myself on Southern California beaches, meeting new people, and finally getting out of my hometown to discover the world. On my first day of college, I realised that my freshman year would instead be characterised by constant lower back pain from sitting all the time and I would be slowly losing myself while trying to keep up with classes in a time zone 14 hours ahead. It was the complete opposite of the year I had planned for myself.

Realising I was not alone in this narrative somewhat helped. My friend Afia started college at a Japanese institution when the pandemic started getting out of hand in March 2020; she helped me ease into the whole online-learning-from-a-different-time-zone thing. Most of my late night conversations are with Abrar*, who is studying at the University of Texas at Dallas. He is the most intelligent person I know, and watching him slip into depression during this devastating year saddens me immensely. Then there's Sagorika, a third-year student at the University of British Columbia. Sometimes we video call each other and work without saying a word. There is something so comforting about human presence at a time like this, even if our time together is dominated by silence.

Most of the time, I feel disconnected from the people closest to me. My best friend started college at New York University only towards the end of January, which meant that my first quarter of college was defined by short texts between us because of our different sleep schedules. "What are you up to?" I text her when I wake up at night. "Just woke up," she writes back the next morning.

I see my mother for a few minutes every morning when she wakes up for her Fajr prayers and exchange brief conversations with my father when he watches the news before he heads to bed. We were never a family big on having thoughtful conversations but seeing them merely once every day somehow makes me feel that I am farther away from home than I have ever been. As each day passes, I find myself questioning whether losing my sanity is worth it.

Sleep deprivation has become the norm. I sleep when I can, sometimes in the small breaks between classes, and oth-



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

er times, all day. I know college is more than stress, depression, and sleep deprivation. But right now, that reality seems so far out of my reach that I constantly find myself questioning the decision to start college during a pandemic.

At the back of my head, I am constantly reminding myself, *it is not like this*, but at this very moment, *it is like this*. Soon, these words will mean nothing to me, threaded together only for the sake of my mental health. Students are expected to churn out material with almost no support system, and those attending classes from abroad have it twice as hard, battling not only the rigorous quarter system but also a monstrous time difference. I know, the first year of college is never what people expect. Hollywood movies have unexpectedly raised our standards. But the Class of 2024 was met with a different kind of disappointment. We never thought the year would go by behind a screen. Coming to terms with this was tough, most of us still haven't. *We're not alright*.

The other day, I met with Maegan Douglas, another freshman from my English class, virtually. Broken shards of sunlight streamed in through her window as she called me from her Lancaster home, where she lives with her family and three dogs. She tells me she finds herself lucky

having ended up with professors who give her accommodations when she needs them, but they can only do so much for a freshman class that stumbles at every step. She is not wrong. It helps me immensely that the faculty members have been kinder than ever. When I cannot wake up from my two-hour naps for my 8 AM class because I have been in lecture all night, they understand and give me work to make up for missing discussion.

I have not made any friends on campus. I know people, but would I call them friends? How do you know who your friend is in a virtual setting? I know college is more than this constant pang of loneliness, but what if it is the same when I am eventually on campus?

Others going to UCLA from Dhaka tell me that they have not made friends either. "Try connecting with people when they meet at 5 AM over Zoom while you try to squeeze in a power nap between classes," one of them tells me, "Besides, making friends virtually is difficult. No one wants to talk in breakout rooms mandated by your TA."

Knowing this gives me some serenity, but it is difficult being somewhat of an extrovert and realising that you have spent a whole quarter in an institution and not interacted with anyone meaningfully.

However, as taxing as the first quarter of college was, it has taught me so much. I may have spent nearly every minute of it knee-deep in stress because of the intense course load but somehow loved every second of it. I was awed by my faculty members and how much insight they had to offer on just about everything, whether it was lectures on Aristotle's *Poetics* or conversations with my TA on how sexual violence is used as a weapon of war. Passion seeped into every aspect of their work and that made me a little bit more hopeful about my education. This was the first time in a long while that I was genuinely enjoying the material that I was being taught and could not contain my excitement to learn more.

During our call, Maegan tells me she is hopeful for when we are eventually back on campus. She looks forward to a better, less stressful time and firmly believes that she can expand her social circle beyond the one friend she made in science class. "We'll be alright," she tells me.

I think I am starting to believe her.

**Names have been changed for privacy.*

Fariha is a first-year undergraduate student at UCLA. Send her memes at fariha.safa@gmail.com



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READER SUBMISSION

5 Stages of Getting Vaccinated

NAFISA NOWSHIN

The current efforts of nationwide vaccination against Covid-19 is the entire buzz. Many people are getting vaccinated and expressing relief. So it got me thinking how these people with so many diverse opinions are deciding to get vaccinated. The result? This article, which follows a fictional character through five stages of his vaccination journey.

DENIAL

At this stage, our fictional person would disbelieve the vaccine to be real or effective. He would go through all the unverified posts on social media about how this is a “plot” or “scam”. He would believe every other speculation about the vaccine, of it being fake or having side effects that can only occur in science fiction. But what he won't do is check the sources of these news pieces or try to listen to actual experts talking about it.

SCEPTICISM

In the second stage, he would start to shift his viewpoint with the increasing social media posts debunking the rumors about the vaccine. He thinks “So maybe it's real, but then again I will never be able to get it. I will need to know someone high up to get



PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN

on the vaccine list. Which I don't, so why bother trying?”

“OMUIK” TOOK THE VACCINE

Now he would start to learn about people from his immediate and not so immediate circles getting vaccinated. He sees them putting statuses and posting pictures about it. Now he is going to experience some serious FOMO. At first, it will be one or two

people. But gradually the circle will start to close in. Then he would start getting phone calls from these people saying they took the vaccine and ask why he hasn't done so yet. He will not have a good response.

IT ACTUALLY IS EASY

Now he is in the stage where he wishes he could get the vaccine but won't admit it. He starts inquiring about how to register for

the vaccine. He also asks around about side effects from the people who already took the vaccine. He still has some of his initial scepticism but decides to give it a go. He attempts registration but is determined to give up if it seems too much work. But to his surprise, it's very easy and takes so little time to register.

THE VACCINE SELFIE

The day finally comes, he arrives at the vaccination centre. He is excited but also a little nervous. Will it hurt? Will he be able to hold his composure? Finally, his turn comes. He goes up to the nurse, sits down, and braces himself. The nurse proceeds with the injection, but then he remembers the most important part. The photo! He asks her to wait, takes out his mobile, and gives it to someone nearby to take a photo. Now he makes what he considers a brave face. The camera clicks away and our fictional character finally gets his vaccine.

Now he can also put vaccine photos on social media.

Nafisa Nowshin is a computer science graduate from Shahjalal University of Science and Technology. She can be reached at nafisanowshin.13@gmail.com

Styling Your Short Hair

FARNAZ FAWAD HASAN

I have always worn my hair short. From bowl-cuts to bob cuts and voguish pixies to wispy side-swept fringes, I've tried it all. Short hair is a statement on its own and over the decades, it has broken various gender norms and classical connotations. But some days, the Mia Wallace-esque hair you're trying to pull off ends up making you look like Lord Farquaad.

Taming these tresses of stress can be a pain when the tiny hairs stick to your sweaty forehead. Here are five versatile hairstyles that will make you look like a million bucks.

BEND THE TREND WITH BUBBLE BRAIDS

This is a fun way to give dimension to any hairstyle. This hairstyle has bombarded our feeds with its resurgence and needless to say, it's super easy and low effort. Part your hair your preferred way and take a section of hair from the crown of your head. With a clear or colourful elastic band, tie the strand of hair at the root. When you're done, you can take a few strands of hair from the side and tie it again the same way, spacing them a couple of inches apart. Prolong the process until you're happy with your plaits. Tease the “bubbles” so that you get a cute, fluffy pigtail. Do the same on your side and rock this *insta*-worthy hairstyle.

GO BANANAS WITH BANDANAS

Whether you are having a bad hair day or looking to spice up your everyday look, bandanas, and scarfs are a great addition to your look book. The simplest way is folding the scarf/bandana in a triangular shape and tying it towards the nape of your neck, keeping it a few inches away from your hairline. You can fold the bandana and wear it as a headband, knotting the ends into bunny ears, or sport a casual sporty look. Pull out a few sections of hair from the sides to frame your face, and soften up the look a little. Mix and match to create endless possibilities.

FEEL FIERCE WITH A FAUX HAWK

Bring back the 80's with a modern twist on the mainstream punk – mohawk. If you're tired of the cutesy looks and want to try something edgy and cool, a faux hawk is your call. For this, pull back all of your hair as



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

tightly as you can to the back of your hair and braid it starting from your hairline towards the back. You can braid the sides of your hair to add a little texture. If you have shaved sides or a pixie, faux hawks become easier to achieve with hair products.

SASS UP YOUR STYLE WITH SPACE BUNS

Looking for something effortlessly cute? Space buns will give you the best soft rounded vibe. Flaunting these half-up, half-down mini-buns makes you stand out from the generic crowd. Hairstyles with bangs and tendrils make this style look more flattering.

ELEVATE YOUR ESSENCE WITH ACCESSORIES

Butterfly clips, barrettes, and sparkly headbands – these dainty embellishments are back better than ever. Short-haired people can never have enough of these in their arsenal. Be it braids, ponytails, or up-dos, hair accessories can make any coiffure appear wonderfully whimsical.

Anyone can pull off short hair. If you're still thinking about chopping your hair off, you know what to do.

Farnaz Fawad Hasan spends most of her time dreaming about chicken nugget castles. Tell her to snap back to reality at farnazfawadhasan@gmail.com

The Fluid Personality Conundrum

BUSHRA ZAMAN & RASHA JAMEEL

Liquid (noun) [C/U]: a substance that flows easily and is neither a gas nor a solid.

From the given definition, we can gather that a liquid's most distinguishable characteristic is its ability to conform to the nature of its surroundings, be it a vessel or just a flat surface. Could the same theory be applied to people who mould different aspects of their personalities according to the company they keep?

Upon conducting some research on the theory, we came across the following from a behavioural study:

“A surrounding environment often influences which information needs to be attentively processed in certain ways and also determines an appropriate action set or behavioral repertoire. That is, the surrounding environment often determines the modus operandi of the brain.” (Choong-Hee Lee & Inah Lee, 2013)

So, essentially, people adapt to the people *around* them, with the latter's behaviour acting as different stimuli influencing the former's behaviour. In the pursuit of being accepted by just about everyone, it's hard to stay constant – to

ME AT HOME



ME AT WORK



ME WITH FRIENDS



ME BY MYSELF



We activating my personality switch based on which friend I'm hanging out with



be just one version of yourself.

It's this pressure that influences people's decision to conform. Trying to be well liked becomes an addictive practice in people's daily lives, almost instinctual at one point. When you're amongst family, chances are, you'd want to make your parents feel proud of you, the entirety of your existence. The only way to ensure that happens is to take on the role of the family favourite. In order to add further meaning to that sentiment, you might just throw in some steadfast obedience and you'll fit right into a conservative Bangladeshi family. This isn't always a forced adaptation of course; for family-oriented individuals, family is the biggest source of comfort.

Being around friends, on account of potentially sharing similar goals and ideas, calls for a more laid-back attitude in the case of others.

Samantha Khan*, 20, says, “I have an incredibly difficult time having a proper conversation with my parents. With my friends, there's this sense of liberation where I know I won't be judged for any of my choices. They offer me a sense of comfort that my parents can't.”

Offering a different perspective of parent-child interactions, 24-year-old Ishmam Khandaker* says, “My equation with my friends is a bit more relaxed as I don't feel responsible for them the way I do with my parents. With my family, I'm more practical. With my friends, I'm another dorky kid.”

However, people occasionally tend to over-indulge in carefree behaviour around friends and become highly susceptible to some degree of recklessness.

In an office environment, the situation varies even more as you find yourself attempting to strike a balance between professionalism and friendliness. Overstepping boundaries is unacceptable. Therefore, you bring out your somewhat reserved self, one who doesn't laugh too loudly and refrains from communicating in terms deemed inappropriate for workplaces. Finally, when you're by yourself for a brief moment throughout a day, you feel... conflicted, about yourself. The conundrum presents itself.

Prioritising different aspects of your personality in different social circles, are you losing sight of who you really are?

Perhaps this is where the harm lies in your efforts towards fitting in. The fear of being the odd person out, the discomfort associated with a lack of popularity, the peer pressure to conform, has perhaps led you to a state of dissociation within yourself. The end result is a personality, fractured. The more you try to become everyone else, the less you become of *you*. The conundrum intensifies.

Let's take a look at how the Covid-19 pandemic has factored into our social interactions.

Portraying different aspects of your personality according to context can indeed get more complicated during a period of isolation, where there's a lack of stimuli in the surrounding environment. They could be flabbergasted upon seeing someone after a very long time, finding themselves at a loss for words despite having many thoughts run through their heads. To the friend they are speaking to, they may just seem spaced out. This may cause them to hug the concerned individual to help make up for the words lost, despite being the human equivalent of a tree: extremely uncomfortable to hug (during pre-pandemic times).

Of course, extroverts are perfectly capable of remaining... extroverted. The pandemic may even make you want to be more outgoing than before. You could find yourself speed walking in parks making

conversation with strangers. You may be unaffected by the pandemic, as was with Dolly Zaman*, 22, who said, “My communication from the hostel with both my family and friends were over phone/social networking sites. So not meeting many people didn't affect me so much. But I did miss the casual face to face meetings with my friends and batch mates.”

If you were already an introvert, the pandemic may have contributed to your general appreciation of being at home, says high-schooler June Rahman*, “I am believed to be extroverted around school friends, but in general remain aloof and cold to others. During the pandemic, I have found myself to be communicating more with everyday faces than I used to in the past.”

Meeting someone outside of those from home could cause you to stammer or forget words while attempting to converse. Two approaches to dealing with this issue could be to either fake an emergency and run for your life to hide from embarrassment or to honestly explain how you are not used to conversations with anyone outside of home in recent times and will take some time to get used to things.

There's always the risk of misconceptions arising due to the changes in behavioural aspects selectively occurring depending on the social group you are with. Being less able to speak with people you do not see often, but perfectly conversing with others at home, being known for being as stiff as a tree when it comes to hugging but willingly giving bear hugs to loved ones, telling your family you abhor walks but being known for loving walks with friends are all tiny inconsistencies in your behaviour in social groups that once identified, could cause those who know you to doubt the authenticity of your personality.

This is because even the trivial habits and personality attributes you see in an individual give you a sense of familiarity. Such trivial characteristics are combined to constitute your general idea of the person and helps you identify them. If these characteristics do not hold true, you ask yourself, do I really know this person? Did they pretend to be a certain way in order

to get along with me? If so, do they have an ulterior motive? Before you know it, the concerned individual may be deemed as untrustworthy.

Step one to overcoming this issue is to accept yourself as you are. There is no superior personality, there is only what is deemed as morally incorrect and correct. Seeking self-improvement should not be correlated with the alteration of opinions or aspects of your personality that are not causing harm. Therefore, there is no need to, for example, convince yourself of being fond of a popular music genre or a particular hobby when amongst a particular social group in order to engage in conversation with them.

Keeping up appearances is hard as is, and being true to yourself cannot only help increase self-confidence, but also other's confidence in you by making you seem to be genuine. According to psychiatrist and author Joanna Cannon, “Instead of living our lives in monochrome, it might be more fulfilling to search for the colour, and the variance, in those around us, and we can then allow ourselves to be accepted for who we really are – not for the fragments of our characters we allow people to see.”

Human personalities can be very complicated, and complexities aren't necessarily flaws. Deviations in behaviour according to context are a survival skill that may just exist eternally. The conundrum will always be there.

**Names have been changed to protect privacy*

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2. Psychology Today (July 13, 2016). *We All Want To Fit In*.

Bushra Zaman likes books, art, and only being contacted by email. Find her at bushrazaman31@yahoo.com

Rasha Jameel is your neighborhood feminist-who-writes-big-essays. Remind her to also finish writing her bioinformatics research paper at rasha.jameel@outlook.com



FOUR WEEKS TO EXAMS: JOURNEY OF A STUDENT

AMRIN TASNIM RAFA

Prepare to scream #relatable.

WEEK ONE: A ROLLERCOASTER OF EMOTIONS

The first week of receiving your syllabus is a balanced mixture of panic and denial. There's absolutely NO way you have to start preparing already, don't you remember relishing the joys of the end of another exam season just a week ago? And then comes the panic, because by now you know the dreaded pattern that keeps repeating every single year, yes, the one that ends up with you cramming last minute. This time you're prepared to avoid that at all costs. But oh wait, isn't that what you tell yourself

a month before every exam?

WEEK TWO: SMART PREP

Ok, so the last week was spent coming to terms with how you felt, but it's about time you take some actual preparation. By now you're invincible. You're armed with a study schedule, enough entertainment that's enjoyable yet not too addictive for proper relaxation between study sessions, and all necessary stationary including a whole bunch of overpriced notebooks because hello? Investments. A cleared out study space made it into your priority list too, but it's only at the end of the week when you realize all of this extensive preparation did cost a lot of time. And now you have two weeks remaining to enlighten yourself with

the contents of your syllabus.

WEEK THREE: MOTIVATED MONDAYS

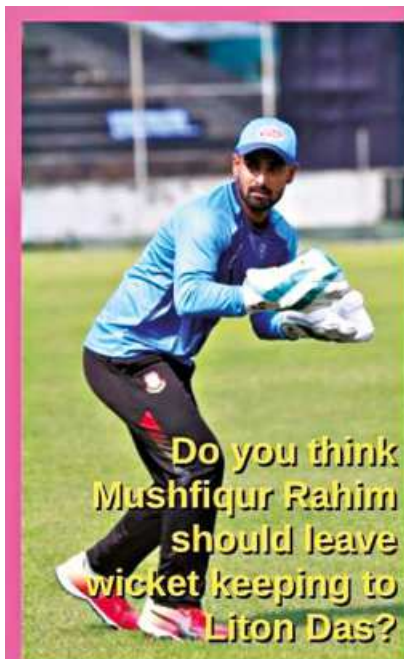
By now all other exam preparations, except for the studying, have been completed. And it takes you a couple of days to get used to your new studious way of life. Uneventful days of laid-back revision are spent as you refuse to put any pressure on yourself because stress kills productivity, right?

WEEK FOUR: OH CRAM! LAST MINUTE

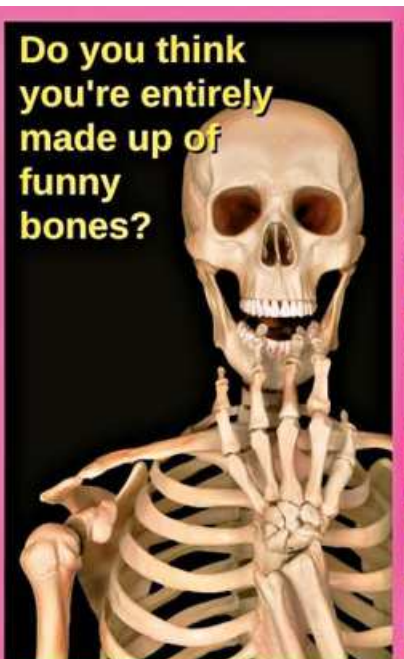
If you thought your first week of preparing was emotional, I pity you. This week starts with the realization dawning upon you of how even after years of the same pattern, you have not gotten any better at time management. This remarkable week just

speeds by with you cramming in all the information you can, drowning in all the work you've let pile up, all the while wallowing in self-hatred for letting this happen to you yet again. By now you don't need any more of those ever familiar reminders of how 'exams are knocking at the door' by your beloved teachers. You don't know if you should be pitied or punished, knowing full well you're the one who's brought this upon yourself.

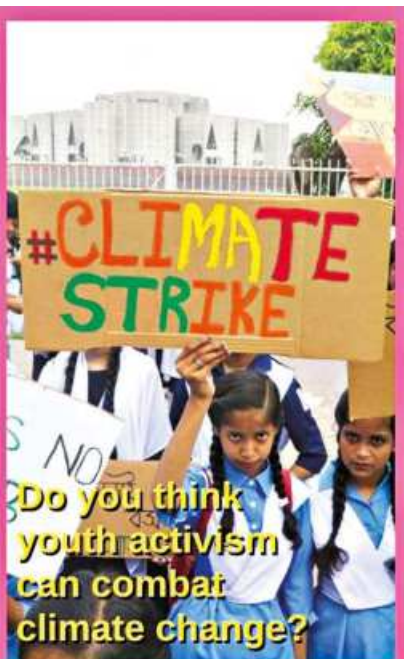
Now that you're acquainted with a dramatized version of how the next four weeks before exam season will be spent, I must say it's worth trying to avoid procrastination and prioritize actually trying rather than just 'preparing'.



Do you think Mushfiqur Rahim should leave wicket keeping to Liton Das?



Do you think you're entirely made up of funny bones?



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Meaning of Truth

NAWAL RABBANI

Have you ever told a lie,
 That caused a friendship to untie?
 A lie can do a lot of harm,
 Even cause the biggest alarm!

But what about a white lie?
 For a party, or a surprise!
 Will it make everything go anti-clockwise?

A lie can also be bad,
 And make everyone a tad mad.
 But admitting it is the best thing you can do,
 So everyone can live with words that are true.

But you shouldn't tell a lie in the first place,
 It can cause a confusing case.
 Just because someone is intimidating,
 Don't let the truth go into fading.

Always stand up for the true statement,
 Then you will be the great amazement!

The writer is a grade 5 student at Delhi Public School.



PREDATORS

MAIF MUHAMMAD KRITI

The first ray of the morning sun poured down on the sapling, unveiling the dark around it. In the middle of the forest, among the many greeneries, the sapling seemed to stand with its humble existence. Suddenly the wind picked up, stirring the trees. The sapling swung sideways as if it was nodding to the wind. The rustling of the leaves had drowned out the sound of an approaching animal. It was a deer. Her pelt was lightly golden, covered with white spots. She kept trotting until she reached the sapling. She lowered her head and uprooted the sapling with her teeth. And that made her first meal for the day.

The baby deer kept scampering through the forest until she reached a small pool of water. Sunlight kept reflecting off the water, as though it was a blessing in that lonely forest. The deer halted at the corner of the pool and bent to drink. Filling her stomach full to the brim, she jolted sideways to get rid of the water that had drenched her golden fur. Then she set off again.

He was licking his paws when he noticed the deer emerging from the bushes. Sitting in the cast shadow of an enormous tree, he was thinking about how he could satisfy his hunger for that day. She would make a small meal, but it was better than starving. He formed a stance, while meticulously observing the poor animal's movements. The deer did not see him; she began to proceed towards the clearing a little too far from where he sat. He rose straight, leaning his head towards the deer's direction, lifted one of his paws, and remained motionless. As though a single sound would alert his prey.

The deer stopped at the clearing and scratched her ear with her hoof. As she



heard the sudden crunching sounds of the fallen leaves, she looked around and spotted a tiger behind one of the trees. The tiger had noticed too, and he was slowly approaching her. She made a run of her

life; she had never seen one but somehow that creature seemed to be ominous. The tiger also quickened his pace, splashing through the puddles as he ran. The deer was dashing through the trees, but her

small legs hardly could match that of the tiger. The tiger attacked her neck and at last, he got her. The deer made futile efforts but became still after a while. Pleased, the tiger carried the deer to a nearby tree and began to savor it. He pulled her tender flesh off the bones with his sharp incisors.

The western edges of the sky were slowly turning vermillion. The orange fur of the sleeping tiger dimmed in the fading light of the sunset. The vestiges of the deer laid beside him. Birds were retreating to their nests after a long search for foods, recurring twittering of them echoed through the forest. Then a thundering sound resounded followed by loud roars. The tiger struggled for a while and became still. One man came down by a ladder from a nearby tree.

He slowly approached the tiger, careful not to get too close.

"Dead?" said a voice up from the tree, breaking the silence.

Blood was gushing out from the tiger's head, soaking his fur.

"Yes," said the other, now finished checking.

The other man came down from the tree and joined his mate. Then they tied the tiger's paws with a rope and held the tiger upside down with the help of a long cane. Each of them took either side of the cane and lifted the tiger up from the ground. And then they hurried toward their village while the tiger's tail kept brushing against the soft grasses.

Dark had begun to veil everything slowly, as the sun had already sunk behind the forest.

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ILLUSTRATION: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD

AAHIR MRITTIKA

Podcasts are the rising medium of entertainment right now, and can be incredibly fun and informative to listen to. They are easy to put on as background noise and are mostly completely free. I launched my own video-podcast last year and learned the process through lots of trial and error. If you're a storyteller or a podcast enthusiast who wants to start your own series, keep reading from the *obviously* best host in town.

THE ABSOLUTE BASICS

Why do you want to have a podcast? Who do you want as your audience? What do you want to talk about? What's so important to you that you can spend hours talking about it? You could be selling a product or narrating spooky stories like Bhoot FM, but you should have a general theme and at least 10 episode ideas in your mind before starting. Start researching similar podcasts. This will help you decide whether your theme is viable, what your competition looks like, and the reaction of the audience. You should also research delivery and creative forces that go behind the content.

THE CONTENT

Write down everything under your overarching theme. If you want to stand out among millions of podcasts, you must have a niche! Narrowing it down also allows space for detailed analysis. Don't just discuss toxic parenting – discuss toxic Bengali parenting in a middle class household or with an only child or the effects of it on the eldest child. Use these nuances to create personalised and engaging content, and definitely plan ahead with notes and references.

THE TECHNICALITIES

Starting off actually isn't that expensive or difficult. Clip-on mics are cheap and available, and

any decent smartphone will do. There are loads of free user-friendly software like Audacity for audio and video editing. Look into streaming platforms you'll release your podcasts on, and the demographic of its audience.

There's always the option of adding to your setup as you grow, and this gives you an opportunity to be more certain about what kind of equipment you need before you invest. Plug and play mics and tripods are some basic examples. I found Bangladeshi YouTubers helpful while researching microphones and digital cameras, because they can point to a website or shop accessible to you.

THE EXECUTION

Spend some time deciding on your target audience and plan accordingly. A conversation styled approach is more suitable to unpack a topic, while an interview or narration is apt if your aim is to educate people on something. However, you should aim to find your own hybrid within these formats. I have informal discussions on my podcast, but it often overlaps with the interview format because I get to guide the direction of discourse happening. The setting is also essential -- how do you maintain social distance without making the episode a monotonous Zoom call?

And then, think about details like cover art and intro music. Getting art made for you is the best case scenario but free logo generators, Canva, and copyright free music can genuinely be good replacements if you look hard enough. Oh, you should probably come up with a name and episode duration by now too...

Aahir Mrittika likes to believe she's a Moham-madpur local, but she's actually a nerd. Catch her studying at mrittikaahir@gmail.com

It's Not You, It's Me

NISHAT TASNEEM SHAHARA

If you are wondering why all your three-month long relationships have inevitably fizzled out, maybe, *just maybe*, a little introspection is in order.

You are not in touch with your own emotions

You don't know what you need from your significant other and you don't know what you want out of your relationships. It's not uncommon to go with the flow, but not knowing your wants and needs, hinders relationships from growing into something serious. In situations like this, you're most likely to follow what your partner wants, and that may lead to discontentment and further complications in the long run. Take some time off, learn to process your emotions and acknowledge any negative ones. You can't voice your own needs and feelings if you never learn what they are.

You need to learn effective communication

Once you're confident that you understand yourself and know your needs well, the next problem may lie in your communication skills (or lack thereof). If people often misunderstand your tone and you are constantly explaining yourself, you probably have to learn to communicate better. The most important and neglected aspect of effective communication is listening, and listening *with intent*. You need to be emotionally available and work on your ability to empathise to become a good listener. It's okay to not be good at this right away, but with time, practice and some Anna Akana videos, you can help your partner feel heard and cared for.

You don't take the time to understand your SO's love language

This can be a tricky one. Is your partner's way of showing affection different from yours, or are they just not that into you? Keep a look out for patterns. Do they actively make time for you? Do they hesitate professing their love for you in words but get you really personal, thoughtful gifts? We are often biased when it comes to showing love; we tend to assume there are certain ways of loving someone and even more specific ways of showing that love. We accept what's familiar to us, and forget to account for anything different. Some may prefer voiced affirmations through letters and voice notes, while others might like acts of service such as grocery shopping dates. Have enough patience to get to know your partner and their love language.

You have past trauma or unaddressed issues

This can manifest in your life in a variety of ways. Maybe your past experiences with unhealthy relationships have taught you toxic patterns, and you don't know how to get out of those cycles. Maybe you have a fear of abandonment because of some unfortunate trauma, and it is manifesting itself in the form of trust issues with your partner.

We learn everything about love and comfort in early stages of our lives, mostly from our primary caregivers. We accept the love we are familiar with, and it is very likely that many unhealthy patterns might have been passed off as the norm, and you have internalized them. There is no shame in accepting your issues, going to therapy, or working on yourself. You will be a better person at the end of it, and all your relationships healthier.

Nishat Tasneem Shahara is her friends' self-appointed therapist. Rant to her at nish.nts@gmail.com



ILLUSTRATION: ALIZA RAHMAN