

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
MAGAZINE

SHOUT

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THINGS I'VE LEARNED
AS A BLOGGER

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DIG INTO THE MADNESS OF
PAGLA BABURCHI

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A CYBERSPACE UNSAFE FOR WOMEN



ILLUSTRATION: ORCHID CHAKMA

EDITORIAL

At the time of writing this, the lockdown has just begun. However, it is as lenient a lockdown as one can be. Maybe we should think about rebranding such events. Lock-down? In its true sense, which you'll see if you've been out on the streets of Dhaka, it should be called "the door's open-come and go as you like".

It's not that we don't take things seriously. What's alarming is how quickly the needle of our multi-layered moral compass shifts between "concerned" and "indifferent". One day we're stunned by numbers, the next day we don't care if our number comes up. People are still out in groups, still without their masks. We may pride ourselves when it comes to resilience and fighting back but truth be told – and these aren't my words – patience is a virtue.

If I'm feeling anything at the moment, it's déjà vu. Stay alert, dear readers, and stay home.

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



PLAYWATCH

ANIME REVIEW



Jujutsu Kaisen

Classic formula, modern take

SYEDA TASNIM ISLAM

Jujutsu Kaisen (JJK) is the latest series that has taken the anime world by storm and successfully made its mark as a popular anime. It is an adaptation of the manga written and illustrated by Gege Akutami. Although the manga was published back in 2017, JJK aired its first episode in October 2020. Produced by MAPPA Studios, JJK is an anime reminiscent of shonen classics like *Naruto* and *Bleach*. In fact, the creator revealed being inspired by *Bleach*.

The plot centers around Yuji Itadori, the strong, passionate yet adorably clumsy protagonist. He is a high schooler that gets introduced to the world of sorcery, or *jujutsu*, after his school gets attacked by spirits due to the unearthing of a cursed object. During the attack he meets Megumi Fushiguro, a sorcerer from Jujutsu Tech, there to exorcise the spirits and retrieve the object.

Chaos ensues, and following an epic fight scene, Yuji ends up becoming possessed by Sukuna – one of the most powerful cursed spirits of the underworld.

Yuji eventually joins Jujutsu Tech, and we get to meet the brilliant sensei Gojo Satoru, and the headstrong female student Nobara Kugisaki. Megumi, Yuji and Nobara form a team under Gojo Satoru, reminding us of the legendary Team 7 from *Naruto*. Again, the first few episodes are very reminiscent of the classic shonen anime, with similar themes in terms of character dynamics and traits.

However, just when you think you've got JJK somewhat figured out, you notice the twists. First, you see that a happy ending isn't guaranteed and the main

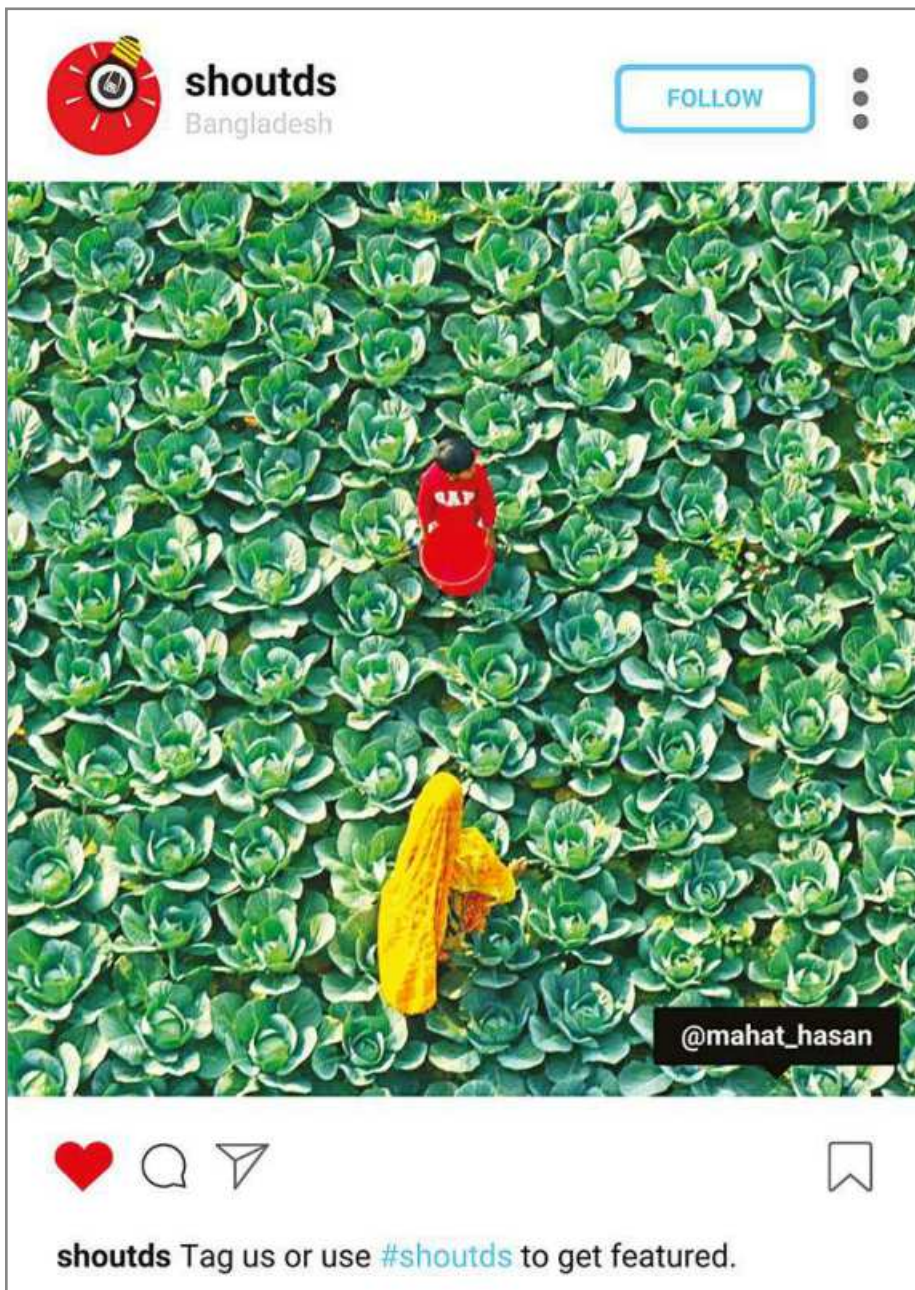
characters don't always win. Secondly, Sukuna is a complete character of his own with his own motives. Previously, we've seen the evil beings possessing the protagonist having some redeeming qualities but that does not seem to be the case here.

Most importantly, you sense the self-awareness of the anime in its storytelling, which is most evident in the way JJK treats its female characters. The shonen genre started off as catered to male viewers and it was obvious when you watched the shows: the female characters always seemed like an afterthought compared to their male counterparts.

With time though, this genre has become popular to both male and female viewers. And the creators seem to have kept that in mind. The female characters of JJK are equally as strong, competent, and interesting as the male ones. They do not exist as mere objects, punchlines, or even tools for the protagonists to seem more "heroic".

There is also no unnecessary dragging of arcs, and the storyline is very easy to follow without being predictable, or worse – mediocre.

To wrap up, *Jujutsu Kaisen* should be on your list for a few reasons: it delivers to the viewers an interesting story, entertaining dialogues with even pop culture references, an amazing soundtrack, and last but certainly not the least, *brilliant* animation. The animation, and the modern take on the shonen formula is what *makes* JJK. With only the first season completed, it's so well-done that *Jujutsu Kaisen* has proven to be worthy of the word, in its truest sense – awesome.



Things I've Learned as A Blogger

RASHA JAMEEL

When I first started my own blog, I didn't know a thing.

All I knew was that I was heavily inspired by the Bangladeshi bookstagramming community and just wanted to channel my creativity through an outlet best suited for me. Lo and behold! My book blog was born.

I believe I've learnt enough since 2019 about launching your own blog. We shall start at the beginning.

THE NAME GAME

There's a lot in a name – your blogging handle especially. If you intend to monetise your blog, you want your name to sound edgy, unique, catchy; a name worthy of embodying a brand, which is essentially you and your online presence. However, if you intend to refrain from monetising your blog, you want your blogging handle to reflect the passion you put into your blog. Choose wisely.

FINDING YOUR AESTHETIC

The only thing that adds to the uniqueness of your blog, apart from your blogging handle, is your aesthetic. Yes, *aesthetic*. It is your sense of style which is customised to be a product of your personal attributes, meant for an online audience. For me, it's all about vintage, minimalistic photography featuring solid colours and a neat presentation of my thoughts. What about you?

THE ABCS OF DIGITAL CONTENT CREATION

Your blog is your space to create digital content, meant for social platforms online. This is where it gets tricky. Regardless of whether your blog is on a social networking site or not, you'll have to keep in mind the importance of photography for your blog. Photos, videos, and graphics are what'll capture the attention of your audience, encouraging them to go through the entire blog post which



features your thoughts and opinions.

If you're shooting for photos, it's important to consider lighting and set-up. The former can either be natural or artificial, the latter will have to be based off of your aesthetic which you've decided on earlier. If you're concerned about fancy camera equipment, don't be. Editing apps such as Snapseed, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Lightroom, and PicsArt will come to your aid.

An online blog's presentation doesn't solely rely on your photography and editing skills of course. Your words will serve as the main content which will define your blog for what it is – your online space for creative expression. In order to adhere to your aesthetic, you'll have to come up with a theme that'll help your audience go through all your blog posts with ease, keeping them engaged. Do make sure to keep your audience in mind, and the kind of content they seek from you. You can categorise your blog posts based on the type of content being presented. Note-taking apps such as Bear, Ulysses, and Pages can be of

immense help with planning and posting.

For my book blog, I break down the book reviews into four parts: premise, likes, dislikes, and the verdict, accompanied by a scoring system at the end. Time to brainstorm about yours.

EMBRACING THE COMMUNITY SPIRIT

The best thing about being a blogger is becoming part of a blogging community. There are art bloggers, book bloggers, fashion bloggers, blogger activists... it's a long list. The more you reach out to fellow bloggers, the more knowledgeable and confident you'll become of your own content. Communication is key.

Now that you have taken in all the insight I have to offer regarding the basics of blogging, be sure to make something of it.

Don't forget the hashtags please.

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





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Animals Are Better Companions than Humans. Here's Why.

BUSHRA ZAMAN

If you tend to obsess over animals featured in movies and TV shows more than the human characters, you may have wondered how lucky these fictional people are to have such wonderful pets and animal friends. I completely understand you; animals can be better companions than humans at times, and these are the reasons why.

IT IS EASY TO PREDICT WHERE THEIR LOYALTIES LIE

The way a dog wags its tail whenever it sees its owner after a long day, or even how a cat softly purrs while resting on your lap, with zero verbal communication, these animals manage to express their feelings towards you clearly. There is no need to analyse their behaviour, no unnecessary drama, no plot-twists, no pretending to like someone when deep down you actually hate them; things are exactly as they seem. Is there not a movie involving a scene where a dog was waiting for their owner to come home, unaware of how the owner had passed away? I'm not crying, you are.

THEY ARE THE ARGUABLY THE BEST COMPANIONS, EVEN IN SILENCE

Suppose you have had a bad day, and are exhausted. You want to take a walk but



are not in the mood to talk to anyone. A dog may prove to be the perfect companion in this case, where it would be happy to go on a walk with you and your very presence is appreciated, without you even having to speak.

THEY MANAGE TO BE A TRUSTWORTHY SECURITY ALARM

Dogs, birds, and even turtles can understand the presence of a stranger in the house.

Many tame animals can recognise their owners from others. You can shower them with love and protect them from harm, and they can try their best to do the same for you. For example, picture a certain cartoon character that tries to protect its owners despite being a cowardly dog. You could even train your bird to dive into people's faces on command when you have an annoying guest over, and can use

this as an excuse to get rid of them.

THEY ARE LIKE HUMAN BABIES MINUS THE POTENTIAL UNGRATEFUL-TEENAGE CHILD PHASE

You won't hear pets randomly saying/indicating that you embarrass them. Cats can have plenty of mood swings, but the mood swings are not an age-specific phase they are expected to go through. The fact that you can easily find the cutest tiniest outfits for your pets at any age is a definite plus point.

THEY CAN EVEN HELP YOU GAUGE THE HUMANITY OF OTHER PEOPLE

Not everyone adores animals, which is alright, but living creatures deserve to be treated with respect. Animals can help you identify any person who is, for example, alright with animal cruelty, after which you may absolutely cut them off from your life. This saves both time and effort being put into a friendship that would have otherwise amounted to nothing.

Do you have pets who you believe are better companions than a lot of people you know?

Bushra Zaman likes books, art, and only being contacted by email. Contact her at bushra-zaman31@yahoo.com

My Love-Hate Relationship with the Colour Pink

RAISA CHOWDHURY

The colour pink and I have shared the most intense love-hate relationship over the course of my life. As kids, we were told that pink is for girls and blue is for boys, and I didn't mind that statement then, like I do now.

Like most girls, I loved pink. Everything around me had to be pink – my room, my clothes, my Barbie's clothes (I was a Barbie freak, so that's a lot of pink). At the same time, I was also the girl in class who would lift four chairs at once, just to make a point, whenever a boy was asked to fetch chairs.

Both these aspects of my personality had been coexisting in harmony. Up until that point, I never associated pink with weakness or a lack of substance. Why would I? It was just a colour after all. That would soon change.

I cannot put a finger on exactly when my perception of femininity had shifted. It could be Regina George from *Mean Girls*, the cunning and manipulative high school bully, Jackie from *That '70s Show*, the self-absorbed, superficial, and snobby girlfriend or even Robin Scherbatsky from *How I Met Your Mother*, the aspirational and independent tomboy, that had triggered this shift. At school and on TV, there was no getting away from the constant reminder that pink was "too girly" and "too girly" was either petty or weak.

So began my efforts to reject and denounce my femininity in every possible way. If being a tomboy meant I would be taken seriously, I was ready to give up pink. At that point, I wish I had reminded myself the story of my favourite childhood character, Barbie. Her doll landed on the moon four years before Neil Armstrong did, she's a living (okay, non-living) example of how smart ultra-feminine women can truly be.

I am sure every aspect of my life was affected by this newfound outlook. So deep was its reverberation, that I had entered my teenage years without ever experimenting



with makeup, my wardrobe was largely laddish clothes with little colour. I had turned into the so-called "alpha female" of my circle who was loud, "bossy", opinionated, yet demonised. I was yet to realise that there really is no escape from fighting society's idea of what a woman is, should, or shouldn't be. Neither had I realised the internal misogyny behind these stereotypes.

With slightly more wisdom, I often look back and wonder how different my style, taste and behaviour may have been today, if I had not forced every ounce of "girliness" out of me. For a very long time, I was so focused

on being society's definition of strong and independent, while actively trying to not fit into the same society's interpretation of femininity, I forgot how terribly wrong societal expectations often are. I don't know who decides what is feminine and what is masculine, but what I do know now is that as long as pink is feminine, pink is strong and intelligent.

Raisa avoids all her obligations to spend time laughing at badly edited memes on Pinterest. Send her your favourite songs at raisa.2001@yahoo.com

A Cyberspace Unsafe for Women

ADHORA AHMED

Your phone suddenly buzzes to announce a notification. You pick it up, expecting something important. However, the notification comes from the requests folder of one of your text messaging apps. You are almost certain what it looks like, a completely random stranger, most probably a man, sent you an inappropriate text.

If you're feeling indifferent, you just ignore it. If it bothers you too much, you block the person. If you're feeling light-hearted enough to make fun of it, you take a screenshot and send it to your friends. If you believe in its meme potential, your screenshot might even make its way to some subreddit dedicated to hilariously poor attempts at flirting.

Women on social media are familiar with the scenario above. In most cases, we tend to brush off such attempts to breach our online privacy, because these things seem relatively harmless compared to the more pressing issues when it comes to women, such as the recent spike in gender-based violence. However, are such acts really that harmless?

Women are harassed online in many ways, and unsolicited texts are just the tip of the iceberg, along with friend requests from unknown people. You must have come across revolting comments under pictures of female celebrities or of any woman that goes viral, most of which can be classified under hate speech. You most probably have heard stories of leaked private pictures, videos or information without consent – also known as doxing – and the devastating toll it takes on the victims.

"I have been harassed online by men on many counts. Often, they were in the form of continuous pestering texts that start off nice, but get more degrading with time. Sometimes, their texts are accompanied by inappropriate pictures or videos," shares Fabiha Fairouz*, a freelance writer.

"Once, when I was in high school, a group of boys decided to bully my friends and I in a group chat," says Zareen Tasnim*, who is now completing her undergraduate degree abroad. "They made very weak yet unacceptable attempts at insulting me, which had to do with my financial status, my dual nationality, my looks etc. They were even

petty enough to make comments about me sending memes in that group chat."

This is a serious problem which has only increased during the pandemic since we are forced to spend more time online than ever before. According to a recent report by *The Daily Star*, 80 percent of the victims of cyberbullying in Bangladesh are adolescent girls and women in their early twenties. In another report by *Dhaka Tribune*, most victims of cyberbullying do not report to the police, hence the statistic does not take into account the cybercrimes that go unreported.

The question arises, why don't people report cybercrimes? Anika Anjum Iftee, Head of Content Development and Marketing at WeMen View, a non-profit social welfare organisation which works to raise awareness against cyber harassment of women, thinks that such cases are generally taken less seriously than physical ones. "It's because there are too many factors to consider. With the ongoing calling out culture, the conversation around things like unsolicited texts could be easily manipulated, which can make the main discourse rather confusing. Also, since how we behave on social media is an evolving process, there is still so much to define and to make laws on concretely. While all of that happens, a lot of us will be unfortunate enough to fall victim to online harassment."

The fact that technology is evolving too fast for us to catch up on the expanding confines of online harassment rings very true. Almost every day, new strides are being made in technology with more opportunities for harassers to abuse



them. In this dizzying mess, no wonder tech-savvy women are struggling to deal with a constant barrage of harassment, both big and small. "I don't think there's much to do. In my experience of receiving unwanted texts, I find that confronting these men is very draining because most see no wrong in their actions and will continue to verbally abuse you or others," Fabiha adds.

It is as clear as daylight that the toxic standards most men in this region have been brought up to contribute to their interactions online. The firm belief that they will get away with harassing women in both physical and virtual spaces unfortunately enables them to do so. In addition, the common yet unjust shaming of female victims further encourages these abusers to carry on, as Zareen and her friends had faced, "This cyberbullying incident was reported to the school management, but they didn't fulfil their promises. Instead, they resorted to victim blaming by accusing us of isolating one of our classmates who egged those boys on, even though we weren't friends with her in the first place."

For all kinds of abuse, for too long, women have been putting in all the work to rage against the injustice. In the case of cyber harassment, from tightening privacy settings to filing cases, women still carry the burden to take preventive measures.

However, prevention is not the only cure, at least in this case.

In order to see an end to harassment not limited to the digital realm, education comes first, as Anjum explains, "Measures should be integrated into the way we socialise from an early stage. At WeMen View, we want to teach children how to respect other genders and expand to do workshops with parents too. Humility and kindness are very important in the process of learning how to behave. Children need to know about the obvious red flags because if we are not aware of the danger, we won't be ready to tackle it."

In the end, it all comes down to getting acquainted with some very simple, basic concepts: consent and respecting one's personal space, and that these apply to everyone regardless of any parameter that you can think of. If we keep all these in mind, perhaps one day all the spheres we occupy, the virtual one included, can be safe for everyone.

**Names have been changed to protect identity*

References

1. The Daily Star (December 10, 2020). 80% of cyberbullying victims are women: Cyber Crime Division of DMP.
2. Dhaka Tribune (September 24, 2019). 70% of women facing cyber harassment are 15-25 years in age.

Adhora Ahmed tries to make her two cats befriend each other, but in vain. Tell her to give up at adhora.ahmed@gmail.com





ECHOES BY
 ASRAR CHOWDHURY

Why Do We Choke Under Pressure?

I
 The 2016 T20 World Cup Final. West Indies needed 19 runs off the last over. An unknown Carlos Brathwaite stormed his way into the history books with four consecutive sixes. West Indies won the T20 World Cup for the second time. Ben Stokes of England was bowling the last over. How could a dependable person like Stokes choke under pressure?

The 1999 Cricket World Cup Semi-Final. South Africa needed 9 runs to go to the final for the first time. Remember how Allan Donald choked and threw South Africa out of the World Cup? Why did a seasoned player like Donald choke under pressure?

If you become anxious at a crucial moment when you need to focus, you can drain out attention and working memory. You overthink. You do something silly that leads to your downfall and also that of your team. Stokes and Donald aren't the only ones in sport who have choked under pressure.

II
 Competitive sport, like any other activity, depends on skill, which can be acquired over time. Performance at crunch moments, depends on how well you lock yourself out from outside "noise" and stay cool. How many times have you found yourself blank during an exam, when you studied hard over the semester or the year? We've all been there.

The best athletes (and successful people) are the ones who have high self-confidence. They can channel anxiety in crucial moments positively, and thus choke less under pressure.



PHOTO: STAR

III
 Annika Sörenstam was a professional golfer. In her own words, "We all hit bad shots. It's just – how do you regain composure?" She goes on, "The shot you're hitting now is the most important. Ten minutes ago, is irrelevant, and who knows what's going to happen in the next ten minutes?" She calls the shot of the moment, the "now-shot".

If you're influenced by outside "noise", you rush. You think less and can tend to make a mistake at a crucial moment. You have to learn to adapt to the "now-shot". This is easier said than done. The "noise" of the moment is not the only noise that influences you. If you have choked in the past, it could make future choking more likely.

Choking under pressure can be contagious on the day

and over time. If one player in your team chokes at a crucial moment, it can spread to the rest of the team.

Including the 1999 semi-final against Australia, South Africa has reached eight semis in global cricket tournaments. They have lost all eight. Pakistan is yet to defeat India in a men's ODI World Cup encounter, although the two teams have faced each other quite a few times. Bangladesh reached two Asia Cup cricket finals only to lose.

In the 1994 FIFA World Cup Final, Brazil and Italy found themselves facing a penalty shootout. Franco Baresi (Italy) and Márcio Santos (Brazil) both missed the first shot. Daniele Massaro (Italy) missed; Dunga (Brazil) netted. The onus now laid on star striker Roberto Baggio (Italy). It was now or never. Alas! Baggio couldn't block out the "noise" from his other colleagues. A seasoned player like Baggio choked under pressure. Brazil won the World Cup after 24 years.

IV
 We'll never know beforehand how a crucial moment will pan out. What we do know, it's the mind that takes you across the line in those moments, or crushes you before you reach it. We also know, blocking out outside "noise" is probably the best way out. But then, the "now-shot" is all about having fun and not considering the outcome as the end of the world.

Source: *Under Pressure: Why Athletes Choke*. The Long Read Podcast by The Guardian, UK. March 22, 2021.

Asrar Chowdhury teaches Economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniu.edu or asrarul@gmail.com

HANGOUTS

Dig in to the madness of *Pagla Baburchi*

HIYA ISLAM

The week before, my friends and I wandered into the doors of "Pagla Baburchi", Madchef's latest venture, located at the heart of Banani Road 11. It was a Tuesday afternoon and the restaurant was just starting to get buzzing.

Walking in, you'd be greeted by a mini *paan* station and walls adorned with vast fictive artworks hinting at the Bengali culture. The space is not as large, however, is well-decorated amongst a theme of royal blue and grey with tables spaced amply.

The menu hosts a range of dishes and we picked several. Starting with the main course, we went for the Mad Kacchi (BDT 399), of course. Despite everything else on the menu, the *kacchi* has garnered intense attention and customers' anticipations have sky-rocketed (thanks to their amazing promotional video).

The *kacchi*, serving one, comes in a big bowl served with an *aloo* and 3 to 4 pieces of juicy, well-cooked meat. If you're not big on eating, it's safe to say it would fill two people. We paired this with a few add-ons which was certainly an interesting option to have. We added more potatoes (BDT 39 each) and a couple of *chicken tikka jaali* (BDT 59 each); you can add more meat at BDT 149 per piece. The *kacchi* is definitely delicious. It's not *biye barir kacchi*, though. Even then, it'd make a great choice for occasional binges.

The *polao*, on the other hand, tastes exquisite. It genuinely evokes feelings of warmth and home. Combined with *shonali morog musallam*, you'd be licking your fingers. This combo costs BDT 349. Although the chicken can be ordered separately, it is priced too high; the order does come

with a good amount of yummy gravy.

The "Borhoney" priced at BDT 69 is served in a big, fat glass tumbler and relishes a thick, minty, sour-sweet flavour. Unlike the typical glass, the drink does not sport the strong taste of rock salt which I personally love. Cucumber salad, pickled onion, *aloo bokhara* chutney, and roasted garlic were served complimentary.

Let's talk desserts. The Shahi Tukra (BDT 229) graced with mascarpone cheese and perfected with a cherry on top looks like a dream. While mascarpone cheese may be new to our palate, here's how it feels: velvety, sweet, almost like cream cheese but not quite. After relishing a whole load of rice and meat, the slice of bread lathered in saffron and *malai* suffices for two.

When the Fruit Yogurtini (BDT 179) arrived, we couldn't be any less disappointed with how it looked. But we judged too early and I ended up craving for more in the end. The recipe is basic: fruits and yogurt garnished with mint and a chunk of vanilla cake. The cool, sour yogurt tastes amazing in the sense that it has a strong creaminess to it and carries the simple idea to a whole new level. For those looking for a refreshing end to a hearty meal, this is perfect.

Pagla Baburchi is a great place if you are willing to splurge on a dine-out as the mentioned prices are tax-exclusive. With room for betterment, they may soon compete with the big names in Bengali cuisine.

Lastly, given the recent surge in infected cases, please stay home and order in your meals. Pagla Baburchi is available on Pathao Food and Efood.

Hiya would gladly eat the food you can't finish. Follow her foodstagram @eichaiwaiae



A NIGHTLY RENDEZVOUS

CHARUSHILA BHASWATI

*What is it that I long for?
Is it just happiness or something unearthly?
Why have I turned into a long-lost notebook?
Which had every story carved in all the colours you
could find.
Which also had my name written with such pride.
A long-lost notebook is what I am,
Which you look for in your wardrobe even now,
When you try to remember how innocence looked on you.
If only the notebook could place itself
Inside the crevice of my heart-shaped space!
And I wouldn't feel so lost.
Life has taken its turn again.
Life tells me that it writes letters to my name,
Which I keep looking and looking, but only in vain.
I'm a long-lost notebook that can't find its way.
So, here I am with an unlit soul.
If anybody's listening to my echoes through the holes,
If you see it scattered around,
Let the long-lost notebook know
And let it find its way back to my home.*

He looked at me when he finished reading it. I waited with my heart beating fast to listen to what he had to say. He seemed lost in deep thought. When I couldn't be patient anymore, I gasped. He under-

stood my urge and spoke finally.

"I won't tell you how I felt."

It was so unanticipated that I just stared at him blankly.

Then I said, "You know that whatever I write, I show it to you first. What you think is very important to me."

"I know that very well. It's just that it's making me dig up something from inside me and I, I don't think I can put it out there without sounding irrational."

When he finished speaking, I noticed a sadness in his eyes that I hardly ever saw. I made him sit in front of me. I thought for a while and asked him, "Are you feeling lost?"

He looked at the ceiling as he spoke, "I don't know. I don't know how I've been feeling for quite some time and that's what's bothering me. I wasn't like this before. I used to be very clear about my feelings and everything surrounding me. When I read your poem, I couldn't help but think it was about me, although I know it's not. The term long-lost notebook hit me. What if this feeling stays with me all my life? What if I'm lost in every situation I come across in the future? The worst of all is losing myself in everything. Maybe I won't be able to be happy with how I am."

I held his hand in mine and I said to him,

"When I wrote it, I wasn't even planning to write it. Someone had given me this precious piece of advice to write it all out whenever I was feeling lost, it was you. So I did just that. The point of telling this now to you is to show you who you are. Who you've been and who you'll always be. The way you listen and show me the way, I want you to remember the kindness you give as sunlight which is essential for the plants to grow. Not for just me or others, but for yourself too. I want you to keep the belief in your heart so that your light reaches you too when everything seems dark. You will find yourself every time you get lost. And please, never let yourself deal with the difficulties or pain you feel inside till the last stop. I am here and I will be here when you do call my name. You can share everything even if it doesn't make sense. Just like I don't make sense most of the time."

We both laughed at this. Then he asked, "Even when we are apart?"

"Especially when we're apart." I said. Then we looked at each other until he disappeared. I took a deep breath and closed my eyes. I let myself soak up his presence till sleep would make me give in.

The writer is an undergraduate student of Microbiology at North South University.



The odyssey of a young visual artist in Bangladesh

ABIR HOSSAIN

Today at 7:06 PM

"Why not do it for the sake of exposure?" inquires Saadman, your classmate, when confronted with the perils of asking for your payment for the sixth logo redesign for his "groundbreaking" streetwear startup.

In between the freeloaders (guised in the veil of friendship) and the established business firm demanding your services, there is no denying that the come-up of a visual artist is arduous. It is only in the past few years that the industry has gained any real momentum locally. Nonetheless, the question remains: *how much are the skillsets really valued, if at all?*

This creates a dynamic of imbalance between the client and the creator – where the input of the artist is virtually lost. What begins as a pursuit of expressing oneself becomes a slippery slope towards compensating for commercial appeal at the expense of one's own vision. Inevitably, personal projects come to a halt, burnouts occur more frequently and art blocks are omnipresent. In addition, the guilt of feeling like a "sell-out" is a telltale to the artist's endeavour.



I can't pay you cash but you will receive credit in the final project and you'll be invited to a party I'm throwing next Tuesday

Photographer and motion graphic artist Zunayed Noor, 18, reflects on the general attitude towards experimentation. "The room for experimentation is nulled in the first place because of the standards set by everyone in the industry, which has become the norm. Clients often don't care about styles as long as you're taking pictures and meeting the criteria," he says. "Even if you take your time with personal projects and lay the groundwork for your visual style, you might not be able to use it commercially due to clients not being flexible about these things."

On the flip side, Zunayed has also had a client approach him for his distinct style of video editing and even implemented it in their content. These are, of course, exceptions. With little to no room for exploring the limits, the wide majority of creatives on the market end up with a portfolio lacking originality, riddled with bland commercial work. As a result, such portfolios will stand to represent a market clustered with low-quality technical skills.

17-year-old graphic designer Faisal Rahman laments that clients are unwilling to value what the artist has to con-

tribute in the conversation. "More often than not, they will blow over whatever my thought process for a specific design is and almost demean my input," he says.

Faisal feels that such a one-sided approach emerges because of a corporate need to implement art and design into their brand, not because they want it. This creates room for conformity.

Back in the day, one might have wandered into a print shop somewhere in Nilkhet and asked the computer guy to make a logo in minutes without sparing much thought or cash into it.

It is, however, vital that creators learn to cope with feedback and bad clients. Negotiating, setting adequate prices, having a solid grasp of the trade are just a few skills required to make it in an oversaturated industry. While artists have their own set of responsibilities, employers and clients must make sure that an upcoming generation of rising talent is not depleted and have their passion burned out.

Abir Hossain is a failed SoundCloud Rapper. Tell him you too can't find anything to rhyme oranges with at fb/abir.hossain.19

A Real Guide to Surrealism

DURDANA KAMAL

Bizarre, strange, unusual, freakish – these are many of the synonyms people associate with surrealism. However, the human brain can propel itself to limitless distances, once it realises there is nothing better than challenging the ordinary. That, by extension, is the very point that surrealism tries to make.

Surrealism is an art movement that boomed in Europe after World War I and influenced literature and artistry to twist and turn into new limits that had never been crossed before.

In literature, surrealism was initiated by André Breton, a French writer and poet. He is the father of surrealism, describing the phenomenon as a "pure psychic automatism" in the first *Surrealist Manifesto*. The movement was boosted by the confusion and dread created by the subsequent two World Wars. Writers wanted to break away from the political cages that restricted artistry. One example of surrealism is Breton's poem, *Freedom of Love*.

*My wife with the hair of a wood fire
With the thoughts of heat lightning
With the waist of an hourglass
With the waist of an otter in the teeth of a tiger
My wife with the lips of a cockade and of a bunch of stars of the last magnitude
With the teeth of tracks of white mice on the white earth
With the tongue of rubbed amber and glass*

My wife with the tongue of a stabbed host.

This is an excerpt from the poem, where Breton describes a culmination of objects that have no relation to each other – his wife, a wood fire, an hourglass, the teeth of a tiger, and many other things. This paints a picture of irrationality in the reader's mind.

In art, surrealism was heavily influenced by Sigmund Freud's work on dream analysis and the unconscious. It was a method of artistry which celebrated idiosyncrasy. Artists such as Salvador Dali, Yves Tanguy, Robert Desnos and many others, combined everyday objects that wouldn't be put together in an ordinary situation, to create an extraordinary effect that would surpass all logic and most importantly, leave the viewer unsettled. However, it does not mean that surrealism should elicit fear. It is, quite simply, the imagination liberated.

Persistence of Memory is, without a doubt, one of Salvador Dali's most famous paintings and one of the greatest surrealist artworks ever created (google it!). As described by Dali himself, the soft watches were inspired by the surrealist perception of a melting Camembert, a form of cow's milk cheese. Dali was one of the pioneers of modern surrealism, and all of his works included symbolic meanings.

Surrealism has been reimagined and reinvented in film, fashion and art.

Modern artists who are putting a contemporary spin on surrealism include Chen Zhou, Julie Curtiss, Penny Slinger and many others. Surrealism has made its mark in animation and films such as *Mulholland Drive* (2001), *Paprika* (2006), and many others.

The great wars left a lasting impact on people. Artists and writers tried to express the bizarre reality of their times in the form of shocking imagery and puzzling objects, which was a representation of the confusion and ever-changing situation.

From the 1920s onward, surrealism has crept in to impact visual arts, literature, film and music, featuring amazing elements of surprise and strange juxtapositions. The surrealist works of that time are still influential to this day and still is an amazing tool for artists to unleash their creativity.

Durdana Kamal mostly likes to engage in activities which mostly do not serve any purpose whatsoever. Send help at kamal.durdana@gmail.com

