



ECHOES BY
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

SHOUT at 9!

I
This week, SHOUT turns 9. Whether by design or chance, I've been associated with SHOUT since the first instalment of Echoes on October 3, 2013. When you've spent almost a decade with an establishment, and more with previous sister establishments at the same organisation, you've travelled a long journey.

II
The first youth weeklies of The Daily Star were Rising Stars; and Teens and Twenties. This was in the first half of the 1990s. Chance had it, I was associated with both the weeklies.

Then there was a pause from The Daily Star from my side. In the end of 2007, I found myself with the youth weekly Star Campus. After some irregular contributions, I started my first column, Post Campus. In 2013, Star Campus and Post Campus drew its curtains. Thus, started the era of SHOUT. As SHOUT turns 9 this week, it's natural to ask: why did SHOUT survive longer than other youth weeklies?

III
The basis of the format of Rising Stars and Teens and Twenties was the Young Observer of the Daily Observer, the leading English daily before the Daily Star. Young Observer was a one-page weekly that



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

came out on Sundays, and then on Fridays. The two weeklies of The Daily Star went one step ahead. Initially, they came out as four-page folds within the newspaper. Later, as separate magazines.

The weeklies became a good opportunity for the editorial team to groom themselves. Over time, quite a few staff of the

weeklies were absorbed in other sections of The Daily Star or went on to make careers in other media houses. SHOUT was born in 2013 with an established legacy behind it.

In 2013, readership was slowly segregating into print and online readers. SHOUT was clever to notice this change

and adapt. Online readership had a few advantages. Print SHOUT could not accommodate long articles due to space constraint. This disappeared in online content. As young people became more and more dependent on their mobile phones to access online content, SHOUT online began to boost.

The best change in recent times is cover stories on issues young people face or think about. A cursory look at these cover stories tells you how advanced today's youth are. We never thought as deeply as today's young people do. SHOUT is now exploring video content. This could be revolutionary if contributors from different areas of Bangladesh contribute.

IV
SHOUT will celebrate its first decade next year. Having been a part of SHOUT over its existence has made Echoes and myself appreciate the last words of Bhagvad Gita that the only constant is change. SHOUT has adapted with changing times making it the longest surviving youth weekly of The Daily Star. The future can only be for the young to SHOUT.

Asrar Chowdhury is a professor of economics. He follows Test cricket, listens to music, and spins vinyls when he has free time. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com

SATIRE

University student still haunted by GK he memorised

HASIB UR RASHID IFTI

"I had to start going to therapy soon afterwards," Shadman shared his grief to the press. "I have friends who went through 10 years of public school, so finding a good therapist wasn't a problem. But in the first session, when I shared my nightmares haunted by the irrelevant and inapplicable information I memorised during my university preparation, my therapist also started crying. Turns out, as an aspiring BCS candidate in the past, she's actually the CEO of irrelevant GKs. It took her years to let go of her own trauma and accept a life without GK. But now, we're both looking for a therapist."

Shadman was just like any other teenager out there – afraid to resist his dream getting stomped on by his parents and too lazy to do anything about it. Peer pressure attracted Shadman to Science just like rumoured cameos attract Marvel fans to theatres, "In class 10, my best friend got 84 out of 100 in Physics whereas I got 17. Yet I dared to follow him to science in college. If my best friend is the latest cryptocurrency, I'm the nerd sitting behind a computer and going all-in with my dad's



credit card."

While Shadman's parents took 10 years to give up on their child, Shadman only needed 10 days of classes to do the same, "Somewhere around the second week in the middle of my organic chemistry class, I realised that memorising irrelevant information has always been my dream. My parents had also been supportive of my decision since I was the middle child and they already had an elder son whose dreams they could butcher. You see, when you have three children in your family, parents' expectations keep getting lower

with each child. My youngest brother, for instance, had all the freedom in the world to pursue anything ranging from music, drama or even sports! He, of course, went for BBA."

Now, after 2 years of university, Shadman's days of memorising GKs from MP3 guides are behind him. Yet, his nightmares are far from over.

"They keep floating in my head at night! I only remember these random numbers, figures and years yet I can't seem to remember which is which. For all I care, Emperor Akbar probably inaugurat-

ed the first nuclear powerplant of south-east Asia on the 23rd of June, 1757."

Psychologists have coined a new term to explain these symptoms: PGSD, or "Post-GK Stress Disorder".

"Initially found among medical school aspirants and D-Unit examinees of different public universities, PGSD reaches its extremities among BCS aspirants. Patients are found lurking around in the lanes of Farmgate and Arambagh, trying to dump more irrelevant information in their already rotten brains," explains Dr Sigma Fraud.

Meanwhile, Dr Shingarazzaman, VC of Shahbagh University explains their meticulous selection process in the entrance exams, saying, "Let's face it, nobody wakes up one morning and says 'I want to be a D-Unit examinee once I grow up.' You're settling for this department so clearly, ambition's not your cup of tea. Where do all the ambitionless souls with crushed dreams end up? BCS. We're simply preparing our students for the balderdash they should expect from life."

Remind Ifi to be quieter at hasiburrashidifti@gmail.com