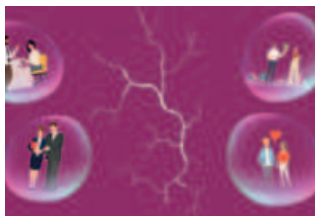
THE DEFINITIVE YOUTH MAGAZINE

SHOUT

DHAKA THURSDAY FEBRUARY 16, 2023, *FALGUN 3, 1429 BS* | A PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star

SHARING MY BIRTHDAY WITH MY MUM'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY
PG 3



FLIRTING AND HARASSMENT, WHERE IS THE LINE?
PG 6

CARING FOR AILING PARENTS

A daunting reality

ILLUSTRATION: **TUBA TUHRA KHAN**

EDITORIAL

I feel like we have all heard of that one joke about how Bengali parents want their kids to pursue a career in medicine yet they are the ones who are most reluctant to visit their doctor for a check-up. More often than not, it is an option they don't even want to consider. It is an option that they turn to only when they have exhausted everything else.

And that is precisely why every time my mom tells me she is feeling a little sick, I begin to spiral. It is a situation we are all too familiar with. Every appointment they don't make, pills they refuse to take, check-up they decline, feels like a tug-of-war. The constant nagging eventually leads to outbursts and arguments.

What begins as concern for their wellbeing is later engulfed by frustration and powerlessness. I wonder if they view it as a selfless act or intend to show just how strong they are.

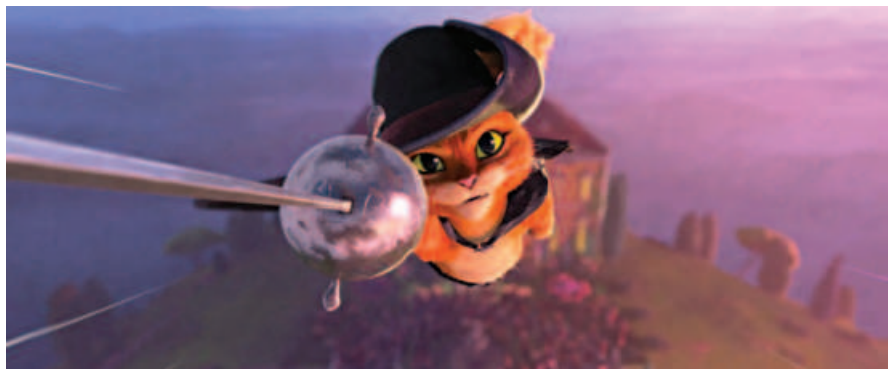
- Abir Hossain, Sub-Editor, SHOUT

A	B
Kids MGMT	The Nights Avicii
Softcore The Neighbourhood	brutal Olivia Rod
Acting My Age The Academic	Vengeance BIBI
Zombie DAY6	I Can't Carry This Anymore Anson Seabra

Email us at **shoutds@gmail.com** with feedback, comments, and reader submissions within 500 words.

PLAYWATCH

MOVIE



Puss in Boots: The Last Wish and the delivery of a masterpiece of a sequel

SHAIKH SABIK KAMAL

I never thought I'd write a review of the *Puss in Boots* sequel, let alone a good one. However, here I am today, utterly amazed by the 100-minute-long movie that encompassed and executed different concepts to near perfection.

DreamWorks' *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* is a product of excellent story-telling and resplendent visualisation. Released as the kick-off movie from DreamWorks Animation for 2023, this *Shrek* spin-off is the second instalment in the *Puss in Boots* series.

The movie centres around its protagonist, Puss, on his expedition to find and utilise a mystical wishing star to grant him his eight lost cat-lives again. He teams up with the confident and ambitious Kitty Softpaws, a familiar character from the preceding movie, as well as an unnamed optimistic dog, Perrito, to reach his path overcoming challenges including an enchanted forest, fearsome antagonists, and the acceptance of reality.

The movie does the finest job of walking the line between adult and kid-friendly entertainment. Even after building its realm around simple and digestible bases, the movie showcases many mature themes. Not only that, it tackles several plot points without oversaturating the theatrical experience.

Subtlety is a weapon the movie has established quite splendidly while bringing forth fleshed-out characters and the motivations behind their deeds and decisions. From showcasing a bold keynote of a familial bond to surmising the inevitable case of mortality, it accentuates questions about existence as well as validates diverse resolutions.

The movie also addresses many psychologically motivated themes. Trauma, fear, and even panic attacks have gotten a fair portrayal in it without carelessly being reduced to a passing joke or pushed to an unpalatable state.

As mentioned earlier, the movie also caters to the younger audience. It successfully captures an imaginative roller-coaster ride of entertainment for them while also mediating a wave of childhood nostalgia to watchers such as me, who grew up with the late-2000s era of animation movies.

Moreover, the humour in this movie is reminiscent of the signature comedy style from the *Shrek* series. It stands its ground to be fresh, iconic and liberated without feeling repetitive or overly generic. Personally, I've felt that a lot of the newer animation movies have followed this trend of simulating jokes uneventfully, which makes them feel very bland and forced. However, *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* successfully incorporates unforced humour for its watchers to enjoy.

Lastly, the movie's primary antagonist is a brilliantly written character and possibly one of the best-written villains in the history of animated movies. How and why, are two thrilling factors I would leave to dear readers to seek out for themselves.

All in all, this movie delivers an enjoyably rich experience, which is something I haven't seen in animated movies in a long time. From clever dialogues to subtle and detailed storytelling, the movie succeeds in harvesting a memorable cinematic escapade.

I believe *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* will be a great turner to the current youth's collection of nostalgic movies. It is worthy to be standardised as a classic for animation studios in the years to come.

Shaikh Sabik Kamal was found utterly lost in his attempt to write out a proper blurb. Consider helping him out at sabik2005kamal4787@gmail.com

Sharing my birthday with my mum's death anniversary

PUJA SARKAR

She laid there, not entirely in her senses. I remember the sound of her gasps and my sister trying to place the oxygen mask on her. My mum, in pain, and likely very confused, kept refusing the mask. I remember thinking that maybe if I went up to my mum, who was at death's door, and said, "Ma, wake up. It's my birthday," she'd magically snap out of it. I wish I had taken that shot but seeing her like that was frightening. Not knowing what or why this was happening on that day put my nine-year-old brain in limbo.

That's the last memory I have of her. This January 16 marked her sixteenth year of passing, and also my twenty-fifth year of existence. Sixteen years have passed and I've lived this moment more than sixteen times with the same confusion and fear nine-year-old me felt. You'd think after such a long time, I'd learn to accept it.

I know now that she was terminally ill for a very long time and her death was inevitable, but I didn't back then. I didn't know I'd regret not visiting her in the hospital more often after school. In fact, that's the only regret I have.

So, that brings me to my question, what do I do on my birthday? How am I supposed to feel?

In short, I'm conflicted. With two voices in my head constantly battling each other, the day always takes a turn no matter what. One tells me that I ought to celebrate with friends and family, the other tells me I should grieve to my heart's content. The latter is always stronger.

Every year I get into a week-long fight with my relatives over not cutting a cake at midnight. Even though I hated the cakes and being the centre of attention, I couldn't hurt the ones I love because of something they don't entirely understand. They had no selfish or malicious intent, but the voice in my head tells me, "You told them how much you hate this and don't want this. You told them you wanted this day to be like any other, nothing special."

I know that even after such a long time, I don't like celebrating my birthday yet. A part of me feels that I have the right to be sad if I want to, and I don't owe it to anyone to fake a smile, at least on this day.

Given her death was bound to come, I wish she had died sooner. I wouldn't have small memories to reminisce upon. Wanting to forget your mother just so you don't feel the pain anymore is selfish and not something I'm proud to feel.

Life and death coexist. In a sense, a birthday is a fleeting moment of joy and we go back to our normal lives the next day. Death, on the other hand, has more of a long-lasting impact. You feel their absence every day. You think about them for a split second and when the tears blind you, you go back to focusing on something else. Over time, you move on. As for myself, time hasn't fixed anything.

Puja does nothing but read Gaiman and drinks unhealthy amounts of coffee. Send her cat photos at facebook.com/pspspspspspspspspspuwu/

PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

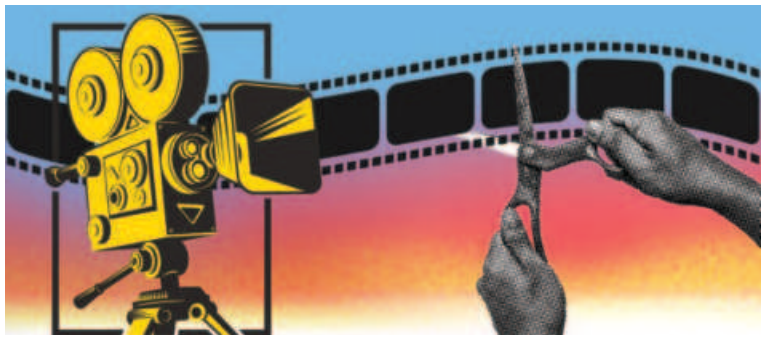


ILLUSTRATION: **FATIMA JAHAN ENA**

OPINION

How censorship is hampering the Bangladeshi film industry

RAIAN ABEDIN

After the pandemic, Bangladesh's film industry has managed to release multiple feature-length and short films that have seen success both on a national and international level. The industry seems to be growing at a never-before-seen pace, reaching audiences it once would have struggled to find. Despite everything, there is a giant obstacle that seems to stop the industry from growing as it potentially could: the Bangladesh Film Censor Board.

All movies deserve to have the freedom to tell a variety of stories given no explicitly illegal or morally abhorrent activity is happening underfoot. No matter what community these voices may belong to, there should be no barrier to having their stories heard. Not only does this help Bangladesh's film industry attract cinema lovers by diversifying voices, but it also helps spread these stories to an international audience.

For instance, *My Bicycle* written and directed by Aung Rakhine, is an independent film made entirely by non-professional filmmakers that saw significant international acclaim. The film saw screenings in festivals across the world, and yet never had a proper commercial release in Bangladesh because of bans placed by the film censor board.

Examples like these are common, as the film censor board tends to take archaic measures to prevent certain stories from ever being visible to the public. This is simply not healthy, neither artistically, nor from a business perspective as these very movies that the censor board tries so hard to block are the ones that end up receiving massive critical acclaim and commercial success worldwide. When you have films made about your country that are celebrated everywhere except in your own nation, you have clearly failed to give space to stories that demand being heard.

Another victim of the film censor board's outdated measures would be Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's *Saturday Afternoon*, a joint production of Bangladesh, Germany, and Russia. A rare case of multiple international publishers and producers choosing to work on Bangladeshi cinema, this was en route to make history. The movie went ahead to win awards in France, Japan, and Russia. In Bangladesh, it was banned from releasing for three years until numerous protests by the director and various netizen groups cleared its release. However, at the time of writing this article, the movie has been called for re-examination, further delaying its release.

The fact that any movie has to go through so many hurdles to tell the story they want to tell will never make for a healthy scene for films in this country.

At the very least, the business of it all should at least make the censor board think otherwise. Especially in today's age, where people flock to the cinemas, making more movies available is simply beneficial for all parties. Filmmakers go to great lengths to tell stories about certain topics with utmost importance. It is completely natural for some of these films to be regarded as not safe for audiences of all ages. If the censor board continues to take drastic measures in banning their release instead of having open communication with the directors or having a proper age restriction system, the growth of films in this country will come to a standstill. Stories demand to live in the minds of the viewers.

Raian is making a list of his favourite love poems in celebration of February, send some poems his way at IG @raian_is_burning

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PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

CARING FOR AILING PARENTS
A daunting reality

AHMED NUZHA OISHEE

On a Friday afternoon, I stumbled through emergency units at three different hospitals seeking urgent medical attention for my ill parent, only to be turned away because there were no on-duty doctors and operational diagnostic equipment. As I look back on my parent's complicated medical history, an ugly experience like this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Life prematurely comes full circle for young people who have ill parents. Their lives become an uphill battle of hustling to succeed in a competitive world while juggling responsibilities towards their sick parents.

Faria Rashid Luva, 20, a student at North South University, says, "My mother had to stay at the hospital after a drug for her eye infection had caused terrible side effects. I stayed with her in her hospital cabin. I had to learn how to cook and travel by myself. I brought food to the hospital. I periodically changed her IV drips while being responsible for her hygiene."

Sholpita Ashfaque, 20, a student at Chittagong Medical College, shares that her father suffered two strokes in the span of 3 years. She says, "After my father suffered a second stroke in 2019, he developed neuropathy and vascular dementia. He slowly lost his memories, his ability to walk and talk. My brother gets posted to different cities due to his job so I was left to tend to abbu, whether it involved taking him to the hospital, helping him use the bathroom or taking him out on walks."

She adds, "Initially, we didn't know much about the extent of my father's issues. There were many times when I saw my mother cry while cradling my bleeding father after he had fallen down and injured himself. I used to get nightmares and had trouble sleeping. To cope, I started reading up on his condition to better understand the symptoms that cropped up."

This is not an uncommon sentiment for children growing up with ailing parents. According to Sharmin Haque, clinical psychologist at Square Hospital, parental illness throws a curveball in the intricately layered development of a young person, "A child with a diseased parent grows up with insecurities and feelings of unfairness because they don't share a normal relationship with their parent. They hesitate sharing their distress and can gradually slip into anxiety and depressive thoughts. In selective cases, such children are at risk to develop mood disorders, empty feelings or even personality disorders when they become adults."

She further adds that such individuals go through a change in personality patterns as they anticipate negative outcomes from their ill parent's prognosis. Younger children lack self-efficacy growing up and may even resort to imagining scenarios to cope.

In this context, Munzarin Islam*, 18, a student at North South University shares, "In class seven, when I was told my mother has been diagnosed with Carcinoma, a type of cancer, I didn't understand it well enough and thought it would get better soon. My family decided to pursue cancer treatment at Singapore after being administered the wrong drugs at a hospital in Dhaka. My parents periodically left Bangladesh for treatment and I'd stay back with my grandparents. I slowly grew introverted, rarely talked to others although I was once very outgoing. I became an absentee student at school."

When a parent struggles with chronic diseases, their children often have to come to terms with the fact that their parent may not be able to play conventional parental roles in their lives.

Parvin Akter, 48, is a mother of two, who shares her experiences living with permanent cognitive impairment after suffering from severe Encephalitis, an uncommon but serious condition in which the brain becomes inflamed, "I'm unable to go anywhere by myself because I can't remember identities, places and directions. I depend on my children or husband to accompany me outside. But they often can't make time due to studies and work. These days, I rarely go out. Sometimes, it's suffocating and lonely to be cooped up in the house. Nothing gives me joy. I'm usually too disoriented to function and perform responsibilities like I used to. I fail to keep tabs on my children. I can't keep up with developments in their lives due to short-term memory loss and crippling headaches. They also no longer keep expectations from me or ask for my advice."

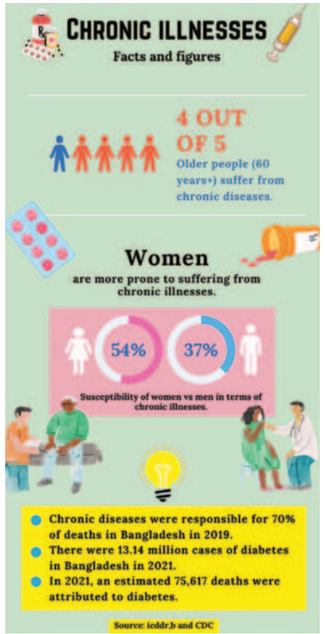


ILLUSTRATION: **AAQIB HASIB**

When it comes to getting parents appropriate medical attention, youths are limited by their lack of connections and inexperience in dealing with our dysfunctional medical facilities. Aside from the inability to bear steep out-of-pocket medical bills, they lack the agency to sort bottlenecks in administrative procedures, smooth over communication and manage complicated paperwork.

Muslima Jannat Eva, a Rajuk Uttara Model College alumnus, shares, "We had to consult 4 different doctors before my mother's gall bladder tumour finally got diagnosed. She had severe symptomatic jaundice and hence was advised to opt for immediate surgery. We booked a surgery appointment at a government hospital in Dhaka but they scheduled it after a month due to lack of surgical capacity. We had no choice but to shift her to a private hospital for the urgent procedure."

When asked about her experiences, Rameesa Jameel, a recent graduate from a renowned private university in Dhaka, says, "My father has to receive regular physiotherapy and acupuncture treatments for paralysis after a road accident. Unfortunately in our healthcare industry, there's a shortage of skilled professionals in both of the aforementioned fields. Apart from the professionals at CRP (Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed), physiotherapists with personal practices tend to have less experience with treating paralysed individuals, being more accustomed to treating ageing individuals with joint and muscle stiffness."

She adds further, "I've also observed the lack of development related assisted living services in our healthcare industry. Most employees in this sector receive little to no training in caregiving, largely due to their employers' lack of understanding regarding caregiving services, and are expected to learn on the job which is inconvenient for both parties: the caregiver and the patient."

Tasfia Fairuz*, a 23 year-old student at Bangladesh University of Engineering Technology, recollects her experience growing up with grandparents who had dementia and Alzheimer's. She notes that diagnostic procedure and therapy pertaining to neurological illnesses are too expensive for most families. She wishes there were more developed assisted living facilities devoted to housing and caring for ageing patients with different disorders.

Since 1982, our country has had no updated ordinance that could decree regulation of private medical facilities. Public hospitals are plagued by absence of healthcare providers, overflowing patients and rundown equipment. Registered diagnostic centres are licensed as separate medical entities. These facilities often put arbitrary hefty price tags on their services and articulate exploitive policies.

According to a survey by Transparency International Bangladesh (TIB), some healthcare providers follow marketing tactics and refer patients to medical services in exchange for commission worth 25-50 percent of those services from relevant medical companies. As a result, patients often get recommended unnecessary procedures at questionable facilities.

The medical sector is riddled with nuanced and intricate problems, the navigation of which is difficult for seasoned adults. When a parent falls sick, however, it often falls on a young person to solve these problems and foresee many troubles, which becomes daunting given the fact that the medical care is for a parent.

The worst part of growing up with a sick parent in our country is the accompanying anxiety that your parent might not get the medical assistance they need. A reliable healthcare system can take the heavy burden off of many shoulders.

**Names have been changed upon request*

Reference:

Transparency International Bangladesh. (February, 2018) *Private healthcare: Governance challenges and way out*

Nuzha forgives people for pronouncing her name wrong and wallows in books and anxiety. Suggest her fiction at nuzhaoishee1256504@gmail.com

Flirting and harassment, where is the line?

FABIHA AFIFA

Cancel culture has many shortcomings, and one of them includes blurring the lines between flirting and harassment. Screenshots and unproven allegations can be posted at any time, and there always seems to be a mob of keyboard warriors ready to interpret situations differently.

How someone feels about a certain interaction they've had is valid and can't be questioned, but for the sake of fairness to both the accused as well as those who've gone through harassment, there should be clear baselines to separate flirting and sexual harassment.

The first one's quite obvious: consent. Flirting is consensual and conscious. Even when it's not too subtle, a flirt won't come across as demanding or like they expect you to respond positively, if at all. They'll also stop it the moment they are told no or if they sense any discomfort from the other side. Harassment, meanwhile, is obnoxiously persistent. No matter how many times or how directly they are refused, harassers don't stop, with many even thinking the receiver of their advances is acting coy.

Another factor to differentiate between flirting and harassment is power dynamics. This element is most commonly abused in professional settings. For example, it's usually difficult for a subordinate to say no to their boss' sexual advances. Similarly, amateurs in any industry are more likely to think they're obligated to take up on inappropriate offers from more established personnel to get a fair chance in the field.

ILLUSTRATION: **SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM**

A 2010 study conducted by Northwestern University found people in positions of power to be more likely to view reluctant consent – which is not consent – as genuine sexual attraction. If anything, this teaches us the importance of being conscious of the other person's perspective when we approach them. We need to understand that being in a vulnerable position makes the concept of consent trickier and seemingly less safe for people.

Last but not least, flirting gives people the space to say no in the first place. In other words, there's a distinct line between being playful and downright inappropriate, and one should always maintain that. Touching someone without their consent, sending unsolicited sexual texts and pictures, making crude comments – anyone who does one or more of these isn't a straightforward flirt, they're simply a harasser.

It's honestly disappointing. The differences between flirting and harassment aren't too confusing. They are simple and, dare I say, easy to figure out from instincts. But in a world so deeply imbalanced by gender inequality and unfair hierarchies, some find it difficult to tell if they're violating someone's space and some find it difficult to say their space is being violated.

With the rise of social media and cancel culture, the crisis has become even worse. In recent years, there's a herd mentality that often passes punishment without judging the full scenario. As a result, if there ever was a time to be aware of how flirting and harassment differ, it is now.

Reference:
Psychology Today (February 28, 2020). *How Flirting Can Become Harassment.*

Fabiha is secretly a Lannister noblewoman and Slytherin alum. Pledge your allegiance and soul to her at afifafabiha01@gmail.com

The youth needs to consume information in moderation

LAMIA KARIM

Information overload is the new vice of this century. In the age of information, unlimited access to news, content, and media is a priceless asset. Asset, or so young people are made to believe.

There is information about everything at our disposal. As a result, we are all expected to be well-read individuals. Yet, why do we become overwhelmed when we try to fulfil this criterion?

The problem of feeling overwhelmed does not strike us as a problem at all. Instead, we register it as a personal drawback. The inability to stomach as much news about current affairs as possible is frowned upon. Under the capitalist system, there is continual pressure to utilise every moment of our lives to make the resources available to us profitable.

Things that the advent of the internet did to the availability of data is more impactful compared to television or newspapers. And the effects of it are still very fresh.

Information as a resource is undoubtedly very valuable. A certain amount of exposure to the news is necessary. Naturally, it has developed into a social expectation to consume as much of it as possible. This is the reason we fail to identify it as an issue.

Does infinite resource equal infinite profit? Profit rears its ugly head when people eventually have to cope with debilitating confusion, anxiety and stress which results in delays in making decisions and evaluating information. Additionally, blaming oneself gives rise to feelings of hopelessness. We are entities with finite capabilities after all. Acknowledging the absurd nature of this social expectation is the first step to fighting the issue.

So, how should we fight this monster? The key is intentional consumption. Mindless scrolling of YouTube shorts, Tiktok videos, and Instagram reels is the first thing that must be cut off significantly. The nature of the delivery of information there is designed to flood the mind rather than enrich it. That is only one example but all forms of media whether it be books, music, games or film can be mind-numbing when one overdoses on them.

In order to not feel like a scatterbrain, it is crucial to give ourselves time to digest all the information that we consume each day. Therefore, we should expose ourselves to it in a way so that we have spare time to stop and think. News should be read consciously. Doing a "brain dump" on a piece of paper is also very helpful in managing an overwhelmed state of mind. Above all, setting boundaries between one's sanity and the endless flood of content is what will save you from brain fog. As the wise man's words go, everything is healthy in moderation.

Lamia is currently very overwhelmed. Give her meditation tips and crystals at lamiakarimxd@gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: **SYEDA AFRIN TARANNUM**

POSSIBILITIES: ATTAINABLE

ADRITA ZAIMA ISLAM

It is a realm
Of seas darker than the urchins that hide in it,
Of colours that are seeped in their own pride,
Of creatures whose hoof-beats reverberate against a frozen sun,
Of delights carved from childhood fantasies and borne not of adult anguishes.

It is a realm
Of endless books on Robespierre and the arcane,
Of statues of marble and gauze, and papier-mâché,
Of laughter and loquacious echoes of the voices of younger girls,
Of stories half-forgotten but fully written.

It is a realm
Of people,
Of things, not material, not immaterial,
Of joys trivial and sorrows bone-crushing but pleasurable,
Of lives unlived not because of a lack of opportunity but attempt.

It is a realm
Of possibilities
That are perhaps not endless or infinite, or even beyond counting.
But of possibilities that are small enough to be held in the clammy palms of a toddler and the withering fingers of an ancient.
But of possibilities that are within the grasp of the human mind enough to make one hope but far enough to make one desire.

Zaima is a struggling student, failed guitarist and a poet in need of better ideas. Extend your thoughts to her at zaima2004adrita@gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION: **FATIMA JAHAN ENA**

Ice in the veins

AAQIB HASIB

While the warm breeze of March wafted over the university campus, a hooded figure walking silently through the grounds left a trail of cool air in his wake.

Carefully walking in the shadows, he took long strides with a purpose. Each time he stepped into the new moonlight, one could see the ice-cold fury in his eyes. The gunshots in the distance would have left anyone else running in the opposite direction, but the man with a glint of red in his eyes walked silently towards them.

As he approached the dormitories, he could feel the gunshots echo through his bones, getting louder with each step. One room, directly in front of him, had its doors kicked open. Countless sets of books and clothes were strewn across the doorway and floor. A single soldier stood in the doorway, peering in, observing the still bodies that laid within.

Filled with rage, his fast-paced strides switched to a quick sprint. Grabbing the solider from behind, he placed his fingertips on his neck. The soldier looked into his eyes – filled with fear as his face turned blue.

"How many of you are here?"

"Too many. I won't tell you, Bengali pig," replied the solider, gradually losing his breath as his eyes started to lose focus.

Letting the soldier slip down on the ground, the hooded man looked to his left as three other soldiers approached him. They couldn't spot the body of their comrade yet, so they progressed steadily with their guns raised.

"Who are you? Are you a student? Bengali?" barked one of the soldiers.

The stranger repeated the same question he had asked the first soldier. Waiting only a few seconds for a response.

With no answers to satisfy him, he took one step towards the soldiers, quickly spinning in a circle as his right hand formed an arc with his palm towards them.

The air in front of his hand quickly condensed into ice, forming a spear that drove itself through the three armed men. As they fell to the floor, motionless, he walked past them, focused only on what was ahead.

Climbing up the stairs, he ventured through the corridor that led to the main dormitory lounge. Every soldier who stood in his way was either temporarily or permanently incapacitated. With each footstep, he left behind a trail of ice, as his breath fogged the air around him.

Finally, having reached the lounge, he carefully peered in through the smashed-in door. Cautiously walking in, keeping in line with the shadows, he took three steps into the room before the back of his head was met with shock.

As his knees buckled, he fell to the floor. Someone kicked him in the back, causing him to fall further forward into the room. One disembodied hand that was now in the moonlight was slowly lighting up a lantern.

Still on his knees, as he looked up, he finally saw the six soldiers emerging from the shadows.

"Muslim or Hindu?" growled one of the voices behind him.

"Muslim," he replied, head stinging from the blow.

"Where are the students hiding? Tell us and we will let you go," commanded another voice from his right.

"Never."

"Then make your final prayers in 30 seconds."

As he placed his hands together, the closest soldier could simply see two circular tattoos on his palms. Fingers now intertwined – he dropped his forehead into his hands.

In just the ten seconds that had passed, the air around the hooded figure erupted into ice, forming a perimeter of ice spikes around his body, extending outward in the blink of an eye. With almost no time to react, the soldiers finally went silent.

Coughing, the man fell to the floor, exhausted. Eyes now closing, as his face met the floor, there were no more gunshots to wake him that night.

The story is set in the author's City of Magic universe. To learn more, contact jadurshohorbook@gmail.com

Removing the stigma of laziness

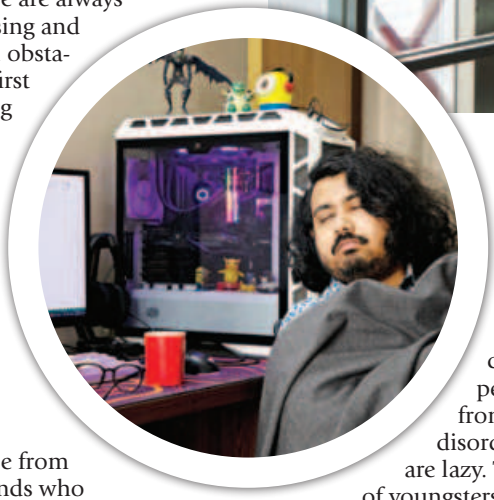
SUMAIYA RASHID

PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

It's convenient to place inflexible, abstract expectations on a person's behaviour because we don't completely comprehend their context, which includes all the minor irritations and significant traumas that define their existence.

A friend once told me that poor people can't think beyond the box because they believe they'll always be poor, so they're just too lazy to do anything about their situation. But when someone is homeless and/or poor, the world is hostile, and everything is excruciatingly unpleasant. It's difficult to sleep well whether they're sleeping beneath a bridge or a shelter. They are likely to have injuries or chronic ailments that trouble them regularly, and they will have limited access to medical treatment to treat them. They most likely don't have a lot of nutritious food. In that persistently unpleasant, overstimulating environment, their primary thought cannot be how they can become successful. Instead, it ends up being how they can survive.

When I notice people behaving unusually, I'm especially compelled to ask: what are the barriers to action that I'm not seeing? There are always challenges. Recognising and acknowledging such obstacles is typically the first step toward changing "lazy" behaviour habits. Responding to inefficient behaviour with inquiry rather than judgement is quite important.



"It's easy to point the finger at others and ignore the structural limitations that poverty brings with it. People from privileged backgrounds who have never lived in poverty may try to rationalise the behaviour of the poor to feel better about the inequities in the world," says Mahbuba Dewan, a lecturer in the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities at Independent University of Bangladesh.

Behaviour that seems "unproductive" on the face of it can often have deeper reasons. There was a student who was rather irregular in an English class I attended, and she always put her head down while lessons were not being given. She sat in the first row and hardly spoke to anyone except the instructor. When our classes ended early one day, I asked her why she was always so quiet, late with her homework, and inconsistent in class, and she told me she had been suffering from clinical depression for the last two years and that it was difficult for her not to cry while talking to others and that some days it was impossible for her to get out of bed, which was why she had so many absences.

Sumaia Azmi, Founder and Lead Counsellor at Nirvana - Wellness of Wholeness, says, "In order to understand why we have anxiety, depression, coping mechanisms to avoid failure, and other mental health difficulties, it's vital to distinguish between persons who suffer from mental health disorders and those who are lazy. The self-identity of youngsters is so delicate due to their familial environment nowadays, they are particularly prone to worry about failure and rejection. The way our youth's familial upbringing has moulded their self-identity is a major crisis today. The connection between parents and children has devolved into a transactional one in which identity is secondary to social standing. The tension between the ideal and the real self worsens. High expectations placed by families nowadays produce worry, which leads to procrastination."

Let's consider a symptom of academic "laziness". For decades, studies in the field of psychology have been able to explain procrastination as a functional problem rather than a result of laziness.

Procrastinators are frequently held accountable for their behaviour. The act of putting off work may look lazy to an uninformed eye. Even people who deliberately delay may mistake their activities for being lazy. You're meant to be doing something, but you're not – isn't that a moral failure and sign of being weak-willed?

When someone doesn't begin a project they care about, it's typically because they are unsure of what the first steps of the endeavour include or they are worried that their efforts won't be "good enough". Procrastination is more likely when a task is important to the person and they care about getting it done right. When you are paralysed by failure, dread or don't even know where to start with a big, demanding work, it is very tough to get things done. It is unrelated to motive, desire, or moral rectitude.

Procrastinators can force themselves to work for hours. They can torment themselves by sitting in front of a blank word document and doing nothing else, they may pile on the guilt over and over – none of this makes starting the task any easier. Their desire to complete the activity may exacerbate their stress and make it more difficult to begin.

Mahbuba Dewan also suggested that students just need to begin the pending assignment or tasks that they need to do. Since, in ordinary circumstances, our attitude follows behaviour, it is possible to overcome procrastination by beginning the task to get her/himself engaged with it. People who perceive outcomes as internally controllable by their own actions and efforts, tend to succeed in personal and professional spheres alike.

If a student is not submitting papers, there is some component of the task that they cannot complete without assistance. If an employee constantly misses deadlines, something is preventing efficiency and fulfilling deadlines. Even if a person intentionally chooses to self-sabotage, there is a reason for it – some fear they are working through, some need that is not satisfied, and maybe a lack of self-esteem.

Sumaia Azmi also expresses her own belief, "We are doing everything wrong; we attend mental health awareness workshops, we employ counsellors at our institutions, and our problem remains unsolved. We're not performing our jobs correctly, aren't we? Instead of seeking mental health care, the focus should have been to prevent mental health difficulties. So that we don't make you sick and instead focus on curing you. We should have designed our educational system such that it never made students sick. The youth nowadays experience significant difficulties with issues related to attachment, understanding of love, concerns with self-identity, and sources of happiness."

People do not choose to fail or disappoint themselves. Nobody wants to be inept, indifferent, or ineffectual. If you don't understand a person's behaviour, it's because you're missing a piece of their context. Just because you can't see them or don't believe they're real doesn't imply they don't exist. I find myself applying this theory to all kinds of actions that are misinterpreted as indicators of moral failure – and I have yet to come across one that can't be explained and empathised with.

Reference:
1. Price, D. (2018, March 23). *Laziness Does Not Exist.* **Medium; Human Parts.**

Sumaiya is in the midst of her researching untold topics era; send her leads here, sumrashid10@gmail.com