

THE DEFINITIVE  
**YOUTH**  
MAGAZINE  
**SHOUT**

DHAKA THURSDAY MAY 4, 2023, BAISHAKH 21, 1430 BS

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WHY WE NEED MORE  
FEMALE PUBLIC BUS  
SERVICES

PG 3

THE REPERCUSSIONS OF A  
SHELTERED CHILDHOOD

PG 6



A GUIDE TO APPLYING FOR A  
**MASTER'S DEGREE ABROAD**

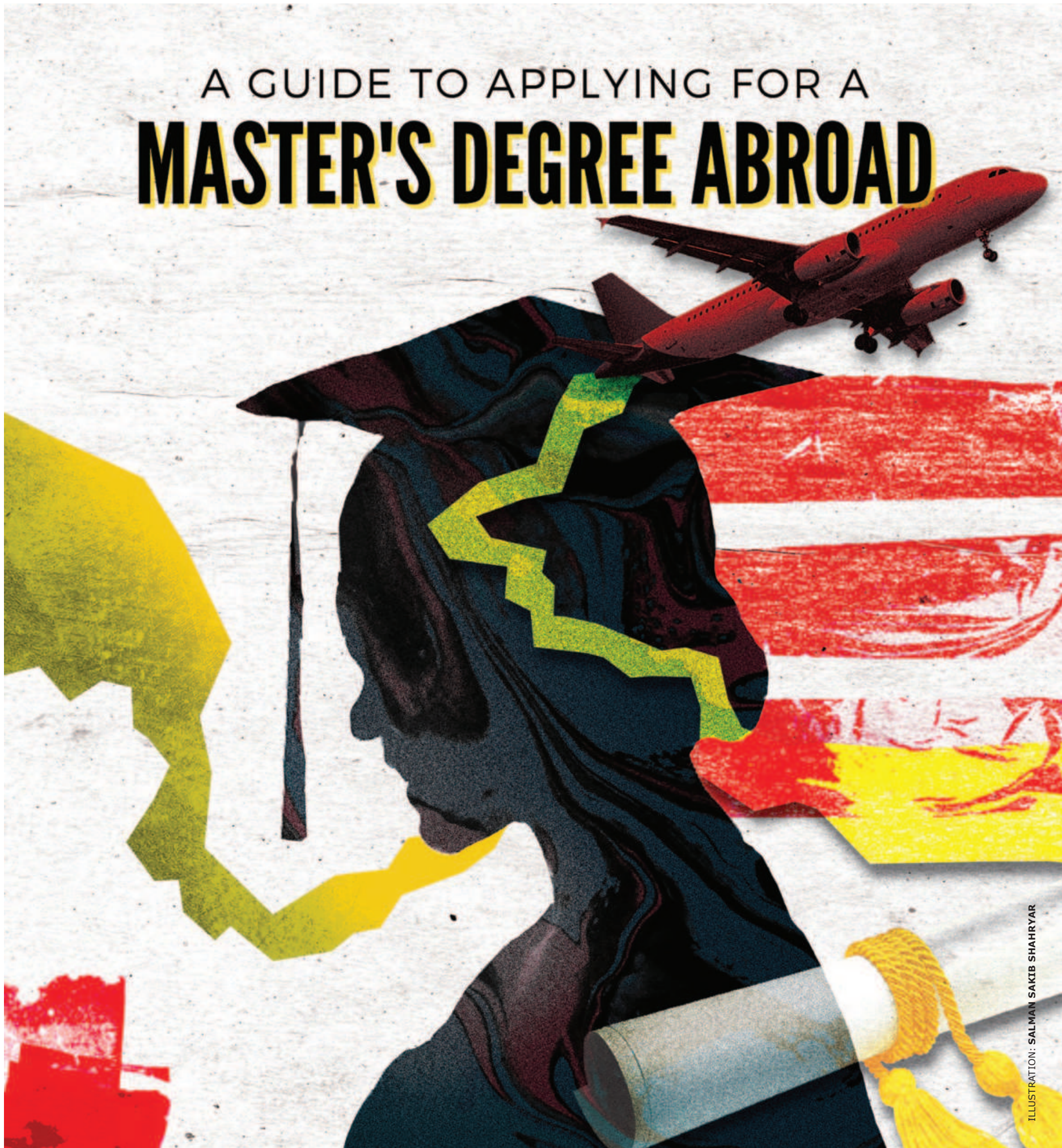


ILLUSTRATION: SALMAN SAKIB SHAHRYAR



# EDITORIAL

I very recently finished playing *Red Dead Redemption 2*, and I loved it. There are so many aspects of the game that deserve a thorough breaking down of their own. But my absolute favourite part of the game has to be just wandering about on my horse. While there are aspects of the game that I thought were a little overwhelming, there is no denying that the world of Arthur Morgan has been painstakingly crafted. And in no place is this more apparent than when you're travelling from one camp to village to town. It might be the most essential part of the game. Without spending a good chunk of time simply exploring the world, it wouldn't feel as immersive. You'd be missing out on hunting animals, doing important side quests or simply improving Arthur's existing abilities – all of which contribute to making the game feel more alive. More importantly, wandering about on your horse provides a moment of calm in a world that is ravaged by crime, vengeance, incurable diseases, and all sorts of scary things.

- Abir Hossain, Sub-editor, SHOUT



## PLAYWATCH

### ANIME



## *Boogiepop And Others* is an underrated enigma you don't know of

MD. NAYEEM HAIDER

Based on the *Boogiepop* light novel series by Kouhei Kadono, *Boogiepop And Others* is a 2019 anime that is hardly known or talked about. That, to me, feels almost criminal, given the absolute delicacy of a show I found it to be. The anime is definitely worth the time for those craving something unconventional and unique.

Rumours waft through the hallways of Shinyo Academy, a strict and prestigious Japanese high school. The missing girls, the ones who vanished without the slightest of traces, continue to be talked about in hushed whispers. In all of this, the shadow of a "Shinigami" seems faintly discernible to many. They speak of a certain "Boogiepop", a phantasmal reaper who cuts short the lives of those who have reached the zenith of their beauty. But it's just a silly urban legend spread by teenagers, of course. There is not a shred of truth in any of it, right?

The series exudes an aura of mystery and thrill that is almost unknown to more mainstream titles. The dialogue-heavy scenes, far from being unnecessary, work only to establish the themes of this show and foreshadow what is to come. The fragmented, non-linear storytelling, despite being confusing, is just an elaborate build-up meant to increase the value of the eventual payoff. And to top it off, there is the mesmerising yet eerie soundtrack by Kensuke Ushio that immerses you in the world of this meticulously made narrative.

All of these individual pieces work in complete synergy, carefully crafting an

enigmatic puzzle that holds you captive as it solves itself slowly.

*Boogiepop And Others* is divided into multiple parts, corresponding to the volumes of the light novel series it adapts. Each of these parts raises a moral question, which it attempts to answer with the events that transpire and the choices the characters make.

Human society can be uncaring, selfish, and capable of extreme evil when it comes to achieving certain goals and interests. If so, from the point of view of a greater power, would it be too wrong to wipe us all out?

In another case, given that all of us are imperfect and condemned to lead unfulfilled lives to compensate, would it be justifiable to sacrifice a single innocent person just to grant salvation to the rest of us? Even aside from such ponderous existential dilemmas, *Boogiepop* also goes to great lengths to portray the desires, guilt, kindness, fear, and contradictions born from the human psyche. It manages to merge both these aspects with near-exemplary finesse and sets it all against the backdrop of supernatural occurrences and shadowy secret organisations. In doing so, it manages to weave an intricate tale that is both intriguing and rich in depth.

In the end, it is perhaps the titular character of this show, *Boogiepop* themselves, who offers the most concrete and concise description of this series:

*"It's a very creepy story, and a little bit sad."*  
Nayeem has board exams coming up. Tell him to think less about Japanese cartoons at nayeemhaider90@gmail.com

### TITLE OF YOUR MIXTAPE



<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>
Poison Brent Faiyaz	What A Life Scarlet Pleasure
Here We Go Again Paramore	dirty dancer Orion Sun
One More Time Daft Punk	Bigmouth Strikes Again The Smiths
Dance Again Selena Gomez	Another Brick in the Wall, Pt. 2 Pink Floyd

Email us at [shoutds@gmail.com](mailto:shoutds@gmail.com) with feedback, comments, and reader submissions within 500 words.



# The perils of climate alarmism

**ROBIAH AREFIN IBN MAHMUD**

Around 3 PM on August 19, 2019, the residents of São Paulo witnessed the sky go dark. This was not the Day of Judgement, as many of the city's devout Catholics feared. Rather, this was the result of black plumes of smoke from the Amazon Rainforest where approximately 10,000 forest fires were burning that day.

It is difficult to look at the apocalyptic images from Brazil or feel the blistering heat of Dhaka city and not find ourselves drowning in existential dread about climate change. But this begs the question – to what extent should we be worried, and is climate alarmism really the most productive way to go about it?

The fundamental problem with climate alarmism is that people have an aversion towards negativity. We dislike being perpetually consumed by pessimistic thoughts, especially those concerning the destruction of our species. Human beings also have a limited capacity to empathise and care about certain issues, being constantly told the world is ending only leads to overall desensitisation.

In the end, the likely result isn't awareness and increased climate action, it is mass apathy. This is why so many people, including the youth, prefer to disengage from the climate change conversation altogether, choosing to live in denial.

"Why bother recycling if the world is going to end no matter what?"

The opposite is also true where many people end up with debilitating anxiety surrounding climate doom.

Climate alarmism can cause further complacency because it sets up an unrealistically morbid expectation of climate change. When people are told the apocalypse is coming, they expect a scene out of a science fiction movie. However, the effects of climate change, while devastating, fall just short of outright dystopian. Thus, it often leads to people dismissing the threat of climate change altogether, perpetuating the cycle of devastating consequences and inaction.

A 2022 survey conducted by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication provides evidence for these phenomena. According to the survey, around 10 percent of Americans feel anxious, 9 percent experience uncontrollable worry, and 7 percent report reduced interest and satisfaction in normal activities due to climate change. On the other hand, 27 percent say they avoid thinking about it believing it to be a hoax or a waste of time.

Therefore, it might be more productive to adopt a conservatively optimistic mind-set about climate change. That is to say, a healthy level of concern is definitely important but slipping into paranoia or apathy is unwise. Of course, this is easier said than done given our social media newsfeeds are perpetually plastered with terrifying statistics about rising sea levels and deadlines on when it may be too late to do anything about it.

However, we could mitigate the impact they have on us by minimising social media usage or unfollowing specific content that cause us distress. Moreover, taking personal initiatives like volunteering in environmental charities or recycling could also be ways to alleviate our stress by trying to be part of the solution. In the end, climate alarmism is a counter-productive mind-set that further exacerbates the climate change crisis.

## References:

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2. World Health Organisation (April 12, 2023). *WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard*.
3. The WashingtonPost (August 20, 2019). *Smoke plunges Sao Paulo into sudden darkness, baffling the Western Hemisphere's largest city*.

*Robiah is crumbling under the despair of university rejections. Send him therapeutic cat memes at robiaharefin@gmail.com.*



PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

# Why we need more female public bus services

**AZRA HUMAYRA**

I set aside a particular sum of money each month for transportation since I'm a student who manages her money carefully. Despite being comfortable, a rickshaw is rather pricey, therefore I cannot afford to ride one every day to my university. Thus, I must use the bus to get around because it is convenient and inexpensive.

I've gotten used to Dhaka's public bus system and have become familiar with how most buses operate. Since private bus services prioritise profit over passenger comfort, and are aware that passengers are mostly compelled to board despite it already being filled to the brim, the buses are almost always completely filled. So, the passengers suffer, sweating profusely due to the combination of the heat, traffic, and over occupancy.

Standing on a bus with predominantly male passengers has been a nerve-wracking experience for me. I live in continual worry that I'll be inappropriately touched or bothered. Finding a coveted seat next to a man who will continually stare at me has also made its place in my list of worries. Not only that, it is a daunting task to board a bus without fearing for your safety in the later hours of the day. Many women must take the bus to get to work because they cannot afford to take a CNG or rickshaw.

The problems faced are thus further intensified when the passenger is a woman. The seats saved for women are often occupied by men who refuse to give up the pre-assigned seats, even when asked. Surprisingly enough, it seems most of these men are only concerned with concepts of equality when the time comes for them to give up these seats, thus, reason and logic automatically go out the window from these already crammed buses. And so women have to either, accept the conditions and keep travelling under such conditions, or

they have to succumb to more inaccessible and expensive modes of transportation.

It is, however, integral for the government to address particular safety and security issues that women frequently encounter when using public transportation. Further initiatives such as introducing female-only bus services where women can travel without worrying about being harassed, assaulted, or subjected to other sorts of abuse and unsafe conditions.

When using a bus service that prioritises their safety, female passengers, especially those who may be at risk due to their age, ethnicity, or other circumstances, may feel more confident and empowered. Thus, these services could be one of the first steps desperately needed to develop an egalitarian and secure transportation system for all users.

However, such strategies often fail due to complacency and fake images of efficacy. In 2014, the government-owned Bangladesh Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) introduced a similar female-only bus service with 17 buses, including seven double-deckers, and female conductors. The service operates between the hours of 7 AM and 5 PM during rush hour and covers 13 distinct routes throughout the city. Additionally, Savar, Gazipur, and Chittagong also began to offer the service. However, commuters frequently claim that the buses don't arrive on time, while men are occasionally observed riding the special buses. While the initial intentions were admirable, the establishment of female-only public services necessitates close monitoring to ensure regulatory compliance and effective utilisation by women.

*Azra Humayra is a part-time roach squasher and a full-time trash television connoisseur. Send her show recommendations at: azrahumayra123@gmail.com*

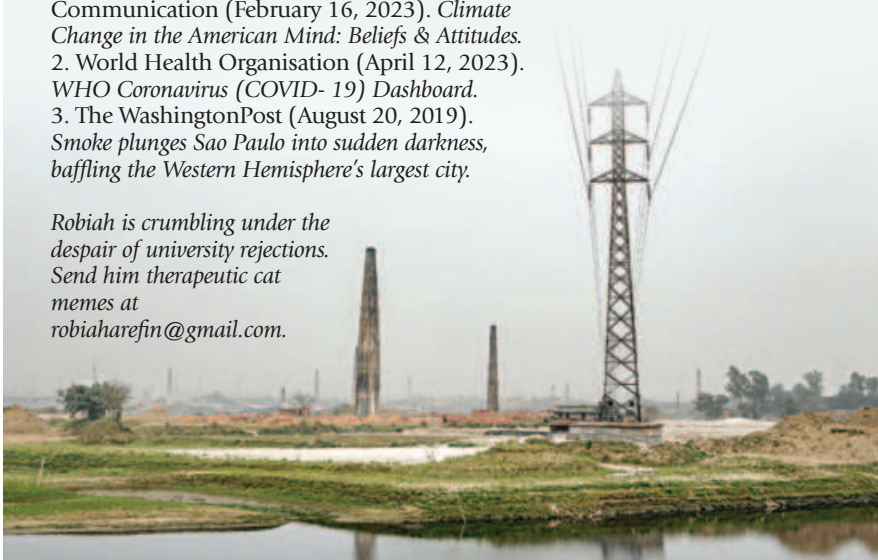


PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA





# A guide to applying for a master's degree abroad

**TAZREEN JAHAN BARI**

While you can't do a master's degree abroad to avoid growing up, it can still be the right step to take, depending on the context. If you want to experience studying in a different country, pursue academia in the future, or if you want to change your field of study, getting a master's abroad could be an excellent choice.

With endless options and a process that includes more steps than a beauty guru's skincare routine, it's common to feel overwhelmed. Thankfully, with the proper guidance and plenty of time, it's not an impossi-

ble feat to achieve.

## Choosing the right place

Too many options come with their own problems, as it becomes more challenging to understand which will be the right choice for a particular applicant. Most popular choices include the USA, Canada, the UK and some European countries like Germany, Italy, etc.

Depending on your situation, financial capacity, subject, future job prospects, and priority, your choice of country/region will vary. For example, the USA and Canada have the most funding opportunities, while Europe offers the most culturally rich and varied experience along with countries where public universities require little to no tuition fees. Canada has the easiest and fastest permanent residency (PR) routes but the weather is an issue for many. Australia has the best weather but funding opportunities are scarce.

Many universities across the USA offer generous funding opportunities via graduate research or teaching assistantships. If the degree you are applying to does not offer central

funding, you will need to contact professors whose research interests match yours in order to ensure said funding.

Some European countries have little to no tuition fees, which makes it easier for students with financial concerns to pursue them. Germany, Italy, and Austria are great examples. Another option for a funded master's program may be in Canada.

If getting a PR is part of the goal, then Canada is a no-brainer. For someone who wants to pursue a master's in the UK or other European countries, an excellent option is opting for scholarships offered by programs like Erasmus Mundus, Commonwealth, or DAAD.

After choosing the region, the next step is to make a list of universities where your desired subject is offered. Some factors to consider while choosing the university are tuition fees, weather, research opportunity, job opportunity, transportation, living cost, etc.

## Timing is everything

For universities in the USA or Canada, there are mainly two sessions when universities ac-

cept applications – Winter and Fall. Applications for Fall sessions start in August of the previous year. Closing dates range from early December to late January, sometimes dragging into early February. The Fall session is the most popular for international students as most funding opportunities are available during this session.

Winter session applications start around April of the previous year and close around late May. It's good to remember that most universities have one primary intake (usually the Fall). All courses are not offered during Winter intake, so it's good to check if your desired course is available during the intake you are aiming for.

European universities have a different timeline, varying from country to country. So it is confusing and challenging to keep track of. But if you start with 10-12 months in hand, no matter which country you want to go to, you will have enough time to prepare everything.

## Sorting out finances

Regardless of where you apply or what kind of financial support you receive, inevitably, the entire process requires a hefty amount from start to finish. Required exams like IELTS/TOEFL/GRE/GMAT cost considerable money. Application fees ranging from USD 50 to 150 can also add up quickly. Suppose, you get into a desired university and decide to go. In that case, you will again need proof of financial capacity when applying for a study permit/visa.

So, depending on your choice of country and university, you must prepare beforehand. If you cannot fund your studies, you need to have a candid conversation with your family about how much support they can give you and make your decisions accordingly.

## Exams to take

Most universities require at least one test



score in their application process. For example, you might need to take an English language proficiency test like IELTS/TOEFL. Additionally, some courses require international applicants to take a GRE/GMAT exam.

These tests only take place a few times a year, so depending on your timeline, you need to prepare for it, book a test at least a month before you want to take it, and collect the result before you can start your application.

## Preparing required documents

Some documents are needed to apply for any degree. Most commonly, these are transcripts, original certificates, and grade sheets. The university's administration department from which you've completed the undergraduate degree is where you can apply to receive these documents.

Between one and three recommendation letters are required from professors/employers/supervisors. For recommen-

dation letters, choosing someone who knows your work and has an excellent professional/academic relationship with you is better. Most universities will send the recommender a link where they can submit the letter.

Before you apply and the university sends the link, inform the recommender about this and choose them as recommender only if they agree. The recommender you have in mind should have an official email address issued by their workplace, as universities abroad often do not accept recommendation letters sent through personal email ids.

Additionally, you may be asked to submit a CV or resume. Academic CV varies from regular CV and can have different formats depending on region. Before you apply, make sure you prepare your CV accordingly.

## Writing the essays

As part of the application process, you

may be required to write a Statement of Purpose (SOP), a Research Statement, or an essay on a particular topic. An SOP is an essay that relates your personal, professional and academic experiences to the degree you are applying for and how you want to fulfil your future goals using said degree. The research statement is usually only applicable to PhD students. Still, some thesis-based master's programs ask for a research statement entailing your research intentions, topic, research questions, etc. Research statements usually take more time and consideration to craft than SOPs.

A rule of thumb to go by here is to never plagiarise these documents, no matter what. It's not wise to pay someone else to write one, as professional SOP writers may write a generic essay or even copy-paste it elsewhere. Plenty of resources are available online. University websites have links to sample papers or websites where you can find steps to writing an essay that fulfils said universities' particular requirements.

## Submitting the application

After the selection, document collection and test-taking are done, it is time to apply. Make sure you have a credit card that allows payment in foreign currency to start your application. Most universities have a very easy-to-navigate online application system. After submitting the application, keep an eye out for emails.

If you've taken all the right steps, it's more likely than not that a ticket to study in a reputed university abroad awaits you. Even then, success is never guaranteed, and it's important to remember that if one dream doesn't come true, we can always dream new things.

*Despite taking a gap year only to apply for a master's abroad, Tazreen applied to her dream university the night before the deadline. Ask her how to avoid such a fate at tazreenzahan@gmail.com.*



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA



# The repercussions of a sheltered childhood

**ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA**

“Your parents only have your wellbeing in mind,” is something most of us hear growing up, especially when we vocalise our dissatisfactions towards our parents. While there may be some truth to that statement in many cases, sometimes well-intentioned actions end up going sideways. When parents restrict us from certain activities or interfere in our lives, it may be from a place of concern. However, the degree of involvement can prove to be disadvantageous later on in life for the child if it exceeds a certain threshold.

Parents will often say that they’re not going to be there for us forever, which is easily the best counterargument for their inclination to be overly sheltering. “Not being there for us” does not only mean physically being absent. It also means how we can’t count on our parents to always solve every little problem in our lives, even if they are physically present. If our parents previously didn’t allow us the chance to navigate our lives, we may end up struggling to cope with being on our own.

The realisation doesn’t quite hit us until we get thrown into a bout of anxiety over simple tasks, or when we struggle to make independent decisions without parental input. Becoming independent as we grow is natural, but the habits formed from always having someone to depend on becomes hard to let go.

This is further solidified by the endless justifications for parents not allowing their children to go out alone, especially in Dhaka city. Road accident numbers soaring by the day, unknown environments, stranger



PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

danger – the list goes on.

Parents, including my own, will even burden themselves by shifting important errands in their own schedules to make sure their children reach their destinations safely. The self-sacrificial gesture is touching, but this constant practice has resulted in me having a terrible sense of direction where a straightforward route practically feels like a labyrinth. If Google Maps didn’t exist, I’d probably be trying to figure a way out of Iqbal Road instead of writing this.

Another deceptively uncomplicated sounding activity I’ve struggled with

doing alone is going through bureaucratic processes. Granted, in Bangladesh something as simple as picking up a certificate is unnecessarily long-winded, but at this point I’m not entirely sure how the process is even supposed to go. In fact, if someone were to come up to me and ask how you’re supposed to renew your passport, my answer will probably be, “You tell your mom.”

If you’ve led a similarly sheltered life, odds are, there’s probably one or two pretty basic life skills that you may be lacking. As we grow up, however, it’s unwise to

blame external factors and take some accountability. Once we’re no longer barred from taking the initiative to make up for our lackings, we might still resist personal growth out of sheer force of habit.

Just as it is important for parents to let children experience aspects of life for themselves, it’s also necessary for us to realise that it’s on us, as young adults, to step out of our comfort zones to work on the problems we face in our everyday lives.

*Remind Zabin to take it easy on the caffeine at [zabintrn@gmail.com](mailto:zabintrn@gmail.com)*

# The ethical minefield of employing domestic helpers

**RAFID KHANDAKER**

The practice of hiring domestic workers has been a cultural mainstay in our society for a long time. It is common in most middle to upper class households, where the workers aid in cooking, cleaning, and other household chores. However, questions have been raised about the ethics of this practice, with many pointing fingers at how the majority of the workers are treated miserably and paid measly salaries while essentially being on the clock 24/7.

At this point, it is common knowledge that domestic helpers, in many instances, are cruelly subject to constant abuse, both verbal and physical. There are no specific laws protecting the rights of domestic helpers, making them prime targets for exploitation. This glaring lack of protection for these vulnerable workers, most of whom are underage girls, means that all domestic helpers are potentially at risk of, or are currently subject to, exploitation.

Some people argue that this occupation allows economically disadvantaged people to have a stable source of income, live in the city with accommodation and food, and have a better standard of living. However, the absence of these basic necessities in their lives is exactly what is being used to take advantage of them. Their in-



PHOTO: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

come is often minimal, that is if they do get an income at all, as many are told that the food and accommodation is enough compensation for their work.

Furthermore, this occupation has become familial in certain cases, where new generations of workers are funnelled into the field by parents who have not been able to better the lives of their children. How

can this, in any way, be considered a way to improve living standards?

Others also argue that domestic helpers are necessary to aid the elderly or people with disabilities, who may face difficulties in doing chores by themselves. While it is true that the elderly and people with disabilities should have access to help, it may be better to employ specialised caregivers,

or workers who are not bound to stay at the homes of their employers.

There are cultural prejudices surrounding the prevalence of this profession as well. Do we view cooking, cleaning, and other household chores as inferior to other work? These are largely unaddressed questions that we as a society need to ask ourselves in order to unlearn the ingrained prejudices.

All these things show how the issues of economically disadvantaged people cannot be fixed simply by paid domestic work, or any other profession for that matter. The key, instead, is to bring about systemic change. Implementing and enforcing specialised laws and regulations to protect these workers will go a long way to ensuring they receive fair remuneration, have set working hours, and aren’t subject to violence. Changing cultural perceptions around domestic workers should also be of paramount importance, which includes giving them and their work the proper respect, and this goes hand in hand with treating them as employees rather than servants.

*Rafid is busy dozing off every chance he gets. Wake him up by sending a notification at [rafidkhandaker@gmail.com](mailto:rafidkhandaker@gmail.com).*



# VESPERTINE

UPOMA AZIZ

The blue never ended here. The lights did not go out either.

I did not know it was a possibility in all the years of my existence here. But to be fair, even the elders of our community speak of it either as lore or as play pretend – it is a tale known by many but believed by none.

In our small, peaceful community, nothing ever went out of order, the mills never stopped running, the supply of fresh produce never ended, and of course, the lights never went out. We never questioned why because that's the way things had always been. This is what was called perfect, I think. But we had never known anything but perfection, we had not known anything named a flaw.

The children here took scraps of thick fabric that were once either blankets or shrouds we'd used to cover the dead with and wrapped it around their heads and over their eyes. I did it too when I was younger. It was supposed to mimic what it would be like during night-time but it truly only ever provided a soft orange tint over the lids, like the colour the sky sometimes turned to between two bouts of absolute, blinding light.

I haven't played with other children my age in a very long time. No one is a child anymore after they lose their parents, I heard the remark thrown around carelessly in the wind and decided to catch it, to keep it. I did not know what it meant back then but I have been taught ever since.

I threw a flat rock across at the pond,

and an absurd thought crossed my mind – that the pond would throw a boulder back at me in response. The rock did not skip across the surface like I intended it to. Instead, it sank to the bottom of the water. I stood there for a while, waiting for the pond to hit me back. It did not, so I turned and began to walk away.

The endless blue sky stretched out like my allocated monthly allowance. We'd seen hyper-realistic projections of how the Earth's sunsets and sunrises used to be but the intangibility of it upset me back then too. One of my classmates laughed and said you cannot touch a sunset or the sky. It was true, but I could never explain how I felt that way. On Earth perhaps, the sky was still something you could claim, something you could connect to.

People trying to claim everything – to try and grab more than they could fit into their palms – their houses, their hearts, was the very reason they had to eventually leave it all behind on Earth and shift to this planet. This is something we are reminded of at every turn and at every task: to look at the ground and not at the sky; to be humble. After all, pride and gluttony had nearly wiped-out humanity once, and it could happen again. We had run out of backup planets, hence the extra care, and the extra caution.

All the care and caution in the world did not prepare us adequately for this anomaly it seemed. Our otherwise perfect town was in a pickle. All the information we had was based on a completely different planet, and people were apparently debating over which

what-if scenario seemed most logical. In some cases, some of their absurd hypotheses cancelled each other out. Everyone settled on darkness being the greatest issue and so, beams were being heaved to hang makeshift lanterns from. It was entirely beyond me how this happened every twelve hours or so back on Earth, but people were used to living in a world that was not as carefully orchestrated.

Dusk had come like it did any other day, but it did not take a peek only to dissolve in the face of glaring light. The sky grew darker by the minute. It was like watching a dragon from the pages of a myth wake from its endless slumber.

I thought I was getting goosebumps from the intensity of bearing witness to an unforeseen event, but others around me were shivering as well. Old blankets with patches sewn on them were being handed out from dusty cardboard boxes. The blanket I got was ashy and too big for me, so I wrapped it around my shoulders.

All around me, I saw families huddled together in blankets that looked like tents, trying to get closer to the lanterns. I felt a quick, sharp jab just below my ribs. A blanket twice wrapped around my torso could not shield me from the bitterness I felt from the absence of a family that could have been there, splitting both the blanket and the warmth with me.

I wandered around aimlessly for a bit – the soft humming of frightened people receded and there had only been a few lanterns in sight. The sky was like one huge canopy the colour of my blanket, but with way more holes in it – small

specks of light leaked through them. Stars, I knew them to be, bespeckled the sky like sesame seeds on a bagel, and it had been the most mesmerising thing I'd ever seen – so much that I almost did not notice the lump near my foot.

"Hello?" I asked.

"Hi," the lump replied in a small voice.

The lump uncoiled himself and I saw a tiny boy with bony knuckles and purple marks under his sunken eyes. A child sitting alone on the outskirts of the town could have only meant one thing – he is like me. I forgot that I had been feeling sorry for myself and my chest swelled with pity for this little creature. I sat next to him. He shifted in his place but didn't scoot away.

"Back on Earth, people believed that when someone died, they became a star," I said to no one in particular, but the boy listened with intent. "When only you can see one particular star twinkling, it's actually your loved one winking at you."

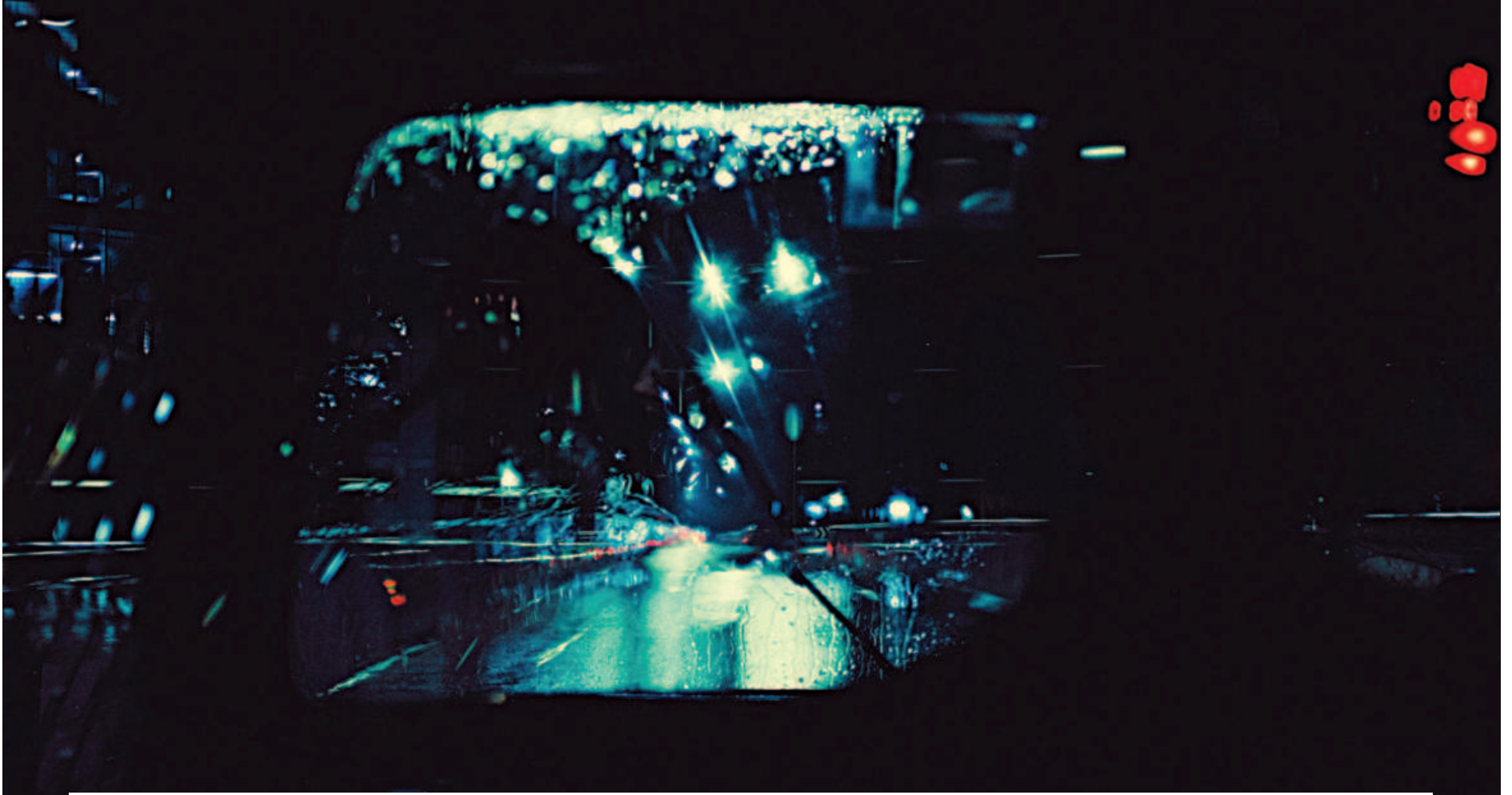
He and I looked at the sky. I unfolded my blanket and draped it over his head. "That one blinked at me" he pointed upwards. "Did any of them blink at you?" he asked.

I couldn't tell because with my vision blurred with tears. I saw thrice as many stars as there really had been.

*Upoma Aziz is a slouching, crouching, grouchy Goblin with a hoarding issue. Hold a virtual intervention for her to declutter her desk and her mind at [upoma.aziz@gmail.com](mailto:upoma.aziz@gmail.com)*

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA





# AFTER HOURS

Tell me a story of the time  
When the sun goes down  
When there's no light across the sky  
And very few people around

PHOTOS BY: **UMMID ASHRAF**  
CURATED BY: **ORCHID CHAKMA**

