



DID YOU KNOW?

PLANETSSPINNING the wrong way?

All the planets in our solar system orbit the Sun in a counter-clockwise direction. They rotate on their axis in a counter-clockwise – west to east – manner. However, there are two exceptions to this rule – Venus and Uranus.

Venus, which is the second planet from the Sun and sixth in the solar system in size and mass, rotates clockwise – east to west. On the other hand, Uranus, which is the seventh planet from the Sun, rolls on its side while orbiting the Sun.

There are hypotheses that Venus and Uranus originally used to rotate counter-clockwise like the Earth and other planets. However, at some point, they were struck by massive objects, probably other planets or asteroids, which sent them spinning in different directions. Had that not happened, they too would have been spinning like the rest of the planets in our solar system.

Editor & Publisher
Mahfuz Anam

Deputy Editor of Features
and Head of Content
Marketing
Ehsanur Raza Ronny

Rising Stars Editor
Azmin Azran

Rising Stars Team
Faisal Bin Iqbal
Syeda Afrin Tarannum
Fatima Jahan Ena
Abir Hossain

Photographer
Orchid Chakma

Graphics & Layout
TDS Creative Graphics

Production
Shamim Chowdhury

Send your articles,
feedback, and opinion to
rs@thedailystar.net
Find our content online at
thedailystar.net/rising-stars

Custom-made keycaps conjured up by YOUNGKEYBOARD ENTHUSIAST

ABIR HOSSAIN

Rohan Ahmed is a 15-year-old seventh grader from Banani Bidyaniketan School and College. Much like other teenagers in his age group, he is also enamoured by video games. However, what makes him and his gaming rig stand out from many others are the keycaps on his keyboard.

Rohan makes the keycaps all by himself, using clay, markers, and glue, among other things.

Having stumbled upon custom-made keycaps on the internet, Rohan really liked the idea of it. He then scoured the internet looking to buy some for himself, but his search came up short. This sparked his eureka moment. Inspired and driven, he thought of designing his own keycaps.

"The design of the keycaps really fascinated me, and that spurred me on to make my own set," he said. "While I design the keycaps by myself, I read instructions online and watch tutorials on YouTube. I initially only used clay to make the keycaps, but you need more than just clay. This is something I learned only after watching the tutorials."

He conjures up characters from his favourite TV shows, anime, and video games and transforms them into miniature caricatures of themselves. From Poké balls to Finn from *Adventure Time*, his ensemble of keycaps is diverse. When asked which of his keycaps he liked the best, he said, "My favourite key that I have designed is the Zoro keycap."



PHOTOS: ORCHID CHAKMA

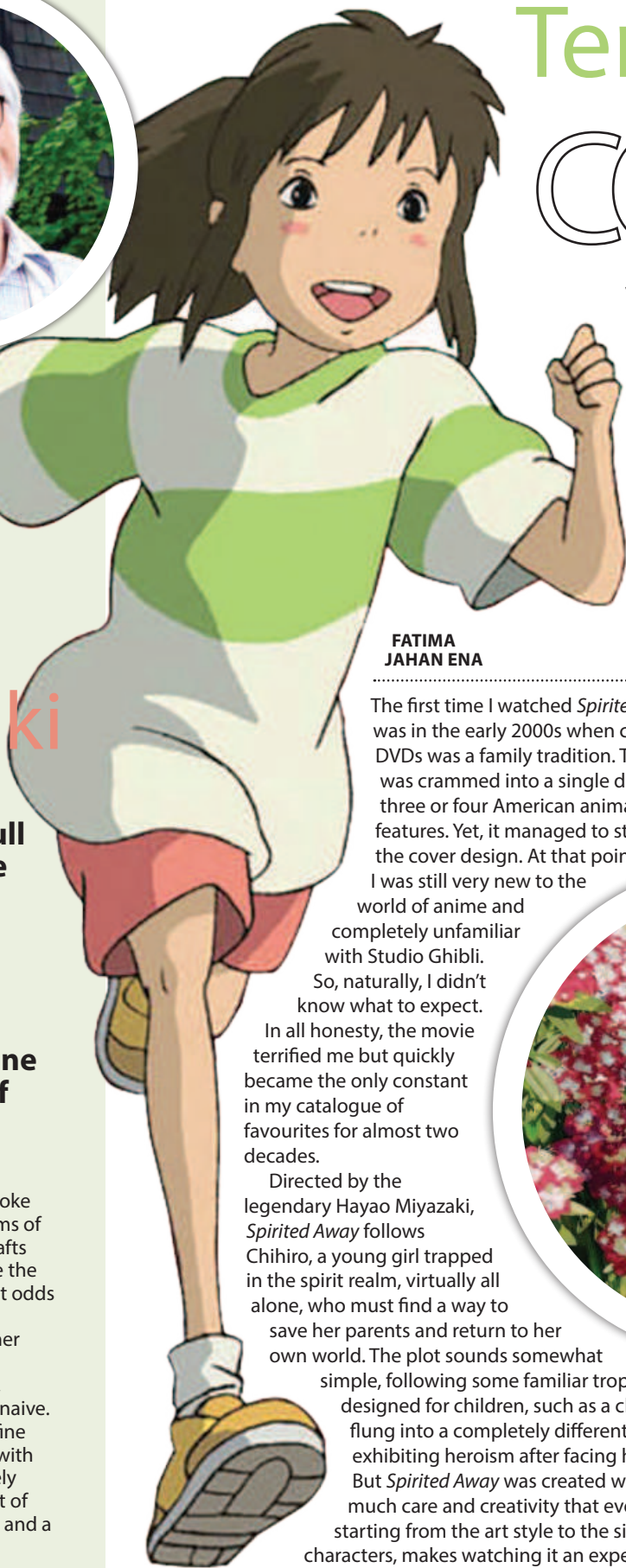


Hayao Miyazaki

Hayao Miyazaki weaves worlds full of wonders while confronting the ugliness of our reality. His films not only leave a mark but often push the milestone of the medium of animation.

Each frame is meticulously crafted, and every single stroke feels deliberate. Even in terms of world-building, Miyazaki crafts multifaceted settings where the majestic order of nature is at odds with the greedy humans.

But what ties it all together are his protagonists who are equal parts courageous, ambitious, and even a little naive. Miyazaki's commitment to fine draughtsmanship coupled with brilliant narratives is precisely why his work stands the test of time. Miyazaki is a visionary and a subversive storyteller.



FATIMA JAHAN ENA

The first time I watched *Spirited Away* was in the early 2000s when collecting DVDs was a family tradition. The movie was crammed into a single disk with three or four American animated features. Yet, it managed to stand out in the cover design. At that point, I was still very new to the world of anime and completely unfamiliar with Studio Ghibli. So, naturally, I didn't know what to expect.

In all honesty, the movie terrified me but quickly became the only constant in my catalogue of favourites for almost two decades.

Directed by the legendary Hayao Miyazaki, *Spirited Away* follows Chihiro, a young girl trapped in the spirit realm, virtually all alone, who must find a way to save her parents and return to her own world. The plot sounds somewhat simple, following some familiar tropes designed for children, such as a child being flung into a completely different world and exhibiting heroism after facing hardships. But *Spirited Away* was created with so much care and creativity that everything, starting from the art style to the side characters, makes watching it an experience that should not be missed.

Terrifying yet COMFORTING

What makes *Spirited Away* a must-watch?

In my personal experience, the movie's visuals and premise terrified me when I was a child. This was mainly attributed to the fact that, at that time, I was only used to the animation and storytelling styles of Disney and Cartoon Network, which often tried to comfort the viewer. *Spirited Away* did the exact opposite but still managed to be comforting in its own special way. I was uncomfortable, scared, but completely mesmerised. The events of the movie were meant to show exactly how terrible of a situation Chihiro is in, with several small challenges leading up to the final challenge, and it excels at causing tension for the viewer as well. You're constantly at the edge of your seat, trying to predict what will happen next and how Chihiro can handle it. But the stress is also accompanied by Studio Ghibli's signature moments of peace, whether it be a tea party in a quaint cottage or a tranquil train ride across the ocean.

Another aspect of the movie that I did not grasp as a child would be the characters. As an adult, I now understand that Studio

Ghibli movies, especially those helmed by Miyazaki, use the animated medium to create incredibly relatable, believable characters who exist in fantastical

settings. In *Spirited Away*, Chihiro is just a little kid. She begins the movie by sulking and complaining but exhibits extreme kindness and bravery as the movie goes on. This paints a very realistic picture of what it's actually like being a kid – being annoyed, being scared, but also being brave and compassionate. Other characters in the movie, even if they have limited screen time or dialogue, are written with just as much complexity and never feel one-dimensional.

At the heart of it, *Spirited Away* is a movie made exactly for children, but in the best way possible. It does not shy away from talking about complex issues while still being a wholly entertaining watch. The movie doesn't try to

talk down to the target demographic either, unlike a lot of other animated features. One of the central themes of the movie is to preserve your own identity in the face of adversity, which can resonate with both children and adults alike. Even now, after years of being an avid lover of movies, I still haven't watched many films which managed to retain the same level of pure wonder and inspiration after so many years. So, it's probably safe to say that *Spirited Away* is one of the rare gems which will probably continue to be amazing for many more years to come.



BUILD SAFE HOMES WITH THE TRUST OF MILLIONS

BSRM
building a safer nation

THE DAWN OF THE DESHI

SIX

SUPERHEROES WE NEED AND DESERVE



Load-Shedding Man

For some, he leaves a wrath engulfed in darkness – depriving their lands of convenience and comfort, stripping them of exhilarating cricket matches, and plaguing the population by cutting off their internet accesses. Having been struck by lightning at a young age, Load-Shedding Man has been cursed ever since. With electrons flowing through his veins, Load-Shedding Man more often than not finds himself being an enigma, even to himself. But where most people sense danger, others find hope. Even though he leaves darkness in his wake, his powers spark joy and bring happiness to students all across the country.

If the lights are out and all is dim, it can only mean one thing. It is time to close all the textbooks, fold the notebooks, and divert all of one's focus towards not studying. And that is a gift not many superheroes can bring to people. A foe to frustrated teachers, a friend to jubilant students. With his mere presence, he whisks away worries about deadlines and defeats



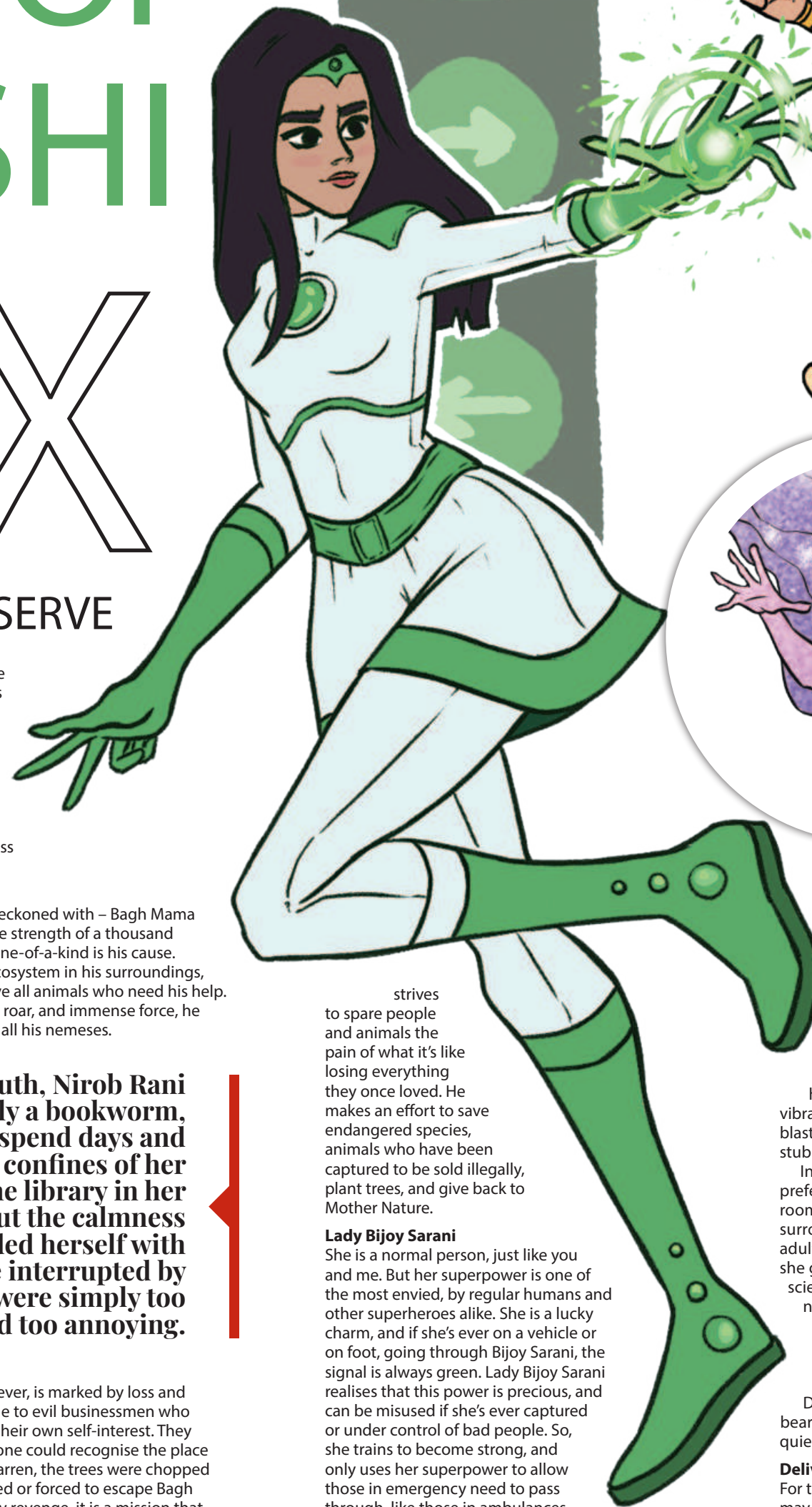
nightmares fuelled by incomplete homework. But alas, the darkness eventually captures the students as well. For they too are unable to play video games, charge their phones, and mindlessly waste hours on the internet. He may be a broken man but Load-Shedding Man can truly mend the hearts of students across the country.

Bagh Mama

Ferocious, fearless, a force to be reckoned with – Bagh Mama is a forest spirit who possesses the strength of a thousand tigers yet what makes him truly one-of-a-kind is his cause. Driven by the need to save the ecosystem in his surroundings, he has set out on a mission to save all animals who need his help. With blinding speed, a deafening roar, and immense force, he sends shivers down the spines of all his nemeses.

In her youth, Nirob Rani was simply a bookworm, preferring to spend days and weeks in the confines of her room or the library in her school. But the calmness she surrounded herself with would often be interrupted by adults who were simply too loud, and too annoying.

His emergence as a hero, however, is marked by loss and tragedy. Bagh Mama lost his home to evil businessmen who burned it down to ruins until no one could recognise the place anymore. The lakes were made barren, the trees were chopped down, and all animals were hunted or forced to escape Bagh Mama's journey isn't motivated by revenge, it is a mission that



strives to spare people and animals the pain of what it's like losing everything they once loved. He makes an effort to save endangered species, animals who have been captured to be sold illegally, plant trees, and give back to Mother Nature.

Lady Bijoy Sarani

She is a normal person, just like you and me. But her superpower is one of the most envied, by regular humans and other superheroes alike. She is a lucky charm, and if she's ever on a vehicle or on foot, going through Bijoy Sarani, the signal is always green. Lady Bijoy Sarani realises that this power is precious, and can be misused if she's ever captured or under control of bad people. So, she trains to become strong, and only uses her superpower to allow those in emergency need to pass through, like those in ambulances,



Nirob Rani

A hero with the power to shut out all harsh noises, and more specifically grownups who are being a little too loud. A celestial being with long luscious hair. Her confident stride leaves everyone speechless. In a world that constantly pushes you down, this is a superhero who will help you up – cleansing your audible periphery of all things noisy, shrill and unnecessary. She absorbs loud noises into her superpowered skin, and uses the energy from the vibrations of those noises to produce powerful (but silent) blasts that can deter the noisemakers who prove to be stubborn and difficult.

In her youth, Nirob Rani was simply a bookworm, preferring to spend days and weeks in the confines of her room or the library in her school. But the calmness she surrounded herself with would often be interrupted by adults who were simply too loud, and too annoying. As she grew up, her reading habits made her a super smart scientist, and she started working on noise absorbing nanomaterials as part of her research. One day, she mistakenly swallowed some of those nanomaterials with her cup of coffee, and her body reacted to it, turning her into who she was now. Nirob Rani is a superhero desperately needed in a loud city like Dhaka, and she goes around making the world more bearable for little children who just like things to be a bit quiet.

Delivery Man

For the residents of Dhaka, every day holds a calamity. It may not be natural, but it is a disaster nonetheless. And



kids getting late for school, or other superheroes who need a clear road. In the beginning, however, she suffered like everyone else. When she missed a doctor's appointment one day and fell ill in the middle of the road and passed out, her friends and family thought all was lost. But a miracle took place in the middle of Dhaka's hellish traffic, and our superhero woke up, raised a hand, and all traffic came to a halt. The car she was in sped through the intersection, and it stayed open as long as she was in eyeshot. A new superhero was born, one who was unique to Dhaka. Lady Bijoy Sarani's traffic signal had turned green, and it wasn't ever going to turn red.

that is; the traffic. When the city is gripped with traffic, it's almost as though it turns into a fortress where time stands still. For hours on end, no movement can be seen through any street. Except when he passes by like a ghost in the corner of your eye.

When the city stands still, one man runs. He runs by like a gust of wind, so fast that you can only see a brief flash of his giant delivery bag. When no one moves, he delivers.

He is the one and only Delivery Man. With his supersonic speed and his impeccable sense of navigation, Delivery Man goes to every nook and cranny of the city to deliver what is needed. If you had forgotten to buy art supplies for your project that's due the next morning, Delivery Man is here to help. He knows what you need even before you place the order.

However, Delivery Man does not limit himself to stationeries and late night snacks. When an actual disaster strikes, he is always the first one there to provide help to anyone who may need it. Whatever you need, he will deliver.

Narikel Nani

We've all been there. Drowning in overdue assignments, a study table lost to mountains of scattered notes that you can't understand, a head full of jumbled numbers and pain. The world seems bleaker than it ever has before, and you can't seem to find a way to make sense of all the mess. All you want is a few moments of peace and clarity, but the frustration somehow manages to trump sleep.

When all hope seems lost, you might just hear the faint swoosh of a sober-coloured saree's draping and catch the familiar whiff of coconut oil. The air around you will somehow magically lose some of the built-up tension and a gentle breeze will pass by. Then you will know that she's here.



Meet Narikel Nani, your friendly neighbourhood grandmother. She may not fit the ideal of a superhero, but sometimes she's more powerful than the strongest of them.

When stress seems insurmountable, Narikel Nani will gently apply her coconut oil to your head, magically dissolving all the worries and confusion. With each parting of your hair, you become more and more relaxed, until you reach a mental clarity so great that you feel invincible. A few (hundred) overdue assignments will feel like nothing once Narikel Nani graces your presence.

Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Habits: THE PILLARS OF SCHOOL OF LIFE

In conversation with Ramesh Mudgal, principal of Glenrich International School

AZMIN AZRAN

Glenrich International School (GIS), located in Dhaka's Shatarkul area, is an educational institution that operates with the motto of "School of Life". Their campus is a clear testament to those words, rich with lush greenery and state-of-the-art facilities alike. I sat down with the principal of GIS, Ramesh Mudgal, to discuss the philosophy behind the words "School of Life", and how GIS is implementing these ideas to produce citizens for a brighter future.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

Ramesh Mudgal: I am a postgraduate in History and Education. I started my career in 1996 as a teacher in Kalaburagi, India. After that, I've taught in Thailand, Singapore, and the UAE as well. Since October, 2023, I've been with GIS. The best practices I've learned from working in different parts of the world have helped me in setting up GIS as a torchbearer of change as a 21st century school.

Can you explain to our readers the concept of "School of Life"?

RM: This concept focuses on the fact that education is more than just books and knowledge. Education is actually the development of the whole personality. Education has to prepare a student for life. In my experience, I have seen smart students who have excelled in their academics who did not have great interpersonal skills, who were not receptive to feedback. When the time came for them to enter the job market, they could not sustain a career for long. That is because despite being ahead academically, they did not have the skills required to become successful in life. Our "School of Life" concept is that academics is the bare minimum, what more can we give students? Identifying the potential of the student, helping them realise their strengths and weaknesses, understanding the changing nature of the



effort is to identify what the child is good at, take that particular thing and help the child get better at it. At the same time, we encourage them to try other things. If we make them focus on one thing and ignore the things they are good at, they will get demotivated. It is important for our teachers to express care and concern towards students.

We are also planning to introduce a relaxation session for our students in the mornings, using the technology available in the classrooms.

The world is constantly changing, and the nature of education is changing with it, as well as the expectations from an educational institution. As a school, what is GIS doing to prepare their students for this changing world?

RM: To ensure that students are in tune with the changing nature of the world, we are not preparing them for today's jobs. We have to prepare our students for jobs and activities that are going to be required 15 years down the line. We don't know exactly what will happen in the future, but looking at today's world, we can make a fair guess. For example, technology is going to be very strong, even now it is strong but over time it will get stronger and stronger. Manual jobs will be available in lesser quantities, but intellectual jobs will become important. Skills like problem-solving, social empathy, values, and creativity will become more significant. Our curriculum is configured keeping all these things in mind. Robotics is integrated in our curriculum until grade 8, it is not optional. Our children are preparing for a world that is going to be a lot more different than the world we occupy now.

A proper campus is important in the holistic growth of a child. Can you talk about some features of the GIS campus that you specifically want to mention?

RM: A lot of thought has gone into the design of this

campus. Some of the unique things about this campus are – the technology that is incorporated into every classroom with WiFi and touchpanels, then there is the huge library, we have a robotics lab, a mathematics lab. We have a skating rink in our school as well, two swimming pools, a phenomenal auditorium, and a rooftop basketball court that can be used for different sports. Laboratories, classrooms, music rooms, sports fields, all the infrastructure in our school is fantastic.

Why is learning languages important in the lives of modern students and how is GIS teaching them?

RM: We understand that language skills are crucial for every child. Every child has to learn their mother tongue, so Bangla is taught to all Bangladeshi nationals in the school and even expatriate students are encouraged to learn it. But the medium of instruction and communication in this school is English. In addition to that, we understand that the world requires individuals to be experts in one other international language. So, we are offering French as a language in our school. Everybody learns it, and this is being done in collaboration with Alliance Française de Dhaka.

What is GIS planning to do to produce the global leaders of tomorrow?

RM: Leadership is all about taking responsibility. So, we always ask the students that, even if there are only three students in a situation and something wrong is taking place, and one of the students takes a stand, then they are a leader. Besides that, we have a student council. Our student council goes beyond just maintaining discipline, they engage in community outreach. In this programme, our students are encouraged to take up programmes that have an impact on the community. It could be related to livelihood, health and hygiene, or education. Under the guidance of the teachers, our students will create an impact and for me, that is what leadership is.

If we make them focus on one thing and ignore the things they are good at, they will get demotivated. It is important for our teachers to express care and concern towards students.

world, the skill sets and attitudes that will be necessary once they become job seekers or job providers in the future – this is what we provide. According to us, the School of Life concept is KASH: Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Habits. If these things are in place, they will be happy no matter what walk of life they are in.

It is clear from the facilities present on the campus of GIS that the students' physical health is of utmost importance to the school. Besides that, what is GIS doing to ensure that the mental health of its students is protected?

RM: Self-worth is an important aspect. Everyone should feel like they are important. We treat every student with respect and make them believe that they are important. Our

The After-Chapter

SHAIKH SABIK KAMAL

There you are.

Lost in time, uncountable. Yet, I return here without any presence again.

Today, my days of wandering are nearing an end as I carry the weight of nothingness. Across tiles of concrete creations, it's become clear now that no shadow can quite mimic the shape of mine. I love to see them try, with their attempts nonchalantly fleeting within the clouds of people I pass by.

Making my way through the spaceless corridor, I notice a room where my quivering feet once stood. Without a shadow, or a presence, I perch on that armchair in that room God made everyone forget about.

With my memories remaining an unvisited dream, I woke up amidst the calm green meadow that gently held onto me. There was warmth in the flora that encased me, but so was a sense of longing deep within me.

And so, I gave in to greed, one more time. Maybe one last time, I'd search for meaning. I pushed away this Eden and ran for myself, faster than I would for my fears. The daylight welcomed me, but with a warning. It could shelter me but

it couldn't save me from the night's abysmal grasp. And so, a deal was sealed even before it was spoken of. I was made aware of the fact that I was on borrowed time.

Something tells me this wasn't my first attempt. Everything in me ached, suffocated. *But I am here.* Somehow. Here I stand, looking over to the bed that I despised so much in my last days.

On my tongue remains a comfortably bittersweet taste of memories. The sheets look cleaner. The pillow feels softer; it hasn't held a head down since, no longer gaping a void that would let me silence my screams. There's nothing around my bed now, not that my body needs them anymore.

It looks better this way. It feels better.

Like the whirring of a grounded bird's wing, long-forgotten bitter memories in me awaken. Some visits to the doctor when it would be overdue. My eyes catch a glimpse of the framed picture by my bedside table. It shelters shades of life I couldn't love enough. It has never failed to blur my sight with tears. I open the drawers and they're empty too. Only this armchair, that bed, and its table at the side live days of despondency.

I was home again. But like always, time did not wait for me. The daylight warned me after all. The light grew orange, vividly passing through me onto my bed. Sometimes I wonder if the afternoon is aware of how eerily tranquil and beautiful it is despite being

short-lived. If it doesn't, could I still wish that I was like the afternoon and that my numbered days were just as serene?

Nevertheless, I look back again, the light on the bed thinning as the sun nears its slumber. It's a familiar scenery from when I stood on the cliff of life, with the arrival of the wind left to take my fragile body down the depths of the next.

Nearing the edge, I was always afraid, regretting every decision that led me closer and closer to my demise. However, that day I was as calm as the sea below me. Perhaps it was the inevitability of fate, the fact that I got to witness a story so grand that it had to conclude before it reached out of bounds.

I wish I could trace my steps from here to the ground beneath where my body rested. But I suppose even greed cannot escape death.

There's peace hidden inside of this room. I do not know where exactly, and perhaps I never will. But it still welcomed me.

As the light mixes with the surrounding colours, preparing its clue for departure, I realise that it's not just the afternoon but its glow too which has embraced all of me.

Shaikh Sabik Kamal is a student at St. Joseph Higher Secondary School.



ILLUSTRATION: **ABIR HOSSAIN**

Hosting POKEMON BATTLES with your friends

With online battle simulators like Pokémon Showdown running since 2011, these online Pokémon games have grown into immersive experiences for an individual to dive into.

SCARFED MAGIKARP

Here are a few you can get into easily.

Pokémon Planet

Pokémon Planet is a free-to-play browser-based MMO (massively multiplayer online) Pokémon game where players can catch and train Pokémon, battle with other players, in-game trainers, gym leaders, and Elite-4 members, trade with others, and many more. The game combines all the regions up to generation 5. Pokémon spawn in various areas like the original video games. Players can also catch legendary Pokémon that spawn in exclusive areas or during in-game events.

The game also has a unique chat option where people can post about trading, have conversations, or run commands. Players unlock the chat option after defeating the third gym leader, Misty, to prevent spammers.

Pokémon Showdown

Pokémon Showdown is the most accessible online Pokémon battle simulator. Compared

to other online games, *Pokémon Showdown* updates its website the earliest, which lets the players compete with the latest Pokémon, move sets, and items offered by the latest flagship Nintendo games.

can compete in formats other than the randomised metagames if they have a team which they can easily build using the website's teambuilder function. For playing *Pokémon Showdown* competitively, a solid idea of Pokémon fundamentals is necessary. For example, Effort Values (EVs), Individual Values (IVs), abilities, items, and move sets are things you need to build an idea on to be competitive on this platform.

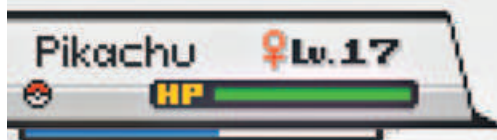
To play with your friends on *Pokémon Showdown*, all you need to do is click the "Find User" button on your home screen and write your friend's username. Your friend's profile will pop up on your screen, and you can challenge them to a battle.

Pokémon Revolution Online

Pokémon Revolution Online has the first four regions from the base games and eight hundred and ninety Pokémon from the national Pokédex. The game is among the easiest to dive into, in terms of exploration and competitive gameplay, with guild wars, tournaments, quests, gym battles, and many more.

To play *Pokémon Revolution*, visit their website and create an account. After that, download the client for your device and start your adventure. To host battles with your friends, get your starter Pokémon from Professor Oak's lab and then add your friend from the social tab. You can then send them a battle request and start battling.

As you proceed further into the game, you'll be able to compete against your friends, like a real-life Pokémon journey, as you explore, catch more Pokémon, level up, and grow as a trainer.



The default setting of the battle simulator is the latest generation's random battle option. In a random battle format, two players match against each other with balanced teams of random six Pokémon with competitive move sets, abilities, and items. Players

PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

