

TEENS and TWENTIES

Renegades is in Reality a Renegade

WE'VE got more politicians than voters, more schools than students, and more bands than fans in Bangladesh nowadays.

While I don't claim to know much about administration, and refuse to meddle with academic anarchy, consider it my duty as a dedicated listener of music, and also as a dedicated "Matobbor", to bore you readers about a subject which is not quite as boring as it's adulator here. (But then, what is?)

Quality is inversely proportional to quantity, and this rule which has been eternal for the last five seconds, coupled with our natural ineptitude, has given rise to a problem in the Bangladeshi

music scene, which is.....

Actually I was just trying to find a fitting introduction to this article. It's not really about the overall rock situation, but I thought a more general introduction might attract more readers. (If any at all are attracted). I'm getting to the point, but let me first take this opportunity to say hello to my family and friends. Hi Jerks! Back to the subject.

Anyone who knows about the Coca Cola Award is familiar with Renegades. That's because they got the second prize in 1994 with the acoustic number, "Prithibir Shod Arondo."

The band was founded in 1992, with the first album

lead guitarist, has a Peavey and a lot of admiration for Yngwie J Malmsteen. Originally a drummer, Habib doesn't let it stop him from shining with an Eysonic keyboard, even though he isn't as good as Jon Lord, his boss, as he himself admits. Hamim plays rhythm guitar and his musical master is Mark Knopfler. Shohid, with his Tama set, is the skinfasher, and has the greatest respect for Pilu of Renaissance. Renegades has its own private studio, and Yakub is the Manager of this talented bunch.

Renegades is also a contestant for this year's Coca Cola Award, with "Prokrittir Chowra", a new wave number from their second album. Let's hear it for them and wish'em the best.

one else's readymade melody. And since we're from Bangladesh, all our songs are in Bangla. That's where we're different from bands like Jolly Rogers, Death Row, Masteria, and Phantom Lord.

Even though Renegades is just another up-and-coming star to be, the self-conscious paranoia that only foreign groups can write good songs which is common among Bangladeshi rockers isn't there. That's because they have good reasons for their renegade confidence.

Ripon, bassist plays a Yamaha Golden Series bass guitar. His favourite is Steve Harris of Iron Maiden, even though he himself plays sentimental rock. Balaam, the

The Blue Diary-I

by Md Atiquzzaman

Such imaginations are forcing Fayeze to smile, though he knows at the back of his mind, that he is merely trying to keep away the future.

A pull by the corner of his shirt, and Fayeze turned to find Mona on the floor over a neatly laid bedsheet. Comfortably, he rested his head on her lap while the legs were stretched beyond the bedsheet. Slow conversation resumed.

"Your mother is presumably preparing to faint for the fifth time... and she's yelling, that scoundrel... that scoundrel will kill my daughter!"

"They'll carry the news to our home?"

What about one? Mona's soothing eyes were penetrating his. They stared at each other for a long time, through a short distance and...after a long while the silence broke with her gentle 'sorry'. The precision in their mutual judgement and recognition is comparable to any other day-to-day fact. They apparently have a mirror in between, where they can see each other, even with eyes closed.

She gazed dreamily into the distance as she said, 'How will you manage all those private tutoring?'

'There won't be so many... I'm afraid,' Fayeze mused, 'Rahman' uncle will say 'au revoir' when he would learn

Politics at Our Cost

by Sadia Sharmin

LOOKING at the present political situation it appears highly desirable that one should come forward to throw some light on our country's much honoured politicians' presumed ignorance about the effects of their poor political relations on the people of this country.

Our Opposition and the Ruling Party are perhaps unaware that the hartal declared on the ninth of this month coincides with the very first day of our O'level and A'level Examinations, where more than fifteen thousand students, from all over this country, are appearing this year. It is being regarded as a thoroughly unethical and disputable matter that political activities should have any adverse impact on a student's education.

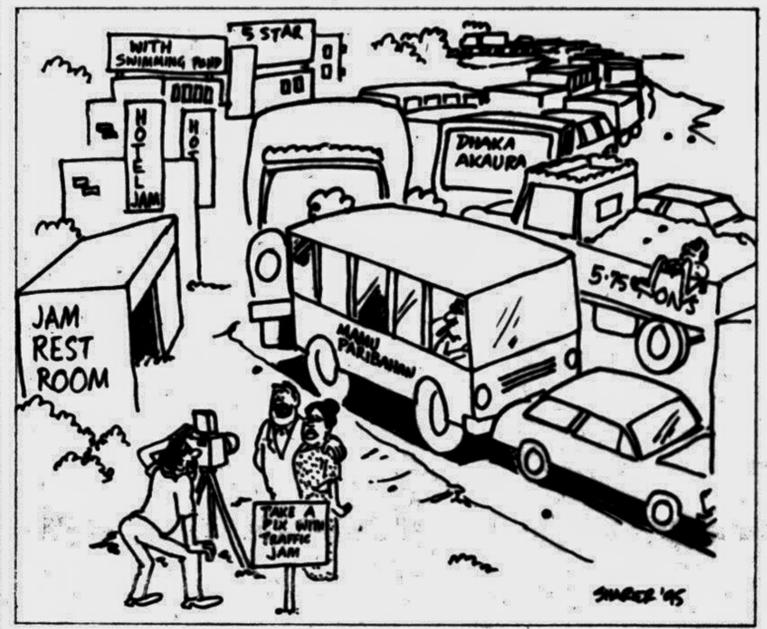
To resolve the existing political crises, our politicians should commence on more constructive and positive methods, rather than their present detrimental process. We greatly respect our politicians' both democratic and constitutional views. However, they must realise that democracy and constitution are not independent variables, and their activities should be directed to protect either of the variables.

It seems that our politicians are always resorting to pessimistic views while embarking on their plans for resolving the crises. It is highly desirable for our country's welfare that our politicians emerge from their present immaturity, and behave like more committed and responsible persons.

Keeping in view the disconcerting effects of the political impasse on us students, I would like to pledge a very sincere request to our respectable politicians to postpone their hartal plans till the twenty-fifth - when the last O'level examination is to be held. I expect that our respected politicians will undisputedly agree with my views, and impart us students from further ambiguity and sufferings.

How Far is Dhaka?

by Muneera



IT was a calm and sunny Tuesday afternoon as people gathered at a bus stand some 69 km away from Dhaka, they awaited for a bus to take them to Dhaka.

After three days of unofficial holidays (during the hartal) in their village home, they were all eager to get back to the metropolis and their work. The buses were overloaded, but that was nothing unusual. There were some young men, who worked in offices, a poorly dressed young lady who had come to visit her ailing mother and was now yearning to get back to her baby son, left with her mother-in-law in the city.

There was a new bride who was going to join her husband in the city - she even had a new mattress and two large suitcases (possibly her dowry) with her. There was also a distinguished looking lady and her daughter who had been attending a wedding and were now returning home, and there were a few old men. Little did these passenger know what was exactly in store for them that day.

These people fought their way into a bus and many did not even get a seat. And at 3:30 pm started their "short" journey to Dhaka. It was a distance normally covered in two to two-and-half hours time. Since almost all the passengers were bound for Dhaka, so the bus did not stop at a great many places but moved (surprisingly) nonstop towards Dhaka.

How far is Dhaka, these people wondered, how far yet?

8:30 pm and the bus was now proceeding at ant's pace to Tikatulee. At least it was able to move, the vehicles coming out of Tikatulee were all at a stand still and the faces of their drivers and passengers hang down. There was nothing, absolutely nothing one could do except wait for fate to take its own course.

How far is Gulistan? The passengers in that particular bus wondered. The young lady travelling alone wondered, how to get to Kalabagan by herself at this time of the night. The young bride, who had been sick enough to puke quietly at the back, now was exhausted and did not know how to survive yet another ride on a bus to Mirpur. But who cared for these people?

They were just a few of the thousands stranded in the city that day. Their feet may be killing them and they may now not get back to their houses till until midnight but at least they were luckier than the ones still stuck. The journey of two and half hours as expected had now run into its sixth hour. Dhaka indeed, was far, far away!

PS the unfortunate bus reached Gulistan after nine pm and the passengers climbed out on their weary feet. Some hired scooters at almost double the normal fare (it was a case of prices going up with desperate demand). And those who couldn't afford it? They walked on, with their heavy luggages in tag, in search of other public buses, but very few of us are interested in that.

ORDEAL

by Mozammel Haque Ranju

*They say - 'Leave it Man!
It's time you better changed,
Ashamed am I
Ask
'Do I hear - changed?
changed into what?
A cold cat is thy mind
Happy within
The idle lap of time.*

*They say - 'When you die
It'll be some happy occasion
For her.'
And I smile.*

*They say that they like me,
And don't like me ruin myself
Any more.*

*'She will get on with life,
And those Yankee guys
And stuff like that.
Peerless passion will devour her
And she will begin experiencing
Body love,
And the tricky customers
Will dip her.
And she will mind them not
And be reposed.
Do you hear!!' (Do I?)
'There could not be any you
Not you no more!!'*

*They get mad at me -
'Oh, you are a self-believer, no?
Look at you, then!
Can't you see you lost her?
She dumped you for life
How come you be that sanguine?'*

*And Shampa
They tell me lot of nasty things,
Of us
And of our love.
But I celebrate
And alight the candle of hope
Of our coming back.
And I keep hanging on...
On and on.....
(If only you could understand!!)*

A Lost Friend

by Asrarul Islam Chowdhury

Where are the shining days?
Where have they gone?
Where is my sea shore?
Where are her waves?
Where are they now?
Get rid of the clouds
For they have taken them away.

The tortoise and I, we were good friends
We used to play a lot
But now the tortoise is at sea
And I think, she won't come back to me
For I hear she is in a garden
Full of other tortoises
Playing and singing her heart out
The tortoise is so happy
That she has forgotten me.

She fondled with the notes, separated the larger ones and returned the others. 'You will need them... today,' she said.

Fayeze had already started on the handbag. He was pulling out the red bed sheet. Fayeze was about to dump the rest of the clothes on it, when he stopped. She was staring out through the curtainless window, kind of... lost. He called her again, 'Well, this is our bed!' She blushed.

'Why do you spread the clothes?'

'Shouldn't you change? Running with the same clothes on all day.'

'They would be here any minute... Hassan likes this saree... I would change later.'

Mona looked straight into his eyes. She could aptly measure his nervousness. She turned towards the bathroom as she said, 'You look tensed... Go to the balcony, I am coming. I would just wash my face.'

Darkness of the empty space gradually faded. The bathroom door clicked as it was locked. Fayeze walked to the balcony. Circular shapes imprinted by the previously lying flower vases, dizzy smell of paint... all these things seemed unusually familiar to Fayeze. His eyes remained adrift in the views while he started recalling the fastly rolling moments.

Here they are, landed in a two-roomed flat. Fayeze felt more or less lucky to have a few friends like Hassan. Everything had been neatly arranged and pre-planned. A roof overhead, money enough to survive... at least a month and then those paper work, to allow them, Fayeze and Mona, to live together. And now the band of cheerful young men and women would be here any moment, with necessary furniture being staggered upto the door; Hassan will bear a smile spreading between both his ears and will inquire, 'Dulabat, sholdaa baak?'



Are you crazy! They'll somehow manage to squeeze it through phone.'

'It's a Friday tomorrow; or else, your father would have sued my mother as soon as possible.'

'No... It would be too dramatic for him. He would analyze the situation cool-headedly.'

'Boro Apu will be extremely delighted when she'll come to know... she might even nail us out.'

'Well, it is your sister... your carbon-copy; Fayeze continued mockingly. 'You women folk, seduce us foolish men all the time to...'

'No, monsieur.' Mona interrupted with a frown. 'It was always you who would seduce... I still have a doubt if she loves her husband as much as she loves you.'

'Hell with your Boro Apu. I'm not yet able enough to maintain two wives.'

everything from daddy...and the one at Shamoli will be too far from here. So, two remain, those two provided by Hassan & Co. ... I'll start writing more frequently.'

'These'll suffice?'

'What else to do? Maybe you'll have to manage a servant's job upstairs or somewhere else,' Fayeze was smiling.

Mona wondered, maybe these are new modes of humour added to their life. Have they actually passed a few hours, or is it a few years already?

Tension and anxiety once again grasped Fayeze. Down inside, restlessness was spreading its root. A sudden strength to revolt surged all the weakness. He clutched her shoulders, pulled her closer and sipped all her tears drooping ecstatically. Boundless careering flooded the floor.

[To be continued]

The Search

by James Onirudhya Zaman

I tried to find Him on the Christian cross but He was not there; I went to the temple of the Hindus and to the old Pagodas; but I could not find a trace of Him anywhere.

"I searched on the mountains and in the valleys but neither in the heights nor in the depths was I able to find Him. I went to the Kaaba in Mecca, but He was not there either."

"I questioned the scholars and philosophers, but He was beyond their understanding."

"I then looked into my heart and it was there where He dwelled that I saw Him; He was nowhere else to be found." - Jelaluddin Rumi

A moving piece of writing by one of whom very few, as myself, have heard of. But he has felt what many have felt throughout the ages and he has said what many of us want to say today.

People often ask to what religion do I belong. My answer varies according to how the question is asked. The sincerest answer that I can put forward is that, belong to none which falls under the mainstream religions such as Islam, Christianity or Hinduism. This reply tends to shock quite a few.

Nowadays, it is difficult for one to actually choose a religion. Life is much busier for teenagers in particular, who hardly get any spare time to spend with friends, let alone study the various religious texts. People choose the obvious because it is the easiest way out.

One may think, that by not belonging to one of the religions is sinful, but what is actually a greater dishonour endowed upon any religion is the act of adopting a religion only in name and not in practice.

Religious texts are written in the languages of the different cultures in which the religions originate. The Bible was originally written in Hebrew, the Quran in Arabic and so on. These, although the embryonic languages, are not the languages of Bangladesh, unless the rare individual exists who has command over several languages.

Except these people, the majority of us do not understand a single word, let alone sentences, of these sacred books in the original form. Hence, in following our

adopted religion, we read these scriptures blindly without any true comprehension or appreciation.

We read it upon what another tells us it means as he or she understands, who in all likelihood has acquired the knowledge in a similar manner. Therefore, we have no true enlightenment and thus no valuation of our own.

It is perhaps human nature to reject another's interpretation, not because of a lack of appreciation on our part, but because others expect us to appreciate it. Hence, the rendition never bears the same meaning as was intended in the original. The current position of religion in our country is somewhat in the described category.

To use a much used cliché: humankind is on the verge of the 21st century. The year two thousand sounds quite enthralling. However, despite the apparent importance of religion today, the world is in turmoil.

It is as if Pandora's box has been opened all over again. One cannot say who is to be blamed for the extinction of species, the onslaught of killer viruses, the catalyst of natural disasters, the assassinations of leaders or even the harbinger of famines.

A glance back into the history of life will refresh our dampened memories about the disasters faced by man: Noah's Flood, the destruction of Sodom and the famine in Egypt are just a few. The reasons behind the disasters were given to God's vengeance over mortals who were dishonest. The occurrences can be given obvious scientific attributes; but who can say for certain whether or not what has been said is fact or fantasy.

Ludicrous as it may sound, perhaps our 'modern day' tales of war, disparity, destruction and disease will be part of the history of some forthcoming religion. Could today's tales be a warning of some larger catastrophe awaiting us?

Perhaps religion should remain at what it does best, that is, remain a personal thing which affects only our moral and ethical judgements and not be the barometer by which we measure human beings. If being honest about things both significant and unimportant will grant us some sort of salvation, then is it not worth, at least a try? Is it really too much to ask for?