

# THE NINETEENTIES

## Climbing The Ivy

By Aiyaz Husain

**T**HE Ivy League of universities in America's northeast region comprises some of the finest academic institutions in the world. Undergraduate education from such elite colleges both provide extensive opportunities for intellectual growth and the chance to 'network' with heads of large corporations, national leaders, reknowned scientists and other prominent alumni. For those awarded the privilege of admission, the potential is great for rapid career advancement.

But the process of selecting an institution can be challenging enough for domestic students, let alone those applying from distant countries. Early action/decision plans cause even further confusion beyond the somewhat non-trivial application requirements, and for most Bangladeshi students, campus visits are not feasible. Here are some tips for applying which I have collected from various sources and personal experience. Keep in mind the difference between Early Action and Early Decision. Early Action programmes require perspectives to enroll if admitted, as opposed to the early decision system, which guarantees a more prompt reply. Jan. notifications for approval filed by Oct. 31.

At present the only Ivy

candidate with a poor transcript will rarely be given a second look by an admissions committee. It's really the lowest common denominator of sorts.

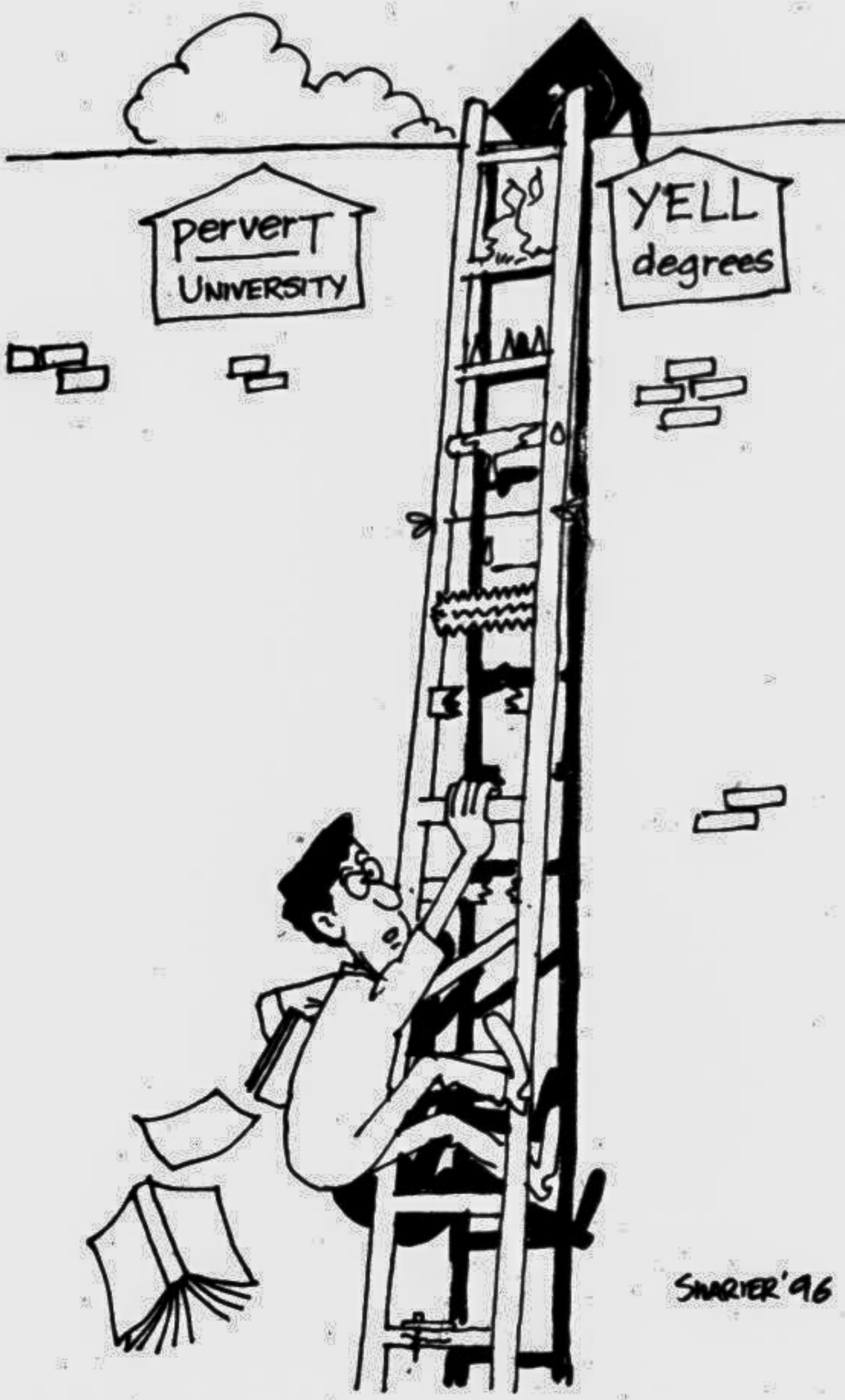
Remember that statistics may be deceiving. For example MIT's 33% acceptance rate may seem infected as compared to Yale's 19% or Princeton's 15% but, factors which need to be taken into account include self-selectivity of the pool for specialized programs' class size and popularity /PR for certain schools.

Competitive colleges are always looking for multidimensional undergraduates. Any special talents interests you may possess are a great selling point. Remember, if you have it, flaunt it!

I hope these tips are helpful for anyone applying to the Ivy League. But perhaps the most important consideration is the applicant and his/her family. Leaving to study in the states is a significant decision which requires much deliberation. And picking a school is a rather personal matter. So think hard, study hard, and goodluck.

A common misconception about Ivy League campuses is that they're all alike.

An anecdote! The sprawling lawns and Georgian splen-



League Universities colleges offering Early Decision are Harvard Colleges and Dartmouth.

Send in the forms as early as possible, and try to establish personal contact with an admissions officer. Such initiative on the part of a prospective student draws attention.

Many admissions offices claim that they place equal emphasis on grades, test scores, essays interviews, and extra-curricular activities. But remember that your grades are always first and foremost. A

## I can't really remember

the exact date when I met her. However, I'm sure that it was in June of 1991; as 1991 was the year when I got admitted at the Law Faculty of Dhaka University. But I surely do remember the day as her name was very familiar to me. When I heard that she was from Chittagong I asked her if she knew one of my cousins. She said yes. I remember that she used to come to my uncle's house regularly from Chittagong. However, at that time we hardly spoke to each other, let alone knew each other.

I grew up at Jahangirnagar University and so knew no one at Dhaka University. When I came to know that she lived with her brother at Dhanmondi I was extremely happy because I was living at New Elephant Road at that time. I thought that we could go together to the Department and, if things turned out well, gradually become friends. She also liked the idea as both of us wanted a 'friend' to go to the university. She used to ring me before she started for the University, then I would go to the veranda and wait for her. I still remember that the rickshaw fare was eight Tk. We would split the fare. After coming home we used to talk over the phone for hours. Come to think of it now, I really miss those days very much.

Our group was seven in number; Sharmin, Mishri, Shilpi, Sarwat, Shathi, myself (Bindu) and Papi. The students, even the teachers, noticed our friendship. The happiest part is that all the groups which were formed in our class from the 1st year broke up. But then, ours never did. This was a surprise also for many. May be we didn't have a guardian angel smiling over us after all; because heaven only knows why our group had to break up in the end!

Meanwhile, Sharmin's mother came from Chittagong. Aunty was suffering from diabetes and a heart problem. So she had to spend most of her time at home. I used to spend time with her too. Sharmin also used to come to Jahangirnagar also to spend the night. This is how we became close with each other's families.

## Memories

by Farzana Chowdhury

In 1992, 28th October, the first shock came. Sharmin's mother passed away in our very hands. This was in fact the first death I observed so closely, which really affected me mentally. After aunty's death, Uncle (Sharmin's father) was always longer than my one's. She always used to say that she missed Bangladesh and the seven of us. Then came the final examination. As her brother went to England for higher studies, both of our families decided that she'd



The Author and Sharmin (Left to right)

stay with us until her exams were finished. I was extremely happy because I knew that, in that way, we could spend time together just like the good old days. However, for what reason I don't know, I saw a change in her. She always used to talk about her mother and how much she missed her. She also worried about her father's health and always thought of being with him even after her marriage. Finally, came to day to go back to London.

Then came the year 1995. She left for London in March

after completing her LLB and also completing the arrangements for appearing in the BCS from London. I couldn't in my wildest dreams, think that this would be the last time I was to see her. As usual, we talked over the phone regularly and wrote letters. We even used to parcel dresses so at least we could think that we are wearing the same dress as we used to. Then she became very sick and needed to be operated. I received a call from her on 30th September learning that she'd be operated the following day. She wanted to see me, but as my LLM exams were going on, even if I wanted to go, it would not have been possible. Her operation was successful. I talked to her on 3rd October. She was very weak and couldn't talk. However, she promised to call me when she reached home. On that very date, Sharmin's cousin called and gave me the news that her whole body had been toxicated; both her kidneys had failed working, she was being kept alive artificially and was in a 'deep' coma. After twenty three days, fighting with death, she passed away on 25th October 1995. She was brought to Dhaka on the 27th. I couldn't ever think that I would put the sheet over her khatia and bury her with my own hands at Banani.

Eventually, time is the best healer. It has been almost a year since she has left me and everyone else. But it seems to be a decade for me. I miss her voice; I miss going to the market with her; I miss sharing my feelings with her; I also miss making the wild plans and going on with them. I remember the day when we went to a saree shop at Bay Road having only 20 Tk. in our bags and pulling down sarees costing 2000 Tk. Lastly saying that the colours don't go.

Sometimes I believe I will see her again at 'New Market' or at the Department. Many of my friends and relatives say I'm not practical enough which may be right... but then, how am I supposed to live if I don't have a dream to drive me ahead?

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## 7AG Special

### MUKTIR GAAN

A triumph of the Bangladeshi Spirit.

TAG has been one of the most important involvements in my life, and it was because I was a TAG member that I initially wanted to see the film 'Muktir Gaan'. I felt that watching a film on the war of independence would provide



derful emotional parts in the film. None more so than the point where the group returns to Bangladesh for the first time. Even though I did not witness the war, the sheer emotional triumph of the moment brought tears to my eyes.

I cannot feel how emotional it must be for those who actually witnessed and took part in the war. There was a different kind of emotion in the part where the Artists leave for India because of worsening condition. The despair and uncertainty felt by the characters about whether they would ever see a free Bangladesh powerfully captures what must have been the general emotion among the people of Bangladesh at that time.

Given the circumstances the film was made under, it would be acceptable even if it was nothing more than a home video. What actually makes 'Muktir Gaan' even more amazing is its quality as a piece of cinematography. The American director Lear Levine does a wonderful job of amalgamating the reality with sublime touches of cinematic art. The film is a must see even just for its artistic value.

'Muktir Gaan' is history in its purest form. There is no propaganda, no exaggeration just the events as and how they were. The directors hands does not distort the events but rather enhances the reality

with the colours of art. There are shocking pieces of reality like portrayals of common people who were actually killed later on during the war. Anyone with any interest in the creation of Bangladesh has to find the film a 'gold mine.' There is no political bias in the way the events are described and in the day when almost every portrayal of our past is tinged with political interest the film is a rare piece of unadorned history.

There are not many instances that I can recall when I felt as proud to be a Bangladeshi as I did after seeing 'Muktir Gaan'. 'Muktir Gaan' is a testimonial to the courage, resolve and patriotic spirit of the Bangladeshi people. It provides hope for those who have lost faith and respect in our nation. It is also an emotional triumph over the cynical outlook about Bangladesh's past that prevails in certain segments of our society.

— By Nusrat Sharmin Haq with Iresh Zaker.

TAG (The Teenage Awareness Group) has made all the necessary arrangements to show the documentary movie, Muktir Gaan, exclusively for English Medium Students, at Russian Cultural Centre on August 10, 1996. The first show will be held at 11:00 a.m. and another at 2:00 p.m. An open discussion among the actors, the students and other notabilities will follow after each show. Tickets are available at English Medium Schools, throught Dhaka.

## My pals at a police station recently had heart problems.

I will not go for any introduction but go straight cut with the incident.

The heroes of the incident: 1. Bura Khorshed (actually he is 38, dark and little bit on the bulky side — a touchy soft guy who is always the target of colleagues' jokes. He is hard working but sometimes feels like bunking office.) 2. Bangu Sharif (he is 32, pichchy, recently married, hyper active movements of hands which dance when he talks. Innocent type but dirty mouth and co-starred by Faruq (he is 27, Laughs loudly like woody woodpecker).

**Scene 1:** Bura Khorshed was working. It was 11.30 pm suddenly he started shouting: oh! oh! my heart... I am dying... oh!

He was almost slipping from his chair when he drew the notice of the Officer in Charge. "what is it?" said he.

Khorshed said that his heart was aching, he believes it's heart attack! "So you too are having this pain?" suddenly intervened Bangu Sharif. Khorshed, with a question in his face, said, "yes, why?"

"I am having this pain every night," Bangu declared with sufficient amount of pain in his face.

As Khorshed's exclusivity of heart attack was shattered, he almost broke down.

"Hear, hear, don't worry. We have official tampon outside. Why don't you rush to Suhraward Heart Hospital?" said the OC.

Both the heart patients showed signs of relief.

The OC then pointed out, "since both of you are sick, you should be accompanied by

## Heart Attack

by Sharier Khan

someone (healthy?)." So the OC assigned Faruq to assist the sick fellows.

**Scene 2:** Inside the tampon, the two sick fellows exchanged views on the danger of having heart problems. "No, you can't work with heart problems in your heart," argued Bangu. "This is the worst of all diseases," Khorshed opined, giving a wise look.

"Yes, you might die any moment," Faruq added.

by his waist so that he would look well dressed during his death (verbatim):

**Scene 3:** The three fellows (some may call them the Three Stooges) came down from the scooter. Khorshed almost fell. He was trembling with pain. You could see the whites of his eyes. However, Bangu looked



at the doctor. For the first time looked at Bangu with a midnight contempt in his eyes. Measured Bangu's height with his eyes and concluded: "you are polypap... you can't have any heart problem. You go from here." Being shocked by the doctor's behaviour, Bangu already felt that his heart was not aching now. Instead he was feeling the urge to kill the doc. Khorshed interrupted, "he is a cop too. He was having problem."

The doc did not bother, he dragged Bangu to the bed and made him open his shirt. Quickly he fixed the plugs and wires on Bangu's chest and started reading the complicated ECG devise. Bangu was happy — if not by 100 per cent. Within few minutes, the angry doc pulled out the plugs from Bangu's chest — giving him REAL pain and said, "you are just fine."

Bangu got down from the bed and asked the doc, who was emphasising on looking the other way, whether the pain originated from gas. "Who knows.. it might be. I don't know what strange pain you've got." Both came back to the office healthy again.

However, for the next seven days Khorshed did not come to the office — his wife called the OC and reported that Khorshed was suffering from Cholera Hill Traxi — an acute form of diarrhoea.

[A genuine 90 per cent true story with 10 per cent colour. Some lines may differ from the defensive versions of the two sick guys. The story has been approved by Faruq. The names and actual designations of the people of the story were, however, false as they have their right for privacy].

NB — upon hearing that his journalist friend was writing this story, Khorshed called me. He clearly said if this story is printed he will simply kill me. So if I am killed after the publication of this, you know who is the killer.

Bangu was patting his shirt

## A Wackier Letter in Answer to the Wacky Letter to the Editor of TNT

Subject: Is it Digital? Yes, it is!!!  
Dear anonymous reader, (he/she/it)

I have just gone through your article about my article, and am wondering by the facts that not only has the name of a simple band raised questions about the meaningless existence of modern man over which the likes of Aldous Huxley or Albert Camus could have (and most probably, did) ponder, it has also succeeded as a laxative where so many others have failed. You shall be pleased to know that I have given your cure for constipation to a doctor acquaintance, as a result of which the sales of Digital's digitally recorded albums and the municipality's work are soaring. The band members told me to be sure to thank you for that; and I, on my part, acknowledge your article for giving me a very important lesson which I'll never forget (just what it is, I don't know), teaching me what to do when Pepto Bismol doesn't work, and providing the piece of paper which served the purpose of cleaning the cleaning of my intestines.

I was a little curious about some men in trenchcoats wearing dark sunglasses at midnight trying to read comics over my shoulder, swearing the neighbourhood nerry kutta to secrecy, swiping the garbage can to analyze it's contents, dusting, the ceiling for foot prints, tripping over furniture, and generally creating a racket in an effort to stay hidden. They must have been undercover agents you were talking about — I would really appreciate it if you would call me off, because one of them is a kleptomaniac and my magnifying glass is missing; also, the police have been having looking for them, along with

some men in white coats with straitjackets. What's more, "undercover" trenchcoats in summer usually tend to over- cover and get their wearers sweaty, and this batch of Gestapo graduates stink even more than your article. The next time you send your operatives to spy on someone, please supply a deodorant.

Don't be mistaken into thinking that I'm hostile toward your agents, even though they are necrophiliac with insects. Actually, they gave me something to laugh about while I was reading your article.

By the way, I enjoyed reading your cute little piece too. Wasn't it a poem, "Happy", by someone the great? Oooooo..... wrong person. What the heck. Anyway, after the secret agents discovered stuff about me which I didn't know myself, I have decided to start listening to Micheal Jackson and Madonna and even Hindi movie tracks. However, I have a problem

with dancing along to those songs, since I happen to be very fat (though thinner after excreting in tempo with Digital), and only capable of banging my head, which I can't do with the aforementioned numbers. I would therefore request you, my anonymous pen pal, to teach me some of your Hindi dance moves, which, I've heard, you're famous for.

I regret wasting your money on a worthless, tape which is apparently good only for raising philosophical questions and removing bowels. However, if you would be kind enough to consider it a lifetime supply of Milk of Magnesia, I'll be really grateful.

yours truly,

Kazi Karigat  
PS — I've set some detectors to work, too, they tell me that you are especially mad at the numerically named band Digital because it implies digits and you're sore because you can't count. Is it true?