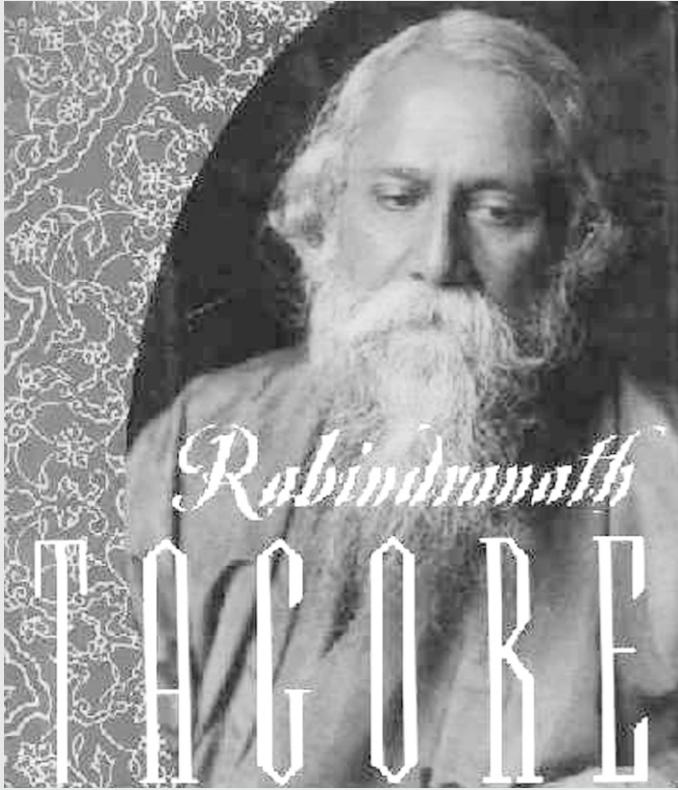


"Wrong wording in a Rabindra Sangeet"

Tagore tussle over a word

An unnecessary controversy has been raised by Nazmul Karim (February 06) on a particular word of a song sang by Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya, which according to the writer has been wrongly voiced by the singer.

You do not need to be an expert on Rabindra Sangeet, as

claimed by Mrs. Rubana Islam (February 15), to find out the mistake and any one who listens to the song minutely can identify the fault.

I am not defending the singer but I personally think she just did not go through the original words while singing. This has nothing to do with notations of Rabindra Sangeet or her learning from Shantiniketan as claimed by Mr. Samir Khan (February 15).

What does Mr. Samir Khan means by 'Shantiniketan gharana'? Shantiniketan has its vices but the virtues unquestionably outnumbers its inherent immorality.

Shantiniketan has not only produced many great singers but also played a vital role in flourishing our cultural heritage since its inception half a century ago.

Mr. Khan has the right to criticise the dominating clan responsible for the flaws in Shantiniketan but calling this world reputed and prestigious institution as a 'gharana' equals to disregarding Rabindranath Tagore.

Anjali Ghosh
Dhaka

I am not sure if it his objective but Mr. Nazmul Karim has appropriately initiated a debate on Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya's songs by pointing out a wrong word she sang in a very famous

Tagore song 'jokhon porbe na mor paer chinnoh ei bate'. I would like to add that I have a cassette of this same song jointly sung by Bannya and Kaderi Kibria and I found the same mistake.

I was informed that both Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya and Kaderi Kibria were lucky and had the opportunity to receive their lessons from two great scholars of Rabindra Sangeet Kanika Banerjee and Debabrata Biswas respectively. But is this what they were taught?

The follow-up letter (February 15) of Mr. Samir Khan is more distressing and alarming because it has further galvanised the debate initiated by Mr. Karim. Mr. Khan has identified that "Rezwana Chowdhury Bannya has, over the years also recorded

differing versions of several songs which differ quite radically from the original notations (swaralipi)" and pointed out the song "ki dhoni baje".

I will request Mr. Samir Khan to specifically describe where is the wrong in "ki dhoni baje" and also like to know the details of other songs she recorded under differing versions.

I do not fully agree with Mr. Samir Khan that "it is because of a lack of exposure to these songs in our country that artists are allowed to get away with such howling mistakes". It is because a so-called "prominent intellectuals and academicians" who have all the knowledge on earth and claim Bengali culture as their personal property, are illegally dominating all our cultural performances?

Now that Mr. Karim has specifically pointed out a major mistake and that too in a very popular song, why are our cultured 'gurus'

Farhana Zaman

North South University, Dhaka

In response to Mr. Nazmul Karim's letter (February 06) Mr. Iqbal Hossain (February 16) seems to have over reacted. The contents of Mr. Karim's letter do not testify Mr. Hossain's allegation.

I did not find Mr. Karim's language to be rude or attacking as claimed by Mr. Hossain and neither I found Mr. Karim's approach was to defame the singer or that his approach was a conspiracy to degrade her status.

Mr. Karim correctly pointed out a wrong lyric sung by Bannya but I also do not agree that by this mistake Bannya has tortured Rabindra Sangeet. Otherwise Mr. Karim was in full praise of Bannya.

No one declared any war against anyone and so Mr. Hossain does not need to remain beside any one to fight the enemies.

Munmun Khan

Singapore

Pandit Nehru wrote: "The Government of India not only reaffirms its acceptance of the principle that the question of the continuing accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to India shall be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations but is anxious that the conditions necessary for such a plebiscite should be created as quickly as possible".

As reported by Amrita Bazar Patrika of Calcutta, on 2nd January, 1952, while replying to Dr. Mookerji's question in the Indian legislature as to what the Congress Government was going to do about one-third of territory still held by Pakistan, Pandit Nehru said that Kashmir "is not the property of either India or Pakistan. It belongs to the Kashmiri people. When Kashmir acceded to India, we made it clear to the leaders of the Kashmiri people that we would ultimately abide by the verdict of their plebiscite. If they tell us to walk out, I would have no hesitation in quitting. We have taken the issue to United Nations and given our word of honour for a peaceful solution. As a great nation we cannot go back on it. We have left the question for final solution to the people of Kashmir and we are determined to abide by their decision".

Shah Affan
Ontario, Canada

BGMEA strategic trade off

What strategic trade off? The BGMEA has been consistently making exaggerated claims to achieving these aims all the while being parroted by the ruling party.

At least now there are some realistic goals.

Bastiat

demands are going out of proportion.

Come to think about it, nothing was as peaceful as the 90-days of the caretaker government.

Dorji
Dhaka

Traffic jam at Sheraton crossing

"For a long period now, traffic in Sheraton crossing have to wait for five to seven minutes on each side. This is due to the fact that traffic sergeants and constables at that point do not let the traffic follow traffic lights, instead they use their own will and judgement for the period one has to stop there until the clearance is given by them.

I think this is totally unjustified to keep traffic stopped for such a long time at one point. This only increases traffic jam and increases journey time.

I request the concerned authority to look into the matter and try regular flow of traffic by following the traffic lights.

MA Mannan Khan
Dhaka

Daily Star'Letters to the Editor' and democracy

The history of mankind is full of valiant stories about its struggle for freedom and emancipation. This freedom gets a shape in the form of democracy. Democracy is not a political philosophy only, it is a way of life what we practice everyday. In democracy, when it is practised in its true form, man's lofty dream of mutual respect, peaceful co-existence and compassion becomes very evident.

Human soul nestles in peace and complete harmony. I enjoy the different views expressed by your esteemed readers from around the world. It looks like a library where books on war and peace, good and evil, love and hate all live side by side in tranquillity. It's like a restless child in his sleep. This is very important that we understand this vital truth that toleration and acceptance of divergent views is absolutely necessary for a healthy national growth. I highly appreciate The Daily Star's role in promoting this essential value and this role is definitely gaining strength everyday.

Human society is a mixture of many variations but there is a unity in diversity. Every sensible human being understands this and enjoys it as well. The synthesis is the power to tolerate and appreciate.

Abkar Hussain
Toronto,
Canada

Closing of Nationalised Bank's branches

I am dismayed by your editorial "Move to close down NCB branches a step in the right direction" (February 8) supporting the Finance Ministers' proposal for closing down about 800 branches of nationalised commercial banks on the ground that they have not been earning profits.

The proposal does not take into consideration that (a) these branches contributed to bring the entire country especially the rural areas under the coverage of banking services (b) provided for an effective conduit for generating institutional savings for transformation into productive investment (c) gave support to multitudes of small businesses (d) laid the foundation for creating and

remembered that we (India and Pakistan) have reached a great deal of agreement already. What I mean is that many basic features have been thrashed out. We all agreed that it is the people of Kashmir who must decide for themselves about

sustaining competition in financial services in local areas.

Closing and amalgamation of branches in the way pro-



The piggy bank syndrome

posed will not provide affirmation to these considerations in any way. In my careful consideration a bank branch having a

deposit size of 10 million can earn a profit if it is operated well under proper supervision. In this context it will be to our purpose to explore ways and means for increasing their operational efficiency rather than killing them outright. Even in the heat of accounting dismally it will be prudent to remember that it is very easy to kill an institutional frame any time but it is a prudent job to ensure its life by finding out ways to make it deliver. One may take time to think about loans and savings associations in the US in this context.

Dr. Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir
Former State Minister
for Planning

Dhaka

Extortion

Extortions under the guise of cricket clubs and memorial functions are getting worse day by day.

Now with Eid coming their

"Will Bangladesh become another Nigeria?" A response from the Nigerian High Commissioner

I would like to draw your kind attention to a post editorial carried out in your esteemed daily of February 12, 2002 written by Mr. Afzal Chowdhury. The heading "Will Bangladesh become another Nigeria?" has really shocked us. More perplexing was that the writer has repeated old stories, which have no relevance now. Nigeria is now under a democratic dispensation where the remnants of military rule are being eliminated.

2. It was due to the strong democratic aspirations of the people of Nigeria that the military had to hand over power after elections to an elected President and National Assembly. Everywhere in the world where military rule prevails many anomalies occur and Nigeria was no exception.

3. I do not want to compare the past events with Bangladesh, as it will serve no purpose at all. Nigeria believes in developing and expanding bilateral relations with Bangladesh in all spheres. Nothing should be written which jeopardise the cordial and growing relations between Bangladesh and Nigeria.

4. It is for your kind information that in Nigeria despite what the foreign electronic media circulates, those attending mosques and churches still thank the Almighty God for restoration of democracy and they also pray for our President Obasanjo to continue to tackle the issue of "oil economics". They also thank the Almighty for the Commission set up to enhance the development activities for more than 50 million people living in eight oil producing states (divisions) of Nigeria that also include the one state where the Ogonis reside.

5. To eradicate corruption, a full-fledged machinery is in operation under the present civilian regime and this was highly appreciated by all segments of Nigerian society. The present government is working sincerely to ensure good governance, ensure employment, improve law and order, provide housing, health and food security to all the needy people.

6. All developing countries throughout the world including the Federal Republic of Nigeria are undergoing socio-economic transformation.

7. By publishing such old stories about a friendly country like Nigeria, the writer has done a positive disservice to our cause. There is no logic in recalling the past, which has no relevance now.

8. I am confident your popular daily will ensure that such writings which will affect our friendly relations do not appear in our mutual interest.

9. Transparency International is not above controversy as its report terms Bangladesh as the second largest corrupt country, is biased as many in your country challenged the observation of the Transparency. Do you believe what this organisation said about corruption in Bangladesh?

10. Bangladesh already an important moderator in South Asian region can indeed be like Nigeria and play an important role in the international system by striving to ensure international peace, especially by contributing to United Nations Peace Keeping forces.

11. Lastly, I seek your co-operation in consolidating our bilateral relations and eschewing publication of adverse stories, which will

the United Nations came into the picture. Ultimately the final decision of the settlement, which must come, has first of all to be made basically by the people of Kashmir and secondly, as between Pakistan and India directly. Of course it must be

their future externally or internally. It is an obvious fact that even without our agreement no country is going to hold on to Kashmir against the will of the Kashmiris".

In a letter dated 11th September, 1951, to the U.N. representative,

This is particularly so for all who want the ordinary people of developing countries to enjoy their own prosperity and not see it limited to a small oligarchy of military men, bureaucrats and businessmen supported by certain MNCs.

2. The accusation that I had wanted to damage Nigeria-Bangladesh relationship is uncalled for. I stated what the situation was during the mid-'90s in Nigeria and expressed concern that Bangladesh may also reach there if the situation here is mismanaged. If this is described as an attempt to damage bilateral relations, I will not respond to it. I leave it to the readers to decide whether I had any such intention or not.

3. Both Nigeria and Bangladesh along with India and Pakistan are at the top of most corrupted country lists anywhere. In fact, the present President of Nigeria discouraged the opening of a Transparency chapter in Nigeria because he had then said that Nigeria was too corrupt for TI to do any meaningful work there. Nobody needs TI to identify corruption, everyone knows if it's there.

4. As your own submission states, the people of Nigeria regularly pray for deliverance from the "oil economics". This shows the depth of the problem. Obasanjo alone can't handle it, divine help is required. It shows how serious the problem still is.

5. The global media network is strong and we do keep in touch. The courage of the Nigerian media is unbelievable and they kept the dissident voice in Nigeria alive when most people slid close to Abacha and the previous rulers who were responsible for the mess. We don't depend upon western media reports but check with our friends there.

6. I hope the Nigerian struggle to improve the quality of life of ordinary people is successful. The elite class, till the last election at least, was against the people and one hopes the situation has dramatically changed since then.

7. The struggle that led to the change and Gen. Obasanjo to power was possible because activists and the media stood by the common people and kept the flame of hope for a better world alive. Like everywhere, the elite class was closer to the oppressors- at least till then- and it's their responsibility now to ensure that the benefits of the oil wealth flows to the common man for a change.

8. But most importantly, the piece I wrote is on Bangladesh and not Nigeria at all. It's a cautionary tale about what happens when the lure of natural resource bring in forces which can contribute to greater misery instead of wealth. Nigeria survived because of its many other resources but Bangladesh has very few. It's more vulnerable. All we want is that the benefit of natural resources sale should flow to the ordinary poor too.

9. The High Commissioner has been silent on the role of Shell in Nigeria. Is it because that's documented so well by so many global agencies? Meanwhile, let's take a moment and pay homage to the Nigerian martyr Ken Saro Iwawa whose activism and subsequent judicial murder by the military rulers of Nigeria did much to raise global awareness of the Nigerian situation and pave the way for the transition that has occurred now.

10. Nigeria remains for me personally, a land I love no matter who's in power.



Ken Saro-Wiwa: The executed Nigerian activist

harm our existing excellent relations.

12. I would request you to kindly publish this rejoinder in the public interest.

13. Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Alhaji Abdullahi Madaki Bage
High Commissioner
The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Afsan Chowdhury responds:

1. Many thanks for the mail. The letter from the High Commissioner endorses what I have said in my column on Nigeria under Abacha's martial law regime. It reached that point over a long period of misrule and by many regimes. The High Commissioner says, the situation has improved. That is extremely good news.

Terrorists under detention

Recently, many European countries have been criticising what they call American unilateralism in the fight against terrorism. Hubert Vedrine, France's Foreign Minister, called President Bush's views on terrorism "simplistic". He said Bush's policy "reduces all problems in the world to the struggle against terrorism". The US has also been criticised by human rights groups for violating the rights of the Al-Qaeda and Taliban captives by not treating them according to the Geneva Convention.

America's aim was to track down Osama Bin Laden and destroy his Al Qaeda network. But the truth is that the U.S.A doesn't have any clue about Laden's current hide out. The bombed recklessly giving the excuse that they aimed to demolish the terrorist networks. I agree that the Talibans weren't good rulers, so it was nothing bad to dethrone them. But one cannot afford to kill a large number of innocent people for ousting them. There isn't any doubt that the attack on the W.T.C was a terrorist act, killing around 4000 people. But the truth is that the U.S.A has killed even more innocent people in Afghanistan in its waged war against terror. Isn't this terrorism?

If someone says that it is wrong to abuse the U.S.A for racking down a bloody murderer like Laden, then I will not argue. But why bomb the hospitals, houses, warehouses and the innocent people of Afghanistan? One should think this over seriously before supporting America's attack on Afghanistan.

Sameer Ahmed Khan Mojlish, on e-mail

practice and possess such characteristics, killed a man; whatever the circumstances were.

Is this piousness overcoming faith or faith expressing anger?

A perplexed Muslim
Dhaka

Terrorists under detention

Recently, many European countries

have been criticising what they call