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## Local Rock stars

What Mahmudul Haque (DS, 22.4.05) pointed out was 'distortion of Bangla accent' by the so-called underground bands (not all, I am sure), and not 'criticising' music which was not to his 'liking' as stated by Arafat Kazi (DS, 27.4.05). I have read both the letters and may add my views from a different perspective.

Arafat Kazi being a band member himself should not feel offended by any attack as one must be open to criticism and suggestions; or how else can one make improvement? It's true that what may seem like 'music' to one's ears can sound like 'irritating noise' to others. But can he say confidently that all these present genre bands are creating 'art and music'? I am positive that he cannot. By just producing high decibel guitar riffs accompanied by thunder drums and high pitched screaming does not make one a 'metal' or 'underground' band. I am open to all sorts of music be it folk, pop, hard rock or heavy metal-- one thing is common for all good songs and that is harmony, balance and the overall composition.

Coming back to the Bangla accent distortion, yes, it does sound irritating, funny and pathetic. Like Mahmudul Haque said there is nothing wrong if these bands produce English compositions. I must say here that some of the present bands are very talented and are producing extremely good music. I had recently gone to buy CDs of two new bands (not available at the shop) and ended up listening to a few songs of Black's last album. The music arrangement, composition and sound were so good-- but when the vocals started, the accent sounded so funny and 'foreign'. Now, if I say that their accent needs improvement, will I be dubbed as someone who cannot appreciate the music of these young genre musicians?

**Shaukat Islam**

On e-mail



relaxation, for creating the proper mood, as required for the occasion. This is also evident in the strong moving background of BTV stages. The point is the analysis of the path of the eye movements of the viewers: watch the performer artist or the background? Why this distraction?

We have to differentiate between additive art (watch a painting behind a cycle rickshaw) and subtractive art. One example of the latter is Zen art, where the viewer interactively joins in completing the picture deliberately left partly incomplete by the artist.

In make-up, and the use of cosmetics by individuals, the same principle comes into play. Supplement or complement natural beauty? The less artificiality, the better. Same in good writing: the economy of style. Materialism is an addictive weakness, difficult to contain. The philosophy of unobtrusive style is a difficult art and/or culture.

This is a vast subject, which cannot be covered in a short note to the editor. It is hoped the cue would be picked by the project planners, for saving time, money, and encouraging the right aesthetic culture.

**Artless Consumer**  
Dhaka

**Can't handle power!**

When you cannot handle power, you reluctantly give away a part of it!

Latest local example: the government, at long last, have reluctantly decided to allow generation of electricity in the private sector (initial limit 50 MW). It is a decade too late--no political consensus at the national level.

Second example: the market conditions compelled BTB to go in for mobile (cellular) telephone service. But the opening was bungled up. (for the usual reasons), and now a court case is under way to check up on transparency (in public interest). BTB will lose the fixed phone market.

Third example: the pathetic inability to lay natural gas pipeline network in the northern districts for so many decades. Example number four: the world's largest jute mills had to be closed down (labour union leaders contaminated politically). Our shipyards are not running, although we are in a deltaic region; and are blessed with around 300 rivers (and canals); and 90 per cent of sites in Bangladesh could be reached through waterways.

To misuse political power, our educational institutions had to be corrupted, adversely affecting the future generations. Today there is no respect for honesty and neutral stances: while hatred and intolerance rule the day. We have no patience or respect for others' views; and the society is divided-to achieve national unity!

We have bungled up lousy governance to such an extent that ordinary, normal leadership can no longer deliver. We cannot import leaders, and the young future leaders are indoctrinated in the wrong way. When the approach is not correct, there is no point in examin-

ing the details.

The electorate has to be tough and punishing. Our leaders are too much spoiled, and they do not know it, or do not care. This attitude will take its natural toll in due course. Sign? The collapse of the nine storey garment factory in Savar.

It is a warning symbol. The internal cracks will show up, in each and every sector. The heavy loads of unauthorised power are unsustainable with weak foundations, materially and morally. This is a built-up situation which cannot be nipped in the bud. Nobody talks about political tsunami. Why?

**Abu Abd, Dhaka**

**Load-shedding in Baitul Aman Housing Society**

I take this opportunity through your daily to draw the attention of DESA Chairman and the officials concerned who plan and control load-shedding in different zones in Dhaka city. I am a resident of Baitul Aman Co-operative Housing Society near the Baitul Aman Mosque.

While frequent power interruptions with voltage-fluctuations of high degree (badly affecting all kinds of house-hold electrical appliances) are the order of the day, load-shedding of a substantial duration from evening onward in our area is being very rigidly followed every day. But, curiously and interestingly, we find that one part of our area does not have any load-shedding at all any time in the evening onward.

On enquiry, we have learnt that the area is spared because a DESA engineer happens to reside there!

## Smoking in public places

I wholeheartedly agree with Mollah Moammad Shaheen's comment on the mockery of law as far as the ban on smoking is concerned. Though the government has enacted a law forbidding smoking in public places, most of the smokers do not heed it. Still today they smoke in public transports and in the academic places without bothering about others. But this practice is not good for the health of the passive smokers.

So all of us--both smokers and non-smokers--should go by the law.

**Sumon Dutta, Wari, Dhaka**



While we accept the load-shedding because of the power shortage in the country, we can never accept this special favour.

We would also like to focus on another very pertinent matter in this regard. When the entire country is going through power shortage, we find all street-lights burning throughout the day on the entire length of the Ring Road! The same is the

## Who should be our next leader?

The Almighty has kept Bangladesh in a good condition. So far the country is in a stable condition, except for a few problems. The price hike has been unbearable for the poor people, but what do we expect, we vote for them and then we yell at them? Please forgive me. I am not trying to be ungrateful, for they did many great things.

What we need now is a leader like Mahatir who is God fearing, intelligent and patriotic. Remember this is our country and motherland. If we want to change Bangladesh then we have to search for a true leader.

**Ubaidullah Awal, Dhaka**

case on many other roads of the city. This too is perplexing and very difficult to understand!

I hope the authorities will kindly look into the issues mentioned above and take remedial action as deemed fit.

**A resident**  
Dhaka

**Turning a car into scrap**

A picture was printed in your paper on 26 April showing one of the two Mercedes Benz cars being turned into scrap as those were reportedly imported under false declaration for tax evasion. Since it was done in line with a High Court ruling, possibly there was no other option.

But as a layman it appears to me that the valuable cars could be confiscated and sold through public auction and the proceeds could be donated to any charitable organisation. The owner's punishment would not differ if such an action were taken.

**MAZahir**  
Kazipara, Mirpur  
Dhaka

**Electrical day at BUET**

The Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering of Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology (BUET), organised a colourful ceremony under the banner of "Electrical Day" last April 1. Each year this department celebrates this occasion in its full volume. Talk shows, seminars, fun games, teachers-students fun debate, raffle draws and at last the

speakers. Dr M M Shahidul Hassan moderated the seminar. The cultural function was a unique and smart presentation by the students of our department. A souvenir titled "Kaktara" was published on the day. Different colourful T-shirts were distributed among the students. Students were in festive mood throughout the whole day.

Such days bring great joy to us.

**MARS Sohel**  
Dept. of EEE  
BUET

**Our universities**

I have read, 'Dreaming of a world class university' (18.04.05) by Prof. Mawdudur Rahman, and have to admit that he is aware of the core problem of our country. He has shown the real scenario by which we can develop. His recommendations are reasonable and very much suitable for our present condition to develop. Actually, our main problem is in the education system both in primary and in the higher level. There is lack of proper management in organising resources in our universities. I feel that our government policy makers and the authorities concerned should give attention to the professor's findings and if our universities become world class with prescribed suggestions, then we will be able to build the most energetic, innovative and resourceful workforce in our country.

**Kohinur Akter**  
Nikhel Residential Area  
Dhaka University

**Tale anomaly**

The most glaring example of over-charge by the mobile phone companies in Bangladesh is that the T&T is now billing as low as Tk.7.50 per minute (on land-lines) for "Economy ISD" calls to America, whereas the cost per minute for a phone call within the same city of this country may be up to Tk.6.00, if anybody is using the so-called channel of "mobile to mobile"!

**CNR**  
Chittagong

**COAB's business**

On 26th April, COAB took a harsh decision to keep cable service off in entire Bangladesh from 27th April evening to 28th April evening. During this period, most viewers missed foreign news channels and other nice things to remain current on happenings around. I do not know, if the information ministry has made the rules to protect subscribers' rights from COAB's arbitrary action. COAB's members regularly impose enhanced rates on subscribers.

It seems there is nobody to oversee COAB's business. To quote one, no action has been taken against the COAB member at Uttara who charges Tk 460.00 per month, while others charge Tk 300.00 for similar services. The whole thing must be brought under some kind of control or supervision.

**AR Choudhury**  
Uttara Dhaka

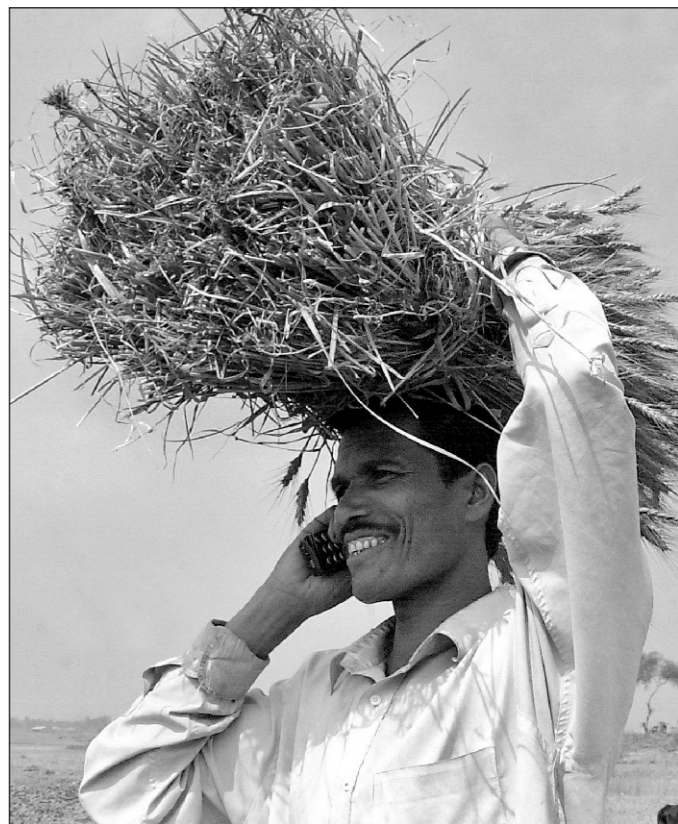


PHOTO: AFP

## Grameen service

The people of Bangladesh had one thing to be proud of, and that is a local company, Grameen Phone. It made the people of this country proud of something "made in Bangladesh". GP also started their business based on the principle "my country my pride". A befitting caption. GP was the only company which could afford to take that position in this country. GP also portrayed a highly nationalistic stance with their advertisements on 21st Feb, 26th March 14th April and 16th December. This company not only slowly started occupying the soft patriotic spot in the minds of GP subscribers, but also of the general masses.

But GP's recent venture with the Indian Idol runner-up was a big let down as far as people are concerned. It may have been a great success for GP itself. They (GP) might have created a great "talk of the town", with lot of people running around for tickets for the concert. If sensationalism was their purpose "it was a great success". However, to us, general subscribers, GP was substance and not sensation. Are things changing?

**Yasser Rahman**  
Dhaka

**An appeal**

I am an inhabitant of Dhanmondi Road no 3/A and these days it has become impossible to go to your own veranda due to the presence of some uncivilised people. My apartment is adjacent to the lake and throughout the day people gather there as if it were an amusement park. Hundreds of people come here every day but some come to disturb others. If you open your window you will see young men and women in intimate postures and that continues till the late evening. We have young children in our home and we face an awkward problem when they see this and try to ignore. To add insult to injury, some young men take drugs in broad daylight in front of hundreds of people. Some even tease you when you sit in your own veranda to have some fresh air.

We came here to have some freedom from the hustle and bustle of city life but alas! It is worsening day by day.

I believe this is high time to stop those uncivilised persons from doing unlawful things in a residential area. I firmly believe the authorities can make them behave in a civilised manner by taking stringent measures and thus allow the people of Dhanmondi (once known as the most serene place) to live peacefully. Sometimes we feel like being exiled in our own place.

**Badal Hasib**  
Dhanomondi, Dhaka

**Raise funds for Savar victims**

The factory collapse at Savar will remain as a black chapter in the

country's history. 'Safety First' should be the prime consideration for all factories. We have had enough mishaps in the industrial sector resulting in loss of valuable lives. It is a pity that no one shows serious concern over these deaths.

The pictures and stories of the Savar aftermath are so horrific and haunting that one wonders how safe people are in the mushrooming unplanned concrete 'death-traps' of Dhaka and its outskirts. The victims' families, the survivors (some with broken and missing limbs) are now passing their days in extreme hardship without salary, relief or any financial assistance. The govt higher-ups have visited the site but what steps have they taken to compensate the dead and support the survivors? This is a serious crisis and should not be ignored by sending mere condolence messages. Doesn't the govt have some obligation towards the victims?

The irresponsible and cruel behaviour of the employers is absolutely shocking. For how long do they think they can hide? I would like to appeal to the BGMEA, NGOs and other social bodies to come up with some immediate relief operation plan. If necessary, they can start a 'Relief Fund' where people from all walks of life can contribute to help rehabilitate the victims' families and the survivors.

**S. Islam**  
Dhaka

**US war on terror and Bangladesh**

Can a Bangladesh government representative ever think of meeting the US Secretary of State in Washington, talk with her for an hour and convey the message "The people of Bangladesh are shocked due to US invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq"?

But an US Admiral, William J. Fallon, held discussion with a minister for one hour and said, "Bangladesh is marked on the map of US war on terror as a possible haven of international terrorists."

We wonder what authority has an ordinary US navy officer got to poke his nose into diplomatic matters when the US government itself has posted a civilian full-time ambassador in Dhaka to look after Bangladesh-US relations.

**OH Kabir**  
Wari, Dhaka-1203

**'Djuice dunia'**

Grameen Phone, the biggest and leading cell phone company in Bangladesh, has recently introduced a new package 'djuice'. The package 'djuice' has designed its marketing policy targeting the large teenage population of Bangladesh with lucrative privileged services.

I personally appreciate GP for its earnestness to offer its services for the highly valued consumers, but the language being used in the ads leaves a lot to be desired.

Whenever we are stuck with the words like Jotil Mood, Kohin Vaab etc.-- it seems that a deviation from standard language has already occurred, which will not only affect the language, but also the long

preserved Bengali heritage and the society itself.

**Rizwan-Ul-Huq**  
Khulna

**High sounding ads**

It is observed as a common phenomenon that most business companies, firms or organisations are floating ads with lucrative offers through media for drawing customers' attention to boost sale of their commodities.

I believe there should be a mechanism to ascertain the validity of their claims, before the ads are published, broadcast or telecast.

**Md. Ahsanur Rahman**  
Dhaka

**R&D lacking in cottage industries**

As a consumer and householder, I get the impression that the small and cottage enterprises (SCEs, as different from SNEs) do not have adequate R&D facilities.

Example: the handloom bedsheets look colourful, but the artists who designed or approved the same do not seem to be aware of the psychological atmosphere needed in a bedroom for sleeping, that is, quiet relaxation. Exciting and bold primary colours and patterns are used, for encourage excitement. The bedsheet is not in tune with the sleeping mood of the sleeper!

Some designs have to remain quietly in the background. It is like the effect of bright strong lighting (for drawing room, functions, parties, and front stage activities); in contrast to quiet indirect lighting for

## Combating Islamic fundamentalism

This refers to the front-page article "Attacks on Ahmadiyyas" published in The Daily Star on April 24, 2005.

Attack on the Ahmadiyyas by the religious fundamentalists has been on the rise since the BNP led coalition came to power. As of today, there have been tons of reports in local and international media about the spread of religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh. In rare cases, the government banned the activities of some organisations; but in reality they seemed to be active in disguise.

Reference could be made as observed by Mr. Abul Barakat, Professor of Economics, Dhaka University in his study: Radicals run bodies fetch Tk. 12 billion a year. Thanks to Professor Barakat for choosing such a complex, enormous, and sensitive subject to work on. Once again, his valued data dictates that we must uproot religious fundamentalism, Islamic fundamentalism in particular, on an emergency basis.



PHOTO: AFP

been claimed that Satkhira calmed down following the administration's intervention. The question remains, for how long? In numerous times in the past, the government administration consoled the Ahmadiyyas that they were taking stern action against the culprits. A repetition of such heinous attacks could be avoided if they really meant what they said.

Concern expressed by the US Ambassador, Harry K Thomas, on this issue could be seen as a gesture of goodwill and friendship; otherwise who cares about the internal affairs of a country? For our own interest, we must contain fundamentalism with an iron hand. US expertise to combat fundamentalism could be solicited since we are failing to dig them out.

Undoubtedly, Islam has no room for fundamentalism. Thus, those who are involved in fundamentalism are not only hypocrites, but they also misinterpret the teachings of Islam and that of the Holy Qur'an for their own sake.

Given below are some suggestions in order to reduce the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. The government's relevant department(s) may consider incorporat-

ing some of those ideas in their planning and intervention in order to combat Islamic fundamentalism in Bangladesh on a long-term basis.

1. The government must recognise the existence/activities of various fundamentalist groups in the country.
2. Give them general amnesty if they surrender.
3. Rehabilitate/integrate them with the mainstream economic activities;
4. Ban organisations/groups involved in fundamentalism, seize their bank accounts, property, etc.
5. Unveil their godfathers/high command and bring them to books. The decision makers can think in terms of taking many other steps to deal with the rise of the fundamentalists.

The government has a commitment to upholding people's rights, including that of the Ahmadiyyas in Bangladesh.

**Md. Saheed Ali**  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
Canada

## Noise pollution

This has the reference of a news item in The Daily Star dated 9 April 2005 saying "Enact Laws to check noise pollution" with a picture of a human chain demanding "effective measures to check noise pollution".

Noise pollution in the cities of Bangladesh has gone too far beyond any acceptable limits in decibel anywhere in the world. It seems no third world backward country is as uncivilised as we are in respect of making noises. I live in a residential area in Chittagong. One of the busiest roads traverses the residential area allowing passage of all kinds of conceivable vehicles including inter-city buses and trucks with hydraulic horns continuously pressed from both directions of the road and loudspeakers fitted on the roof of the buses with songs in full bloom. And these happen during the day and during the night all days of the week. To this is added frequent miking for political and religious meetings.

This is not just gross noise pollution and serious health hazard. This is torture to the residents, patients and students.

Something must be done about it. I don't think use of hydraulic horns and loudspeakers are allowed in the city areas. Why can't these be stopped? I feel if the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and the City Mayor desire, they can stop these nuisances forthwith.

Anyway, if these need enactment of law,

please, the lawmakers, enact the needed law and save the peace-loving people from being tortured.

**ASM Fazlul Karim**  
Chittagong

