in the afternoon and some people were still in bed. And, even T20 teams need warm-up matches. To add local spices Chhayanaut sang the national anthem, and some native artistes did the BCB welcome song, and some others drew the conclusion with the event song 'four and six, gone where' in Bangla, which if rendered 'xxxyr, gelo koi?' would have been justified.

Deshi legends Sabina Yasmin, Kumar Biswajit, Mumtaz and Runa Laila also came to rejoice in the party that was getting packed as darkness descended on the Bangabandhu Stadium. As did American hip-hop singer Akon and R&B. But a host of Indian artistes and dancers led by skipper Oscarian AR Rahman and Vice-captain Udit Narayan were apparently the main draws.

We are shocked to learn from media reports that the artistes of Bangladesh and India had varyingly furnished green rooms. Unbelievable! Is a new caste system being introduced?

Despite being cricket organisers BCB is yet to learn that you cannot honour India's Sachin Tendulkar to dishonour Bangladesh's Sakib Al Hasan. And so there was no need to ferry AR Rahman, who undoubtedly has millions of fans in Bangladesh by his own right, and UN with '*mitwa re*' to put Bangladeshi celebrities in an awkward situation.

So close to our independence day, a national sports body such as the BCB should have been much more sensitive in selecting the menu for an event at the doorstep of a World Cup of which we Bangladesh are the only host. Any country in the world utilises the opportunity as a games host to showcase the country, its history, its people, its achievements, its victories, its aspirations, its tourism.... It is that much more difficult to do them in Hindi and English. Here BCB has failed miserably.

There is nothing wrong in hiring international artistes and celebrities for the entertainment of the local crowd and yes celebration. But the differential treatment dispensed to Bangladeshi and Indian performers is unacceptable, unwarranted, and unpardonable. If after 43 years of independence we cannot show respect to our home-grown talent, some of who have earned their deserving place in India too, then pray when?

We are most alarmed by reports that the sound system for the Indians and that of the local artistes were different. Whaaaat? Are we reverting to the apartheid days? We are shocked to learn from media reports that the artistes of the two countries had varyingly furnished green rooms. Unbelievable! Is a new caste system being introduced? In cricketing terms, it is like playing a Cricket Match with two qualities of balls in two innings because one of the teams is the underdog. No prizes for guessing which team got the inferior ball.

If those who man BCB are so much in love with Indian and American music it would have been cheaper for them to fly the entire executive committee to those countries and get front-row seats in any of the year round concerts. The *tamasha* meted out to the nation is not in their constitution. Nor do they have the entitlement.

The irony is that for every such gross error of judgement by any national organisation, people generally jump to blame the government, which may have been in the dark. BCB (and such bodies) then take the comfortable lie on the couch and remain silent, as they know the criticism will eventually die down. Persons, who hold offices by the blessings of the government, should work towards earning a good name for the government, be thoughtful in taking decisions that affect the nation, and remember that they represent the people of this country. It is not fair that the office-bearers are prepared to embrace the bouquets but leave the public brick-batting for the government. The BCB owes an apology to the Bangladeshi artistes, the government and the people.

On a sombre note, global too is the search for the missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370 in which over two dozen countries, thousands of people, and hundreds of ships, aeroplanes and helicopters are taking part. The untold grief of the families of the passengers and crew is beyond words. May Allah swt bestow on them some comfort. The frustration of the aviation experts and several governments is mounting by the day, as the Boeing 777-200 aircraft with 239 people remains elusive for nearly two weeks. The disbelief across the world has united people beyond nations, race and creed in prayers for the victims. Mechanical fault or deliberate manipulation, internal or external involvement, hijacking or terrorism, our prayers are that the aircraft is safe, that the passengers and crew are the innocent prey of some weird as yet unknown phenomenon, and that they shall return soon from somewhere to everyone.