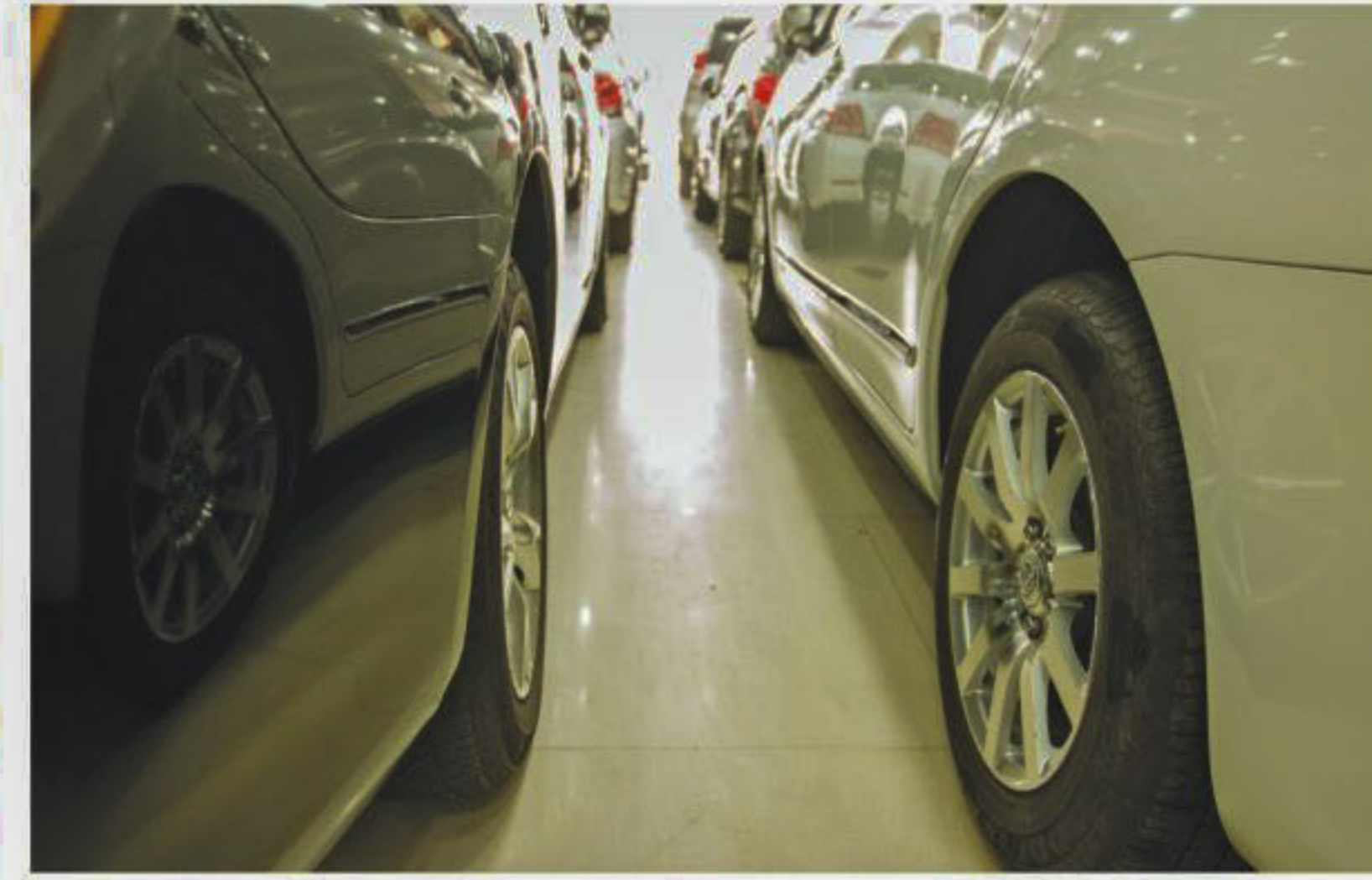


MUSINGS

J O Y R I D E



I remember those silly days when driving did not appeal to me at all. It was my first few months in Australia, and I would try to dodge any driving lesson my uncle threw my way, because they would bore me to death.

"I'll learn, I'll learn ... someday soon, but not today," was my usual excuse. Why spend a Sunday afternoon driving to grocery stores when I could sit at home and do nothing instead?

I can't pinpoint what exactly changed my mind. There was no strike of lightning that turned driving for miles from a chore to a passion. I wish there was, but the story of

how I fell in love with driving was quite lacklustre.

It all started when my mother got her full license and bought a car. I would get a ride with her to university on her way to work. Sometimes, I met her halfway on the way back home. Almost every evening, we drove to my aunt's house not too far away and indulged in a lot of post-

dinner chitchat until someone started to yawn and call it a day. During these rides, I would sit shotgun, because my father was residing in Bangladesh and my brother was a teenager in his own world. By some strange sorcery, I developed the annoying habit of what drivers label as "backseat driving", where the passenger assesses every move of the driver and

thoroughly inspects the road.

Suddenly, I wasn't just a passenger staring out the window listening to the radio. I was observing the brakes, accelerations and road etiquette. When my mother stopped at a "Stop" sign, I would crane my neck and look for cars too.

SEE PAGE 14

