

TEENs and TWENTIES

Children of the Nineties, Look at What We've Done!

They say the darkest hour
is right before the dawn!
— Bob Dylan

1971, that glorious year, the year of the shadow and light, marked the realisation of a thousand year dream of the people of this region. It led to the establishment of a nation that was to be based on a foundation unlike any other nation. Yes, Bangladesh, the ten letter word, was formed on one unifying tie — language! We are probably the only nation who can boldly claim to be

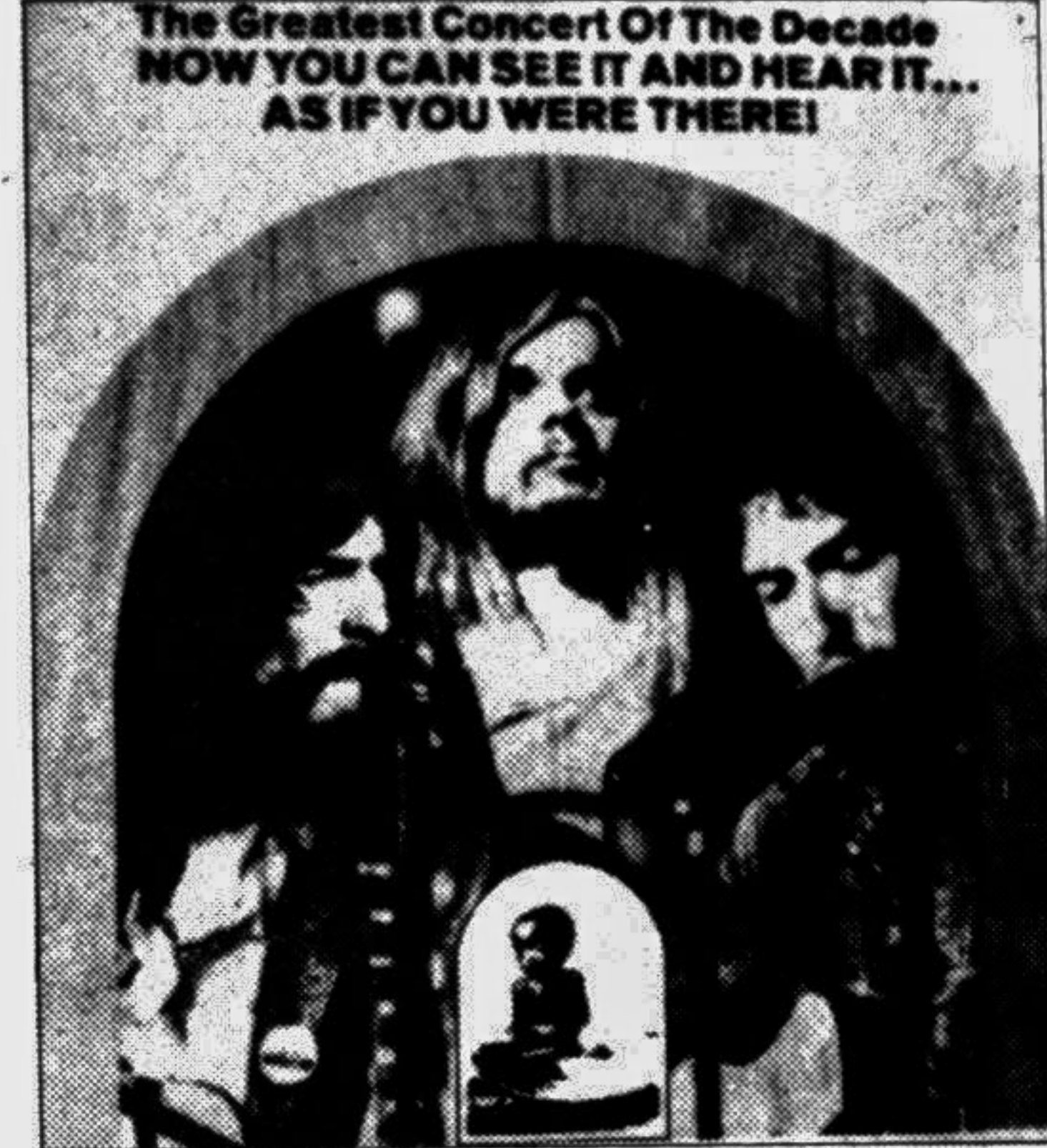
would have thought impossible even a few decades before. At the same time, Newton's Third Law of Motion proved correct. It also led to "crime and punishment" and "war (and peace)" which formed the basis for frustration among many. Vacuums are created only to be filled up. This is a burning truth of Mother Nature. The poets, the musicians, the social workers, all devoted their time and energy in protesting against such de-

by Asrarul Islam Chowdhury

also instrumental in acting as a catalyst in realising a dream — using music to fight for us in "our glorious liberation war". The Panditji was deeply hurt at the genocide of his people. How could man commit such a loathsome crime? Why was it that the innocent people have to pay such a high price? The Panditji thus sought out to solve the problem once and for all and attract the attention of the global community. However, how was he to do it alone? Notwith-

when Harrison declared 'I'd like to bring you all a friend of us all, Mr Bob Dylan'. In sent Dylan into action with those unique songs "A Hard Rains A Gonna Fall", "It Takes a Long Time to Get Where You're Going", "Blowing in the Wind", "Mr Tambourine Man" and finally "Just Like a Woman". Indeed,

How magnanimous the people of the Concert for Bangladesh were. What great deeds they did for their people as their address is the world. "Oh Maggie, what have we done to Bengal?" On August 1st this year, The Concert has celebrated its Silver Jubilee. The western world will, no doubt, celebrate the 25th year of the Concert with due sanc-



Bangladesh
by George Harrison
My friend came to me
With sadness in his eyes
Told me that he wanted help
For his country guys
Although I couldn't feel the pain
I knew I had to try
Now I'm asking all of you
To help us save some lives...
Bangladesh, Bangladesh,
With so many people, dying fast
It sure looks like a mess
Never seen such distress
I want to lend your hand
Make you understand
We've got to release, Bangladesh!

standing his immense popularity, what was the guarantee that thousands of people would come and listen to him?

Some of the best creations of mankind have been done in collaboration. So, the Panditji thought of asking for help. The death toll was approaching the million mark. Time was running out. The sand of the clock started to become empty. There's an old saying that when all the doors close, a window will open. A messiah came. His name was George Harrison. The next question which had to be answered was how could such a massive project be undertaken in such a short span of time?

George Harrison learned a lot about our independence war from various news media, and was convinced that something had to be done. However, Harrison and company were 'artists and not politicians'. So, Shankar and Harrison went to their friends. The rest of the story is history. The stage was set for the "greatest musical show of the decade" — and not exaggerating a harbinger for later day initiatives in e.g., Live Aid for Africa 1985.

The Concert started with Harrison introducing Ravi Shankar and his "band" to the people. With Pandit Ravi Shankar on the Sitar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan on the Sarod, Alla Rakha on the Tabla, and Kamala Chakravarty on the Tamboura, Ravi Shankar started his Bangla Dhun, a version of "our" folk music, the folk music of Bangladesh.

Harrison and Shankar were singing for the people of Bangladesh who have a mystic heritage. So the Concert could not be fulfilled without the "Lalon Fakir" of the western world, Bob Dylan! Indeed one still remains impressed at the introduction accorded to Dylan



Ravi Shankar — One of the main artists of the concert for Bangladesh

nobody felt any pain, that night, as we stood inside the rain!

Besides Harrison and Dylan, Billy Preston, Ringo Starr, the sad-eyed clown and the oldest of The Beatles, Leon Russell, and Mick Jagger of The Rolling Stones were present. The entire atmosphere at Madison Square Garden was simply boisterous. It was for the first time that the east met the west. It was for the first time that man used music to protest against atrocities.

The message of the Concert was clear. It was organised to help "release the people of Bangladesh". Yes, other artists, both of Bangladesh and other nations helped in raising awareness in favour of our glorious Independence War. None of their contributions can ever be denied no matter how little it may have been. However, the Concert was the final ice-coating on the cake.

The money gathered went far beyond the imagination of The Panditji, nearly a quarter of a million dollars — which would have been worth something like two million dollars on today's market. The entire money went to the relief fund of the UN. Although this money seemed nothing in comparison to the actual amount that was required it nevertheless created an international awareness of the genocide which was being committed in Bangladesh.

ty. The only thing that seems really annoying and humiliating too, is that we've never had the courage to honour these philanthropists!

Swan Song : The Revelation

The main purpose of writing this article was simple. It was to raise a question that the author had done two years ago. Sad as it may seem, there has not been a positive answer from any side since then. We, as a nation, sometimes don't know how to exploit a situation properly. Nevertheless, let's ask ourselves again after two years.

Children of the nineties, look at what we've done! Did we ever officially invite Harrison and company or Shankar and company to Bangladesh? No we did not. Did we ever think of how ungrateful we are? No we did not. There is a saying that it's never too late to start. Behind every cloud, there's a silver lining! Let our generation repay these great maestros. "Let It Be" that our generation do what our ancestors did not. Is there anybody out there who's willing to challenge him/herself beyond the ordinary?

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The History of Hartals

by Nameer Rahman

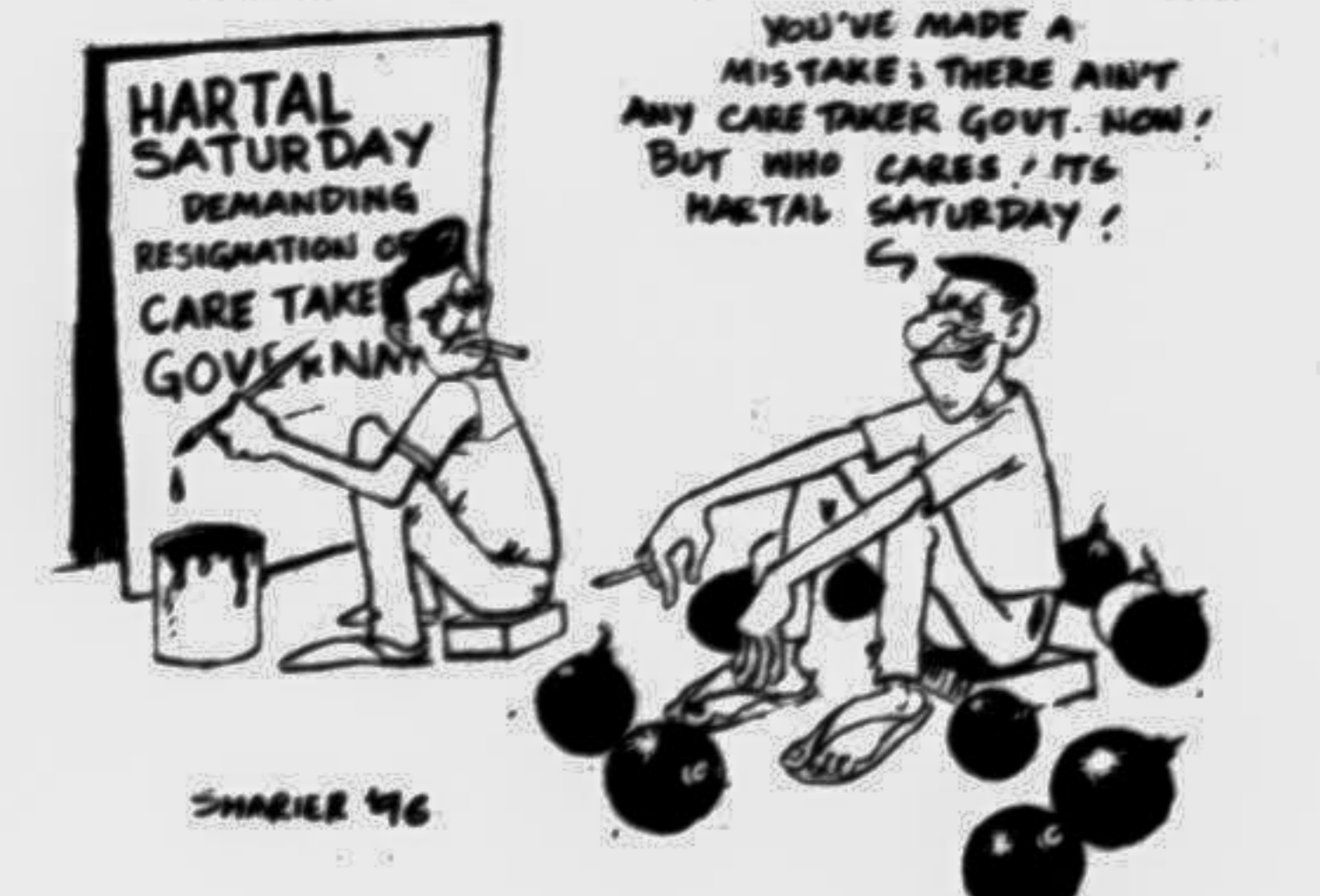
THE word "hartal" is one with which we are only too familiar. It is responsible for single-handedly pushing our economy and industry back into its infancy. And needless to say most people in Bangladesh are by now sick and tired of them, almost regardless of who is calling them and for whatever reason.

The first hartals, or strikes, were the product of thousands of disgruntled workers in England at the turn of the century and were used to protest poor working conditions and low wages. More than a hundred and fifty thousand workers mainly from the mining industry went on strike for six months bringing the industry to a virtual standstill. However, the strikes as we know it (for political gains), started in the subcontinent in India during the thirties, when Mahatma Gandhi began his non-violent, non-cooperation movement for the liberation of the subcontinent from British domination, through the use of peaceful demonstrations and sit-ins and not to mention the odd boycott or two. On a lesser note, this anti-British sentiment led to a misguided support of the Japanese during the Second World War. However, with the British Empire in decay, the added pressure paid off and in 1947 India gained independence as well as partition.

Prior to the war of liberation, hartals were used to protest Pakistan's refusal to give priority and importance to the needs of Bangladesh (then East Pakistan). Later on during 1990-91, hartals were once again employed to great effect

in ousting former president Ershad. This same method of political pressure was also applied by the opposition, on the government of Begum Khaleda Zia resulting in one-party elections and a continuous hartal lasting one month in West Bengal a type of hartal called *bandh* is frequently put to use, for whatever purpose with varying scope and degree of vigour, where sometimes traffic isn't allowed on the

partition politics have given way to more insidious forms. This is increasingly evident in the political scenario of Bangladesh as more and more normal political activity gives way to wanton terrorism in the name of hartal. Very often hartals and the people who enforce them, intimidate and assault the very members of the public in whose name the hartal was called in the first place. In this context, to say that har-



streets, but the shops remain open, and sometimes the reverse.

Whereas the ethics of hartals, their use and abuse as well as the right to call a hartal are clearly debatable, one thing is for sure, hartals are being used more and more to inspire terror in the mind of the public. The old 'non-violent non-cooperation' movements that were the trademarks of pre-

tals are an expression of democratic ideals is absurd and ridiculous, because whatever the cause, in every instance it is the common man and the working class that pays the price.

Unfortunately, when democratic struggle is stifled, people are inevitably driven to extreme measures. Hence the hartal. Nevertheless this in no way justifies its abuse.

Insomniac and Miserable

by Muneera Parbeen

I am an insomniac. There are many other people who are insomniacs as well but none are as worse as me. When I stop sleeping or rather, my systems decides to stop sleeping, I go on for days without almost any sleep at all. Many people have insomnia under stress. They can't sleep because they have 'thoughts', I mean something's on their minds. I can't sleep when I have 'nothing' on my mind. When I have nothing to think about I get so worried that I lose the ability to sleep (I think).

Nights spent awake because of this is quite long. Sometimes I wonder if there are only 8 hours of total darkness or 80? Thoughts to ponder on. Insomniacs like me try various methods to over-

Very soon I am still staring into the darkness — wide awake now — with ampuis of energy in me. So I get up and get a book. I have already read my story books, how many times I forget, but luckily I keep a stock of new ones at hand. The stories end but my night does not. My eyes are burnt out but there is no sleep for me yet.

I get up and write letters to as many people I can remember (I never post them later for when I re-read them in the daylight they all uncannily carry one message — my sleepless nights and displeasure). These are merely done to pass the time for I know that there will be no sleep for me some nights I lie down in the darkness and count sleep. Believe me, I

accept my eyes. Then I feel so helpless. My whole body is so very (too much in fact) relaxed that I don't even have the energy to get up and do something — for my eyes are still active — they stare into the darkness and the eyelids don't even flutter.

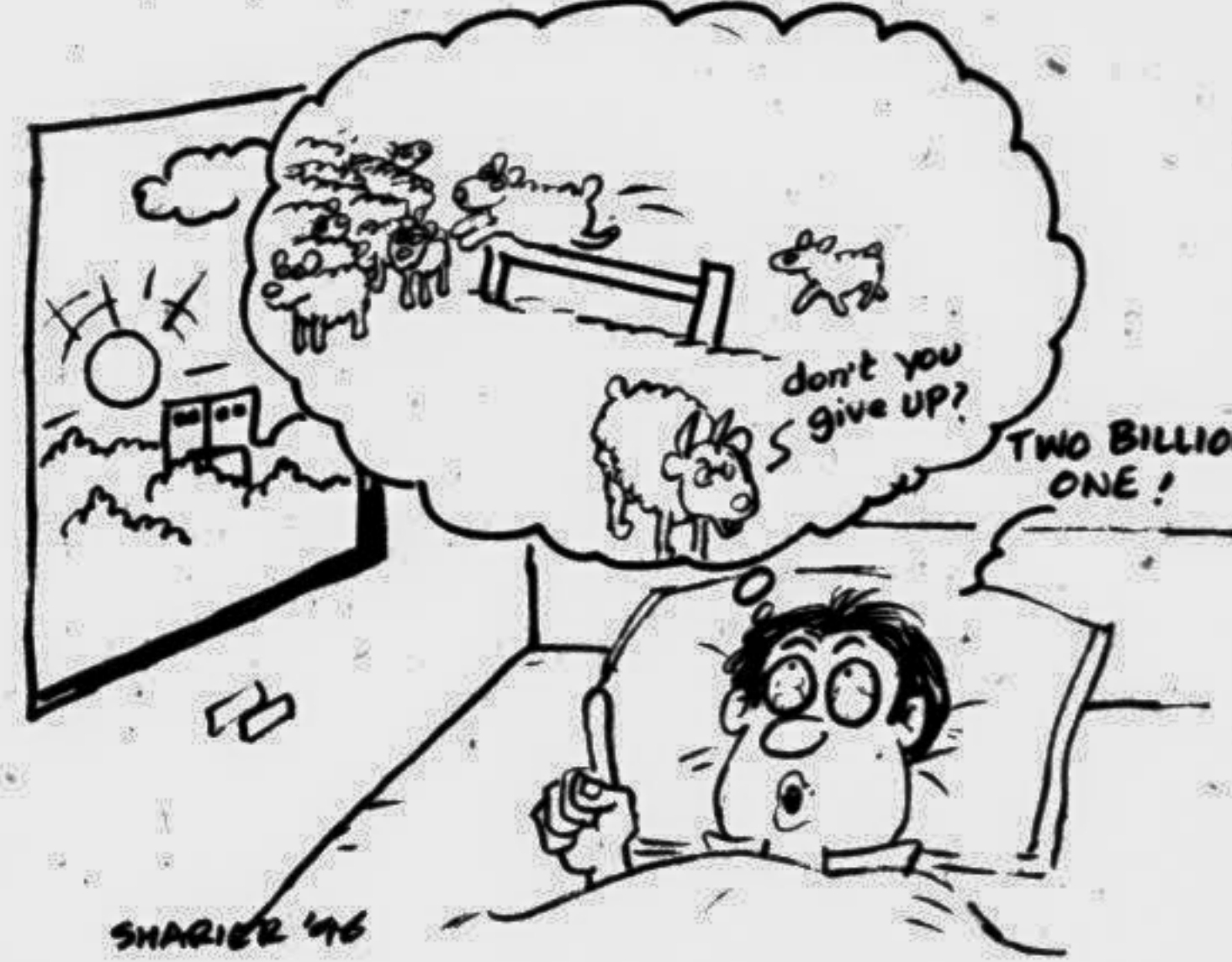
As I lie down, staring into the darkness, I start imagining things. My entire world of imagination is shaken up. Characters from 'The Amityville Horror' to 'Freddy from 'Nightmare on Elm Street' to the finer details from 'the extraordinary' comes alive to haunt me. Oh my museum if you had ever seen! I switch on all the lights I can reach and sit, trapped on my bed with my feet tucked safely in a bedsheet (yes — in this sweating heat!) — those turn out to be my worst nights for then the fright keeps me awake.

Are you laughing? Perhaps so but this is no laughing matter in the dead of the night.

Some lights, I just lie awake. Then I start remembering things I had never thought of during other times. Now why was I laughing at me in the class? Something I missed there? Then why did X help me out with my project even though I had never asked her? What did she really gain. Oh God, the thoughts that come to me, I find a double meaning in everything that had happened during the day.

One might think that after all these worries during the night, I might resemble a million-dollar wreck in the mornings? No sir, the other day I walked into my office — after a whole night of absolutely no sleep (except one and half hours in the day in between) and my colleague greeted me by saying that I looked rather fresh this morning (no malice in her words, believe me). I can't even pour out my heart and troubles for no one really believes me....

As for me, my sleepless nights continue, some completely sleepless, others letting me unwind for a few hours in the early mornings. I am quite a night owl these days, staring awake (and writing to kill time) and thinking... Now what if you are laughing at me now, hmm, that's rather horrible to think of. But what if... that's certainly food for thought for me... Now will S & B & A & AR & AK read this, and all perhaps laugh at me?



come their 'small' problem. The first remedy for me, thanks to cable TV licences in the country is to switch on the TV. There may be at least 13 to 14 channels that I get at a time but its simply amazing how none of them has anything watchable on air when I am so helpless. One shows a movie I have watched at least a few more times (in past nights of course), other has a horrid documentary on another repeating an interview for the nineteenth time and so on. I still watch till my eyes burn out, and after some time, it comes to a point when my eyes really can't take no more. I switch off the set (which luckily is placed right in front of my bed) and the lights. Thinking sleep cannot evade me now, I am only so wrong.

count upto a million, and still remain right a fresh. As they say — as fresh as a lily? One of my therapists taught me how to relax my body to get sleep at night. There are so many methods. One is counting backwards from 100 and by the time I reach 1, I am supposed to be really relaxed. In my case I concentrate so hard that I can even go further, upto negative 100 and I remain all the more alert and active at that point. Then there is the method (2nd stage) to count to zero and then imagine that each part of my body is being relaxed, part by part, toes, feet, legs, arms and all. I divide my body into more fragments for more effect and relax each part (from the toes upwards). Finally every part is relaxed



Competition of the Month Essay Writing

Word limit: 800-1000
Topic: An experience that has had a profound impact on you.
Or,
A humorous anecdote
Attractive prizes will be awarded to the winners declared. So, hurry up! And good luck!
Deadline : Aug 23-1996

Happy

by Someone the great
I'm happy...
Happy as misery would be
If the world was a little worse off
Happy as an optimist thinks
Reality should be
Almost as happy as a lie
I'm happy
So happy I can see the rainbow
Even though I'm colourblind
So happy I can shout
Without the fear of getting my larynx busted
So happy that I wouldn't be happy
If my body became a little unwell at the moment
With a case of Death.
I'm happy
So happy that I can smile
Without showing my fangs.
Yes, I can say that I'm very, very happy
Because I'm not sad
And that's because
I'm happy.

A Wacky Letter to the T'n'T Editor

The Teens'n'Twenties Editor
Subject: Is it analogue? No it is Digital!

Dear Madame,
I have just gone through this...uh... article on a "rock band-Digital by Kazi Khaled Arafat and impressed by the article bought one cassette of that group. After hearing the band's cassette I have also ordered, by mail, to have autographs from the band members. I have also deployed undercover agents to monitor the behaviour of Kazi Khaled Arafat — the famous writer of the article.

Let me first congratulate the Digital for writing such a grand piece "Chand Dekhechhi". In the interest of the readers I would punch a few lines from this heavy metal love song:
Chand Dekhechhi Mon bhorena (I have seen the moon, dissatisfied)
Fool Dekhechhi Mon bhorena (I have seen fools, dissatisfied)
Tome Dekhe pal na kono tulona (after seeing you I find no comparison)
Joto Dekhi, tato bhabhi (so much I see, so much I think)
Duti chokhey shapno eke jao

je tumi anonna (in two eyes, you go drawing dreams... why you unique)
Anonna, anonna, anonna-naaa (unique, unique, u-hu-nique)

Describing the band member's musical inspirations Kazi Arafat rightly pointed out the names of Geezer Butler, Tony Iommi of Black Sabbath and Jon Lord of Deep Purple. I interpret that either it's Black Sabbath and Deep Purple which do not know how to play guitar and Hammond organ (Lord's favourite key boards) or it's "Sukhbir" of India who does not use guitar or Hammond organ in real sense.

Wait-a-minute, what's Sukhbir doing here? Well, if you did not know, let me explain. This awful Indian musician has been copying "chand dekhchhi mon bhore na" in his own language. I was lucky to notice Sukhbir — the copy cat of Digital — was singing the same tune in Channel V with Nilon as his model girl! Imagine! Our sons... sorry, digitals of the soil are composing a song and the copy cats are robbing all the credit.

I have also been thinking the intrinsic meaning of Digital. What does it mean? This Adjective but noun could mean anything. Digital reminds us of digital watches, digital recordings, calculator's LCD display... anything electronic!

After listening to Digital, I ask myself: Are we not Men? And a silver voice cries out from distance: No, you are Digital!

Later I found out, it was my father's deep voice. He was looking for me with a kural in his hand saying, you'd better listen to Motorhead or Guns'n Roses than what you were just listening to!

Right now I am in the toilet. I have been digitalized to an extent that I can't help listening to "chand dekhchhi" over and over before I clear my stomach.
Yours,
sincerely
An anonymous reader
PS. My agents reported that Kazi Khaled Arafat, the great writer, is a great fan of Ozzy Osbourne just like his digital friends. They also reported, Arafat often listens to Madonna and Michael Jackson when he is totally alone — but denies them in public.