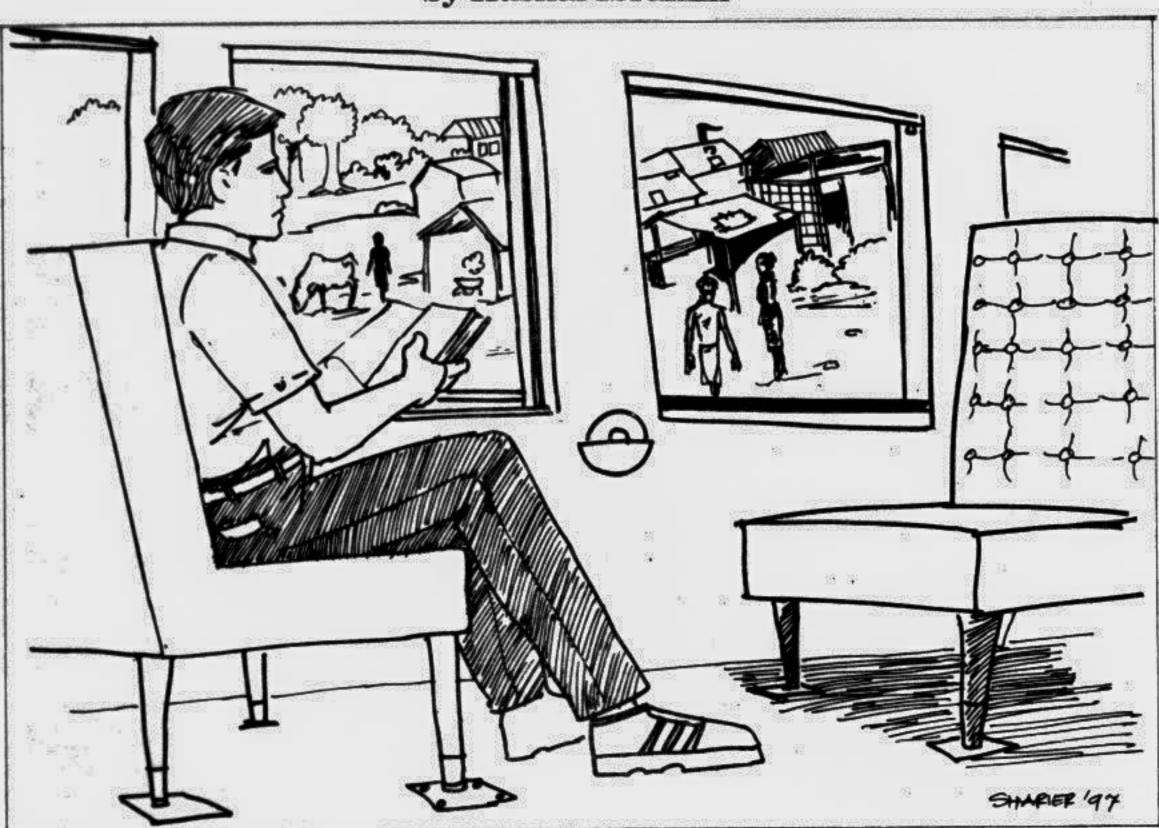


by Kushal Ibrahim



T was two thirty, and it was the third time in less than twenty-four hours that I found myself running in a railway station in India. The first time was in Agra, then in Delhi, and now in Aligarh. "This is becoming quite a habit of ours", I cried out to Sami, my friend and present "running mate". He did not look enthusiastic enough to share the joke, and hurried me to run

The train back to Delhi was supposed to leave at that exact time, and failing to get on it would mean waiting for about three hours to catch the next one. We did not even have enough time to buy the tickets. It was a local train and seemed fully loaded. Sami's cousin Abed (whom we had come to visit in Aligarh that morning from Delhi) conducted a quick search, but could not find a seat empty. Sami and I realized that we would have to remain standing throughout our journey to Delhi, which was supposed to take nearly three hours.

The only space where we could stand was beside the

doors of a carriage. The space was a fairly large one, not that it was of any comfort to us because passengers were crowding there also and there was hardly any room for us even to stand. After a few minutes we realized that we really did not need to run so frantically to reach the train. It was fully living up to the reputation of local trains and showed no signs of leaving

the station. It started about fifteen or twenty minutes later than due time but quickly gained speed. Sami looked extremely grim. He was not very enthusiastic about standing for three hours in a crowded carriage of a local train, specially not after traveling several times in the last few days in much better express trains including the famous Rajdhani Express. I tried to cheer him up, saying that it would be a different experience for us; but I must admit that I was not very enthusiastic about the whole situation either.

There were people all around us: men, women and children. The doors of the carriage were open, and the cool winter wind,

which otherwise would have been a great discomfort, provided valuable comfort in the middle of such a crowd. As they were all around me, I could not avoid watching them. And then a thought suddenly dawned on

In the last few days, I have been to Calcutta, Delhi, Ajmeer, Jaipur and Agra. I have enjoyed with much admiration the subway or metro as they call of Calcutta, marveled at the exquisite pinkness of Jaipur, stood dumbfounded with my jaws agape in front of the eternal beauty of the Tajmahal (though I still think that it is a great wastage of public money) and wondered with astonishment how westernized the city of Delhi has become (including its girls). But those were only some inanimate objects, and many of them were merely of historical interest, bearing no relevance to the India of today.

I have, in the last few days, seen technological achievements and historical monuments, but I have not really seen what makes India what it

OR the last few months or

so, I have really been into

to anything and everything

could get my hands on. In the

process, I brought a tape from a

friend of mine and while going

to sleep I played it. But after

having heard the first two songs

I had to sit up in my bed and

look at the cassette-cover for

the second time. It read

band, "Ark".

'Tajmahal' with the name of the

'Ark' is actually a break-

away section of the once-popu-

lar band Chyme, which was

formed in the year 1991. When

keyboardist Ashiquzzaman

Tulu and some other's left

Chyme, they put together their

own group Ark. So - evidently,

almost all of the members had

professional background as

musician and that's where, the

So, the "Ark' line-up stood

present finesse has come from.

thus, keyboards and vocals -

Ashiquzzaman Tulu, (band

leader), lead guitarist Ridwan

Chowdhury (Pancham), Bassist

Ahmed Shohiar (Shishir) and

main vocals Hasan and

Shamim. With this line up 'ark'

brought out their first album

under the label of Sargam-titled

"Muktijuddhas") meaning inde-

pendence war). Considering the

fact, it was their debut album

'Muktijuddhas' is a brilliant set

of even better compositions, the

album contains pretty deli-

cately arranged compositions

such as "Shedins Akashe chhils

chaad" and "Reshmi sochhanai"

"Oshomoye mehman" is a weird

and funny number in which the

main theme is the untimely ar-

rival of an (unwelcome) guest.

But the best thing about the al-

bum is that it is dedicated to the

memory of the martyrs of "71 I

really felt this was a nice ges-

years to bring out their second

album -titled," Tajmahal" In

the meantime, ex-LRB drummer

Joy, joined the band only to be

replaced shortly after by

Rezwan. And this line up still

sweet time -five years to be pre-

cise, to record this album. It is

engineered mixed and recorded

very first melody that is played

Anyway Ark took their own

It took the band five long

ture on their part.

exists today.

Bangla songs - listening

is - its people. Well, I have seen Indian people, but they were city dwellers - people who visited the posh shopping complexes and drove cars. Yes, I certainly saw those people. But certainly they do not represent the general population of the nation. And here, in an overcrowded carriage of a local train. I finally could see the face of true India.

The people around me were clearly from poor or lower middle class background. (Otherwise they would not have been traveling in a local train). There was this bespectacled man with a child. He looked like a schoolteacher in some rural school. There were those two men who were always chattering and laughing. The two women who sat just beside me on the floor looked extremely tired. One of them was speaking to the other in a harsh, commanding tone. Some old men were also sitting on the floor near me. Some of the men were smoking cheap cigarettes.

I heard children crying. Their clothes and manners clearly revealed their rustic identity. I tried to listen to the conversations all around me. but could not comprehend much. It was partly due to my almost hundred percent ignorance in Hindi

I realized that unless we were forced to board this train, would have missed this wonderful opportunity of having a glimpse of rural India. The train was stopping at almost every station on the way. People were getting on and off without anyone showing any sign of having a ticket. Once, a man even got on the carriage with his bicycle creating, I must say, much trouble for his fellow passengers, including myself.

What fools we are, I thought. We visit a country, spend a load of money, see some historical monuments or some natural scenarios, and think that we have "seen" that country, when actually we see nothing. It is the people we need to see, and it is the people we always overlook.

Watching the passengers in the train, I realized how alike the people of India and Bangladesh are. Delhi or Calcutta is not India, as Dhaka is not Bangladesh. The heart of both the countries lie in the village. The people around me in that carriage looked just like village dwellers in Bangladesh. except that they were speaking in Hinds. And 4 and retord that despite the political or language barriers, we of the subcontinent were all same — minus the glamour of Dhaka or Delhi, we

were all poor.

HE auditorium was im mersed in pin-drop silence. Then, as my name was called out, the whole auditorium burst out in applause. With a flushed face I wheeled upto the stage amid the tumultuous applause to receive the trophy. I was so happy that I hardly cared to try to stop the tears from welling up in my eyes. My fingers felt numb under the weight of the trophy and I could hardly hear anything. As I proudly held up

year ago — a film that had a pro-found and rejuvenating influence on my life. My whole class had left on a sports tour that day — leaving me behind since I could not participate in any of the activities from my wheelchair. I remember watching the bus until it disappeared — with tears of disappointment in my eyes. I sat brooding and despondent. When the librarian came in to the classroom. She invited me to join a junior class to watch a film. Little did I know that day that the film I watched through

the bitter tears of resentment

would have such a strong effect

my trophy, my mind swept back in time to a film I had seen a

on my life. As the lights dimmed, a little boy on crutches appeared on the screen. He had been a cripple since birth and led a life much like my own. Gradually I became engrossed in the film watching him struggle to be accepted in society with his handicap. At school, he was mocked and jeered at by his classmates. Other students regarded him as a pitiable, helpless creature. He was left out of most class activities - and generally regarded as worthless.

During recess, the boy would sit silently in class, often crying. Then one day, he found a paint brush lying on a desk. With a few deft strokes, he had a marvellous landscape on the cover of his diary. Finding it a pleasurable passtime, he began to spend more time painting. For the first time, he was doing something without fearing the mockery of his peers. He devoted a lot of time and effort to painting and soon acquired great skill and expertise.

Yet no one came to know of his talent because he was too scared of the possible criticisms to show anyone his work. He lacked the confidence to face the inevitable barrage of mockery. His classmate continued to eye him with pity his teachers assigned him only the easy and undemanding courses. He wanted everyone to know that. in his own way, he was also ca-

pable of hard work and devo-

tion: that he could also succeed

Rejuvenation

by Naina Shehzeen Ahmad1



if given the scope. But first he would have to overcome his fear. I watched enthralled as he struggled with himself, unsure of his own abilities.

Once they did get to know of his work, however, few found any grounds for criticism. His art work won unstart popularity. His teachers saw the potential for success in him and began to help and guide him. Gradually he began to win peoples respect and admiration — not pity anymore — through the strokes of his brush. He had proved that his disability did not make him useless - that he had qualities to be admired despite a handicap.

As the film neared its end. my mind snapped to back to reality. I admired wholeheartedly the boy's courage and will to

"I may not be able to do some of the things that you can; but that does not mean I can't do any of the things that you do.

My mind racing, I slowly wheeled back to my classroom. He was right. I could not play games or run around during recess like the others — but I had my own aptitudes. Suddenly I felt that I could do it too - I could also do something worthwhile instead of brooding over my handicap. With a new

inspiration, took up my pen. Writing had never posed as any difficulty for me. While my classmates pondered and racked their brains over an essay, my pen would always flow freely. Stories, essays, poems et al came to me easily. Unable to play. I spent a lot of time reading, and this gave me a rich vocabulary. Yet I had never devoted much time to writing. guess I had been too distracted by thinking of what I could not do. Once I began writing, however. I soon began to worry less about missing sports, I had

I was much happier and cheerful. But I still lacked con-

my leisure hours.

fidence. I was still afraid of others' reactions to my work. I could not bring myself to show my stories to my friends. I did not want to be laughed at anymore. Yet I could not bear to be regarded as worthless either. It was then that I remembered the boy in the film; remembered how he had struggled and how he had been rewarded for his pains. One day, gathering my courage I sent one of my stories to the quarterly school maga-

When the magazine came out. I saw groups of student huddled together in corners reading something with keen interest. I had never really expected to see my story printed; so it came as a shock to find that it was my story everyone was avidly reading.

The story became very popular all over the school. My friends congratulated me, telling me how interesting and well written my story was. Even my teachers expressed their appreciation of my literary abilities. Instead of pity or scorn. I now saw respect and admiration in everyone's eyes. My classmates now included me in their projects — asking me to write out the text of the presentation. I was assigned the role of script writer in our annual play an activity I had never been able to participate in because of my disability.

Yet when one of my stories was selected to be sent to an international competition, many smirked behind my back. I felt very discouraged. Only when I remembered the boy in the film did I regain some of my confidence. Under such circumstances, when I did win the first prize from among thousands of entries, many people were more than mildly surprise. I felt I had jumped the last hurdle to my acceptance. Now, finally, my talent was fully appreciated by everyone. Everyone had to admit that I had achieved a lot despite my handicap. I had achieved what I had set out to do — I had been accepted with my handicap as a useful and successful person.

Even as I sit here upon the stage today - holding my trophy - in the limelight of people's attention - I am aware of the great effect of that film on my life. The film was inspirational; it gave me something to work for in life. It showed me how to divert my attention from what I couldn't do to what I could. Here I was revelling in the glory of my achievements something useful to do now in "my rejuvenation - something made possible by that film the film which gave me a new

Weeks Peak

by Mukit Ahmed IFE - a fantastic fourletter word which means, according to the dictionary, "state of living." But, when describing life, what we actually mean is the 'STATE' of living and exactly 'How' one is living. If we were to come into this world just to live, then what's our exact reason for living, or at least coming in this world? And, who sent us? According to the religion, Islam, Allah sent us. According to Christianity God sent us, and so on. Leave aside religion. Lets come to the present world: the reality. We are born; we have parents; we have brothers and or sisters. We acquire knowledge: education. We marry; we have children; we become a successful engineer, doctor or a businessman; we become old and finally we die. What Have we done? "A taste of life" - is that how the saying goes? No, we have come in this cruel world to challenge fate, to fight against all odds. How do you expect this to be possible? Is

this what life is about? There's more. What is the use and cause of fate if we had denied life after all? Why do some people do good things and others do bad? WHAT is the use of doing bad or being bad? What is the use of being or doing Good? "Honest people suffer most" — is this the latest saying? No comments.

Half of the people in this world eat to live and half of them live to eat. I have just made an error. You know why?

Half of the people in this world are eating because they are living, whereas the other half are living because they're eating.

Why is that?? Is this life? Why has the word "hatred," "fear", "pain", "war," "enemy", been added up in the dictionary? Scientists don't quite give a damn to the fabulous world below the seas, while they're frying to reach the heavenly bodies, why the hell go so far when the sea-bed is right within our reach?

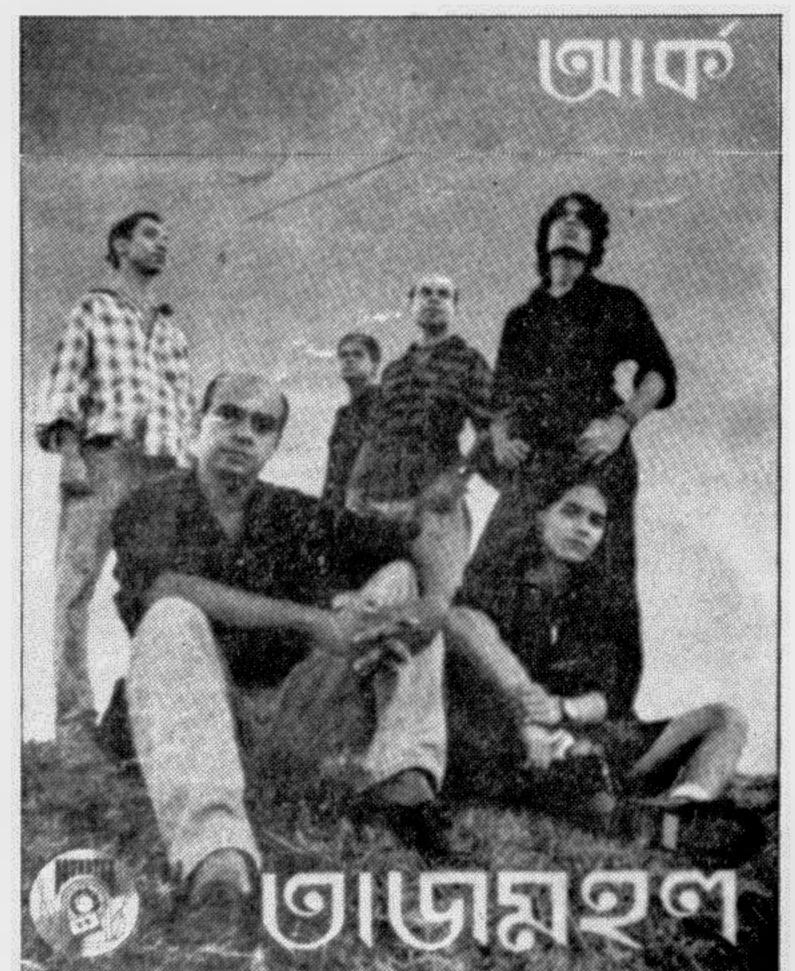
Why did UN support Kuwait while in war with Iraq and why didn't they do anything about the dying Muslims in Bosnia? This is life. Every-

thing was fine by 1942 for Germany, Italy and Japan in the second World War. WHAT made the whole political era turn over by 1943? How did Hitler die? Was Napoleon actually murdered? How could "they" assassinate Nabab Sirajudullah, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman, Abraham Lincoln and Rabin and not Mussolini, Mir Jafar and others who deserved to be? This is life.

Why don't they believe in any Almighty? Do the snow on the mountain — tops melt at the right time to destroy the growing crops of the new season below? A lovely accident. Did the sun itself choose to be exactly a hundred and fifty million kilometres away from the earth just to give birth to life in this very planet of the whole solar system? It is his choice. WHAT do bees have inside their mouths to produce the world's sweetest food - honey? So what does science say? There's no God? What HAS Science given us? More importantly, what has science TAKEN from us?

Charged

by Adnan R Amin





before the vocals enter. It is undoubtedly a marvelous composition - containing a series heart-rendering cries. Vocalist Hasan is a very young and a talented musician with a Godgifted voice-the best I've heard

in many years and he has definitely done a great job as the main vocal of the band. In 'sweety', he sings." Tumi achho, shoto mile O poth juray-akaki bedona shoyna" which is a hit

The fourth song featured in this album is "guru"- It is a song that takes Bengali songs to a new dimension. I cannot think of any other band who have ever so successfully fused baul' songs and western music together. The song starts off with a heavy guitar rift - which is followed by a swift storm of a single note cadenga and finally a sudden half before the gentle acoustic passages push through It is (presumably) a song about the gurus who spread spiritual healing to the people. The lyrics

are very thought provoking and

the whole tune very well ar-

ranged. The B-side holds some pretty groovy songs, too." Ato sukh" is one of them. It is basically a guitar-based song which kicks off with a grungy descending chromatic scale as the intro. The last song of the album is the title track "Tajmahal. "This is a song which simply defies description. The tune could well be played on the chords CF and G. But it would be foolish to judge this extra or diary song merely by the above mentioned fact. Despite the lack of a wide array of various sharp. 6th, 7th, 9th diminished and other chords, the song is simply a master piece.

It would have been entirely as acoustic tone if not for the melody. The lead work is excellent and so is the keyboards. After the keyboard melody. The pattern of the song suddenly breaks the stereotype ABCA song structure. The next passage is accompanied by a high-scale keyboard line which really accentuates the song, and Tajmahal is a great song in terms of

it's lyrics too. Songs are always I feel ambiguous. But the implication that I got was that the lyrics roughly means." If I were the great emperor Shahajhan — I would've built a shrine like Tajmahal to commemorate your love. But so many poor women have ended up with their loved ones away from them, and their lives shattered, it's an irony. And it would be better to be like Pamir and offer shelter to thousands of people or bind the people of this planet together in bonds of brotherhood like the great milky way. Maybe my translation is not that good, but actual bengali words are so beautiful that I couldn't help being immensely

fascinated. There are some very obvious changes in the lyrics and tunes of Ark. With time, have come much experience and wisdom. The lyrics seems to be more concerned about more deep and human matters.

Now that the band have had a success with their latest album, the entire group is thriving with new found energy. And as the wind of change blow through the country's music scene Ark have started ascending the top slot. We all hope to see more of Ark in Future.

Billboard's TOP 25

Issue Date: March 22,1997 **Billboard 200 Albums**

This week	Last week	Artist Title	on chart	Peak Position
ı	New	U2 POP	1	Į.
2	3	LEANN RIMEN UNCHAINED MELODY/THE EARLY YEARS	1	
3	4	CELINE DION FALLING INTO YOU	52/	34
4	6	JEWEI. PIECES OF YOU	56	4
5	5	NO DOUBT TRAGIC KINGDOM	62	34
6	7	SPICE GIRLS SPICE	5	5
7	2	I.IVE SECRET SAMADHI	3	1
8	10	THE WALLFLOWERS BRINGING DOWN THE HORSE	36	8
9	8	ERYKAH BADU BADUIZM	4	3
10	9	LEANN RIMES BLUE	1 35	
11	1	SOUNDTRACK HOWARD STERN PRIVATE PARTS: THE ALBUM	2	i
12	n	TONI BRAXTON SECRETS	38	2
13	12	BLACKSTREET ANOTHER LEVEL	26	3.
14	15	SOUNDTRACK SPACE JAM	17	5
15	14	VARIOUS ARTISTS 1997 GRAMMY NOMINEES	4	14
16	16	MAKAVELI THE DON KILLUMINATI: THE 7 DAY THEORY	18	i
17	13	TRU TRU 2 DA GAME		8
18	17	SOUNDTRACK LOST HIGHWAY	3	7
19	18	VARIOUS ARTISTS ULTIMATE DANCE PARTY 1997	17	17
20	New	VARIOUS ARTISTS MUGGS PRESENTSTHE SOUL ASSASSINS CHAPTER I	T	20
21	20	AALIYAH ONE IN A MILLION	28	18
22	21	DEANA CARTER DID I SHAVE MY LEGS FOR THIS?	26	10
23	19	SOUNDTRACK ROMEO + JULIET	19	2 //
24	22	SHERYL CROW SHERYL CROW	24	6

DRU HILL

DRU HILL

My Trip to Sonargaon by Qazi Golam Mohammed (Shahab)

ONARGAON is the oldest capital of Bengal. It was built around one thousand A.D. There is a museum where objects found in wreckage of the old buildings are kept. The museum is a red colored building made of red bricks with a white dome, there is a beautiful pond with steps leading up to the mirror clear

water in front of it. On the main road of the old city there are magnificent houses. These houses were built by landlords. There is a dance hall almost in every house. The dance hall is surrounded by stripped pillars and has beautiful mosaic on the floors. The dome of the house and the banisters of the first floor can be

seen from the dance hall. The stairs are very dark. steep and long. Each building has had at least two corridors. I don't know why all the doors were very low. I guess that the people of those days were short.

There are some miniature drawings on the walls. These beautiful structures were made of mortar of limestone and powdered red brick raised by solid small burned bricks.

Every now and then my mind went back to the ancient days and I was imagining myself physically present; back in history and roaming the narrow streets and alley of this town. I imagined seeing horse drawn chariots, mounted soldiers roaming the streets, children playing in the corners and tradesmen chanting sellable goods carrying on their heads. The sky was the same with blue flying fluffy cotton wool clouds

ings built hundreds of years ago. I was thinking that it's a shame the Government didn't properly preserve these ancient structures.

at Sound garden Studios by Emran Ahmed and Chara. There are twelve tracks in the tape-of which half a dozen are decidedly simply marvelous. The album kicks off with 'pagol mon' which is a light, catchy tune with a palligeeti" influence. The second song is "Akaki" (got the spelling right?) which was telecasted a few weeks back on (to the best of my recollection) "Shuvechha." It's a very unusual and sun ever shining as that of this day. While looking at these build-

tune in regards to the backing vocals and background music. The name of the song which means" alone " in Bangla, offers enough hints as to what the theme of the song might be. The third song in side-A is 'Sweety". The first thing that I feel, it is imperative to mention, is it's