

Reporting 21st February

I don't know about you guys, but I think that Bangladesh has entered the year 2000 with proper dignity! The main reason behind it is that the UNESCO has declared 21st February the International Mother Language Day. 188 other nations are celebrating our very own Shaheed Day with us this year. What can be more magnificent than that?

We have been honoring this day for the last 48 years, and today our devotion has worked wonders! It's no longer a secret to the world how proud we are about our mother tongue!

Like all the previous years, this year the day also started with the laying of wreaths and showing profound gratitude to the martyrs of this heroic event! By 00:01 minutes on the 21st of this month, the Shaheed Minar area was flooded with flash lights and bare footed people wearing black badges. President Shahabuddin Ahmed was the first one to place wreath at the Shaheed Minar, followed by the Prime Minister and her cabinet colleagues. The Shaheed Minar was decorated with extra care this year. Not only the people of the county, but also the foreigners who aren't even diplomats were seen in great numbers at the Shaheed Minar premises on the day. Many processions came out including a joint one by the DU students and teachers. Different political, cultural and professional organizations arranged a handful of special programs on the day.

The month long Bangla Academy Book fair arranged discussions on the language movement. On the other hand, The Ministry of Cultural Affairs organized programs on the day starting a day before the 21st at Ramna Batamul. The TV channels and radio Bangladesh broadcasted special dramas, movies and cultural shows on the big day.

Ten personalities were awarded the Ekushey Padak for their works in their respective fields. And at last the five martyrs of the language movement had been rewarded after so many years, for their inspiration on the liberation war. The names, I am sure are very familiar to all the students but still let's take a look again-Abul Barkat, Abdul Jabbar, Abdus Salam, Rafiquddin Ahmed and Shafiur Rahman are the brave sons of the motherland who set example to the youths of today.

Yes after 48 years the tiny little spot on the world's map is getting the attention that it has always deserved. But as today we celebrate the International Mother Language Day let's stop and think for a while about how passionate we are about it? How many of us actually understand the depth of the day's importance? Till today we have teenagers who find it uncouth to speak in Bangla when they are out at an expensive restaurant having the time of their lives! There are people among us who pretend not to know Bangla very well, when they are born Bangalees! The world is convinced about our love for the language, when will we be?

By Nazia Hussein

An essay in wondering....

By Fardeen Chowdhury

This is not a cry for help. This is just another essay written by just another teenager with fading hopes of youth, expounding his God-given teenage rights to crib about everything under the sun and think himself naturally inclined towards some form of prophetic prowess. Whew. Enough said for an intro.

Well, by the looks of it, you're still reading. That's Good to know. Lord knows, you've had your fill of the weekly of suburban woes within these hallowed pages. Right? Wrong? You're still reading, right?

Yes, this is yet another essay about life here in the city. Yes, this essay explicates the elements of disdain and commotion in our daily lives. Yes, I have come to remind all of us gathered here of the disappointment in living in the place we all call home. Yes, yes, yes.

Why do we hate this country? More important, how do other people bring themselves to like it? Many would say the reasons for hating this country far outweigh the ones for liking it. Let's see... it is the corruption? Would you be referring to that selfish act of indirect destruction that makes invertebrates of us all and impedes our chances for proving ourselves in the global arena? Come now. There is not a single country in the world without some degree of corruption, a bit of underhandedness... You know the routine. So that can't be it. We, as intelligent citizens (as I pray we are) cannot be that far displaced from the truth, could we?

Fine then. Perhaps it is the level of Poverty... that little, almost negligible aspect of Bangladesh that foreign newsmakers, quite embarrassingly, never forget to concentrate on in their documentaries. I am not going to haul out the previous solution that no country is without poverty... that would be insulting your obvious intelligence. But why would poverty be a subject for dislike? It does not make sense. T-shirts saying, "I hate corruption" yes. T-shirts saying, "I hate poverty" no. Unless one is speaking from a sympathetic point of view. Which is as plausible in our circles as a snowstorm. To be taken with a pinch of salt: man, I saw an entire family that day, on the streets, begging. Man I hate that. I hate the way poverty affects people. I hate poverty. I really do. Pass me a bag.

So we don't really hate corruption, unless we are descended from goons, and poverty isn't a big thing either. Perhaps what we hate in something bred within us, something so far displaced that the average citizen is hard put to actually stop and ask her or himself what it could be.

I could go on for pages. But that really is the case all the time anyway so I won't push it. Do we hate ourselves? That is the question I try to pose before you now. And I suppose that the answer to that question would be a shaky, if confident "yes." Why not? Greed and corruption, it seems, is state of mind in this city. The best way to explain it is to go to the source of it all: the people themselves.

Trouble is, we are a nation of "scapegoat scanners." We try and put the blame on some one else all the time, disrupting a metropolitan Great Chain of Being that should have subsisted in the first place. Because of the mistakes of a few, an entire populace has degraded into base moralities.

We put ourselves down. It is a rare moment when I hear of someone's services being praised, either before or after the service has been rendered. People have little faith in each other. And it is because of these constant put-downs that the average person goes ahead and thinks: "hey. Maybe I AM deficient. Maybe I AM a moron with his brains and morality in his back pocket. Perhaps others see me differently than I do myself.... So why try and improve on myself when there's nothing left to improve?"

I leave the house occasionally, say, to go to a friend's house, and almost all the time, without fail, there will be people yelling, screaming, honking at each other, spouting obscenities and pointing fingers... bit if its their own fault, they will never own up to it. It's always blame, blame, blame, argue, argue, and argue. There is a general ill feeling around Dhaka City when one goes through it. Like that American president who spoke of the house and the country. You know. The bearded guy. The low self-esteem being doled out affects everyone... and soon we all arrive home muttering "I hate this country."

Let's get something straight: I am no Freud. I am pretty sure if he ever read this he'd draw me aside and give me the third degree with a martini in his hand. However, as we people-watchers go, I know what I know and I've seen what I've seen, and I know what I've seen isn't what any of us should be seeing. We are a nation that joined hands in liberating this country. Take that sentence any way you will, in the end, its all the same. We did participate in this country's independence. Surprisingly enough by today's standards, without bitching, backbiting, or thinking of what the other person was thinking. Those were days when "we" was a definitive statement. We don't hate this country. We just hate ourselves for watching it slip away from us.

Whatzup this week

By RS Desk



Weekly CD review

(Compiled from mtv.com)



Enigma

"The Screen Behind The Mirror" (Virgin)

Friendly Advice: New listeners should listen to Enigma's previous albums to get the most out of this one.

In 1990, Romanian Michael Cretu made a bewitching song called "Sadness: Part 1," which mixed a somnambulant AOR melody with some heavy chanting vibes from Gregorian monks, thereby introducing the world to the sounds of Enigma. Considered by many to be way ahead of his time, Cretu is an innovator who has created a captivating fusion of new age, classical, and world music influences with dance-club beats.

Their fourth album, "The Screen Behind The Mirror," offers a sound that appears quite different from its three predecessors' at first listen, mainly due to a larger presence of female vocals (Elisabeth Houghton, Sandra Cretu, and Ruth-Ann Donalds), and

perhaps also because of its lack of Gregorian chants. You however start to regain that sense of "Enigmatic" familiarity as the album progresses. The third track "Gravity of Love," for example, has the epic-sounding gothic background sound of "MCMXCAD" and the rhythm of "The Cross of Changes."

An outstanding part of this album is the recurrence of "O Fortuna," from Carl Orff's opera "Carmina Burana," on several tracks. You find the extremely well integrated ditty lurking in the background at times, and storming into the forefront at others. The album can also be quite a bit to handle, with bits and pieces of church bells, Middle Eastern singing, and native instruments folding into each other on a steady wave of hip-hop rhythms and synthesized sounds.

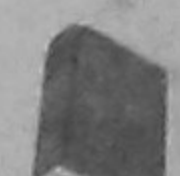
This fourth album may have pulled a slight 180 on the other albums, but it still retains the same kind of philosophical, mystical, non-commercial sound, as with the other three. However, one cannot help but wonder how much longer can the chemistry of choral break-beat and ambient techno sounds sustain its cultural appeal before becoming outmoded.



Web-site of the Week

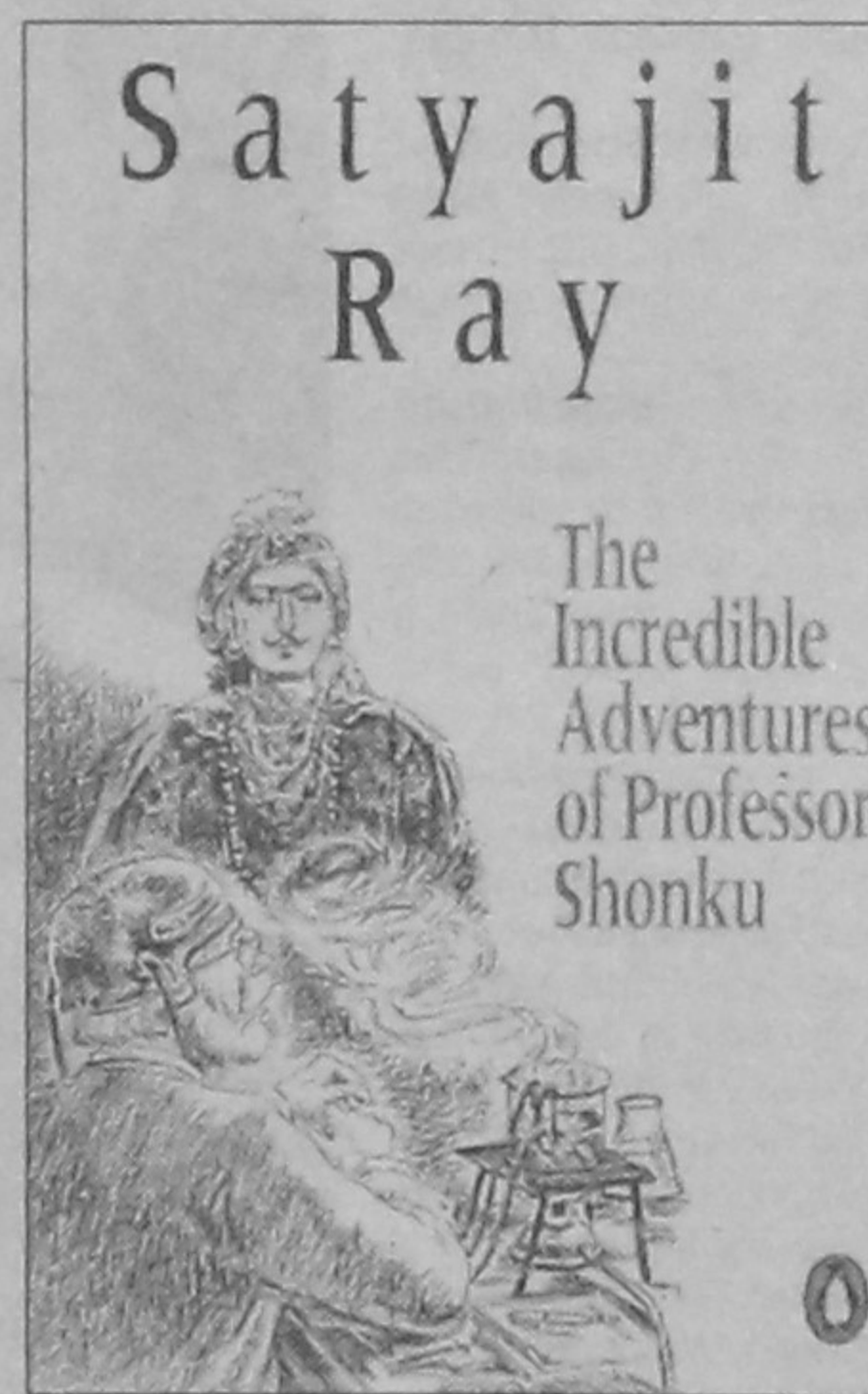
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This game arcade includes demos and downloads, reviews, previews, game specs, ratings, tech support, hints, tips, and player technical discussions about all kinds of computer games. You can even get free e-mail from this site. To do that you simply have to subscribe. This site also offers contests, where you win, (guess what?) stuff. You search for any information on games according to parameters such as "Title", "Game Maker", and so on.



Book of the Week

The Incredible Adventures of



Professor Shonku- Satyajit Ray

This is a very old book. It's based on the exploits of an absent minded, eccentric genius, Professor Shonku.

Armed with Miracure-All, a wonder drug that is a sure cure for any ailment, Remembrance that helps revive a failing memory, and powerful Annihilin that can destroy anything without a trace, Professor Shonku is ready to venture forth into strange new worlds and time zones. Wherever he is, and whatever he is doing, the scientist usually finds himself caught up in the most extra-ordinary adventures- facing down a Tyrannosaurus Rex, encountering a distant ancestor of man, battling his way through the jungles of the Amazon. When he is not engaged in these amazing excursions into the past and the future, the Professor explores the world of Magic and the more obscure areas of futuristic science - usually with relative results.



Movie of the week

The Hurricane (1999)

This is a rather old movie. I'm sure everyone has heard of it. Some of you might have even heard "Hurricane" by Bob Dylan.

Starring Denzel Washington, Deborah Unger, and Liev Schreiber.

In June 1966, Rubin "Hurricane" Carter was a strong contender for the middleweight boxing title. When three people were murdered in a New Jersey bar, Carter's dreams were destroyed. Driving home from a nearby club, Carter was erroneously arrested for the murders and sentenced to serve three life terms in prison. Several years later, Carter's published memoir, *The 16th Round*, inspired a Brooklyn teenager and three Canadian activists, who believed in the truth, to join forces with Carter to prove his innocence. Their extraordinary efforts, commitment and love ultimately secured his release, leaving "Hurricane" to sum up his 20 years in prison for a crime he didn't commit by simply stating, "Hate got me into this place, love got me out."

