



TOYOTA

7 Seater
Dual A/C
High Ground Clearance

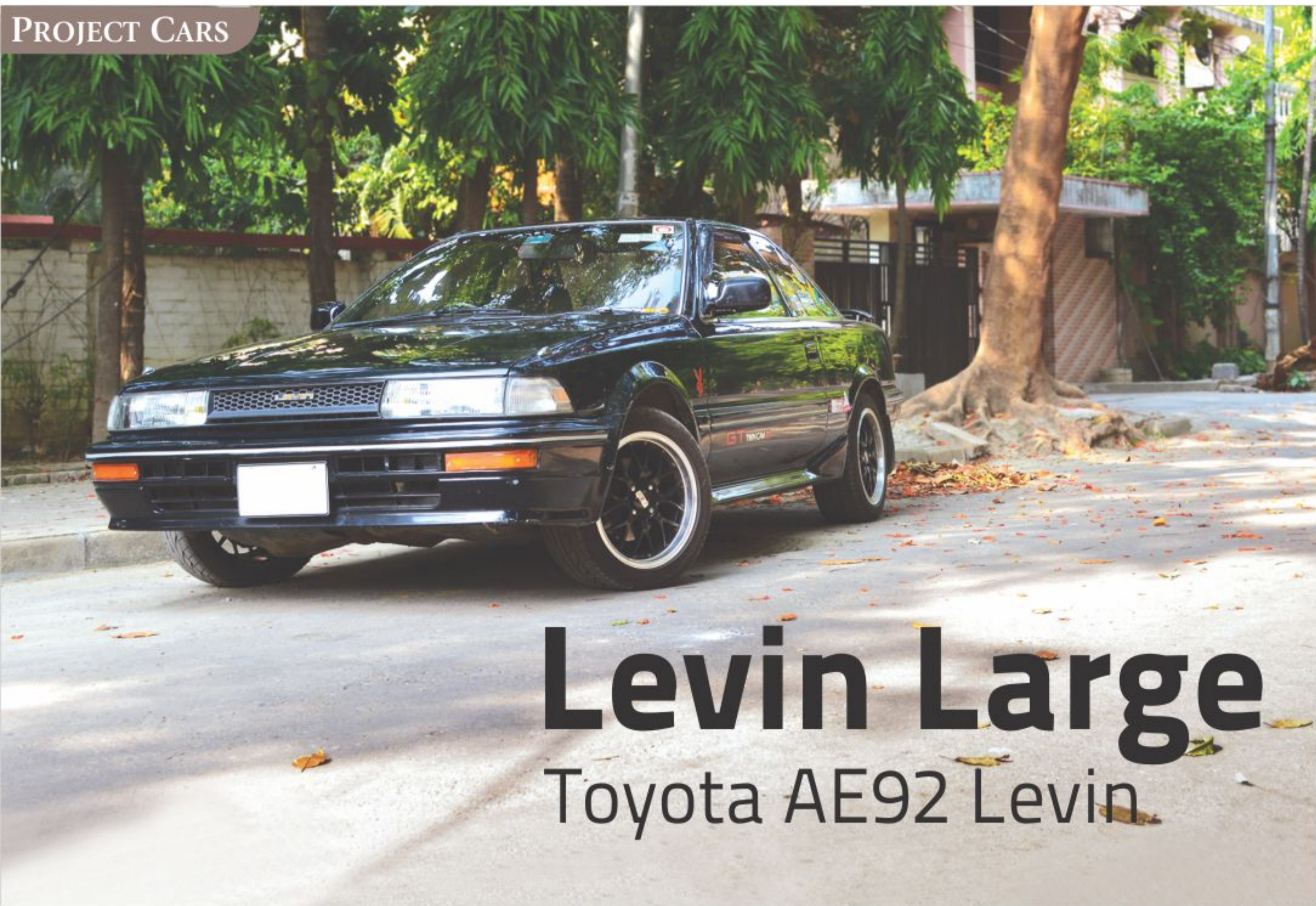
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...Because I Love My Family

SHIFT

PROJECT CARS



Levin Large Toyota AE92 Levin



Possibly the cleanest Levin interior you will see out there, complete with Nardi wheel and gear knob.



WORDS: EHSANUR RAZA RONNY
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM

Owner: Junayed Al Hasan
Hails from: Chittagong
Currently: Doing MBA at IUB, running a business.
Past: Worked at Shanta Properties Ltd.



Specs

AE92 Toyota Levin

Engine: 1.6 liter 4 cylinder twin cam 20 valve, quad throttle 4AGE (blacktop), Blitz LM Pro cold air intake, Aerospeed plug wires, Blox lightweight crank and cam pulley.
Transmission: 6 speed C160 manual transmission, Exedy stage 1 clutch and pressure plate.
Brakes: All wheel disc brakes from AE111 Levin.
Wheels and tires: 15 inch aftermarket BBS wheels.
Suspension: Tanabe Sustec springs, Ultra Racing front and rear strut/sway.

I love the cars from before the 2000s. Those always had the proper proportion of what cars should be: long and sleek like a hotdog filler. The 92 Levin is exactly that. It's based on Toyota's more common and often anesthetic E90 sedan, except the hood looks a little longer and the tail looks more eager to wag and entertain like an obedient puppy.

This black machine is a mostly tame, everyday fire breathing monster. It has what I would consider just the right amount of power for a car to be driven in the city every day. It's got the very popular-for-Bangladesh 4AGE Blacktop engine offering something in the vicinity of 145 bhp. This is a brilliant engine for all purposes whether it be zooming across and open highway or puttering around town picking up friends for a tea session by the road. It's zippy quick. But it didn't start out that way.

I've known Junayed Al Hasan for a while now and when he got his hands on this little rocket, it was your average grocery getter. In fact, that's exactly what it was being primarily used for by the original owner, for school duties of the family kids. It also lacked all the juicy mechanical bits.

The car started life as a 1.5 5AFHE, five-speed coupe

with the typical disc/drum setup. It looked the part, but didn't have the go. When the car went up for sale, Junayed picked it up as a potential project that could turn heads. And boy did he succeed. The car was in exceptional condition structurally. That's the first thing to ensure when buying any project car. If the chassis and body are straight, your work is cut out for you. But that didn't necessarily make it easy. It was quite the task sourcing the proper brakes. The rears had to be upgraded to discs to help the car stop after it received the new engine setup.

My jaw dropped when I saw the interior. It was all original and everything was where it should be. It's amazing to see such interiors considering the state of old cars in our country. Weather and wear plays a big part in making a 20 year old car look like a hundred year old barn. With dead pigs included. But this was pristine. So what do I do when he offers me the keys? Of course I take it.

The Levin has been fitted with a 6-speed gearbox that offered a bit of challenge to me. Like all project cars, this had its quirks. Reverse was difficult to put into. Junayed kept telling me I should push it into the slot real hard and it will engage, except I feared I would break it. In all

reality I couldn't break it if I wanted to but there's always that nervousness for the car geeks that prevents you from doing hurtful things. So every time I needed reverse, Junayed acted the co-driver. Helper if you will.

The car has Exedy stage 1 clutch and pressure plate, yet every gear change is like a regular 'normal' car. I could drive this all day and not feel a thing. So what makes this car exceptional? This is a true project car like the others we've featured so far. It's been built from the ground up from a regular car to something that can scare you but in a good way. Every stab of the accelerator makes the car lurch forward. Its strength lies in the mid revs from second gear onwards.

There have been newer, faster cars that made me giddy and excited all at the same time. But this car has just the right amount of everything for everyday use. Fast and beautiful, these old cars have a style that has aged very



"Stickers make my car go faster."

well. The ride is tight and extremely compliant on the 195 section 15-inch tires. There's a future upgrade planned for this little rocket, that being coilovers and slightly bigger wheels to compensate for the drop. Can't wait to see what happens then.

Footnote: You want to start a project car like this? Junayed's tips: Find a clean chassis, build up the brakes and suspension and then go for power. It's the only formula. If your car can't stop, don't go for 'go'. And yes, at the end of the day I mastered the reverse gear. It was extremely difficult giving back the keys.

PROJECT CARS

4AGE against the machine

Toyota AE92 Trueno

There was a time when the number 4 combined with the letters "AGE" was enough to cement a car enthusiast's respectability in Dhaka's automotive circles. Coupled with the Honda counterpart, the B16A, the blacktop and silvertop 4AGE engines were the hot cakes everyone lusted after, and a 4AGE transplant cost a small fortune.

The rare beasts were Truenos and Levins and GT versions of the Corolla, these factory tuned hot versions of basic Corollas fetching very good prices due to the rarity of these machines and their performance capabilities. Nowadays, the 3SGE and the 3SGTE have stolen the 4AGE's limelight, as more and more people switch to the larger displacement engines in the ever long quest for more power.

Is the 4AGE dead, then? That's exactly what I wanted to find out when I stepped into M Raihan Ahmed's clean AE91 Trueno.

The low slung coupe's flip headlights make it a time machine into the past, harking back to a time when sports coupes without flip-up headlights were incomprehensible. One of the last Toyotas to feature



The X90 Sprinter bumper looks great on the Trueno.



them (other than the SW20 MR2), it's difficult to move past how cool the Trueno looks, with a sort of angular, edgy look to it that you'd be hard pressed to find in any modern contemporary car. In terms of exterior modifications, the owner has kept it limited in trying to accentuate the original lines of the Trueno rather than go all out. An X90 Sprinter front bumper and custom lip were made to fit the Trueno, with a great deal of work and time spent in the garage to get the body sorted properly. After going through several colour changes and experimentation, Raihan settled on the metallic blue you see on the car now. It might go into the bodyshop again for fresh paint, Raihan informs us.

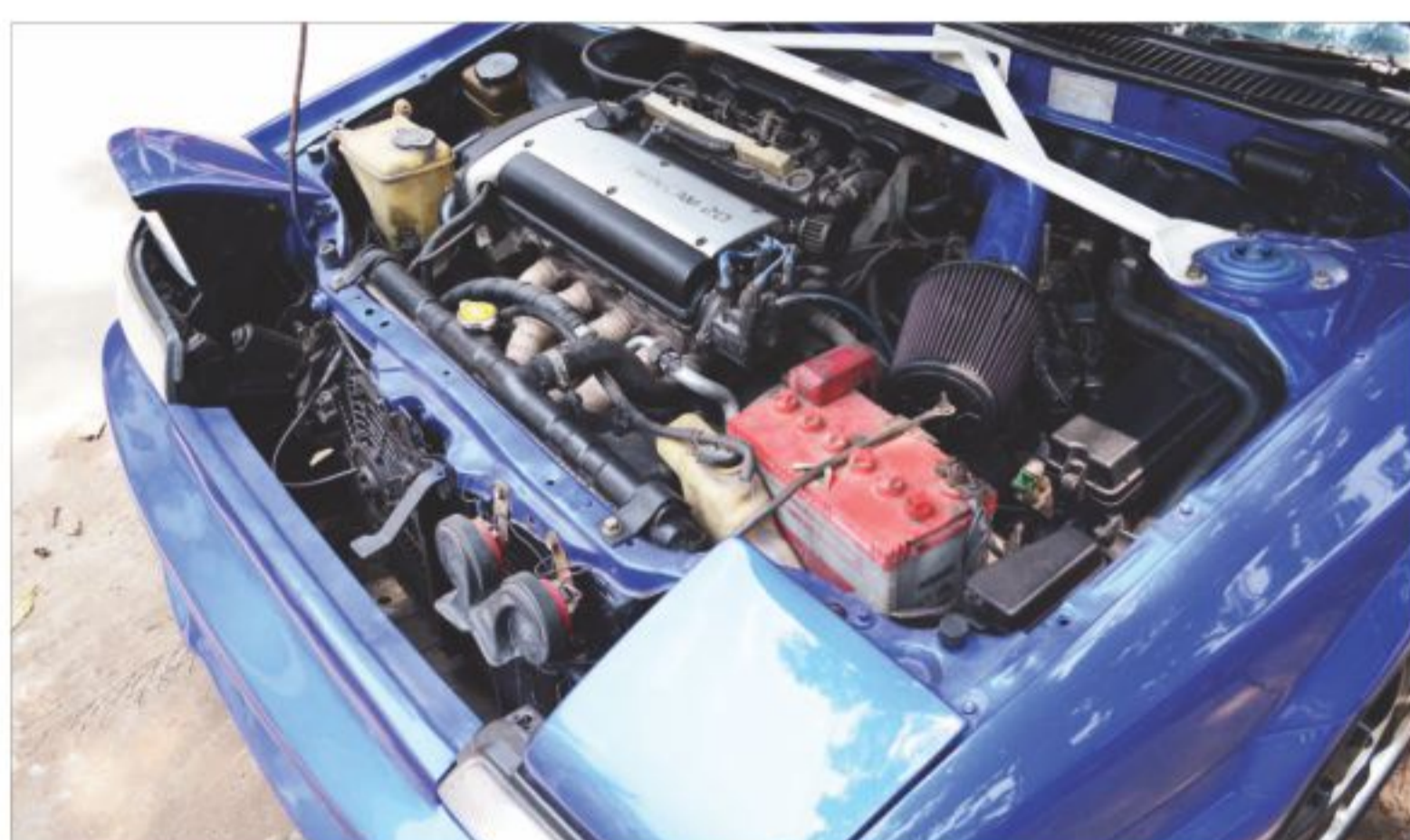
These are all insignificant next to how the lightweight machine performs, which is what I was most interested in. Pulling out of Uttara and onto Airport Road, the car rattles a bit, typically old Toyota, which is all part of the inherent charm of these cars. The exhaust has a loud bass-line, thrumming with restraint. It doesn't have to wait long to be let loose though. Raihan drops a gear, and floors it.

The RPM needle makes a ferocious climb towards the redline, and the exhaust sings the song of its people, leaving a ringing sensation in your ears. The upshifts are smooth and precise, delivering instant power from the naturally aspirated blacktop 4AGE engine. This is not the first time I have experienced the power of a 4AGE at full throttle, yet, it has an addictive pull which never seems to diminish in pitch and fervor even after you've sampled it for the thousandth time. It's a solid piece of Japanese engineering at its best, squeezing out incredible amounts of fun-power (horsepower should not be the unit of measurement for such engines) from a tiny 1.6 liter engine. The speed, the sound, the ferocity with which the car accelerates, they're all testament to this fact.

Detractors will point out that the kick of a turbocharger will boost is unparalleled, and yes, a turbocharged engine does make for a wholly different kind of experience, but purely from an engineering point of view, making a small displacement four-cylinder engine rev to over 9000 RPM and keeping it intact is no small feat. The power delivery is instant, on demand, and its miraculous how a 160 horsepower engine can make tingles course through your body whenever the accelerator is held down.

To those who say the days of the 4AGE are over in Bangladesh, eat your own words.

WORDS: SHAER REAZ
PHOTOS: RAHIN SADMAN ISLAM



The 4AGE is still king of the smaller Toyota engines.



Owner: M Raihan Ahmed
Hails from: Chittagong
Currently: Working at Red Rocket
Past: Studied BBA at North South University

Specs

AE92 Toyota Levin

Engine: 1.6 liter 4 cylinder twin cam 20 valve, quad throttle 4AGE (blacktop), with K&N air intake, NGK Power Cable plug wires, NGK iridium plugs, ZerOne lightweight pulley, lightweight flywheel.
Transmission: 5 speed C56 manual transmission,
Brakes: All wheel disc brakes from Levin BZR.
Wheels and tires: Yokohama S-drive tires with 17 inch aftermarket wheels.
Suspension: Ultra Racing front and rear strut tower bar, front sway bar.



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