



# SHIFT

AUTOMOTIVE PUBLICATION OF The Daily Star

# WHY DO WE MODIFY?

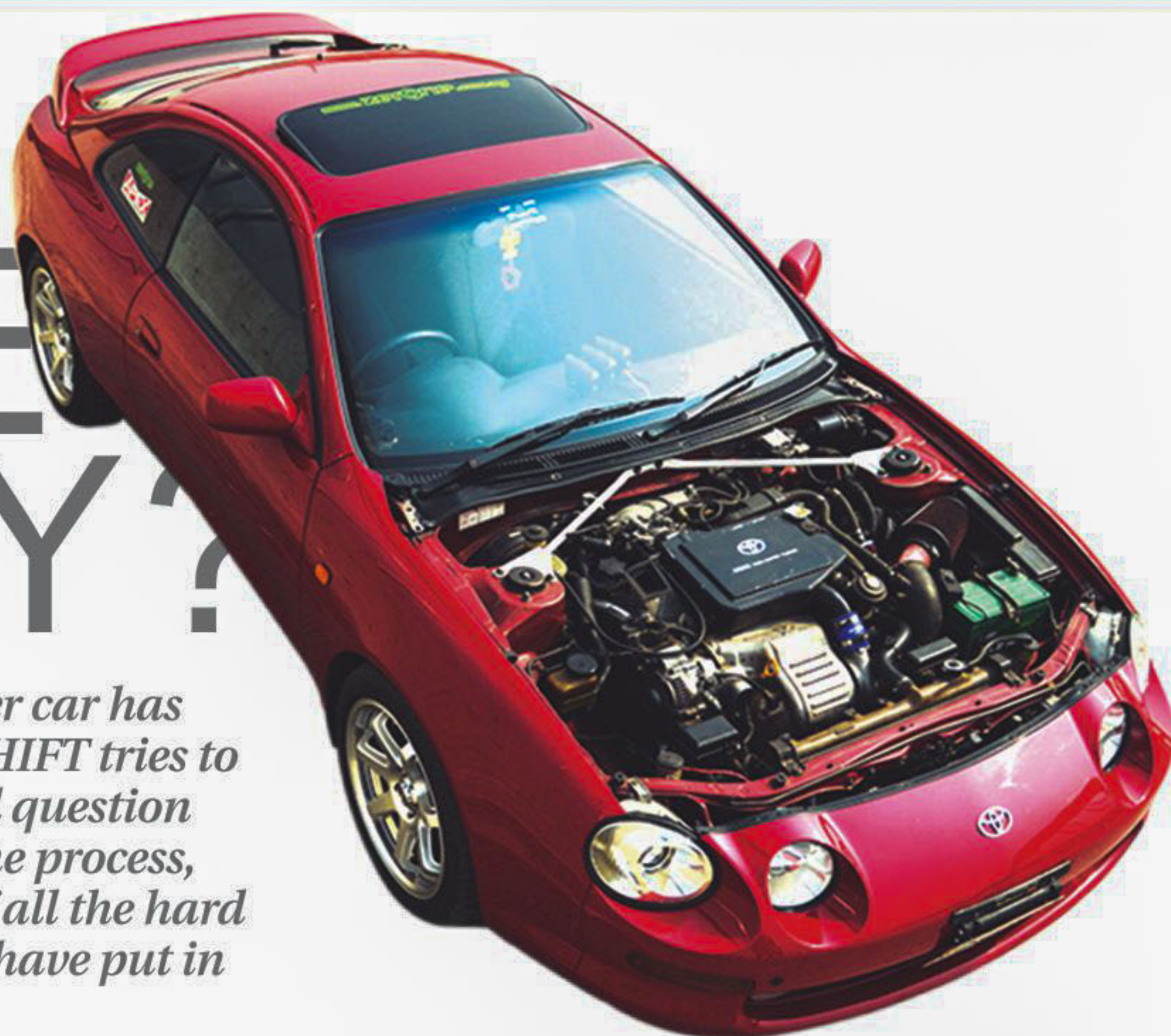
Anyone who has tinkered with his or her car has heard this at some point or the other. SHIFT tries to find an answer and whether it's a valid question worth answering in the first place. In the process, you, the reader, get to see the product of all the hard work that these madmen, these artists, have put in the cars they've modified.

A common question that almost every car enthusiast in every part of the world has had to face with regard to automotive customisation is a pretty simple one: why. For most, answering this simple "why" is pretty difficult, as there's no simple answer as to why someone feels the need to chuck out the factory air filter box and replace it with a cold air intake (although within our own circles its pretty simple - more power, better response, higher efficiency if done right).

To explore the depths of why, we have to understand the entirely intangible fascination some people have with entirely mechanical objects. Humanity's defining separation from cats, dogs and every other animal (except perhaps chimps) is that we are tool builders. We see a problem, instead of submitting to the laws of nature and admitting we're stumped, we find ways to

we can pull it off, see if there's a single horsepower hiding behind installing fatter spark plug wires. Its why Dholaikhal's oil stained alleyways fill us with a sense of wonder that we would be hard placed to find anywhere else. For some, it's the guitar store and the Stratocasters and Les Pauls hanging off the walls, for some weird people (read: our career page Next Step's sub-editor, Amiya) its cereal. For us, its all about the 3SGTE's, 4AGE's, 4EFTE's, B16A's and B20B's, and what car can stuff these marvels into. There is no possible way to inform the uninformed about why a simple combination of letters and numbers that is 2JZ-GTE or RB26DETT can induce catatonic, limp jawed stares from people like us. The engine-swap: the holy matrimony of man, machine and the laws of physics.

The "repurposing of a machine to make it better"



## New Ford EXPLORER



Bangladeshis wont find the Ford Explorer to be that alien, with several late 90's examples seen occasionally around Dhaka. Most are draped in a gaudy shade of gold, the imposing size of the mid-size SUV sticking out like a sore thumb in Dhaka's traffic. Ford has just released a brand new model in North America, and it looks great.

Powered by a 2.3 litre Ecoboost engine and options of a 3.5 litre V6, the Explorer is now more of a mid-size Crossover than a full fledged SUV. It looks like a downsized Range Rover, which is no bad thing, the squarishly handsome face setting the stage for the rest of the car. Steely blue and black suits the shape really well, which says a lot about Ford's ability to design cool looking vehicles that hide their bulk really well.

The interior is modern and crisp, featuring minimal wood and aluminum trim and lots and lots of leather. The overall equipment levels are high as well, so it should sit well with almost all Americans obsessed with cupholders.

That's precisely why we want to see it on Dhaka roads. It'd do really well, with relatively small displacement engines and decent spec, it can fill the gap as a flagship slotting in above the Everest and the Escape. Unfortunately, even though the Explorer is intended for international markets, it is unconfirmed that it will have right-hand-drive versions. That is a shame, because the Explorer would have been a brilliant alternative to the SUVs in the market currently, and it is no secret that SUVs sell really well in the local market. It is a prestige issue with SUVs, after all.



Saad's B20 powered Civic. Just one of the many old cars in his collection. Regularly gets told he should study Automobile Engineering or something.



Autosmith tuned 850 BHP+ Evo VI, owned by Bappi. Sometimes it's a numbers game, and one upping the competition with outrageousness.



3SGTE Camry, Fahim's project car of over 10 years. He doesn't know why he kept it.



Salman's 2JZGTE powered Crown. Has been in the family for over 10 years before he went mental with it.



Shoeb's Civic Ferio. Aesthetics and comfort. Need you ask why?

whole bunch of parts, from different cars, aftermarket brands, and sometimes even different manufacturers to create one single machine. Why not? If Frankenstein could have raided graveyards for limbs and brain and eyes and a heart to create what would be, in his eyes, the perfect human being, we can have our own monsters as well. We can, and many of us do. We raid parts, bring them together, and inject life into them via electricity, air and fuel.

Like all counter-culture phenomenon around the world, from street graffiti artists to skateboarders to the hippie revolution in the 60's, automotive customisation is largely a foreign thing to us Bangladeshis. Its extra difficult to be accepted as a car enthusiast obsessed with customising in Bangladesh



The 1JZ-GTE beast within Tanweer's Chaser. Some dream of Ferraris, others dream of 1JZ's.

than anywhere else, especially so if someone likes tinkering with his or her car on their own. Labels like "mechanic" are thrown about indiscriminately, and almost always in a derogatory sense by parents: "Ato koshto kore boro korlam, mechanic howar jonno!?" Well, part of raising that child comes with buying toys for it. Toys that will eventually be pulled apart in a magnificent display of guts (of the toy as well) because there are some children who are more interested in how that friction powered toy car operates, than keeping it intact and nice and shiny in the box.

Parents find it hard to understand why their child might have a fascination for what is basically the thing they stuff their grocery into every weekend, friends rarely realise that this obsession goes deeper than acting or being "cool", spouses brand it a waste of money over a mid-life crisis. We fail to understand why having a loud exhaust bothers so many around us, when there are a host of other issues which need tending to than a person who simply wants to enjoy a car the way he or she wants.

We don't expect you to understand. We don't expect you to realise that this is more than a hobby, more than a passing phase and certainly more than just going fast and being cool. We don't modify our cars because there is some sort of reward in store for the most praised. We do it because it makes us feel at peace and it rids us of that itch at the base of our spine that we can't quite explain. And what is that itch, but love?

## COLLECTIBLES



## Tamiya's 1:24 300ZX

Plastic model kits are a pain to do right. You have to cut, trim, smooth, sand, smooth more, paint, fit, cut, adjust and put it all together. Then you find out you forgot to drill out the holes to fit the right hand drive wipers blades. So you end up fitting the left hand drive dashboard. For now. That's the case with this particular 300ZX. It's a Tamiya kit and with most Tamiya kits, they fit like magic. You can cut out all the bits, throw them up in the air and it will all land fitting properly. The 300ZX is one of the coolest 90's Japanese cars as highlighted couple of weeks ago. This Tamiya kit is the stock, twin turbo version and comes with a full engine and a transparent hood to show it off. But I colored it. The custom work includes a scratch-built lip spoiler and a heavily trimmed rear ducktail spoiler. While everything fits well, there are some incorrect engine details like the air intake tubing. Coloring the black parts of the glass and putting it all in without breaking those delicate T-Bars are difficult. But all in all, this is a great kit to build for those looking to start something moderately easy. More details on the build available on our site.

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