VOICES ... Young People Speak Out

ELIM'S age was 16 when he joined the Liberation War. He was a student of Shaheen School and was going to sit for the SSC exams that year. He decided to go to the war in the month of May. The decision was made one day as he was hanging out with his friends in a friend's shop at Paltan. Selim along with his three friends Towfiq. Belal and Kamal made a plan to go to the war. At first, they contacted Manik bhai and asked him how they could join the Mukti Bahini. He told them to go to Agartala, and once there, they will be able to contact the right people. He told them the way to Agartala through Comilla, Nabinagar. Kasba and then through the

border. The next day at dawn, Selim left home. He left only a note behind saying that he was going to join the Mukti Bahini. As planned the "four" of them were wearing pay jama-panjabi and tupi so that they were taken as members of Jamaat-e-Islami and nobody could suspect them otherwise. They took a bus to Demra and from there another bus to Meghna river. From there, they got a boat that took them to Nabinagar and stayed the night at a farmer's home. There was a C&B road which they had to cross and it was patrolled 24 hours by the Pakistani army and was really dangerous. It was the strongest obstacle on their way. If they could cross the road by any means they didn't have to worry about the rest of the path.

When they were 4/5 miles away from the road a man came up and said that he would take them to the border. They followed him but on the way a moulout stopped them. He told them not to go with the man because he was a razakar. They got really confused at this moment, they could not decide who they should trust, the moulovi could be the real razakar. Meanwhile, a few other people gathered and also supported the moulovi. However, they took right decision by listening to the moulovi, and finally reached the border.

Selim, Towfiq, Kamal and Belal reached India at 2 o'clock in the night, hungry and tired they fell asleep in front of a shop in some bazar. They woke up around 4:30 in the morning with pain and hunger. They bought a jack fruit from the bazar with fifty paisa and ate it. Selim had only ten taka at that moment. From there they, with the help of a man who they previously met in Dhaka, went to the office of communist party of India. There they met 10/12 boys from Dhaka including Rumi (son of Jahanara Imam). Then all together they started for Melaghar, a training camp of the Mukti Bahini

The training was very rigorous. They used to work for twelve hours a day. There was no bathroom at the camp and they had to use leaves as toilet papers. To take a bath they had to go to a lake 2 miles away from the camp. Besides training they had to chop woods, make roads. The youngest in the camp was a school-boy who used to read in class seven. The biggest problem was food problem. They had a cup of tea and puri for breakfast and daal, rice or chapati for lunch and dinner. The daal that they used to eat was actually fed to horses in normal times. The rice was full of pebbles and the chapatis often contained baked bugs. They had to fetch water in grenade boxes. Even sometimes they had to eat on

stained dishes. There used to be some fun Dr. Jafarullah (now at

LOOK! I'VE

FOUND A HEATED

SWIMMING POOL!

No School at the Time of War

At sixteen, Salim was fighting along with other Freedom Fighters. Sajid Rizwan Matin has more



The heart aflame : Salim at 12

was fat, dark and used to order all the time and made them work to death. After liberation when Selim's friend Towfiq joined the Army he found out that he their good old Pampoo. Sometimes they used to play tricks on each other.

the war). Kamal (one year se- the rest would kill him. It

in the camp too. Selim and Ganashashtha) treated him. his friends used to call their The wound was not that bad. trainer Pampoo, because he so Kamal was released on the

But meanwhile the commander in Sector 8 had blown up a bridge on the border. So Selim's group could not enter Bangladesh. was again under charge of They stayed a mile away from the border for five days. There they caught a razakar who had supplied 3 girls to After the training was over Pak army and had slaughthey were divided into tered 4 Freedom Fighters. groups and were ready to go Selim was the youngest in to action. Selim was in the the group and because of that group of Kazi, Rumi, Tyab Ali he was ordered to stab the (used to be a blacker before razakar in the throat, then



Training for the teenage: Students

nior from OMPI camp) Rashid and six other Mukti Senas. Captain Haider gave them the mission to blow up Shidhirganj power station. Their group was the most armed one from Melaghar. Everyone in that group had a stengun, some magazines, 500 rounds of bullets and 5 grenades each. Their group also had 4 SLRs, 2 Enagras, 1 rocket launcher and 10 rockets weighing 10 kg each.

They had never shot an Enagra before. Enagra shoots bomb shells instead of bullets. Captain Haider told Kamal to shoot the Enagra just for a practice. Kamal took up the Enagra and shot a tree just in front of him. The bomb exploded and a splinter hit Kamal in the shoulder. He was taken to a hospital where

was Selim's first kill and it

was not at all that easy After this incident they went back to Melaghar. And a few days later again started for Dhaka. They walked through roads, waters and marsh lands and after encountering a few Pak soldiers and some razakars they were able to reach Madertek There they camped in the village of Pirulia. Some local boys joined them at the camp. Tyab Ali was in charge of cooking. From this camp they used to go in action in-

side Dhaka city. Selim's group had done a lot of operations in the city. Of them the operation — on the 25th August - was the most remarkable. Three months earlier on this day the Pak army attacked the sleeping unarmed Bengalis.

The group members thought that they should do something on this day that would agitate the Pakistanis. Their main target was the Pak MPs (military polices) who guarded a house of a Chinese diplomat on Dhanmondi 20 and also a few MPs on Dhanmondi 18. They had brought the necessary ammunition from Pirulia camp that noon. Then they hijacked two cars from Dhanmondi. Their group got divided into two parts. Selim, Alam, Badi Kazi, Rumi and Shapan took a car and headed towards Dhanmondi and the rest went to Rajarbag on the other

Selim's group started at 7:25. Alam was driving the car. Selim sat next to him and Kazi sat on the left of Selim. Rumi, Shapan and Badi sat on the back seat. At first they went to Dhanmondi 20 but found no MP guarding the house. Then they moved on to Dhanmondi 18. There they saw 7/8 military men standing in front of a house. They were on the right side of the

Alam then took the car on road 20 but still there was no sign of any MP. From there Alam took the car on Mirpur road and drove towards New Market. Meanwhile the army somehow got the news of the killings. They blocked the road near the petrol pump on road 3 and were searching every car. Alam did not waste any time, he switched off the head lights and pretended to take a right turn. The MPs shouted at them. Alam then took a swift left turn. There were two soldiers with LMG lying on the road. Selim shot one down and the other was also shot down. Then Alam drove the car through the Road 5 towards the Green Road. The road was not that long and as they nearly reached Green Road. Rumi noticed that a jeep was following their car.

At once he broke the glass behind him and started firing at the jeep. Badi and Shapan started firing too. The driver was dead at the first shot and so the jeep lost control. It hit a lamp-post on the road and turned up side down. Alam to a quick decision at that moment. He flashed the left indicator and pretended to take the turn. But then again he turned right and headed towards the New Market. And at a great speed he drove the car by the other side of the petrol pump and escaped. The other Army trucks and jeeps were running towards Green Road

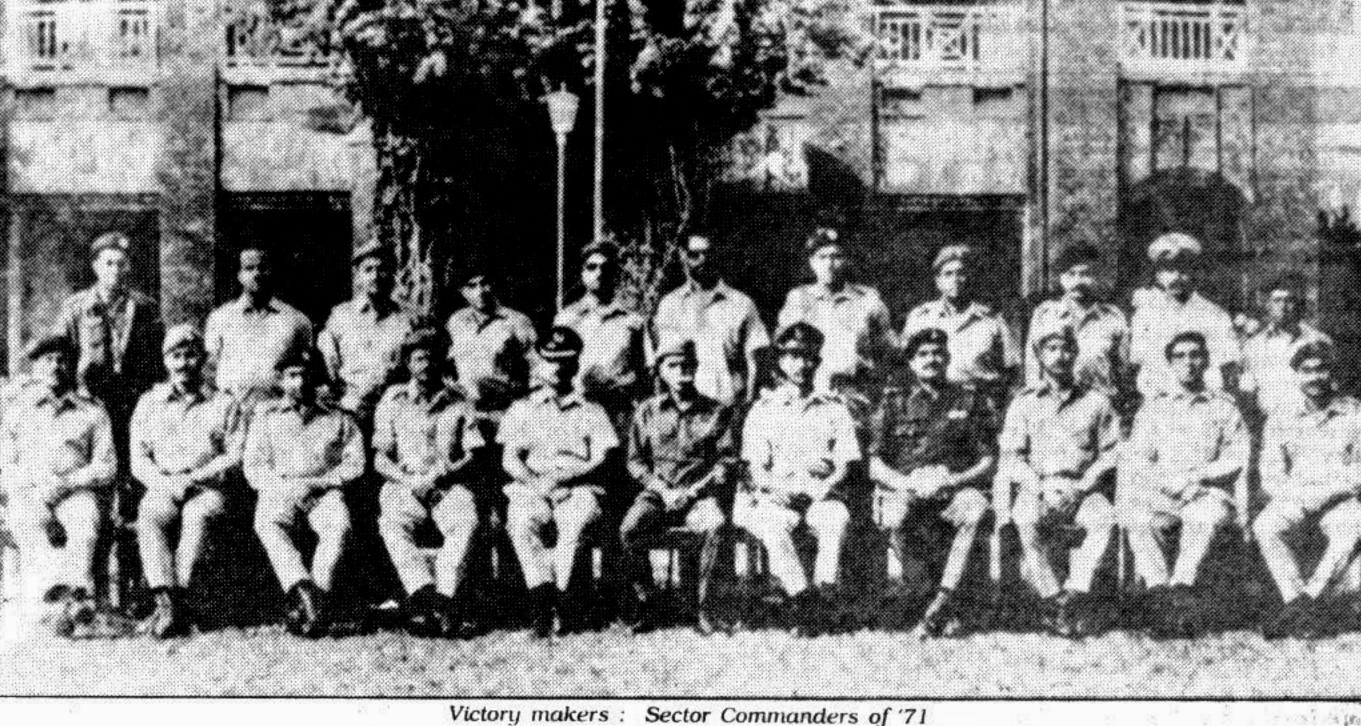
After this operation, Selim went back to Melaghar. And after just couple of days everybody else of the group who were staying in Dhaka was rounded up. Hearing this news Selim and the rest decided to get scattered. Selim took a stengun and some grenades and went back to Dhaka. This time he put up in his own home (Shelter) in Motifheel. From there he contacted John, Arif. Faruk (bilai), Jamil and went in action in different places. Among these actions were grenade charges on Chinese embassy, grenade charges and brush-fire at Rajarbag etc. Once at night in Motiiheel he shot a razakar. On the next day that razakar was

tions from September to November. Selim gave back the ammunition he had with him after the liberation. He was awarded Bir Protik. His award was published in the '73 gadget and he got the medal in '93, twenty years after. Selim is now a big executive of Social Marketing Company.

SETTER READ THIS

found dead on the street. He

had carried out all this opera-



Where Have All the Facts Gone?

We are not getting the real picture of the Liberation War from the political pit, worries **Nusrat Sharmin Huq**

I DICES" represents the voices of the youth of our generation. We thought it would be symbolic to write about two of the youth who had participated in the Liberation War. The discussions we were fortunate to have with these two particular gentlemen gave us a more vivid image of the events during the war than any book could even give. Not only did it make us rethink of how we see Bangladesh, the images drawn by the words of the Freedom Fighter made us feel proud of our root.

Kazi Faruk Kader was driven by the basic emotion shared by many at that time, to free our country from the clutches of the Pakistani rulers in order to from an independent "DESH" which we could call our own. He was in Karachi when the news about the rising 'disturbance' taking place in Dhaka were released. Of course, the news released were controlled by the Pakistani Government. In the middle of April '71, Mr Faruk Kader travelled to Dhaka to bring back his family members to Karachi. But when he arrived in Dhaka he heard a very different story. His mother refused to budge from Bangladesh, calling Pakistanis "the killers".

She told her son what really had been happening. Mr Faruk Kader said, "It was an eye opener. The news I had received in Karachi, had no relation to the reality." Then he decided to venture out along with his friends for research and fact-finding. They visited villages in Faridpur and Munshiganj and saw. first hand, the result of the butchering of human beings. The villages told them what had happened. This became the turning point. Kazi Faruk Kader wanted to become part of the struggle that was shining to free the country. But Mr Faruk Kader faced

a problem. He was the eldest son of Kazi Abdul Kader, a prominent member of the Muslim League. There were several others in the same position. When he saw the others being harassed, he Through his father he knew the identities of many other Muslim Leaguers. He. with this knowledge, was able to forge identity cards under the names of members of Muslim League, and distributed them among people

of about 5,000 who were going to India to part take in the war. These identity cards helped many people to reach India safely. Kazi Faruk Kader along

with three of his friends

started their journey towards

India. At Daudkandi, they were caught by the Pakistani Army but, luckily, as Mr Faruk K. could speak fluent Urdu, he was able to convince the armymen that he had just came back from Karachi and that his group was going to visit his hometown. The closer they got to India, the harder it became to travel. At one point, they were almost shot while crossing body of water in small, open boats. This travel to Agortolla, was treacherous and very timing. When reaching the reception camp called Shoronathri camp many of the families stayed back, but Mr Faruk and his friends continued onwards. Soon Mr Faruk realised that his name would become a problem. He changed his name to Faruk Ahmed. The Indian CRP Intelligence interviewed him longer than the average time. But eventually he received clearance and then travelled to Calcutta where he found out that his khalas and mamas where living there.

His mama was a deputy director while his khalu was a section officer of their camp. Faruk Kader was able to convince his mama that he wanted to take part in the movement in any position. His mama took him to see Major Monjur. Faruk Kader and Major Monjur were both from Pakistan Air Force College, therefore, they were already well -acquainted with each other. Faruk became a civilian staff officer. His job was to issue rations to different section after verification. Unfortunately corruption surfaced, for carrying out his duty he stepped on few important' and sensitive

Eventually, Faruk was stationed at Banpur in the Charlies Company which was guite near the Indian border. He participated in 7 to 8 operations against the Pakistani Army with the assistance of the Indian Army. After freeing of Jhenidah. Faruk and others were given orders to disarm and neutralise the razzakers. Fighting continued until all parts of Bangladesh



Kill or get killed: No fear at all

became liberated. On 16th December, Mr Faruk received clearance pass to travel home. After leaving home, he had no contact with is family. He was very uncertain of what he would

Dhaka was dark. People were on the streets. Mr Faruk reflected, " My most memorable moment was when I saw my mother and other family members alive." Mr Faruk refused to take the certificate of Freedom Fighter when he saw people who did not take part in the war were receiving it. He stated, " I fought in the war because I believe in it. It was my duty. I don't need a certificate to proclaim my involvement".

This month represents

bration of the Victory Day. solemn prayers for the departed souls, reestablishment of patriotic feelings, remembrance of tragic events for the survivors of the war etc. For many, December became the month of regret. Regret is of the present state of our Shaheeds magined their shundar Shushya Shumb Bangladesh to be? Through our research, we discovered that many schools lack record of their students who fought in the war. During this month there were many people who gave speeches about educating our generation about the true history. Ironically, most of the speakers differed in their opinions of the basic facts.

variety of emotions - cele-





Celebrations in December After the Pak fall

Great Exploitation

As the nation celebrated its 25th Victory Day, the VOICES Team asked two college students the question: "What are your expectations from your country after its liberation?"... And this is what they replied.

RAIHAN JAMIL Willes Little Flower

GENERALLY there is a

large difference between what one expects and the reality, and in our country's content, this gap is very large.

From our glorious history. expected the brave and talented patriots to build a nation, which will be envied by most of the other nations. As a nation we could have been proud of their history and culture. But what I see now is that those who can make a difference, focus only on power and fuss about facts. Most do not know our history properly, or don't care

much.We must all work together to put an end to this. for our own benefit.

ASIFUR RAHIM

Dhaka College

WE were being exploited economically by Pakistan till our liberation. In my opinion. after independence we should have had an economical evaluation. It's a shame that after 24 years of independence, our country is still known to the world as one of the poorest countries. I think the development we have achieved so far is very trifle for such a long period. And it is the politicians and the bureaucrats who are to be blamed for this situation.



The Victory Day Observed

People of different walks of life observed the Victory Day with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Students from different colleges rushed to the Dhaka Stadium with the break of dawn. Their enjoyment and exuberance gave the city's monotonous life a splendid festive mood. Students of Viqarunnesa Noon College, Varoteshwary Homes and many other institutions took part in the march past at the Stadium on this occasion.

Picnic and Outings All Around

Like all the yesteryears, with the beginning of the winter season. The young community got busy with picnics and outings. The spendour of some popular pienic spots like the National Park, Sonargaon etc., has been embellished by the orate and colourful picnic parties. Our correspondents from different colleges and schools informed us that many a colleges have already gone to make a little outing and those who have not - are planning to do so. Mohammadpur Preparatory College students went to have such a picnic as well.

