

B f o r B a n

SRABONTI NARMEEN ALI

EVERY year, Bangladeshis celebrate their so-called Bangaliness on the designated days -- *Pohela Baishakh*, Independence Day, Victory Day. Our parents' generation jump into the festivities full throttle, reminiscing about the good old days and taking pride in the fact that they fought so hard for an independent, liberated Bangladesh. The second generation of free Bangladeshis, seemingly us, follow suit. There are many of us who share the same pride in our nation that our parents so enthusiastically showcase, but then again, there are some who grudgingly allow themselves to go with the flow, moving and pulling themselves along with the motions without really understanding or caring.

In response to this lack of enthusiasm for our motherland, our parents (inevitably) blame us. We are spoiled. We got everything handed to us on a silver platter. We didn't struggle for freedom as they did, so our feelings for the *desh* are not as strong. However, the fact that we are only the second generation of free Bangladeshis should make us all the more proud. Our parents remember the war, they talk about it, they reiterate stories for us. Our generational counterparts in nations such as the United States (for whom independence was centuries ago) and India (who will, this year, celebrate its 57th birthday) display a fierce loyalty to their respective countries -- one that puts all us Bangladeshi youngsters to shame. So what happened to our generation? Why are we so indifferent in our loyalties to our nation?

Parents claim our generation is full of good-for-nothings. Drug use is horrifyingly and shamefully rampant, political clashes within the university student groups seem to cause no changes -- instead they only hamper education and endanger the lives of other students -- the select few who actually go to school to learn. Along with violence, murder, rape and harassment (which are now every-day occurrences for the youth of today) comes the indifference of the privileged class, and the complete lack of caring for anything of any substance that we seem to come across in the youngsters of today. Match that with laziness and no motivation to

The difference lies in the fact that, along with everything else that is "wrong with us," we have no sense of pride and loyalty for our identity, which gives us even more cause to be lost.