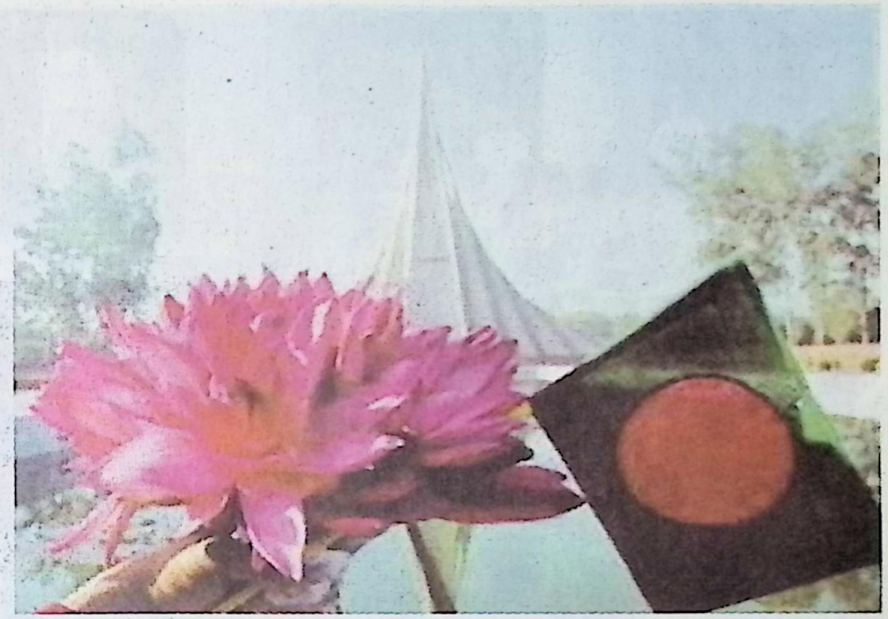


Speaking our mind

Nazia Ahmed

26th March, our Independence Day (though a little clichéd by now), elicited a very interesting range of comments during a survey we ran among various groups of students, professors, lecturers and reporters. We gave them two phrases, "What if" and "then", and asked them to complete it based on the theme of independence and our country as a whole. This is what came out:

What if Charu Sharma and Mandira Bedi never made those annoying comments about BD? **Then** We'd have no reason to try a little harder just to prove them wrong:

Sabrina F Ahmad. (Reporter)

What if we had given capital punishment to the razakaars after 71, **then** would we still lack the character to realize that enemies of the country should never run the government?

Hamdan Kabir (Student)

What if we never had the war of independence, **then** we wouldn't have known what we are capable of.

Aiman and Sana. (Students)

What if the whole Human race was homogenous? No countries no tribes no divisions. **Then** how could I have relished the victory of our national team with complete prejudice and bias?.

Matin Saad Abdullah (Lecturer)

What if there wasn't any power cuts, **then** we wouldn't have known its Bangladesh!

Nofela (Student)

What if the partition of Bengal never took place, **then** I would be saying this with an Indian accent!

Loban (Student)

What if there was no pohela boishakh or pohela falgun, **then** we would get to wear sari to work and not feel self-conscious.

Hana Shams (Reporter)

What if we never got independence **then** we would still be the lesser of the two Pakistan, crippled by unfair economic policies and voting rights that hardly meant anything pragmatic.

Piash Karim (Professor)

What if the Indians did not make their pseudo tiger commercial **then** we would not have had so much fun rubbing their faces in the dust!

Qazi Zulqarnain Islam (Reporter)

Consortium Aly Zaker, Managing Director of Channel I Faridur Reza Shagor and other high officials were present.

The participants had their second camp at Inani on March 24, the second day of the programme. However, the challenge looked really tough as a number of walkers fell ill - - mostly men - - due to the scorching heat. Although all the 30 female participants were standing tall, most of the male performers failed to pass the test of the second leg of 45-kilometer from Shamlapur Sub-camp. Having rested at camps in Shamlapur and Inani, the participants began the third and final leg of the walk on March 25.

The 3-day long walkathon concluded at Laboni point on the afternoon of March 25, after overnight stopover at Jahazpur, Shyamlapur, Patoyartek and Inani sub camps. The pack, carrying the national flag, was welcomed by the celebrities amidst much fun and excitement.

The title sponsors of the event was Grameen Phone and co-sponsors were HRC, Square, Teem (pepsi), Labaid, Alma Crystal Drinking Water and Media partner were Channel I, Prothom Alo, The Daily Star, Radio Today.

Channel I broadcast the programme live three times every day from Cox's Bazar sea beach. The international popular Television Channel - CNN and BBC also broadcast the programme.

Some 250 law enforcers from Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), Bangladesh Police and Bangladesh Ansar was depoyed during the event to ensure security.

[Muazzem Hossain Shakil: Cox's Bazar Correspondent of The Daily Star.]