Bangladesh: of Reality and Expectations

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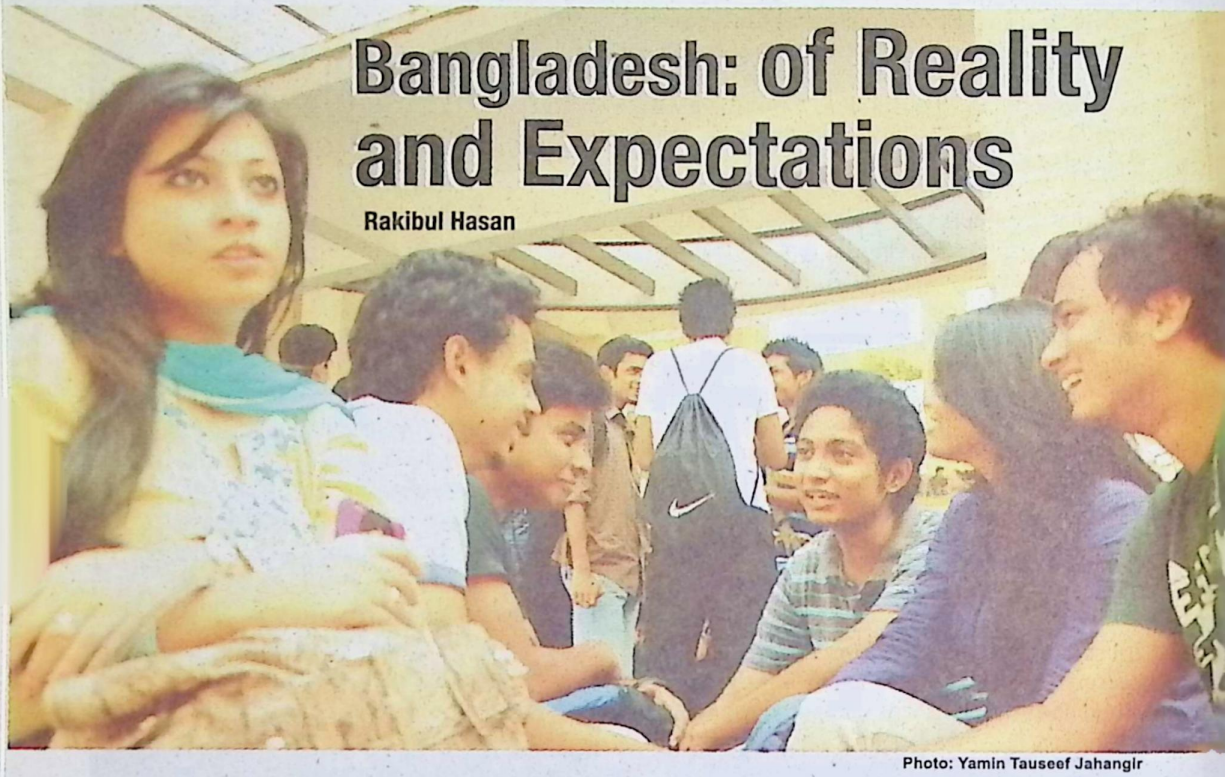


Photo: Yamin Tauseef Jahangir

FIRST a small circle, then a slightly larger one and as it ascends to the top, the radius of the sun gets bigger on the national flags attached to a bamboo stick carried by Mithu, a young man from Munshiganj, who makes a living by selling flags to people in the streets of Dhaka during December, the month of victory. One can think that the ascending order of small to large radiuses of the suns on the flags carried by Mithu symbolises our growing aspirations and achievements as an independent nation. This year we are celebrating the forty years of our glorious victory in the war of liberation. However, though it has been four decades since we emerged as an independent state in the world map, we are yet to achieve much more. On the occasion of the 40th Victory Day celebrations, the young generation has a lot to say.

Mithu, the flag vendor, hopes that more people will buy flags from him to hoist on the rooftops and cars. This is very normal for Mithu, since he can feed his family of four better.

Zahid Aasha, an active volunteer of Movers, Math Olympiad, opts for a Bangladesh where math education would get a high priority in the curriculum. "If we really want to make a digital Bangladesh then there are no alternatives, but to educate our students well in maths. For this we need to be passionate about the subject. In addition, innovative ways of studying this subject must be introduced as well so that students can grow an interest," says Aasha.

Mizan, a Dhaka University (DU) student, thinks that though occasions like the Victory Day and Independence Day are being celebrated with great flamboyance, the sense of patriotism amongst the people in this country are on the decrease. "From political parties to the media, everyone is trying to exploit people's emotions about the liberation war for the sake of their own interest. If we want to celebrate victory in a befitting manner then we have to work sincerely for our country. It will be the best way to pay tribute to the martyrs of the liberation war," says Mizan. Prince, another DU student, who is involved in leftist politics says, "Our real victory is yet to be achieved as the people in this country are still deprived of their rights." Prince says further that people will be more conscious and aware of their rights and they will establish a society, which will promote equality amongst all, within the next ten years.

There are people for whom the occasion of Victory Day is a day of joy and festivities. For Lisa, another DU student residing at the Rokeya Hall, the Victory Day comes with great fun and merriment. "Every December I eagerly wait for the 16th as I, along with my other friends, participate in different programmes within our campus celebrating the day, wearing red and green. A team of teachers and students from our hall go to the national memorial at Savar to pay