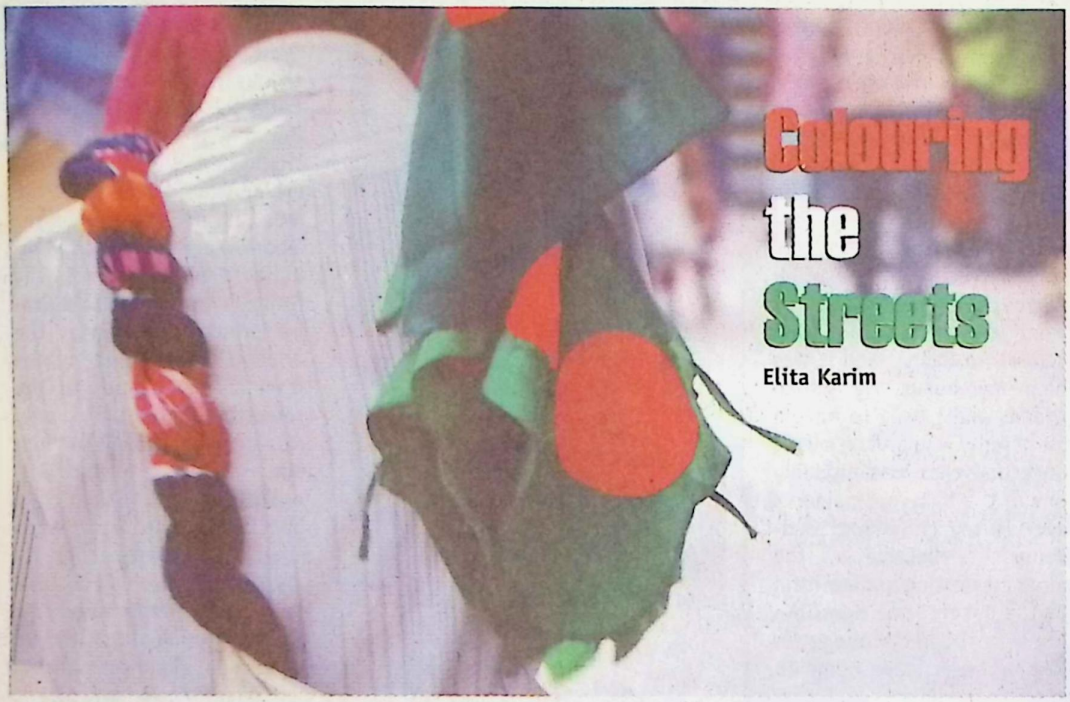


Colouring the Streets

Elita Karim

PHOTO: YAMIN TAUSEEF JAHANGIR

THE last couple of weeks, the streets have been filled with the colours of red and green. The flag bearers are back! Clutching on to flags of all sizes, starting from life-sized ones to ones that can be worn as a head band or even a wrist band, December is the month many look forward to, thanks to the random reds and greens that suddenly appear out of nowhere on the streets.

"I make them myself," smiles Mohammad Manik Ahmed, a flag seller roaming the streets of Banani, Gulshan and Tejgaon. "Actually I do have people who get me the clothes and make them for me to sell every day. You should get one too! They look good when you fix them on your car. You will look like a government official with the flag!" Indeed, cars and automobiles suddenly turn all patriotic and official with flags draped partly over the windshield or fixed in front. People can't help giving a second look, when convertibles, spray-painted for the occasion suddenly screech to a stop, and two young men with spiked hair, torn jeans and red and green panjabis get off to have tea by the stall (not to miss, the flag set right in front). Clearly, fusion in styles has set in amongst the youngsters, however, their hearts stay in the same place.

Bithi Hossain is seen buying 12 head bands, with 'Bijoy Dibosher Shubhecha' painted all over in Bangla. An employee of a publishing company, Bithi wants to share her colours with her colleagues. A day before Victory Day on December 16, Bithi and her friends are seen seriously at work, fixated on the computer screen, occasionally taking a tea break at the office cafeteria with the red and green head band tied over their foreheads. Now THAT is definitely taking the colours seriously and of course with a lot of enthusiasm!

Alamin, the security official at an apartment building in Dhanmondi puts up the red and green flag on the rooftop, with the help of the youngsters living in the apartment. While the residents play badminton on the rooftop, the flag flutters in the winter breeze. "We still had the flags of Brazil, Spain and Argentina on the rooftops from the last World Cup. We never got a chance to take them off," says Shahriar, an Advanced Level student and one of the residents of the apartment building. "My neighbour Shanta, who goes to school with me, bought the largest flag she could find yesterday on her way back home. We thought it was time to bring down the other flags and put up our own. There were some who said that there were legal issues related to putting up flags up on rooftops, but we could not figure out what they were. So we just went ahead with it."

The season of the red and green has just begun, and will go on till the end of March 2011. Let's make the colours brighter and the country proud!