

EXTRA CREDIT |

I'm a lousy utopist. I daydream about waiting behind a line of people to enter polling centres – homemakers, teachers, middle-aged medical officers, rickshawpullers, third year university students, artists, activists – and a social entrepreneur. Are we finally voting for a city mayor we believe in?

For too long, dynastic politics and corrupt public servants have crippled Bangladesh. Our patriotism is on par with how desperately we honk in traffic. In spite of our rapid growth potential, we are disgruntled and disoriented. We blame and defend our country with equal enthusiasm. Our bipolarism is most often reflected through our unanimous love for cricket. Unsurprisingly, a collective indifference

towards mainstream politics is prevalent in our young generation. Although we are genetically engineered to discuss politics at any *adda*, we can never imagine getting into politics ourselves. For the first time since, our mindset is about to change.

On April 28 this year, the city corporation mayoral elections will be contested by – amongst others –leftist leader Zonayed Saki, rags-to-riches businessman Annisul Huq, ex-mayor's son Sayeed Khokan, BNP-endorsed Tabith Awal and Bikalpadhara leader Mahi B. Chowdhury. What's different about them is that they're freshly baked and erupting with idealism. They have provoked a passionate conversation on the kind of society and politics we wish to see. They

represent the same group of disgruntled, hardworking citizens like you and me – and they are pledging for a game-changing campaign.

In the past week, I have received

promise lies in the candidate's inexperience. The propelling factor is not a past record, rather the lack there of that creates a window of opportunities for the citizens.

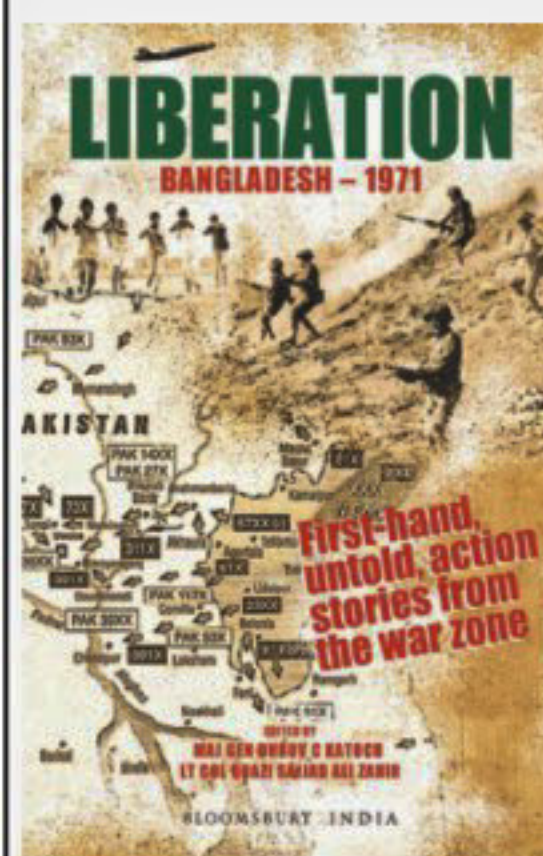
Why I Am Excited about the City Mayoral Elections *And ultimately, does my vote matter*

SABHANAZ RASHID DIYA



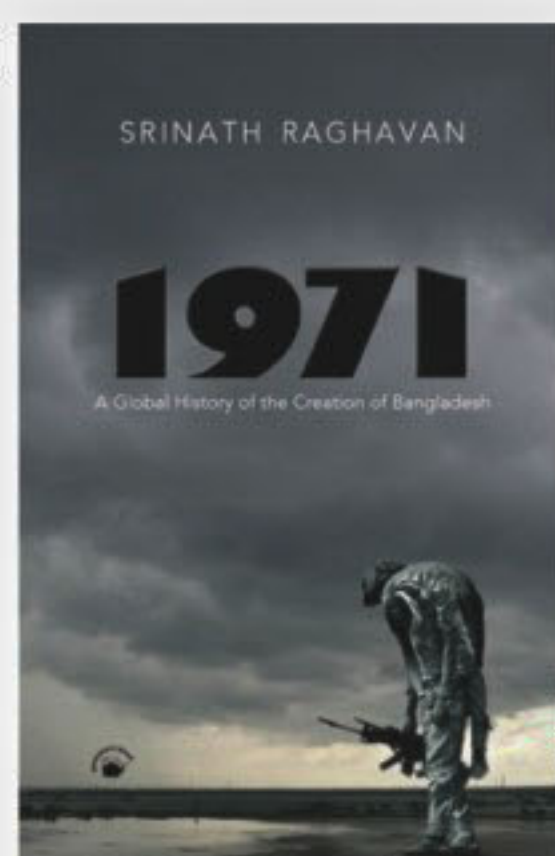
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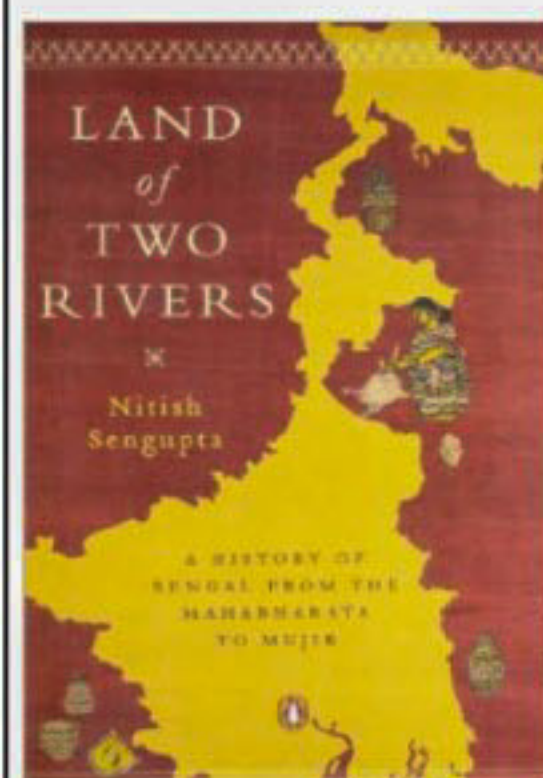
Liberation : Bangladesh-1971
by Dhruv C. Katoch
Narrated for the first time in this book, are never before published stories by soldiers who fought the Liberation War. Described with disarming candour and honesty, the book covers the sacrifices of the citizens of Bangladesh and the exploits of the Indian Armed Forces jointly with the Mukti Bahini, which brought the tyranny and genocide of the Pakistan establishment to an end.

ISBN : 9789384898564
Price : 1000 Tk + Vat



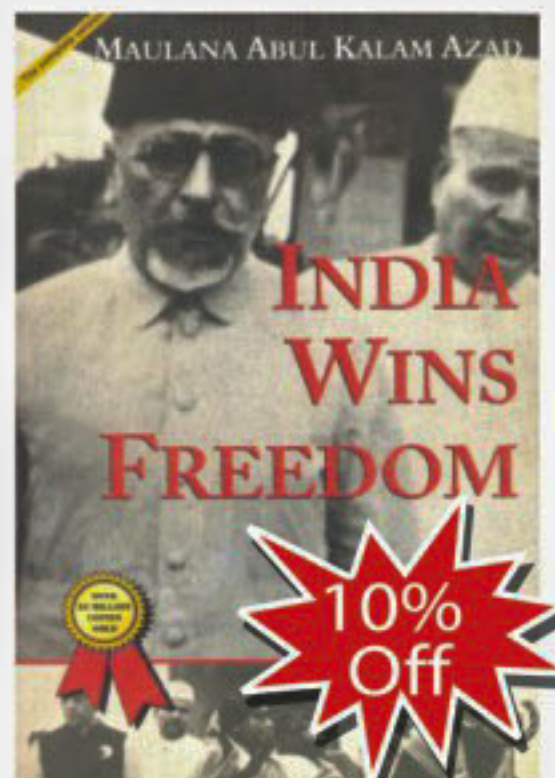
1971 A Global History of The Creation of Bangladesh
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March 26, 1971. East Pakistani military forces prepared to execute Operation Searchlight, the systematic genocide and rape of the Bangladeshi population. In what is the largest recorded genocidal rape against a single group of people, they ravaged the women, killing millions in their attempts to wipe out the race entirely.

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Land of Two Rivers
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Land of Two Rivers: A History of Bengal provides an incisive look into the history of Bengal, one of the most fascinating and influential regions in the Indian subcontinent. Located at the confluence of two major rivers, Ganga and Brahmaputra, Bengal has been the center of trade, learning and the arts for the longest time.

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India Wins Freedom
by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
India Wins Freedom is an autobiographical narrative of the partition that occurred in 1947. It is marked by the direct, clear cut passages that narrate incidents that took place during the Indian Independence movement. Azad recounts, in his typically frank and forthright manner, the events that unfolded and ultimately led to the partition in a profound, yet deceptively simple manner.

ISBN : 9788125005148
Price : 650 Tk + Vat

multiple requests to "like" a Facebook page for each of the aforementioned candidates, all recommendations coming from people aged below 28. Annisul Huq's "AMRA DHAKA" gathered an enormous support by opening up to questions on social media and a designated hotline with responses delivered in less than 48 hours. AMRA DHAKA organised online competitions and regular meets with the youth to share problems and solutions. Tabith Awal kick started his campaign with 'Adarsha Dhaka Andolon'. Zonayed Saki inspired a loyal following of young academicians, activists and civil society representatives who're #ShakingItSaki into a brave new world.

The big question is, are talkers willing to become active voters?

In the recent Delhi elections, a small but powerful glimpse of people-power was demonstrated by Aam Aadmi Party's landslide victory. AAP's manifesto was committed to zero corruption and unashamed pursuit of serving two-third of Delhi's faceless population that made majority voters – 2.25 lakh of which were aged between 18 and 20 (*source: The Times of India*) – not just select between one candidate over another, rather one form of politics over another. While I am drawing no fleeting comparisons between our candidates and Kejriwal, it can be safely assumed how in both cases, the

However, the mayoral candidates are far behind on a definitive plan of action that can systematically drive young people to the polling centres. Against the backdrop of an ideal city, specific goals such as free Wifi in public spaces, playgrounds in areas with a high number of schools or women-friendly and punctual public transportation between university hotspots and residential areas can leverage people power to more constructive debates, votes and support. While Dhaka North is already leading in this race, Dhaka South is falling behind with typical, age-old campaigns and losing support of the youth. It may be fair to believe that "real voters" comprise only of highly partisan and loyal followers, although statistics show otherwise. The most recent *halnagad* from the Election Commission identified over four million voters from Dhaka North and South combined; an unofficial estimation of one million (13 lakhs) voters are aged below 35 (25 percent).

This City Corporation Elections poses a unique opportunity for politicians and youth to change the kind of politics we wish to continue in Bangladesh. Instead of reeling back to goons and corruption, let's take back what's rightfully ours. We hold an enormous stake in the equation. And that's exactly what excites me – the sheer knowledge of the power we hold and what we can deliver with it. ■