

| AROUND THE WORLD |

It's a day that celebrates the joy of all backpackers; lone travellers, group travellers, adventure lovers or whoever wants to be the part of one of the biggest global movements - travelling! It's a day that rejoices the success of the tourism industry, which every year generates trillions of dollars around the globe.

September 27 is marked as the United Nations' (UN) World Tourism Day, a day that is celebrated by globetrotters around the world every year. The date is befitting as Tourism Day as it appears at the end of the high tourist season in the Northern hemisphere and the start of the tourist season in the Southern hemisphere.

In the recent years, the tourism industry has become a booming sector, as it plays a major role in enhancing the host country's economy.

But tourism is not merely limited to numbers, monetary benefits and taxes flowing to the government. When the UN World Trade Organization General Assembly in 1979 declared World Tourism Day, it aimed to create strong bonds within the international community and increase awareness on the significance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic impact on both the host country and tourists. UNWTO's motto reflects this goal as it focuses on "the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism."

On this day, the United Nations' World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) invites people from all over the world to be a part of the World Tourism Day. Besides, a number of tourism enterprises and concerned government agencies arrange an array of special events and festivals based on the chosen theme for that particular year.

This year's theme, "One billion tourists, one billion opportunities," mostly reflects the positive economic impact that tourists are making in the economic growth of several countries and subsequently, the effect they have on the livelihoods of the residents of those countries. While there are seminars, photo and writing contests promoting tourism, award presentations for sustainable eco-tourism are held on this day. Social media also seems a buzz with pictures and special offers, different tour related app launching ceremonies and many other such programmes.



A DAY FOR THE GLOBETROTTERS

FAYEKA ZABEEN SIDDIQUA

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO

Bangladesh, too, is getting ready for next year with its project 'Visit Bangladesh 2016' that aims to bring the tourism sector of the country in the forefront, by emphasising on the natural, archaeological and cultural assets that we are blessed with. Terming next year as the 'Year of Tourism', several advertising campaigns are being launched and a new tourism mega plan has been undertaken by the government, where it will invest \$26 million.

Rashed Khan Menon, Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation, is working on an ambitious target to increase the visit of foreign tourists in Bangladesh by 70 percent to one million in 2016.

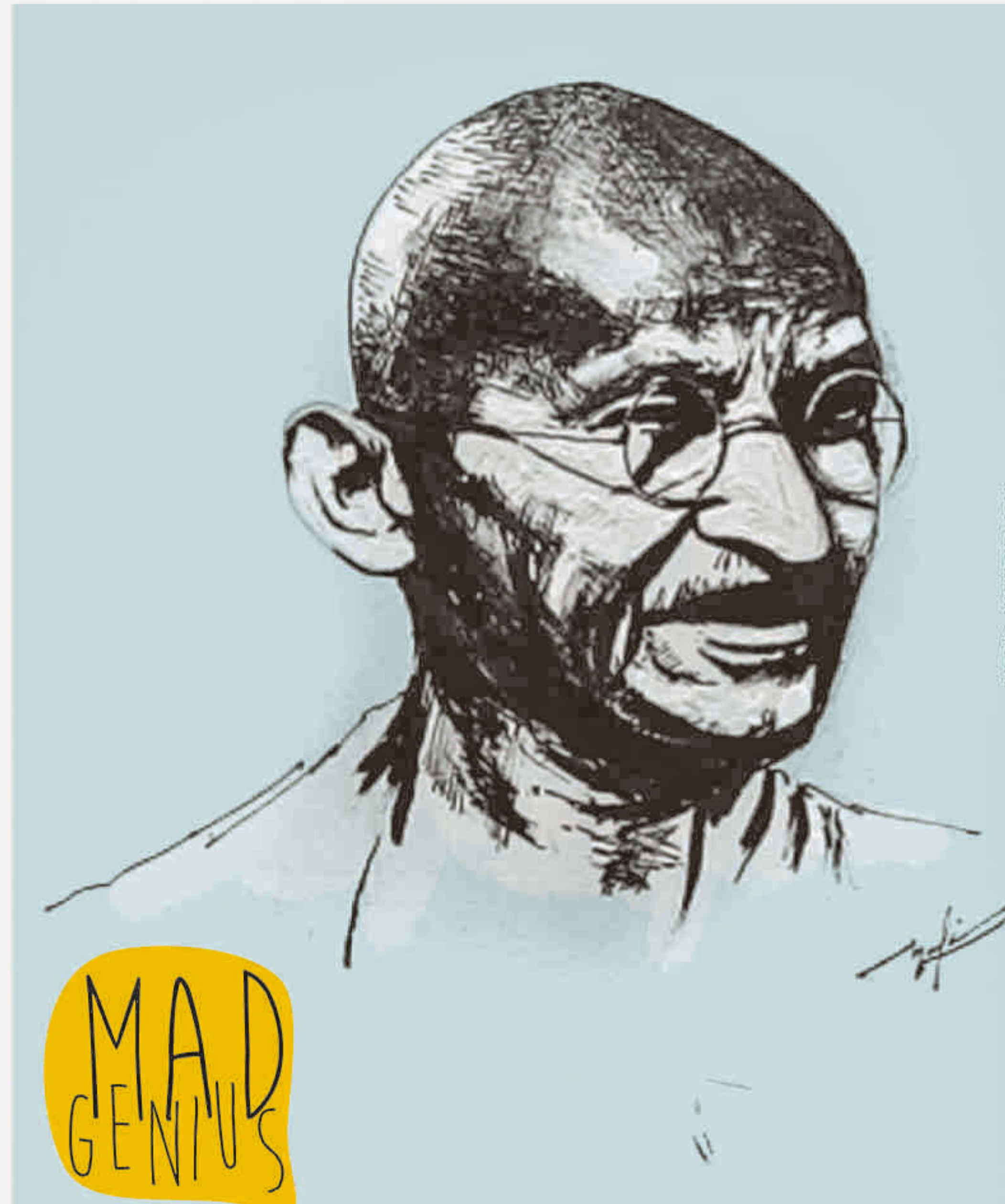
In fact, many measures are being taken to secure Bangladesh's spot on the global tourist map.

Cox's Bazaar has been chosen as a significant natural site to attract more tourists, while other places such as the Sundarbans, Sylhet and St. Martin's Island are also being promoted in order to develop eco-tourism and community-based tourism.

For spiritual tourism, we are gearing up to welcome one million Chinese tourists to visit Buddhist heritages sites. The Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry, in collaboration with the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), is going to arrange National Buddhist Workshop and International Buddhist Circuit Conference, which anticipates the participation of 13 Buddhism-centric countries this month. As a part of the celebrations of Tourism Year 2016, the conference aims to showcase over 500 Buddhist ancient monasteries and temples in Bangladesh to the foreigners to further enhance overall tourism.

The ministry is also working on establishing more tourist friendly trains, marine vessels and improving regional and international air connectivity by increasing flight frequencies while constructing new hotels to welcome tourists. Having said all, the safety and security of this anticipated foreign visitors need to be the first concern of the organising committee.

We should not let this issue stand in the way of achieving our goal!



MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

(October 2 1869 – January 30 1948)

Was one of the greatest leaders of the Indian independence movement. He propagated the philosophy of non-violence to fight against the imperialist British Raj by calling Indians to engage in civil disobedience without taking up arms to meet their demand for independence. Gandhi assumed leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1921 and led campaigns all over the country to develop women's rights, end untouchability and ease poverty. The honorific Mahatma, meaning venerable, given to him in South Africa in 1914 is now widely used over the world when addressing him.

“ LIVE AS IF YOU WERE TO DIE TOMORROW; LEARN AS IF YOU WERE TO LIVE FOREVER.

HAPPINESS IS WHEN WHAT YOU THINK, WHAT YOU SAY, AND WHAT YOU DO ARE IN HARMONY.

NOBODY CAN HURT ME WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.

IF I HAD NO SENSE OF HUMOUR, I WOULD LONG AGO HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE.”

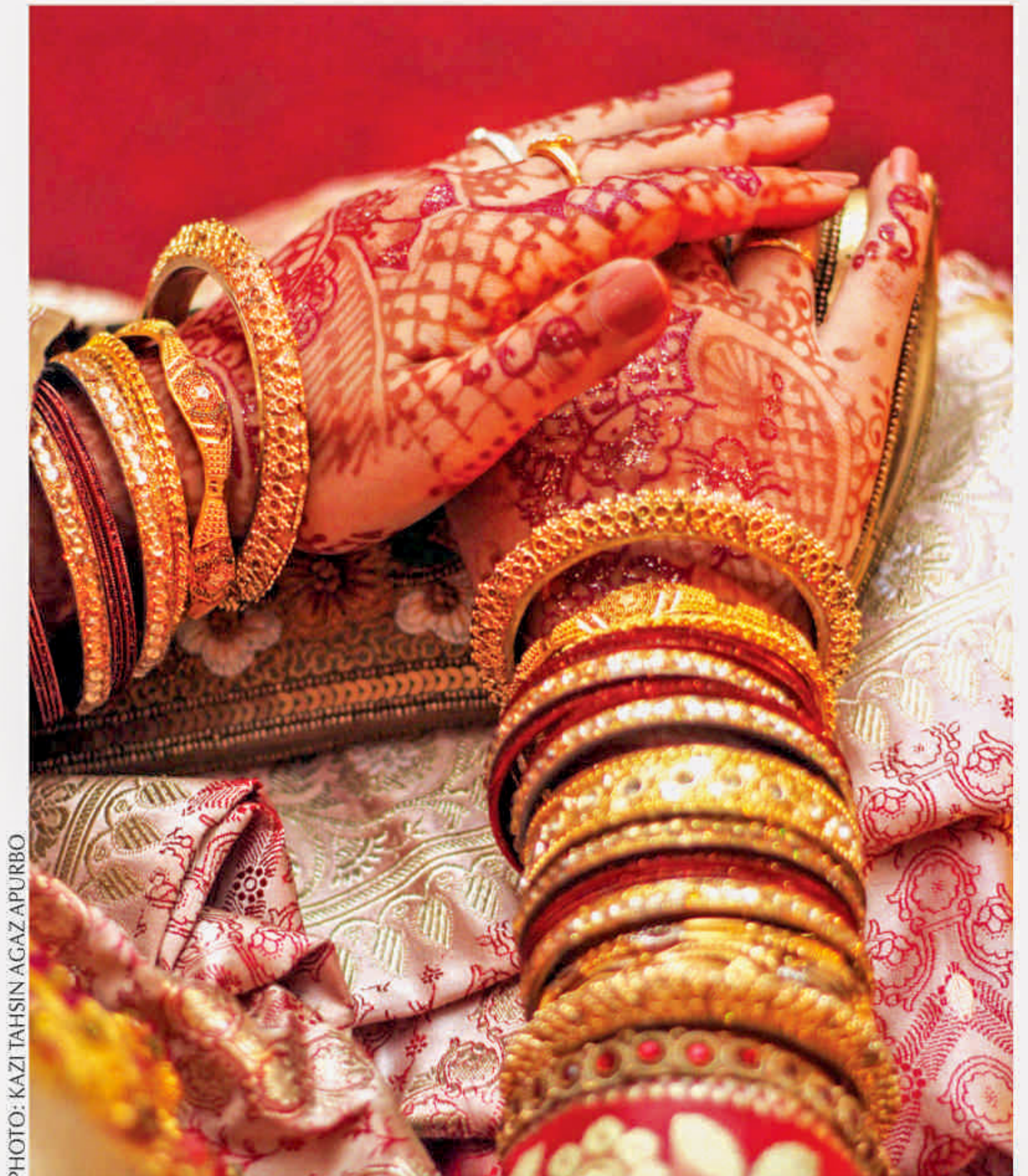
SOURCE: WIKIPEDIA AND BRAINY QUOTES

STARSTORY

WHERE IS OUR NATIONALISM?

Last week I along with my friends went to Star Cineplex in Bashundhara City mall to watch a movie. We sat beside a group of young students who were quite loud from the very beginning. Like always, the national anthem was played before the movie started and most of the people around us stood up from their seats out of respect for the anthem until it finished playing. However, this very group of students did not bother to pay their respects by standing up while the anthem played. As we asked them to stand up, some of them did reluctantly. The rest of them were talking loudly among themselves and laughing at their friends who stood up. They started taking pictures of their friends on their cell-phones and started ridiculous conversation among them. Many people around us found it very disrespectful and told them so as soon as the anthem finished. But their body language showed that they did not bother at all. I was disgusted at how ignorant those people were. As soon as the movie started they started complaining about the traffic jam and the incidents of question paper leakage. Since they were complaining about how Bangladesh has failed to move forward as a nation, I was wondering if we can not respect important things of our motherland and improve ourselves, how can we expect a developed nation?

Azmi Hasan
Dhanmondi, Dhaka



WEDDING BLUES

These days weddings have become so expensive that it scares people like me who have come from middle class background. After attending my cousin's wedding last week, later I discovered the bride and groom worrying about settling the loans that they took for the big day. Unfortunately, the culture of hiring expensive photographers and taking pictures has ruined the true beauty of the event. These days the bride and groom are swamped with guests trying to take photos of them. It was completely chaotic and a display of money and vanity and in the end, not too many people can claim they had a good time. I wondered to myself, what is the point of all this. Why can't the whole event be more relaxed, enjoyable and meaningful? In our country, it seems that the goal of having a huge wedding is to show off and please people. I do believe that we should change this trend, follow the way things were done in the olden days when things were simpler and easier.

Sayeeda Afrin
Agrabad, Chittagong