

EDITORIAL

In terms of national events, most of us won't be experiencing anything nearly as important as the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh's independence in our lifetimes. The weight of history is ever growing, and a landmark anniversary offers the opportunity to truly sit back and reflect on the past, and maybe even peek into a future.

This landmark also offers a remarkable situation – today, you don't have to consider yourself lucky if you meet someone who has lived through our struggle for independence. 50 years later, that will not be the case. Today, Bangladesh is a mix of the elderly who look at this country as a miracle that took millions of lives to achieve, and a young population who look at Bangladesh as a platform that took 50 years to build, with endless possibilities ahead.

It is essential that the road ahead is paved using the knowledge and input of both these groups, that both these perspectives are respected. As the first hand memories of the war start to dwindle, we must be careful to not forget our humble and turbulent beginnings. We must also be careful that we are not hung up on the past, because otherwise, the world will pass us by.

– Azmin Azran, Sub-editor, SHOUT



PLAYWATCH

INSTAGRAM REVIEW



COURTESY: @BANGLADESH_ON_RECORD

Learning Our History, on Instagram

ADHORA AHMED

Whenever social media platforms come to mind, we don't necessarily think of them as repositories of precious chapters from the annals of time that aren't explored in depth in our History textbooks. However, there are some Instagram pages who do just that, carefully documenting stories from the past that can tell us more about our struggles to get where we are today, a 50-year-old independent nation. Therefore, the following Instagram handles are more than just pages; these are precious digital archives.

BROWN HISTORY @brownhistory

It is undoubtedly the most popular platform in this list, boasting over 500,000 followers. This blog is filled with rich content on South Asian culture and history, focusing on the Indian subcontinent. There is a good deal on the British Raj and its aftermath on the region, including the 1947 Partition, the Language Movement of 1952, the 1971 Liberation War and post-independence Bangladeshi history. The page also has a running hashtag called #BrownHistoryPhotoAlbum under which followers DM family photos with stories, most of which are set against the backdrop of the Partition, wars and migration. By documenting the shared histories of this subcontinent, Brown History manages to connect South Asians both at home and among the diaspora. Apart from the blog, Brown History also has a podcast (@brownhistorypodcast) and an online shop (@brownhistoryshop).

THE 1947 PARTITION ARCHIVE @1947partition

The Partition of 1947 is a crucial link to understand why Bangladesh became Bangladesh, yet it is unfortunately glossed over in our History textbooks. The 1947 Partition Archive, a non-profit organisation based in the USA, aims to set things right by crowd-sourcing oral testimonies

of those who witnessed and survived the horrors of the Partition. This includes stories from the people of Bengal, a region now sprawled over two countries and divided by a treacherous border. The Instagram content includes the pictures of the survivors with their individual stories. Their invaluable testimonies also shed a light on life before the events of 1947, and how their lives were affected after the subcontinent was divided. They also have a website (www.1947partitionarchive.org) with additional resources and detailed information on how to conduct and provide interviews of the survivors. The page has 10,000 followers, which is a shame because it needs more attention.

BANGLADESH ON RECORD @bangladesh_on_record

This is a blog that deals with matters closer to home by looking at the history of this part of Bengal, from the time when our *bihars* were flourishing centers of education, to the Mass Uprising in 1990, and beyond. The content includes rare pictures, newspaper cuttings and ads that offer a glimpse into how life was like during different eras of our history. The Instagram handle is a companion to the initiative's website (www.bangladeshon-record.com), which boasts collections of essays sourced from Bengali and Bangladeshi luminaries, scanned copies of rare books and documents and more audio-visual content. Aside from the Instagram blog and website, Bangladesh on Record also has a YouTube channel, which highlights videos on our folk traditions and a podcast series with four episodes so far. Like the 1947 Partition Archive, this blog too deserves more love because it only has just over 800 followers*.

*At the time of writing.

Adhora Ahmed tries to make her two cats befriend each other, but in vain. Tell her to give up at adhora.ahmed@gmail.com

