



ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

## The strong case for staying and building in Bangladesh

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Institutions often move slower than the people they are meant to serve. Many still feel compelled to leave, and for valid reasons. But what has changed is the collective mindset around these challenges. They are no longer seen as final verdicts on what is possible. They are treated as constraints to navigate, systems to push against, realities to improve incrementally.

We need to acknowledge this transformative mindset. It replaces

resignation with experimentation. It turns frustration into momentum. It allows young people to imagine futures that do not require erasing where they come from. Slowly, it begins to reshape the country's global identity, not as a place people escape from, but as a place people build from.

Bangladesh's place in the world of the future will be shaped by whether this emerging confidence is recognised, supported and trusted: whether young builders are given room to try and fail without being dismissed; whether

thinkers are invited into conversations that shape the future rather than spoken about after decisions are made; whether creatives are valued as contributors, not distractions.

What is most striking is that this transformation is happening without spectacle. It is unfolding in classrooms, co-working spaces, neighbourhood offices, and late-night conversations about ideas that may or may not work. It is happening when someone chooses to invest their energy locally, not because it is easier, but because it feels

meaningful. It is happening in small acts of belief, repeated often enough to become momentum.

There is also dignity embedded in this choice. When people decide to stay and build, they assert that their country is worth their best effort, not just their leftover energy. They refuse the idea that value must be validated elsewhere. For the first time in a long while, many young Bangladeshis are not asking, "How do I get out?" They are asking, "What can I do here?"

That question carries confidence.

It suggests that staying is no longer synonymous with stagnation, and that ambition no longer has to be exported to be fulfilled. It reflects a growing belief that Bangladesh is not just a place to survive until departure, but a place where futures can be actively shaped. It carries responsibility. It carries the possibility of a nation that is not just keeping up with transformation, but shaping its own place in the world of the future. And it begins with the question that is finally facing inward: what can we build here, together?

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