

# Ramna Park

## A Magnificent Garden in the Heart of Dhaka

Taslima Rawshan Tinni

IT is a normal scenario for many people to go to Ramna Park on *Pahela Baishakh*. But at that time the park gets so crowded that it becomes quite impossible to enjoy the nature fully. *Ramna Batamul* becomes the stage for a cultural function on Pahela Baishakh every year. Women wear White sharees with red borders and men wear panjabees. They eat *Pantha* with *Hilsha fish* and green chili as a mark of traditional native food. Fairs are arranged by sellers even without decorated stalls. They sell their goods sitting anywhere in the park or even while walking around. But all that is just for a day. But many people go there everyday to walk, for keeping their body, mind and soul fit.

My father goes there to walk early every morning. Once I asked him how he feels when he goes there? He replied that walking through the park adorned with natural beauty was really entertaining and refreshing. Anyone who goes there can feel the natural beauty; hear the twittering of birds. Those who have not been there cannot understand how beautiful the environment is in the early morning!! He then asked me to accompany him to the park. One day I went with him and believe me, it was really beautiful! There are a lot of trees, some of which are totally uncommon. And there is also an interesting history behind the establishment of this park.

Can we guess what the age of this park is? Ramna Park was named by the *Moghal emperors*. After the transfer of capital from Dhaka to Mursidabad, Ramna became a forest like other areas in Dhaka. Then in 1825 the Magistrate of Dhaka Charles Doch started to clean the park to develop the city. Interestingly the work was started with the prisoners from Dhaka Jail. In 1908 under the supervision of one of the best gardener of Quie garden, London, R.L.Prolok, the making of Ramna Park started. His main assistant in this work was Akhil Babu. It took 20 years to finish the whole work! In 1952 the park got its present shape. Its area is 68.50 acres, which includes a magnificent lake area of 8.76 acres. This park has been a safe house for many birds as well as many rare plants and trees, some of which are *Nagessorchampa, Sornochampa, Ritha, Corpur, Naglingom, Arjun, Mahua, Kusum, Telsur, Ashok* etc.

At present the number of species of plant is 211. Of these, flower and ornamenting plant are 87 in number, fruit plant species are 36, medicinal plants are 33, forest plants 37, water plant 2, agricultural forest plant species 3 and spice plant 3.

If you think that you will get tired of walking so long, then you are totally wrong. There are a lot of nice places where one can sit. These have nice names like ***Kusumchaya, Prabhati, Kichukkhon, Hijol, Shiuli and Akashmoni.*** All the places are fantastically made. Some look like small cottages built of wood. A lot of people walk and exercise in the morning. Besides cottages there are also benches made for them. There are benches around the lake. There are also washrooms for males and females.

There is a water tank that looks like a Lotus. There are many walkways and also a specific path covered with trees on both sides, made of stones and cement slabs. In the park there is a tree that looks like a Christmas tree. With high-rise buildings, apartments and markets we are losing our natural beauty from the capital city day by day and as such we must see to it that Ramna Park does not perish. Although there are many parks in the city but I think Ramna Park is the better choice as it contains a lot of natural beauty as well as provides a number of public facilities. It is noteworthy that there are not many other parks that have a history like Ramna park does. This is one of the most organized and well-planned parks in Dhaka city.

*(Dept. of Accounting & Information Systems, University of Dhaka)*