The chemicals or poison we are indirectly fed through our foods are carcinogenic. 'We are what we eat'. This is what Dr. Iqbal Aminul Kabir said, and he is the 'brains' behind this organic farm and herbal medicine research center. He saw the bigger picture and realized what we are doing to ourselves. Hence, he moved to Panchagarh and brought his concept to life with the help of the owner of the estate. Today, this organic farm covers an area of about 650 acres, has the largest single estate organic tea garden, and also researches on herbal medicine. One of the most posh departmental stores in the world, *Harrods* in London, is a client of theirs for the organic tea produced at the tea estate. We were courteously taken to the tea factory and explained how everything is done.

Apart from all the healthy food and picturesque scenery, the architecture was magnificent. Arched bridges, water running underneath, Chinese styled cottages against the fog, we couldn't ask for more. Walking through this place had a spiritual effect.

The whole setting and architecture around made you unwind and feel right at home. As architecture students, we endlessly try to bring out the creativity from within us, and this place was just right to get our stresses out of the way to let our creative mind breathe. Sadly enough, we could only experience this feeling for one day and two nights.

We left Panchagarh on the following Saturday with fresh ideas, a better heart, and an ounce or two more knowledge that Dr. Kabir was generous enough to share with us. If only we had more people like him, who are willing to light the candle rather than curse the darkness, we could be half way into a better future where life had more value. A true genius, Dr. Kabir inspired all of us to see light at the end of the tunnel, once again.

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Jabbarer Bolikhela

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It was done to instill a feeling amongst the young people of Chittagong, the feeling they are not physically weak to take on the colonial rulers when the time came. You just have to prepare yourself and wait for the right moment. The mela had a political message. Few years later in 1930, the youths of Chittagong staged the famous '*jubo bidroho*' (youth revolution) under the leadership of Masterda Surya Sen in Chittagong and declared the independence of Chittagong. Chittagong remained independence for a day and a half.

Over the years *Jabbarer bolikhela* has managed to become a rallying point around which now a big three day *Boishaki mela* is held. Till the seventies, bamboo galleries would be built around the Laldighi maidan from where the spectators would have a better view of the wrestling for a fee. In the centre the wrestling pit would be situated. Most of wrestlers would come from South Chittagong, particularly from Anowara, Banshkhali, Swandiwip, Ukhiya, Teknaf, Chakaria, Moheshkhali, Kutubdia and Cox's Bazar. Now some bolis even come from other districts. These wrestlers were all amateurs and they would wrestle just to entertain the audience. On the day of the wrestling some wrestlers would take an extra egg or two for breakfast, assuming that it would give them some extra strength. Steroids was something not known to them. Once in a while even foreigners, who came to visit the mela would take off their shirts and jump in the pit. Few years back a German *boli*, while he was struggling to beat the Quddus Boli of Chittagong, managed to loose his belonging as the person who was holding them for him decided to walk away! One whose back touched the ground lost the bout. It was very simple. *Bolis* would invariably be dressed in *lungi*. These days some are wearing shorts. They would tie the *lungi* very tight and with the beating of the *dhols* enter the pit, rub some mud around their forehead and bow to the audience. The bout would begin amidst thunderous applause. Every *boli* would have his own supporters and even there would be informal betting. As the *bolikhela* was held in summer the schools would normally be on summer vacation. In the fifties when we were growing up my grandfather would come with a horse carriage (the famous open style *ghorar gari* of Chittagong with excellent leather upholstery) to take us to the *bolikhela*. Many parents would bring their children from the adjoining areas in reserved dilapidated buses (murir tin) to the *bolikhela*. Because of the crowd, we could never see the main *bolikhela*, until much later. My grandfather would make us sit inside the Laldighi park till the sun went down. Then the grand firework would begin and would last for two hours. It was a grand finale that would have everlasting impression amongst anyone who was there. As the night got deeper the sounds of the drum became fainter and people would be leaving for home. My grandfather would take us back to the *ghorar gari* to be taken back home. There are no bamboo made galleries in Jabbarer *bolikhela* now. Children do not come in *ghorar gari* any more. I am not sure how many children of today's generation are at all interested in any *bolikhela*. They have other options to entertain themselves. They are much more comfortable with computer games, cell phone pushing, game boys or MP3s. They perhaps enjoy more of choreographed wrestling on TV. But for people of my generation, yes we would like to talk about the *Jabbarer Bolikhela* to all our successive generations, because that is what makes us proud. Next year *Jabbarer bolikhela* will be celebrating its hundredth year. The civic leaders of the historic port city should make an all out effort to make it a national event and do everything necessary to inspire the young generation as to what life was all about in the yesteryears. Past glory needs to be preserved for posterity.

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