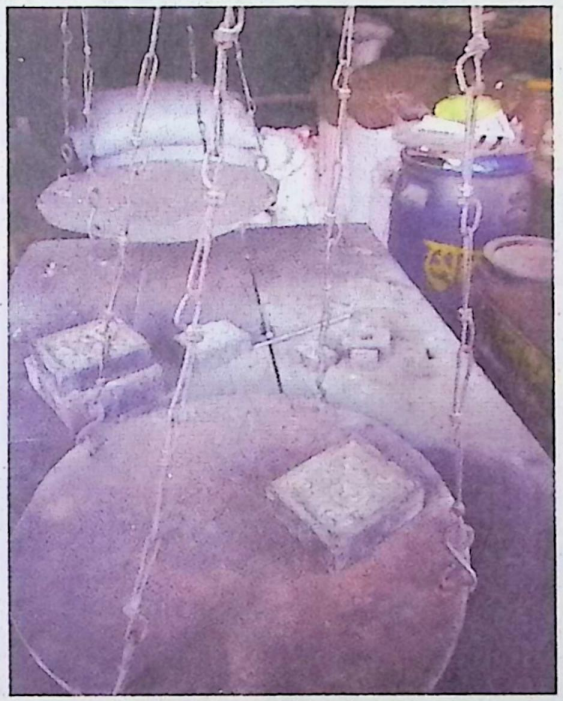
with that and it circumvents the need to elaborate. A more sophisticated reason might be that since he was young he was fascinated with Eastern Europe and one thing led to another.

It's funny: I taught him the word 'jajabor' and he discovered its opposite, the term for people who prefer a life in one place. He called them: 'sedentarians.'

When it comes to explanations, I have similar troubles. When Australians asked why I was moving to Ukraine some years ago, I said, 'I've always wanted to live in a country that begins with a 'U'.' It started people listing: Uruguay, Uganda, Uzbekistan... it was so much easier, it didn't take hours.

In Hatiya, when I used to visit almost annually from Sydney, the circumstances were even more difficult when a Hatiyala would ask, very occasionally, why. My Bangla was still very basic and more than that, I simply did not know how to speak of the inspiration of travel. I could not explain how much there is to learn from other cultures or properly clarify how much enjoyment I took from their company, that in even the basic elements of their daily lives, which they take for granted, I found new wisdom and, often, hope. How could I say that I wanted to understand their life experiences and way of thinking in order to better comprehend mine? What is universally human, what is cultural and what is the individual? I would've liked to have explained such ponderings, but I had no ability.



Life priorities, weighing the options.

So instead I simply pointed to the tents by the road and said, 'Ami ek *jajabor*'. The answer made Hatiyalas laugh. It was a simple statement, but it made me start to wonder...

The last modern *jajabor* I met was probably that British-born one in Kolkata a few years ago. His name was something plain like Ken or Mike and we met in the queue at the Bangladeshi Consulate while organising visas. He also didn't have a pen. Besides that there was little about him to suggest he was a jajabor. It was when we started talking that I could imagine it.

The first sign was that his travel plans sounded complicated and evolving. He was down from Korea, had been to Bangladesh, was in India on a detour due to a wedding invitation that had surfaced and wished to return to Bangladesh en route back to Korea. He taught English, he said, which is not atypical for a *jajabor*. I started to consider... maybe, yes maybe...

And the sedentarians wonder what the *jajabor* is searching for; and it makes the *jajabor* laugh.

Perhaps because I know Kolkata I did something unusual for a *jajabor*, I asked Ken or Mike if he wanted to go for a meal when our visa work was done. I write unusual because *jajabors* rarely team up. They follow their own journeys and despite having much in common, say goodbye as easily as hello.

So we chatted more, somewhere up on Park Street. I heard about his circles in the sand, his plan to see South America for at least a year before teaching again and then setting out for African wanderings. He never wanted to return to the U.K. Naturally I spoke of Bangladesh and the pull of the Meghna River; and he said he had liked Bangladesh.

But what I remember most fondly about Ken, or Mike, is when I asked what he would do when all the travelling was done. I wanted to see if his answer was the same as mine.

'I guess I'll decide which country I like the best,' he said, 'and I'll stay there.'

'You're lucky,' he continued, 'You've found yours.'

More recently I sat in a party in Dhaka, with *shondesh* and delicious home cooked savoury items on a plate and I confessed to a Bangladeshi who lives in Sydney that I'm actually a bit of a *jajabor*. His eyes lit up at the idea and he said eagerly, 'Well, I moved to Sydney so perhaps I'm a *jajabor* too?' And maybe it's true. It can be that the scope of *jajabor*-minded public is far broader than I was used to thinking. When I consider it, in many Bangladeshis there are certain signs: curiosity, adaptability, a sense of humour and love for going places, even if that means not further than visiting relatives in another district, as far as opportunity allows.

Yet this jajabor may have progressed to being an ex-*jajabor*. His *jajabor* life may be done. Or could it simply be that from around-the-world-and-back-again he found himself perfectly content within the most *jajabor*-minded majority culture of all?