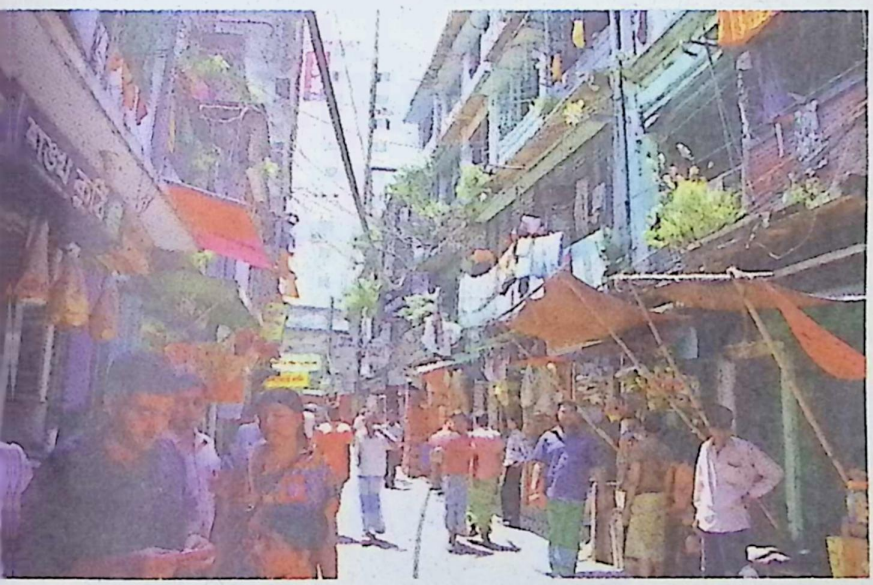
and Chat or Chatpati sold in the backyard of Gulistan building. They were mostly run by immigrants from India. The price of most of the items were below Re 1/-.

Not far from Gulistan building on the other side of the then rail-crossing in Nawabpur Road was Capital restaurant that specialised in Mughlai Paratha; price was perhaps Re 1/-. The gentleman shut down his business after 1965 and left for Kolkata. The delicacy gladdened the heart.

Delhi Muslim Restaurant started later at Johnson Road near the Court Building operated by a Delhiwallah. It was an all-purpose restaurant catering to the court officials, police personnel and litigants.

As you proceeded on there was Savar Boarding in Wiseghat opposite where Star Cinema Hall stood. It was frequented by intellectuals, poets and authors meeting together in '*Adda*'. I remember listening to the reminiscence of Poet Shamsur Rahman about time spent at Savar Boarding.



The streets of Old Dhaka have always been popular for its traditional fund.

There was another elegant eating place in Wiseghat on the Buckland Bund – Shankar Boarding. It had such a quiet and exclusive ambience with the panoramic view of Buriganga, boats plying, an occasional steamboat or tug boat and playful boys jumping into the river from the height of the Bund. The specialty was fish cutlet served with cutleries wrapped in napkin.

On the Patuatuly road opposite Ahsan Manzil gate there were two notable sweet meat shops, Sitaram Mistanna Bhandar and Kalachand Gondhobonik. They were the leaders in the trade. But they left Dacca before the sixties.

On the Islampur Road there was a popular easting house that reminded of Tales from Arabian Nights. It was in the basement and the only delicacy they served was *morog polao*. The delicacy was phenomenally popular. Like the ABBA's song, "who could live without it the songs we sing", those who lived the time would submit to nostalgia – how could we live without Sainu Pahelwan's *morog polao* (Chicken Fried Rice). For 1 Rupee one could have as much *Morog Polao* as one could. Dacca was in love with Sainu Pahelwan's *Morog Polao*. Another delicacy of Islampur Road was Paglar Glassie - a chunk of fried mutton. It operated from Asheq Lane near Lion Cinema.

Towards the west in the heart of Chawk Bazar was Pakistan Hotel. It served breakfast, lunch and dinner. The breakfast contained many items - *nan ruti, nehari*. The other items were *puri, doi bundia* small pellets of sweet placed in sweetened yoghurt, *bhaji, kala jabun* (a sweet with burnt black coating) etc. In the early fifties the price was between 8 Annas and Re 1/-. For lunch and dinner there were fine quality rice, plain *biriyani, tehari* (rice with smaller pieces of beef, smaller sizes of potato and even peas), *kachchi biriyani, morog polao*, curry of fish (Hilsha), mutton or chicken. Nearby was Alauddin Haluwai — today's Alauddin Sweetmeat specialising in *puri, jilapi* and *halwas*.

The eminent personality of Dacca Hakim Habibur Rahman of Chowk Mogaltuli set an illustrious example of hosting breakfast of *Paya* at his residence. Dastarkhan or floor spread was placed on the floor with decorated *badna* (water container) and *chilumchi* (container for spilled over water from hand washing). Hakim Sahab and his guests sat around it. Nan ruti and *paya* was served. It was a tradition that was Dacca's own.

An eating house that survived the march of time is Haji's mutton *biriyani* on Kazi Alauddin Road. It started in late forties or early fifties and still survives. The tradition of Haji's *biriyani* is that it is cooked on firewood and the cooking procedure continues. There are two servings one in the morning and one in the evening. In the fifties the price of full plate was 8 Annas (50 paisa). Parcel packages come in oval shaped bowls made of stitched jackfruit leaves with a piece of paper as cover.

A city, a town or a settlement speaks of the time it has seen, how it has changed with the time, the people who lived it and how they lived it. It was Dacca. The eating places were a part of its heritage. A journey through it is an acknowledgment that there would not have been a present without the past.