Going Back in Time

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The Eid moon had been sighted. I went to the barber's shop of our area. It was doing brisk business. There was an assortment of people at the shop: the young with Mohawk and a ring in the left ear lobe getting a facial, the fortyish gentleman with thinning hair concerned that the barber may cut it too short, getting his hair coloured, the middle aged man getting a haircut and beard and mustache trimmed and children aged three to four years old getting their funky Eid haircuts.

The owner of the shop Dilip looked at me and smirked and told me in his Brahmanbaria accent "*dekchen ni aro dekhbain*" (you haven't seen nothing yet). I was happy the kids were enjoying their freedom.

My mind travelled to the early fifties. I was three to four years old. I also used to have my hair cut one or two days before Eid. The roadside Bihari barber Ram was called. He was a taciturn fellow focused on his trade. The only words he uttered were "*babu kabal itna lamba kiu rakhat ho mathe garam ho jawat ho*"? (*Why* did you keep the hair so long, your head would become hot?). Then, putting down his box of tools he would get down to his trade. He would get my head in a knee lock so that there was no way of moving my it. After I was shorn of my locks I would be released of the knee lock. I thought the ordeal was over. Nay! Ram got me by the scruff of my neck and pushed my head down. He did the rest of his work, finessing my sideburn, the arc over my ears and smoothening the slope of my nape. He held out a mirror and my silence said I was happy! Ram was paid eight Annas.

India's Kamala Circus was in town. It perhaps camped in Ramna Park. My *mamu* took me along to see the circus. It was a large tent with a cluster of smaller tents around. I was awestruck by the massive spectacle. The show began - the clown came with his antics. The elephants came playing with balls with their trunks. My enthusiasm was rising. Then came the male and female horse riders jumping their horses through rings. It was thrilling to watch the dashing bike riders orbiting around an oval iron cage.

Oh! The pride of lions in a cage!. The lions walked majestically through a trap door. The tamer stood ready with a whiplash in his hand. There were stands of different heights. The tamer cracked the whiplash and the lions dutifully tripped on to the stand. Only the sound of the crack of

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