



FOR THE LOVE OF FOOD
BY KANISKA CHAKRABORTY



Bose Cabin

A venerable institution. 95 years and running. About 30 km south east of Dhaka. On a weekend, a leisurely 45 minutes drive. We went on a Friday. The last time I had been there was ten years ago. I did not remember much except for the soft mutton cutlets. And it is the lure of the mutton cutlet that drew us back. Next to the rail tracks, tucked in between an old mosque and a market is Bose Cabin. Like most traditional places in this part of the world, modern tiles and flooring has changed the look that I remembered it as. We sat down to eat. Over a sumptuous lunch of plain pulao, chicken and mutton curry and the famous cutlets, I learned the history of the place. The fact that the third generation of the owners is proudly keeping the tradition going. That Netaji Subhash Bose was a patron of this place. That it still is the meeting place for the cognoscenti of Narayanganj, otherwise famous for hosiery and textiles. It will be a travesty if I do not describe the food. The pulao was pristine white,

almost perfumed with bay leaves. It could easily pass of as plain steamed rice, till you take your first bite and the ever so mild aroma of bay leaf wafts in. Not oily at all, this pulao is a pleasant change from all the heaviness that is served at most places.

The chicken curry was also very light. I was lucky enough to get the leg of a free range chicken, bursting with flavour. Spoon tender meat. Ginger infused gravy. Perfect foil for the light pulao.

Two pieces of succulent mutton and the customary chunk of potato. The gravy was not as delicate as the chicken. After all, goat meat is a more serious meat than chicken.

The showstoppers were the cutlets. Palm sized crumbed and deep fried beauties. Stuffed with shards of meat as opposed to ground meat, every bite was a delight. The meat was mixed with onion and cooked. Ever so slightly sweet, it struck a beautiful harmony with the savoury coating and the spices that so serenely hummed in the background.

We ended the meal with some 'mishti' and some 'doi.' Yes, I do not like to refer to the typical sweet yogurt as 'mishtidoi', as most do. I'd rather call the plain yogurt tokdoi. These came from a local shop and the folks at Bose Cabin were kind enough to serve it to us.

Let it be said that Tarak Bose, who is carrying on the tradition of Bose Cabin, is a kind and generous man. He saw me yawning after the brilliant lunch and made me a cup of very strong tea with milk and sugar that woke me up. And then, as we were taking his leave, he asked me to wait, called for someone from inside, and handed me a packet with ten of his also famous egg chops as parting gift.

Random acts of kindness. I am pretty sure that is what makes this seemingly unkind world very bearable.

Thank you Tarak Bose. It is people like you who restore faith in humanity every so often. Respect.

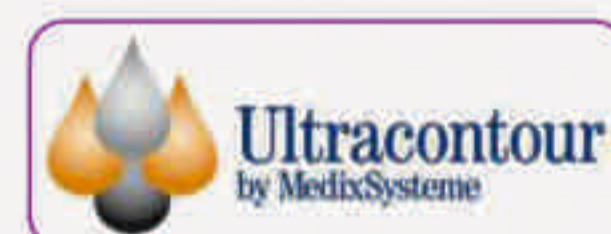
Photo: Kaniska Chakraborty



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