

Did you know that the term 'brand' derives from 'brandr', which essentially means 'to burn'? Marking livestock with fire-heated stamps with distinctive logos or symbols identifying the ownership of farm animals had been in place for centuries.

How often do we use the word 'brand' in our everyday lives? Quite often indeed. More so, we use names and logos to create a distinct impression of a particular company, product or service and so on, helping us to form preferences and make decisions.

It is this leverage of a 'good' brand that unscrupulous businesspeople take. Examples of piracy, copyright violations, counterfeit products and infringement of intellectual property rights are everywhere around us. And the culinary sector is no exception.

Dhaka has its share of highly celebrated eateries, with the reputation being handed down from one generation to the next, along with age-old recipes that have survived the test of time. Names such as Haji Biryani and Kasturi come to mind. On the other hand, we have all seen outlets using names of international food chains that are yet to even set foot in Bangladesh!

All these trademarks are heavily abused. One way it is done is by adding prefixes and suffixes to the name, such as 'new', 'garden' and 'original'. Shahriar Imtenan, a university student who had come from Chittagong, recalls how he fell into this little trick when he first came to Dhaka. "When I saw 'Original Hajir Biryani' in the signboard, I, being new, didn't think that it

would be a duplicate! Also, in many cases, these outlets display the 'borrowed' brand name prominently whilst the extra word is written in a tiny font," Imtenan complains.

Imtenan had been deceived once. But through a couple of years of living in this city, he now knows which outlets to trust. And it is this knowledge the authentic eateries depend upon. Kasturi, located in Purano Paltan (which is its only branch), is a flagship eatery serving Bangladeshi cuisine for more than three decades. Although it had registered its brand name, there are other eateries which are using it by adding prefix/suffix. Kawsar Ahmed, Managing Director, Kasturi, points out, "People know us. They recognise the superior quality of our brand. They cannot be tricked or deceived easily."

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

M H HAIDER
CARTOON: E R RONNY



There is also a general perception among the owners of many of the renowned eateries that if prefixes or suffixes are added to their respective brand's name, the duplicate outlets may be immune to legal actions. A B M Hamidul Mishbah, Founder and Chief Executive, Bangladesh Copyright and IP Forum, disagrees. "Deceptive similarity in names, logos, taglines and so on, confuses the customers, and it is a misrepresentation of the original trademarks, which has spent numerous years, money and intellect to attain their reputation. The law does not allow you to exploit that," he explains.

The need for protecting intellectual property rights may also increase with the maturity and competitiveness of the market.

"Awareness needs to be raised among the intellectual property owners themselves," Mishbah draws the most important conclusion. "If they do not understand their rights regarding their own intellectual properties, or do not bother to take any action, how can you expect the unscrupulous people to stop running such ventures?" ■

HERITAGE

HERITAGE SITE IN CHITTAGONG

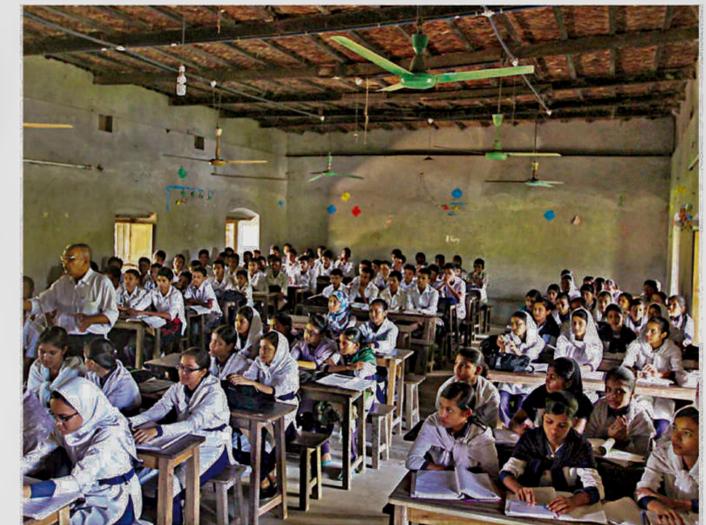
MUD-BUILDING OF KADHURKHIL HIGH SCHOOL: A TESTIMONY OF SWADESHI MOVEMENT

MINHAJ UDDIN
PHOTOS: ANURUP KANTI DAS

The modest tin-shed facade of Kadhurkhil high school at Boalkhali upazila in Chittagong tells little about the rich past of its mud-structure.

The 8300 square feet building is a testimony of the Swadeshi Movement, an anti-British demonstration during the colonial period.

To provide high school education, some enthusiastic people of Kadhurkhil village started the school in 1917 and decided to build the structure solely using local raw materials with a view expressing the solidarity of the Swadeshi Movement. The construction of the mud-structure took two years to complete from 1918 to 1920.



The building is 200 feet long from east to west and 41.5 feet from south to north, and flanked by a total of 74 pillars on both sides. It houses eight rooms with 20 doors and 23 windows. The walls are around 3 feet thick.

"There was another room in the structure on the west side that was demolished due to damage in the 1960s", said Ranjit Kumar Dey, who has been working as an office assistant at the school for 15 years. At present, five of the rooms are being used for classes while the remaining three are offices.

"We want to preserve it. That's why we did not demolish the building despite having accommodation problems," said Biswajit Barua, School Headmaster. The school has a semi-pucca and three more brick buildings for 860 students. Experts think that it is one of the

largest existing mud buildings in the country. Md Amiruzzaman, regional director (Khulna), Department of Archeology (DoA), the government agency in charge of preserving antiquities, visited the building on August, 2013. He said, the mud building, known as "Maitte Kotha or Maitta Gudam" in Chittagong, was a common type of house for two hundred years till 1950. But the availability of bricks and other modern ingredients and the destruction of many mud houses in disasters resulted in the drastic decline of mud-buildings.

The unique building attracts many visitors throughout the year. Among others, representatives of Swedish Embassy visited the school in 2011 to marvel at its unique properties. Yet the existence of this remarkable building remains unknown to most. ■

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ANNE MORROW LINDBARGH
Author and aviator



PEARLS OF WISDOM

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MAYA ANGELOU
Poet, author and dancer



"A VACATION IS WHAT YOU TAKE WHEN YOU CAN NO LONGER TAKE WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN TAKING."
EARL WILSON
Author and journalist