



PHOTOS: AVIPSU ARKO



MAYA DIP: A QUEST TOWARDS SOLITUDE

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In recent times, a lot of social media users are seen glorifying a certain place they recently encountered. Hundreds of check-ins have been made on Facebook and the selfies are uncountable. Some are calling it the ultimate place for a getaway from the city's chaos, and it has now become the new hot spot for photographers. Who knew a sand bed in the midst of the Meghna River can be a perfect spot for travel enthusiasts. For the locations natural magnificence, its quiet atmosphere and rural setting, visitors say it's hard to leave its enchanting beauty. It is why they are calling it *Maya Dip*.

Known as *Nuner Tek* to the locals, *Maya Dip* is nothing more than a collection of the sand beds, yet it has been circulating the trends list for quite some time now. "I first heard of the place from one of my friends, who is a photographer, who also heard about it from someone else," says Rakin, a contributor of the popular magazine *Kishor Alo*. "A couple of friends and I went there and we were amazed. We didn't realise that such beauty is placed just an hour away from Dhaka." Like any other traveler, they took a selfie, which was later published in *Prothom Alo*. One can say that was how the hype for the place came about.

The location to *Maya Dip* is quite simple. One must first go to Narayanganj, Ananda Bazar, which sits right beside the Meghna River. A bus from Gabtoli is the best option to go there. The next part of the journey is by boat. Almost every boat man knows *Nuner Tek*, and for 50 taka, they will happily take you there. The boat ride is for 20 to 30 minutes and it is one of best parts of the *Maya Dip* experience. After a few minutes one will encounter nothing but riverine water. It is both very pleasing and frightening at the same time.

The first thing one notices when arriving at *Maya Dip* is the greenery. No houses, no trees, just lovely, green grass. A 10 minute walk will take one towards a place which looks like a beach. The water might not be the cleanest of waters but the environment is such that one cannot resist dipping their toes into it. The *ghaat* consist



PHOTO: IFTEKHAR RAKIN

of a 4 to 5 houses. Locals are quite friendly and most of them work as farmers or fishermen. The whole area consists of maximum 50 to 70 houses. There's no shop nearby so visitors make sure they bring everything with them.

"It is very quiet, and people are quit friendly. You can spend hour after hour by the ghaat and no one will bother you," says Maisha Khaled, a student of North South University. "As a woman, I know there're very few

places where I don't have to worry about my safety and *Maya Dip* is one of them." Maisha comes here almost every month; sometimes with friends, sometimes alone, just to get away from the hustles-and-bustle of city life.

As Dhakaites, we sometimes need to escape this crowded city, just to give our minds some well-deserved peace and relaxation, or maybe just to think about the future. *Maya Dip* may be the perfect solution for it, a land of solitude just outside the chaos. ■

HERITAGE

FEAR NOT IF THE PEARLS ARE SCATTERED UNSTRUNG

M H HAIDER

PHOTOS: COURTESY

Glimpses of Old Dhaka, written by Syed Muhammed Taifoor (1885-1972), is one of the most influential books ever written on the subject of the history of Dhaka. And this statement is not an exaggeration in any way. If you read on this topic, you inevitably will come across references to Taifoor's book.

Go ahead. Give it a try now. Open a book about the history of Dhaka. Or open a few articles on Wikipedia that deals with this matter. Now, go to the footnotes or bibliography section. Chances are extremely high that Taifoor's book will appear on the list.

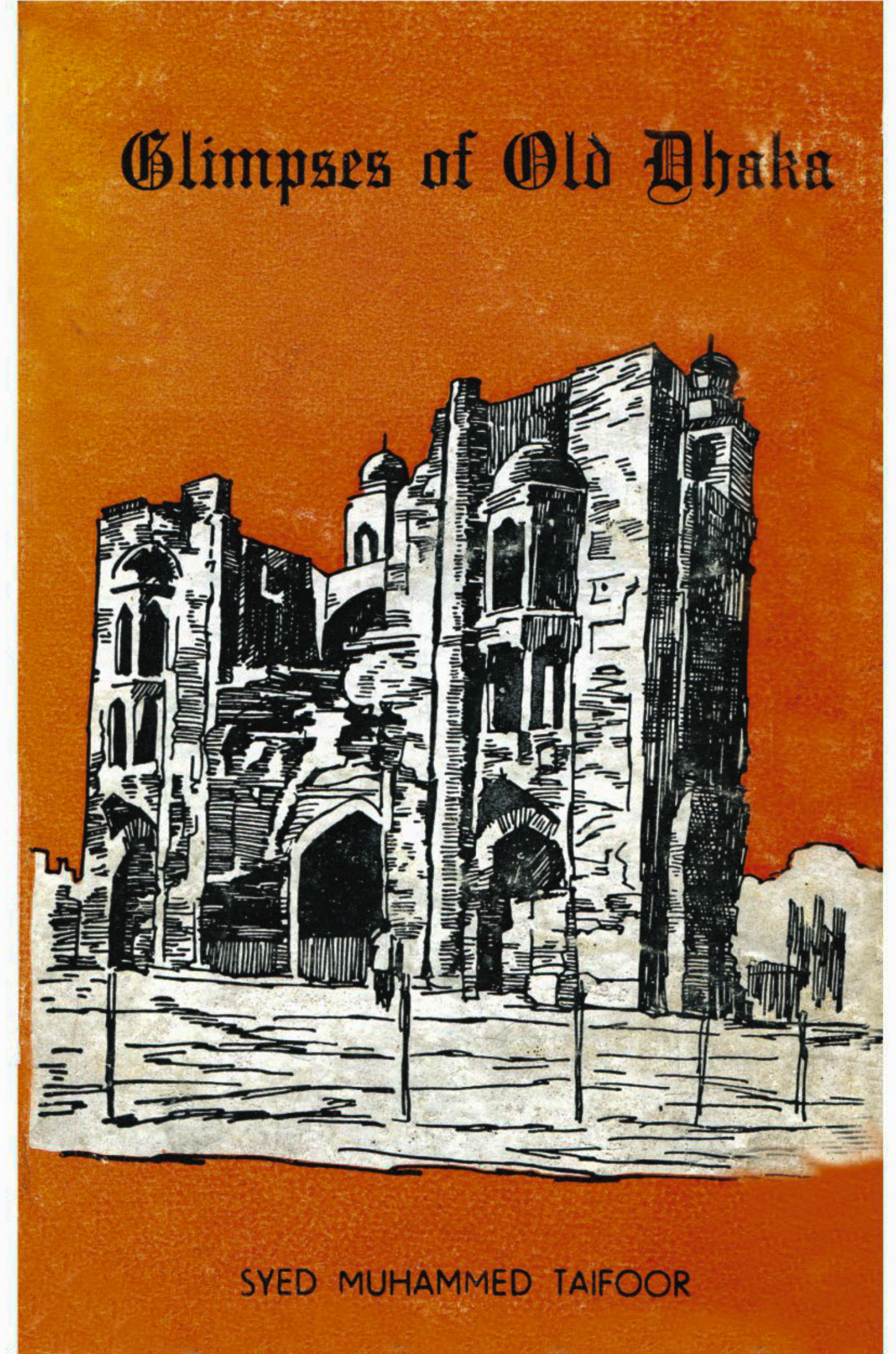
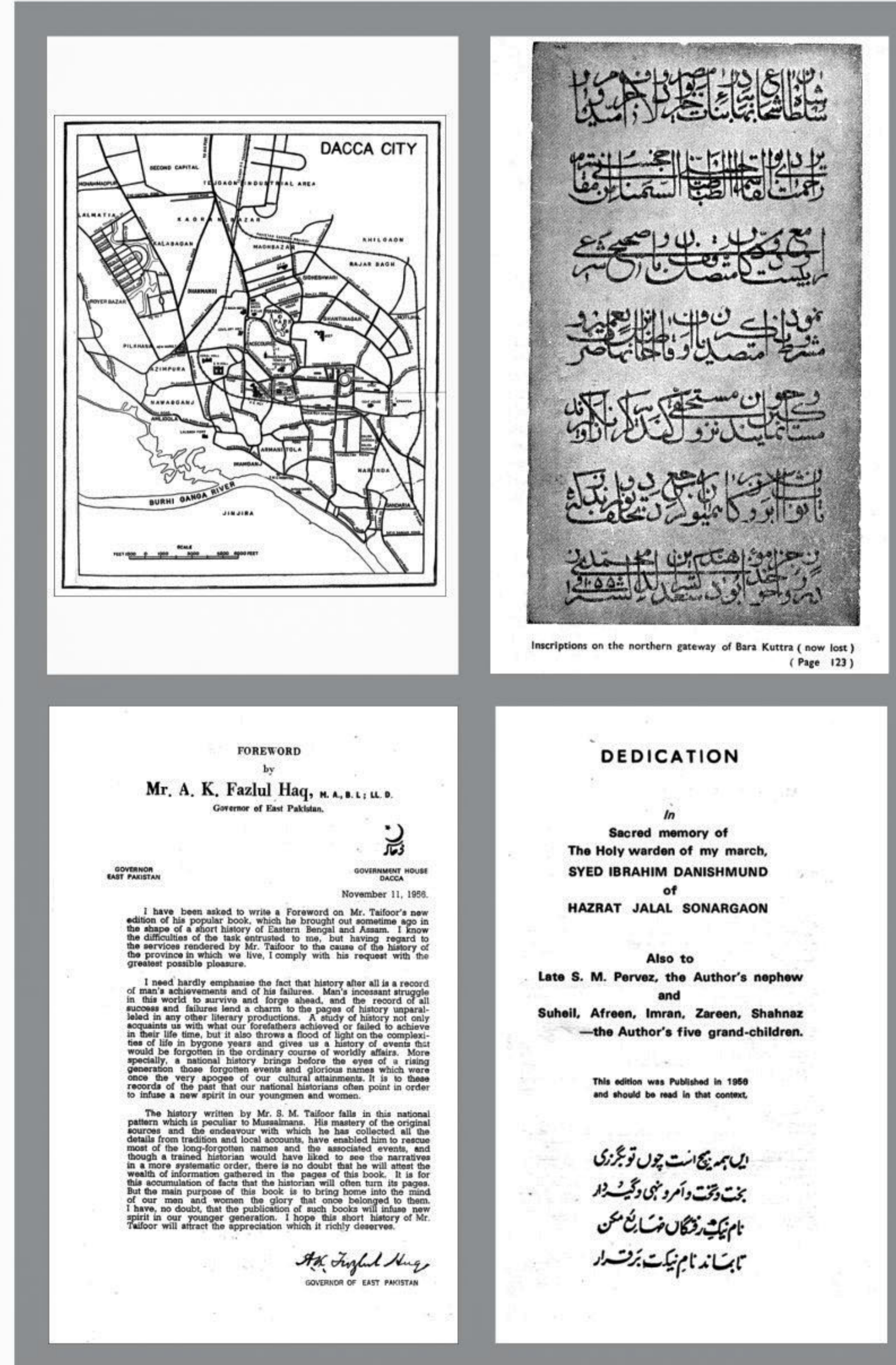
Now that's how authoritative the book is!

It was published in 1952, and an enlarged second edition came out a few years after that.

As you open the book - named 'Glimpses of Old Dhaka: A Short Historical Narration of East Bengal and Assam with Special Treatment of Dhaka' - the very first page draws you in with this couple of beautiful and inspirational lines:

"Fear not if the pearls are scattered unstrung;

They only await to be re-strung in better order."



The foreword had been written by none other than A.K. Fazlul Haq, Governor of East Pakistan.

As you quickly flip through the pages, you will see a lot of writings in Arabic, Persian, etc - poems and inscriptions and verses. Some of them are followed by English translation. These heart-warmingly beautiful words make the book even more amazing.

Taifoor was well versed not just in English and Bengali, but in Urdu and Persian too.

And while you're browsing through, you will also see some visuals; mostly paintings of monuments and different sights of our city, almost all of which were drawn by Charles D'Oyly (1781-1845), who was a Collector of Dhaka.

The book ends with a large map of the city.

With the old map and paintings and poems and the very fact that this book has been written more than half a century ago, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka* indeed has a feeling of antiquity to it.

It's an useful book. The narration begins from the time of the invasion of Bukhtiyar Khalji in 1204 down to the British rule.

From the fiery Sultans to the rebellious 'Baro Bhuiyans' to the glorious Mughals to the aristocratic Nawabs, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka* deals with the city's political history, monuments and people.

But while you read it, keep in mind that Taifoor had '...written from a Muslim point of view', claiming that 'Non-Muslim writers invariably tried to discredit Muslim rule...'

Nevertheless, if you are thinking of brushing up on Dhaka's history, this book is what you are looking for. An interesting and informative read, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka* alone will take you far.

S M Taifoor served as the Registrar of Kolkata. The aristocrat was closely associated with leaders like Nawab Salimullah and A.K.Fazlul Haq. He was also an antiquarian, who later donated his entire collection to Dhaka Museum (now Bangladesh National Museum).

His work, *Glimpses of Old Dhaka*, continues to be a treasure for historians and enthusiasts of Old Dhaka.

Photocopied version (made available with permission) of this incredibly rare book can be bought from The Bookworm, a bookshop located in Old Airport Road, Tejaon. ■