

CONNECTED TO KHULNA

Well known for its evergreen picturesque scenery and mouthwatering chui jhal curries, Khulna is a city of peace and prosperity. The citizens are hospitable and will do everything humanly possible to make you feel at home.

Reaz, an architecture graduate of Khulna University and originally a resident of Khulna, has been staying in the capital for about a week now and believes that everything here works on the clock. "If you ask me what I miss the most, that would be the usual 'adda' with my friends," replied Reaz.

"In Khulna, we barely ever hung out at cafes. If you took a walk down the street, you would see groups of teens and even adults huddled in different corners; those are the 'adda' spots," he further explained.

Anisha Hassan shared a similar story. "Living in a bustling city like Dhaka really makes us wonder about the surrounding quiet neighbouring cities. One of the things I used to look forward to the most was taking a ride at the back side of a van, the wind blowing against my feet, grabbing on to the sides and letting go like there is no tomorrow, something one could never imagine happening here in Dhaka".

And then she further added, "With streets so wide it was hard to see the other side, and large trees overshadowing every nook and corner. One of the best parts have to be the sweet stores with every turn you take, the most popular being Shatkhira Ghosh, a priceless place crawling with the most delicious mouth-watering sweets one can have on earth.

"Weekends were the time to go a little further south and take a ride along the great Rupsha Bridge, letting all the stress wash away with the distant waves.

Growing up in the city of the Sundarbans is not something everybody gets to do, nor take a walk along the swamp mangrove forests, and if you are lucky, maybe even hear a roar from afar of the Royal Bengal Tiger."

SOULFUL SYLHET

Currently a permanent resident of Pir Mohalla, Sylhet, Syed Abu Sadek, Marketing Advisor at Tradesworth Household Limited, depicts his love for the city as 'indescribable in words'.

"During the 15 years I spent residing in Dhaka for job purposes, I dearly missed my mother, friends and Sylhet itself," he reminisced.

The thought would fill him up with unshakable nostalgia every time and make him wish he could leave everything and go back to his hometown. It is a city that has an abundance of natural beauty in its surroundings; Jaflong, Hakaluki Haor,



Bichanakandi, Madhab Kundu, etc, which can be described as some of the most breathtakingly beautiful locations of the nation.

Residents of Sylhet rarely have to depend on 'mechanised entertainment' and can spend their holidays visiting these marvelous spots with their friends and families.

REVISITING JESSORE

The district of Jessore stretches out against the border in the south-western region. It is renowned for its fresh produce of vegetables, fruits and flowers; in fact, it is the largest flower producing region in the country, supplying fresh blooms all over.

S M Sultan Kabir who is working in the banking sector in the capital left his hometown in Shaikh Hati, Jessore about two decades ago. "I always try to take my kids

along whenever I visit my hometown once or twice a year," said Kabir.

"As they spend some time running around in the open space during the holidays, it helps build an attachment in them with Jessore and I believe they will pass it on to the next generation," he affirmed.

Date jaggery and Jamtola's sweets are 'to die for' food items in Jessore.

CHITTAGONG CALLING

"The bond shared amongst the people in Chittagong is incomparable," stated Shawket Jaman, Executive Director of Baridhi Shipping Lines Limited, who is currently settled in Dhaka.

His hometown, Chittagong, is the second largest city of Bangladesh and accommodates world famous locations namely Cox's Bazar, Rangamati and the Bandarabans. Sea

fish, shutki, mezbani dishes and binni rice are noteworthy Chatgaiya cuisines.

"As it is rapidly growing and competing as a city, there is little difference left in terms of lifestyle between Dhaka and Chittagong," Jaman added. He prefers to characterise Chittagong as an 'unexplored treasure trove' as he feels that it is rich in resources and could be handier when coming to allocating them.

Jaman describes Dhaka as a jumbled canopy of a banyan tree, explaining that although it does provide people with shade and shelter, it is still quite unsystematic and requires proper management.

A NON-STOP DHAKA

The busy capital city of Dhaka is filled with busier people with no time to rest. This 'mechanised' concrete jungle is progressing rapidly with high rising skyscrapers replacing mundane one/two-storied establishments every now and then. With the increasing number of people entering every day in search of employment, education and even an identity, our beloved city is suffering, gradually crumbling under pressure, in our oblivion.

Raisa Islam, double majoring in Geology and Data Science at Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts, USA, believes that despite its myriad of defects, Dhaka is the only place she can truly call home.

Raisa explained that when she visits every summer, she finds new buildings, restaurants, boutiques and shops that she has never previously heard of popping up around various parts of the city. "I guess it's always nice to see change, but there's this feeling of your hometown kind of 'moving on' without you being able to witness it happening, which is not necessarily upsetting, but gives me an odd feeling that I am missing out on so much," Raisa admitted.

On asking about what she misses the most, she spoke about Bengali food and around-the-corner eateries for which she has to travel a couple of miles from her dorm in Massachusetts.

"ABSENCE MAKES THE HEART GROW FONDER" –

Most people who have spent some time away from their dearest cities have genuinely realised the love they have for the city. People leave a part of themselves in every city they go to. The biggest part, the root is left in the place they call their hometown. That is probably why at one point, they begin to get homesick and miss that part of themselves and finally find peace when they go back again.

By Nafisa Faruque
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

