



NEWS FLASH

Kolkata chain Aminia in Dhaka

If you crave Kolkata Biryani, you now have an address to savour it! Aminia, the name which is synonymous to Mughlai cuisine - the oldest in Eastern India - has now opened a swanky restaurant in Dhaka. The first outlet of Aminia opened in 1929 to tickle the palate of Mughlai lovers. The group has seven restaurants in Kolkata alone.

The Dhaka outlet is nestled pretty on the ground floor, which has dedicated sections for takeaway and home delivery. With both the indoor and outdoor sections, the seating plan can accommodate 85 diners. The theme is rather striking, as it is reminiscent of Sufism. One may dine in absolute quietude, surrounded by the picturesque interiors. Once

there, the chef recommendations are the Awadhi Biryani Chap, Aminia Special Curry, and Irani Khichdi. For those with a sweet tooth, one may dig into the firni and mihidana with rabri.

The restaurant has provided employment to 46 Bangladeshis. "The idea is to relive the shared history, heritage, culture and cuisine shared by Indians and Bangladeshis alike," Asher Ather, Co-founder and Partner from India, said.

Address: House # 54, Road # 4, Sector # 3, Uttara- 1230, Dhaka. For home delivery: 01847176112. Facebook page: facebook.com/AminiaRestaurantBD

Photo courtesy: Aminia

MUSING

The shop around the corner



The last-minute crisis of running out of sugar or quenching a thirst for water on a hot summer day without much change in your pocket; sometimes we all need rescuing. These rescuers are also nostalgic windows into our childhoods where we can picture ourselves grabbing a bag of chips or a bottle of cola during playtime at evenings.

The saviours in question are none other than the *paarar mudir dokan* (the local corner store).

Pinpointing the first time you walked into the corner store you now cannot imagine life without is often difficult. Chances are, you obviously walked into the shop closest to where you live to get that emergency bit of grocery. Little did you know you would frequent this store for years to come and eventually develop a wave of warmth for the generous vendors.

The age-old *mudir dokan* has always been our mum's go-to store. Happy occasions seemed dulled without a box of the finest sweets from the local confectionary in business for years.

'In sickness and in health' has never been truer for the pharmaceutical store down the

street, always prescribing you the medicine to nurse you back to health; sometimes even throwing in a free pill of Civit just because!

Cravings for cola and mento's were always met by sneaking out of the house to the tiny grocery store where the radio was always on. You simply could not get enough of that store and running back home to enjoy them with your siblings was the best part.

Whether you have realised it or not, the humble convenience stores always have us covered. These saviours are always in the corners when we find ourselves in dire need of spare change, have forgotten our wallets at home or face an indecisive choice.

With an arsenal of lower rates, special exemptions of Tk 2 from that total bill of Tk 542, and responsibly informing us about inferior or expired products, they always have our backs. Although so many of the tactics are textbook strategies adopted by small ventures to lure in more customers, somewhere along the line, we begin to trust them.

We start to look at them as more than

just nameless shopkeepers. They become so much of family that we even let them babysit our children when we have to run an errand across the street. Even if your child injures himself on their watch, you can count on them to adopt a parental role and use a Savlon cream and a band-aid as their weapons to combat such accidents. And if you have been good enough, you can always expect to go home with a free bar of your favourite chocolate in one hand and holding on to your mum with the other.

A *mudir dokan* is a part of each of our childhood memories. They invoke nostalgia and a desperate wish to go back to the good old days. They have managed to establish a long-lasting relationship of trust and you even remember those times when your parents engaged in mundane small talk with them and discussed about their daily struggles in bits and pieces. They never let fetching a bag of tea leaves or tallying the total bill from offering helpful advice to cope. They always listened.

These corner shops have always been there for us, and we, for them. Running the proud and humble corner shop offers a

viable livelihood to the shopkeepers, but also a way of life. Sure, the shops are a way of making ends meet but the mere conversations and friendly laughs exchanged during a sale mean something to them.

Witnessing a child grow up in through their frequent visits to the shop adds an unparalleled dimension to just selling milk and eggs.

Many of these convenience shops have been demolished to make space for larger departmental stores or have simply gone out of business over the course of time. It is even sadder when the realisation that you will never see their welcoming faces ever again sinks in. That is, until you unexpectedly run into them when returning home one fine day and you are flooded with the same nostalgic warmth.

Lost in time, our local corner shop stories may have faded, but many new stories and memories are being written, each a unique tale, making other childhoods memorable. And at the root of it all stands a *mudir dokan*, tall and proud.

By Ramisa Haque

Photo courtesy: Basic Ali Studios