

SPOTLIGHT

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Museum hopping in Dhaka

Of mail and currency

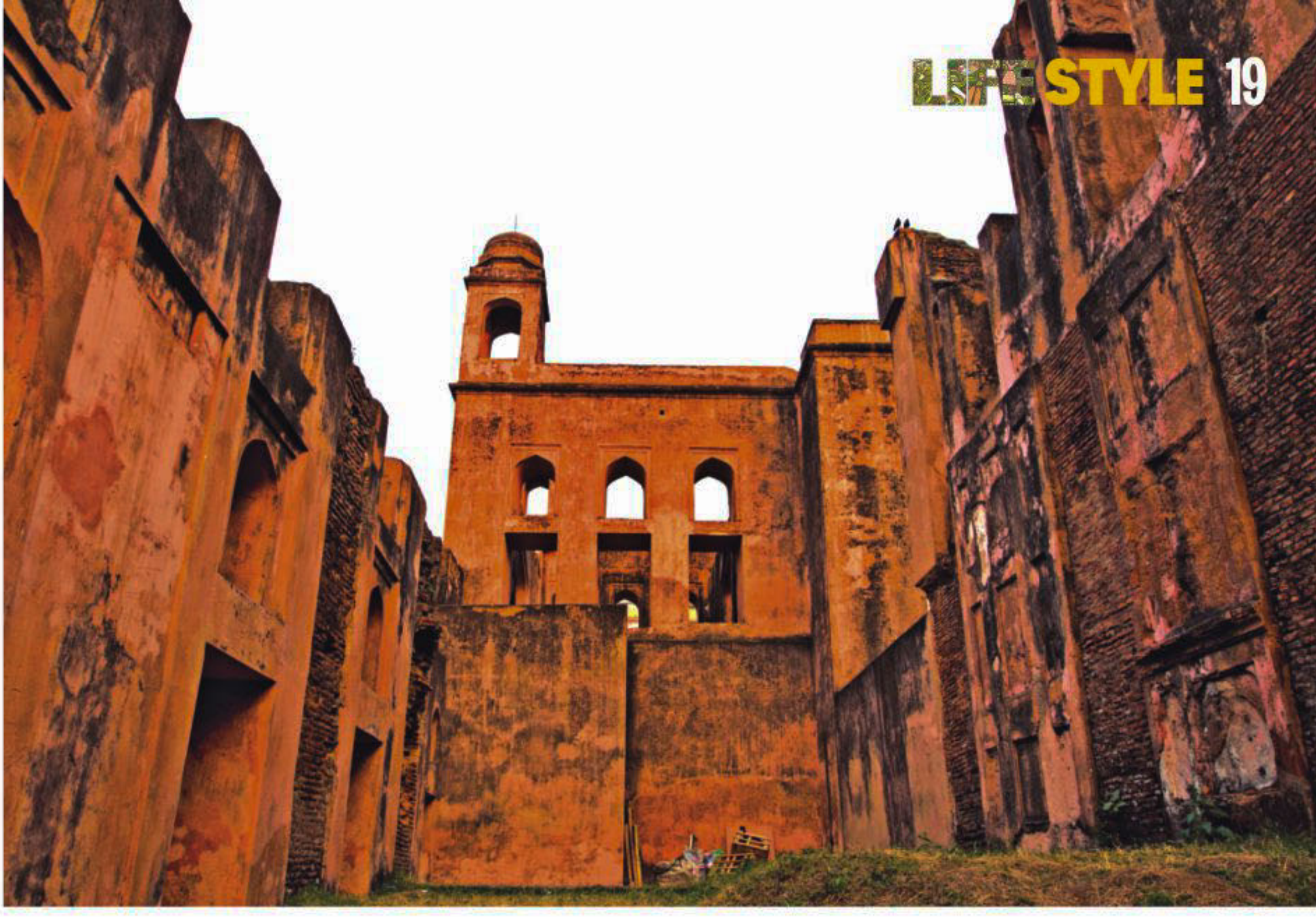
Stamps and postal services, and coins and bank notes – the two areas may not have a lot in common, but a commonality they do share is the fact they reflect political and social histories of administrations and economies – along with the fact that the items involving these two fields, excite many collectors.

But you do not need to be a philatelist to visit the Postal Museum, inside the premises of Bangladesh Post Office, and a coin collector to go to Taka Museum at

Bangladesh Bank Training Academy in Mirpur-2.

The postal museum has a collection of stamps from all over the world. It also tells the story of the postal services rendered in the olden days. A tribute to the 'runner' (i.e. postman) has been expressed by a diorama: a life-size model of a man carrying a bag on his shoulder, a hurricane lamp, along with a spear and other essentials.

The exhibit is complete with poetry and literature — including the celebrated poem



and song, Runner — a tribute to the unyielding services of the runner.

The museum also contains a number of exhibits of age-old objects used by the postal services, from rubber pads to letter boxes.

On the other hand, Taka Museum features a rich collection of coins, bank notes, bonds et al. From cowries (shells, once used as currency) to ancient coins used throughout the ages, the exhibits reflect the social and political history of Bengal. The intricate

legends of coins, jewellery made with coins, the diverse array of bank notes, dioramas explaining currency systems, etc. indeed make the museum a brilliant one.

To indulge in your inner wackiness, you may also choose to visit the photo booth and have 'money' printed with your own photograph!

Weekly closure — Postal Museum (Friday and Saturday); Taka Museum (Thursday).

Photo: LS Archive/Sazzad Ibne Sayed

Museums in Dhaka: Much to improve

The number and diversity of museums in the capital is good enough to satiate enthusiasm of most people. And these museums indeed put up sincere efforts for the education and the entertainment of the visitors. However, one may say that there is still much room for improvement in the museum scene of our city.

To start with, it may be argued that a number of museums require renovation or refurbishment, from improving the presentation of exhibits to modernising the interior. A museum should not be dull and bland.

At the same time, it must be applauded

that there have been projects undertaken successfully by some museums to address this issue.

Indeed, presentation is very important for museums. Typos, misspellings, and other errors are not uncommon in the descriptors, labels, and websites. It is obviously not possible to make anything error-free, but a more rigorous checking would help reduce cases of more obvious and embarrassing errors.

After all, museums are not only public spaces; they reflect a country and its people to visitors from all over the world.

The museum in Lalbagh Fort was facing

power shortage at the time this reporter visited. Without electricity, the presentation – and perhaps more importantly, the overall impression – was compromised.

Websites require improvements too. A few museums have websites which are rich in information as they are in their attractive and user-friendly design, but many institutions are yet to catch up. Online catalogues and search tools (not just regarding objects on display, but of archives too) are invaluable for researchers. Unfortunately, there are not many examples of such online services being provided adequately.

On the other hand, there have been

instances of time lag between the official inauguration of a museum and the date doors open to the public. General services, facilities, and maintenance issues should also receive more attention.

It may be claimed that the museums in Dhaka have many constraints, from funding to manpower. And the various initiatives which have been undertaken are positive signs. However, further efforts should be taken to improve these institutions.

Museums, after all, reflect who we are as a people.

By M H Haider

মাদার নতুন বাস

কালার গার্ড

কাপড়ের রঙকে রাখে
নতুনের মতো ঝকঝকে

মাল্টি বুস্টার

কাপড়ের যে কোন দাগ-
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সবচেয়ে ফাস্ট, সবচেয়ে কার্যকরী ..

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