

THE DEFINITIVE
YOUTH
 MAGAZINE

SHOUT

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DINING NOSTALGIA:
 CHATTOGRAM EDITION

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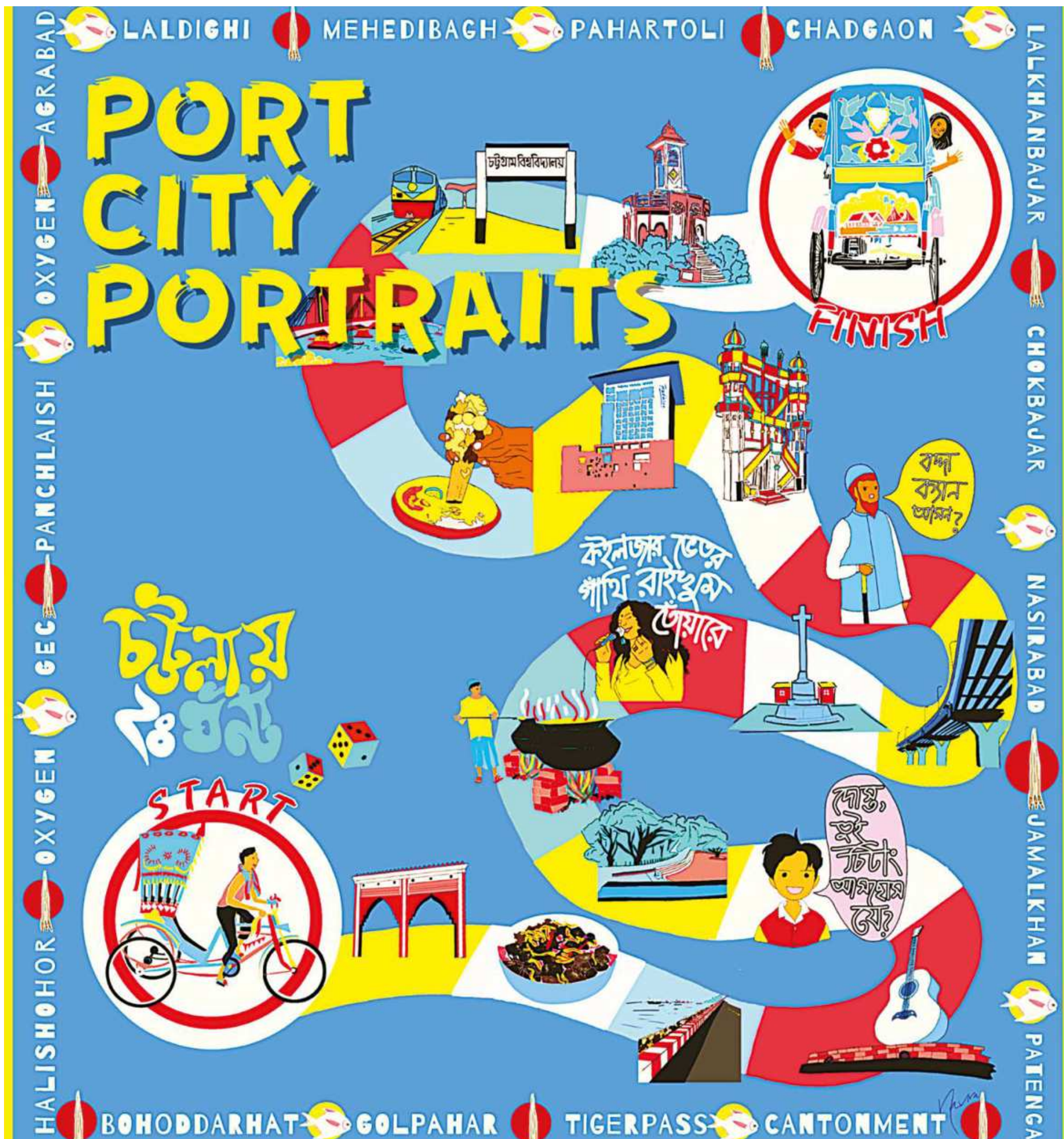


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EDITORIAL

Chittagong, or Chattogram, holds a special place in my heart. I visited the city when I was a toddler and as a young man. Each time, it has welcomed me with open arms; I don't feel like a tourist here. Rather, I feel like an explorer. The city has everything and more, and so this week we bring you the essence of the port city—as told by its youth.

The youth of Chittagong want to tell the world about their hometown. It's a place steeped in history, with its own ways of talking and eating and living life to the fullest. It must be a special feeling to be a Chittagonian.

This week's issue is all Chittagonian, with articles, stories, photographs and illustrations all done by the youth born and raised in the city by the sea.

Welcome to Chittagong on SHOUT.

— Kazi Akib Bin Asad, In-charge, SHOUT



TALE OF THE TAPE



**KALA
BHUNA**



**MEZBAANI
GOSHT**

'Kala' and 'Bhuna' are Bangla terms for 'dark' and 'fried', respectively. You didn't know that?

NAME

From the Persian word for 'host', mezbaani means 'arranging a feast'. Simple.

Can be assumed that the dish was often served at large gatherings. So glad it exists, though.

ORIGIN

Early Muslim communities held large feasts usually in the memory of a person or cause. Mad respect.

Dark appearance because of spices and the way it's cooked. Diamond does come from coal.

LOOKS

A fiery red colour thanks to special chilli powder and spices only found in Chittagong. Blessed.

Oh, wow. Small bite-size pieces of spicy, juicy, meaty goodness!

TASTE

Ugh. Rich, flavoured beef in fatty, spicy gravy that goes perfect with white rice.

A dish for all occasions. You can enjoy kala bhuna anytime, anywhere. But best to do in Chittagong.

EVENT

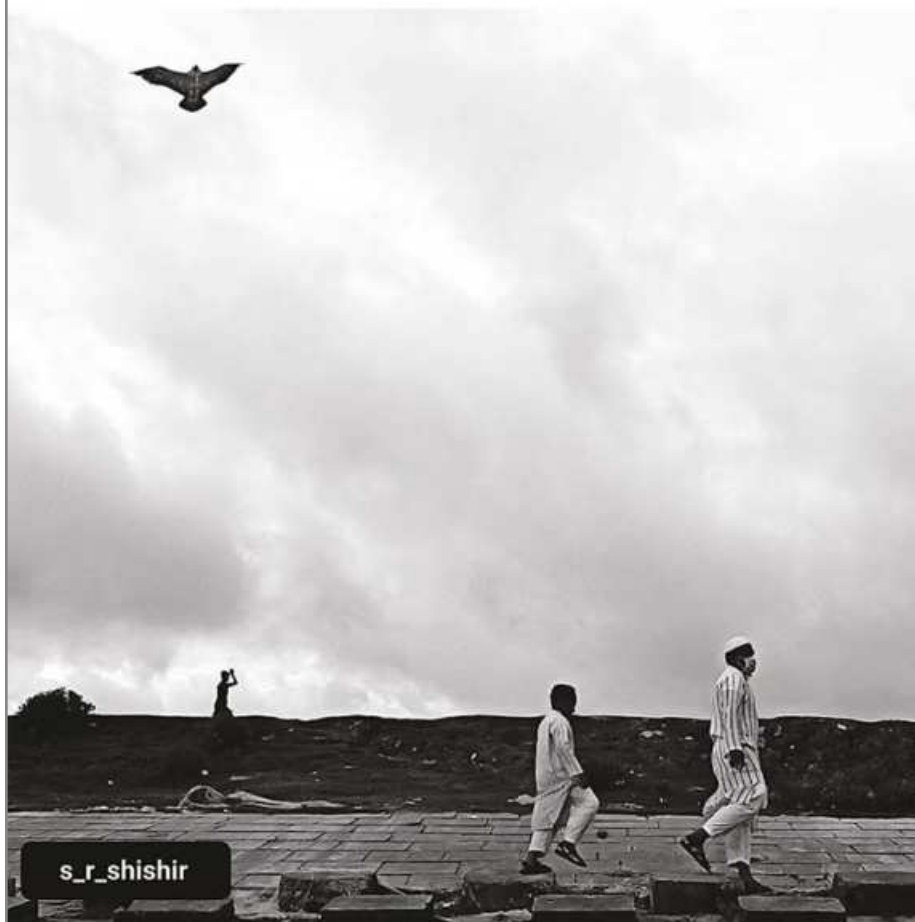
Community-organised grand feast, usually open invitation. Come one, come all, to Chittagong for mezbaan.

Text by **FAISAL BIN IQBAL** • Design by **KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD**



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THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

SYED MOHAIMINUL ISLAM

In the west, once you are 18, you have to move out of your parents' house and find your own place. Many move to a different city for higher studies. In Bangladesh, I went through the same experience.

Even though I come from Chittagong, a port city with reputed universities, I moved to Dhaka to begin a new chapter in my life. A 258 kilometre journey to experience freedom and new frontiers.

Sure, Dhaka is very much a concrete jungle. With little-to-no getaways and terrible traffic, the living expenses were high but it had its upsides. There were high-paying jobs, quality food, coffee shops, big concerts and my true love, *kacchi biriyani*. Then came along Covid-19 and just like that, I was unemployed.

I moved back with my parents for an unforeseeable future. I had the same feeling when I had moved to Dhaka seven years before. This time, I began getting to know my city in a different light. So different that most people here speak a completely different dialect which the rest of the country barely understands; people here say they are a *Chittaingya* first, and a Bangladeshi later. This was evident when the government officially changed the name of the city to "Chattogram", however, locals refuse to acknowledge it. Such a sense of pride and belonging has led to different tastes

in food, culture, society compared to the rest of the country. Chittagong does not even serve *kacchi* in weddings as the main dish!

I used to visit Chittagong during semester breaks and holidays. The two cities have such distinct lifestyles that I developed alter-egos for each.

In Dhaka, where my life was fast paced, I was an outgoing person. You'll know what I mean if you've lived it. And so when the city changes, so does the person. Chittagong is a city with a small town vibe. Here, because of a more conservative culture, most cannot stay out past 10 PM. Life is a lot quieter here. The dining out culture is not as popular as Dhaka. Cafés and restaurants are usually half full, unless you are talking about Zaman Hotel. It is always full in Zaman Hotel—all branches, all day long.

Weekdays are ordinary. There are no hour-long traffic jams to work. No one wastes their time on the road. When the

sun sets, the young and the old all head home or somewhere to hang out with friends, enjoy a cup of tea and maybe talk about politics. My father used to do all this, I do this and my younger brother has just started. I guess it's common in Dhaka too, but here it feels more passionate, more personal.

Then comes the weekend. Even if you do not own a calendar or your phone doesn't work, you can tell it's Friday if you live in Chittagong. The weekend mornings here have a special sound, a unique smell, and a different taste altogether.

There is barely any sound outside; you may hear a few rickshaws or hawkers. That's it. If you wake up early, you can go to your local restaurant and buy soft *naan* charred in spots, made in a clay oven. Having that *naan* with *moong daal*, followed by a hot cup of milk tea with *bakarkhani* that's as sweet as a mother's love, is a heavenly experience. The fathers visit the fish markets in Fishery Ghat to buy the catch of the day or Chawkbazar to do groceries.

The afternoons are as lazy as they

come. Most people usually visit their relatives who live no more than a few kilometres away. So, us *Chittaingyas* are always "closer". Apart from that people go for a drive around the Naval Academy area, CRB Hill, Bhatiary, Patenga beach or Foy's Lake. Just the perks of living in a smaller city.

One thing that might come as a surprise to anyone is that Chittagonian mothers know more people than anyone else. Take my mother for example. She stays in touch with everyone from our building, with other aunties in the neighbourhood and from the previous places we lived. Hence, your neighbours might know more about you than you think. Imagine the resources and networks Chittagong mothers have in their arsenal if they want to set up a marriage. And all that without using Facebook. Amazing!

Now that I think about it, living in Chittagong is great. You have most of the things one can find in Dhaka, minus the traffic, living expenses, and poor air quality. What you don't get, I believe the serene hills, the beach and the surrounding nature compensates for it. Moreover, you might get invited to a few Mezbaan events. And that, my friends, is a win.

Syed Mohaiminul Islam is a civil engineer waiting for the universe to guide him to his destination. Reach him at smislam54@gmail.com



PHOTO: KAZI AKIB BIN ASAD



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Dining Nostalgia: *Chattogram Edition*

IFREET TAHEEA

I always enjoyed eating out but my options were limited. For those who don't know, Chattogram (more famously known as Chittagong) didn't really have too many restaurants or fast food places. There wasn't a BFC around every corner of the city. Having a good fried chicken would require us to travel to GEC Moar or atleast to Lalkhan Bazar. However, we didn't really mind the commute either as every outing was a festivity on its own.

Fortunately, most sentimental spots are still around to cater to us. So hop on this nostalgia train and follow along the trail of food options in CTG. **NAVAL'S PIYAJU** Tell someone from outside Chattogram about your hometown, there's a 99 percent chance they will respond with *"Oh, tomader Naval er chhoto piyaju onek moja!"* And it certainly is! A hot cup of tea and a plate of crispy *piyaju* with sliced onions beside the sea is the perfect comfort food combination.

But you see, to us it has never been about the taste of those little delicacies. It has been about finding something warm to munch on while letting the waves bring in a sense of comfort within ourselves. **FUCHKA AT MIMI SUPER MARKET**

You might be angry at your tailor on Mimi's second floor for messing up your Eid outfit but you will still go to Hujur er Dokan for your *fuchka* fix. I don't think I have seen the *mamas* there ever not be busy preparing *fuchka* or blending sweet lassi in full volume. Even in the noise, when you munch down on your first bite, you'll be reminded that there is nothing a *tok-ihaal* flavour bomb cannot fix. **SUGAR BUN'S MEAL 1**

Fast food and Sugar Bun go hand in hand when it comes to CTG. Mommy's logic: Fried chicken is unhealthy but pair it with fried rice and your child's dinner is sorted. That's why Sugar Bun's Meal 1 is a popular order. Consisting of one piece fried chicken,

savoury rice, a vegetable salad and a drink, this meal is sure to fill you up. By the way, if you're that one person who orders some other meal that comes with French fries, be prepared to share.

DEARLY ICE CREAM

Before Baskin Robbins came (and left) the city, Dearly was the ultimate spot for ice cream lovers. Even though their ice cream is basically, ahem, Kwaliti Ice Cream, there's just something about their Single Sundae or Banana Split being served in age-old transparent bowls you give at weddings. Speaking of weddings, this place has even witnessed a lot of family-supervised awkward matchmaking happen over ice cream cones.

BANGLA CUISINE AT HOTEL ZAMAN

Even though Hotel Zaman's food quality has deteriorated over the years, it has become a must-visit among tourists when they want to try out the port city's fish items. Their pomfret fry, *loitta shutki er dopiyaja* and *taki bharta* with plain rice are a delight! Don't be surprised to find their *biriyani* on the table even if you're invited as a guest at someone's house.

P.S. If you're looking for authentic Mezbaani food, they serve it every Sunday too.

DFC'S SPICY FRIED CHICKEN

DFC is more famous among 90s kids. Their limited seating options and menu equal to cosier gatherings with your spicy food lover friends. The best part? Rupom bhai is always there to greet his decade-old customers with the biggest smile. He has seen more first dates and heartbreaks than you probably have seen in a Korean movie. However, when they serve up those piping hot fried chicken with the house special Korean spicy sauce, somehow, everything doesn't feel that bad.

Turn your bites into binges. Follow Ifreet Taheea on Instagram at @iffybiffys where she regularly writes on her foodventures.



ILLUSTRATION: @THE.COLORJOURNAL

A UNIQUE DIALECT

JARIN SUBAH

Sitting at the corner of my bed at 3 AM, I'm overloading my brain with random stuff. It isn't my Instagram feed keeping me awake for so long. Rather it's my gallery. It's the memories that I had made over the past few years, giving me instant flashbacks.

While scrolling down I find this one photo which reminds me of the days my friends and I used to hang out. Going to the Chittagong War Cemetery, sitting under a specific tree, and discussing all the irrelevant things in life.

My memory takes me back to that day. I randomly asked my friend Salma if she had ever tried *shutki bharta*. She replied, *"No hai ai."*

Our whole squad burst into laughter hearing her broken *Chittaingya*. We were amazed that our non-Chittagonian friend was trying to speak in our dialect. It was heartwarming, but at the same time I had to correct her.

"You are wrong. It's actually—*ai aizo no hai."*

"Okay. I admit I still need to improve on my Chatgaiya. I wonder what's so special about this language..." she said.

"Everything about Chittagong is special," I told her. "And the dialect is unique on it's own. Just to let you all know, it's an Indo-Aryan language which is closely related



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

to Bangla."

"I heard that it's a member of Bengali-Assamese sub-branch," my friend mentioned.

"Yes, it is! Its sister languages include Sylheti. And more interestingly, it is derived from Pali. The accents do vary in some regions but the vocabulary has its own twists. Moreover, the grammar has similarities

with Bangla. You will be fascinated to know that it includes a significant number of imported words from Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Portuguese," I went on.

"Really? How do you know all that?" my friends asked.

"My grandfather told me that during the ninth century, Arab traders came to this port city for trading and eventually left a

huge impact in our dialect. The rural Chittagonian dialect loans about 50 percent Arabic and Persian vocabulary. Talking about the Portuguese, we already have a place called Firingi Bazar, named after them," I explained.

It feels so proud to be a Chittagonian. Or maybe it would be better to say *"Sitain-ga"*.

"But Subah, please stop using 'je' at the end of each sentence," my friends implored. "I'm helpless. It's in my blood," came my reply. And my friends broke into laughter.

"Can you please stop clicking so many photos, Rubayat?" "This candid came out really good. Look?"

Back in my room, I kept wondering why I love this picture so much. Maybe because it is so real. Just like our Chittagonian dialect. It has been enriched with contributions from different foreign languages. This quality makes it more unique than any other dialect in Bangladesh. Every now and then when I speak in this dialect, it expresses the real me in its own charm. And using *"je"* at the end of sentences adds to its beauty.

I think I should go to sleep now.

The writer is a grade 10 student of Cantonment English School and College, Chattogram.

Port City Portraits

SUFIAN SIDDIQUI

"Do you like mountains more, or the sea?"

Growing up in Chattogram, everyone will have faced this question. The mountains on one side and the sea on the other puts you in a dilemma – a strange illusion that makes it so very hard to give an honest answer.

This city has grown inside of me as much as I've grown up in this city. When I walk along these familiar streets, or the winding alleyways that spread out like the roots of an ancient tree, I smell familiar scents. I see faces of people, busy faces, running from one circle to another in search of a bus. I see faces full of enthusiasm, eyes that light up at the sight of fresh *jilapi* being fried on roadside open stoves. I see faces of couples sitting together, losing themselves in each other's eyes, in an air-conditioned restaurant somewhere in this city. I see people with sadness etched on their faces, carrying along tired bodies, their eyes betraying the emptiness inside.

Everyday I see these faces, and feel a ring of familiarity solidifying around me. A ring that's hard to break out of.

I, too, lose myself in these faces every day. Sometimes I am the busy pedestrian, sometimes I am the stranger. A day

in the city often takes me to GEC Moar, which you could call the heart of the city. Different buses on different routes start their journey here, and while the *moar* stays busy all day, the influx of home-bound commuters adds a whole new level to the chaos as evening falls. Public buses brimming with people roll off towards Muradpur 2 No. Gate or Bahaddarhat, some are going to Agrabad, Barek Building, or even further away.

All this time, shoppers and shopkeepers in Riazuddin Bazar, New Market, and Tamakundi Lane are busy playing the game of buy and sell, while Chawkbazar mostly deals with the comings and goings of students. A two-hour class might have left someone tired, eager to get home, while someone else moves hurriedly to catch a class themselves. With friends hanging out in scattered groups, and lazy strolls in Gulzar Tower, Chawkbazar lives on in a tradition of its own.

The smell of new books floats in to tingle the senses from the direction of Anderkill. In the rows of bookshops by the road, or in the ones that you will find if you go inside and up some stairs, attentive readers can be seen browsing through bookshelves. Some of them are desperately looking for a book they need; some just want to read the first few

pages of a book that seems interesting. The books on display bear witness to the murmur of haggling over prices that goes on between the buyers and sellers.

When the activity and chaos of the city becomes too much, I walk in search of some solitude and peace. I find it at CRB, a place surrounded by ancient trees, where seven roads meet to form a world of its own. The calm lasts until noon, and then as afternoon rolls in, people come with it, when Shirish Tola gets to play host to games of cricket, football, and friendship. The search for greenery and tranquility has more than one answer, however. People go to Foy's Lake, they take the winding roads of Bhatary to enjoy the beauty of the hills and the lake together.

A little way away from the city centre is one of the biggest attractions of Chattogram – Naval. Perched up on the walls made of red and white bricks, I've spent hours looking at ships afloat the river. The area is abuzz with people as night falls and the light goes dim, as the wind from the sea gets stronger. A plate of *piyaju* or fried crabs keeps company as onlookers get mesmerised by the sight of the Karnaphuli meeting the sea.

The sunrise and sunset is best seen from Patenga beach. It's also where I go to enjoy the sea in its singular glory.

Standing on the edge of the sea, you can only see the waves crashing in, and also the tiny ships in the horizon, waiting to enter the port. The waves grow louder and the winds get wilder as time passes.

Starting from the Rail Station, a track snakes through the city, ending at the Chittagong University Station. The shuttle train carries students to and from the university all day, their journeys adorned by catkin in autumn, by a mysterious fog in winter, and by the pitter-patter of rain in monsoon. It's almost as if the journey reminds students of the seasonal beauties nature has to offer as they whistle into the country's largest university campus.

Chattogram changes in appearance as the year comes around. Bangladesh's business capital and port city lightens up from the yellow glow of the port as evening rolls in. The hills and the sea cradle with love those who have to constantly hustle in search of a living, the monotony of city life is interjected with the memories of life in a beautiful city.

These memories and this love then become the capital of progress, for a dream of a better future.

The writer is a student of Public Administration at the University of Chittagong.



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN



ECHOES BY
ASRAR CHOWDHURY

Chatga With a *Chandrabindu*

I
One of the first sentences I ever heard was my late mother jumping in joy, cheering, “*Chatga jai to my Nanu bari!*” It was no ordinary Chatga. A Chatga with a *chandrabindu*.

II
I was born in Chatga. My mother’s family has been living there since the partition of British India in 1947. My mum and dad met in Chatga when my father was teaching in Chittagong College. Ever since I knew I was me, I’ve been visiting Chatga once in a while. Over the years, I’ve seen the change of a city, while nothing changed at all.

III
Chatga is unique. It’s a city that stands on a river, the Karnaphuli, and is the main gateway to the sea, the Bay of Bengal. The city is a mixture of sweet and salt water. Culturally, Chatga is unique from the rest of Bangladesh. It maintains a link with what was Purba Bangla that became today’s Bangladesh, and the middle ages kingdom, Arakan, part of which falls in today’s Rakhine in Myanmar. That nasal tone in Chatga has many shades only travellers can appreciate.

IV
Chatga of the 1970s was a beautiful place. Except for pockets like Agrabad, the city maintained a character separate from Bangladesh. Load-shedding had its romanticism. The light of the *pidim* in the tea stalls, the *hajaks* in the shops, and the hurricane lamps and candles at home, are now all nostalgia. The smell of charcoal from a kitchen coupled with the fragrance of *loitta shutki* or *kala bhuna* evoke memories of a childhood of my *Nanu bari*. The walk from *Nanu*



PHOTO: ISHTIAQ AHMED

bari in Lalkhan Bazar around Batali Hill is a walk that’s still not found anywhere in Bangladesh.

V
The change of the city was just a matter of time. In the 1990s, Bangladesh started to enjoy economic growth. Dhaka and Chatga were the first beneficiaries and also the first victims of a long-lasting economic prosperity. Chatga started to look like Dhaka. Nostalgia was about to vanish. High rises sprouted from nowhere. Modern shopping malls overshadowed Chittagong New Market, which still remains the only market in Bangladesh where you can ride a cycle

from the ground to the top floor through a spiral stair. Physical change was one side. Natural changes were the other. When it rains on the plains, it rains in Chatga. Rains can continue for a week. Yet, in my childhood because of high drainage and natural canals, there would never be water-logging. That’s not the case now. Development always comes at a price, but it’s sad, when it comes at the price of nature.

VI
Chatga, with a *chandrabindu*, has had different connotations for me. In childhood, the attraction was my Nanu. There weren’t mobile phones in those days. Nanu would wait patiently for us to arrive. No prize for guessing right. A warm meal would be waiting. Now the attraction of *Nanu bari* is *Chhoto Mami*. She does the same. Patiently waits for us to arrive. In spite of all the changes, not much has really changed.

VII
What has changed forever is my late mother. She now rests in peace with my *Nana*, *Nanu* and other members of our family in the graveyard of Garibullah Shah Shaheb’s Mazar, a small walk from our house. *Chatga jai*, in the nasal tone, now rings the same bell, but now I go to visit my mummy, knowing I’ll visit her and other members of my maternal family who are now chapters of “the book of the dead”.

Asrar Chowdhury teaches Economics in classrooms. Outside, he watches Test cricket, plays the flute and listens to music and radio podcasts. Email: asrarul@juniv.edu or asrarul@gmail.com

Where nature, history, and culture meet...

DUHITA CHOWDHURY

Chattogram district is an attraction for many travellers because of her multifaceted natural beauty. The people of Chattogram are lucky to get the taste of hills, waterfalls and sea all in one place. So, people living around the country can spare some free time to take a short trip to the hilly district. And if anyone has to choose just one upazila, Sitakunda and its nature will serve a whole platter to them.

Chandranath Hill at Sitakunda can be a good option for the adventurous travellers. This place will offer you not only some of the best scenic beauty but also mythical legends and histories related to the Hindu goddess Sita. This hill is a place of attraction to trekkers. Besides trekking, you can also visit the famous Shakti Peeth, Chandranath Temple, and some other small temples.

During the rainy season, this hill reaches peak beauty with the emergence of fountains deep into the forest. Just beside Chandranath Hill, there is Sitakunda Botanical Garden and Eco-Park. This park will soothe your senses with its greenery full of flora and fauna. It is also home to two beautiful waterfalls—Suptadhara Waterfall and Shahasradhara waterfall.

After hill climbing and trekking, you may want to proceed further for some fresh air. Guliakhali beach is now getting much familiarity among travelers because of its



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

exceptional combination of green and blue. The environment of this beach is like a swamp and mangrove forest.

After Sitakunda Upazila, you can choose Mirsharai Upazila to give your trip a more adventurous flavour. Mirsharai can be a good choice if you like waterfalls. The two most visited trails here are the Khoiyachora and Napittachora trails. While trekking these trails you will come across multiple

brooks, hilly roads, small cascades and some breathtaking natural scenery. If you are searching the meaning of “dreadful beauty” then these two trails will serve you well.

The aforementioned places require both mental and physical stamina along with an adventurous mind. However, if you are not an adventurous soul, Chattogram will not disappoint either. You

will get all those flavours of hills and sea inside the metropolitan city. You can enjoy fresh beach air along with some crab masala and *piyaj* at the Naval beach and Patenga beach. On the other hand, popular tourist spot Foy’s Lake will enchant you with the beauty of a lake surrounded by hills.

If you want to travel for history, the Chittagong War Cemetery at the heart of the city is for you. Along with the greenery, you will be able to visit the history of World War II at the location of the graves of 715 soldiers. It is a perfect amalgamation of nature and history. And if you want some acquaintance with the cultural aspects of Chattogram, Cheragee Pahar Circle will take you there with its historical touch.

In short, Chattogram can be a great travelling spot for the young and the old. Here, you will experience the touch of both ascetic and aesthetic features. With travels now, Covid-19 has put us in a very uncertain situation, but the show must go on. So, by maintaining proper social distancing and all other health precautions, you can grab your backpack and let yourself enjoy the streams of nature because if health matters, mind matters too.

Happy travelling!

The writer is a lecturer at the Department of English Language and Literature, Premier University, Chattogram.

P O R I

OFELIA CHAKMA

The rays of sunlight touch the slumber of the busy city announcing the start of a new day. Maliha wakes up with the sound of a busy street and the noise of people bustling around the dorm. She's a 21-year-old university student living her youth away from her family for the first time in her life, in a strange big city by the sea. Growing up in a small village, she always dreamed about a different life, she always believed that she will achieve things in life, that someday she will become a person who will be remembered by everyone. Her determination gets her out of bed every morning.

She gets ready for the day and takes her breakfast in a hurry. The sound of the train's whistle gets her out of her dorm, and she rushes to catch the train to her university. The first familiar face she can make out in the crowd is her friend, Binni, who has saved her a seat. "Hurry, someone might sit here!" she smiles brightly and pats the seat beside her.

"Hey, how is your presentation coming along?" Maliha asks.

Binni's smile turns into a frown as she lets out a sigh, "It's going nowhere, girl! I couldn't write a single line. The professor is being too much. How are we supposed to write about that many books in so little time?"

"I'm having the same problem. Don't worry, though. We still got about two weeks left."

The slow motion of the shuttle train along with the breeze feels nice on her

skin. At the end of the carriage, some students start singing one of those songs that everybody knows, in their loud and untuned voices, using whatever they have as instruments. The back of a seat, a book, or the carriage door.

"Life is wonderful," Maliha thinks to herself.

The day ends with classes, passing time in the tea shop, eating snacks and having fun with her friends. Maliha takes the last train from her university. Just as she says goodbye to all her friends and starts walking down the alleyway towards her dorm, she suddenly hears a small cry. At first she thinks it's a small animal but as she gets nearer to the source, she realises that it's the cry of a small baby. She rushes towards it only to find a newborn baby wrapped up in some dirty blankets, abandoned in a trashcan by the road.

Her head goes blank for a second, she freezes up. What is she going to do? Call the police? Call her friends? Call locals? But the baby might be injured, it might be sick. Without thinking of anything else she holds the baby in her arms, and realises that it's a beautiful baby girl, crying out loud, desperate to live. She makes up her mind to take the baby with her. She calls the first person she can think of – Binni.

"Hello? Binni? I need your help! Please come to the hospital at once. I need you!" That's all Maliha could say.

Binni rushes to the hospital, and keeps calling Maliha. In her head, she's thinking the worst possible scenarios. She runs into the hospital and almost falls down on the

floor when she sees Maliha standing outside the emergency room.

"What were you thinking, calling me like that? I thought something had happened to you!"

"Binni, please calm down. I need you to listen to me," says Maliha, taking Binni with her to sit down in the waiting room.

Maliha goes on to explain what happened after she got off the train. Binni is understandably upset when she hears about it, "How could they do such a thing? How can people be so cruel? What are you going to do now?"

"I just talked to the doctor. He says the baby is safe now, but she's very weak. You know, she's only hours old. I think we should call the police."

Inspector Ikbal comes as soon as he gets the call about the abandoned baby. As he finds out about the situation, he thanks the young girls who saved the baby. But now he has a new problem. He needs to figure out what to do with the baby as she needs someone to care for her, and not to mention the tedious process of announcing that a lost baby has been found. He has to issue official statements, and a bunch of other paperwork that needs to be done before he can take the baby with him. His hesitation gives Maliha an idea, she comes forward and says, "Excuse me sir, if you give me permission I want to care for the baby till you find her parents, or until she gets adopted."

"Are you sure about that?"

"Yes, please let me take care of her."

Surprised at her friend's suggestion, Bin-

ni exclaims, "Are you out of your mind?! How do you plan on keeping that baby?"

"Come on Binni, can't you see she doesn't have anyone by her side? I found her and picked her up, so I should at least do this much," Maliha takes the baby in her arms and holds her tight, "I will take care of her."

Days go by, and the baby who's now called Pori is three months old. Maliha prepares a small gathering for her, because Pori will be adopted by a very kind family that Inspector Ikbal has found. As her news got out, many kind and caring people extended hands of help to ensure Pori gets a better life. Even though it's a happy occasion, Maliha can't stop her tears. Yet, she knows it's all for the little child's future. Binni, Inspector Ikbal, her friends, and all the people who helped her during the last three months have come with many gifts for Pori, and she smiles her bright baby smile at everyone.

Years go by, and on the day of Maliha's graduation, there's a special guest. Pori has come with her parents to congratulate her. Her smile becomes the best gift in the world for Maliha and her friends. After all this time, it doesn't matter to Maliha anymore if she becomes someone who will be remembered by many, it's enough to be remembered by the few who she loves.

The writer has completed a masters degree from Premier University, Chattogram.



ILLUSTRATION: @THECOLORJOURNAL



CHITTAGONIAN

Are you a scholar from the olden days or a trader from a strange land?
A sailor of the rough seas or a time travelling historian?
Be whoever you may, by the river and sea you stand
Believe it is a blessing to be a *Chittagonian*.

PHOTOS BY RAJIB RAIHAN
CURATED BY ORCHID CHAKMA

