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DU turns 100! CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

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Happy 100th, DU!

The upcoming centenary of Dhaka University, on 1 July, is not only a monumental milestone for the institution, but also a matter of celebration for the whole country.

The university, after all, has always been a political and cultural melting pot, a place rich in history and glory, a campus buzzing with excitement and zeal, an unparalleled

centre of education held in high esteem.

Therefore, on the occasion of its centenary, this week's Star Lifestyle is dedicated to Dhaka University.

Read on, as we take a kaleidoscopic view, presenting the many colours and dimensions of the university — from experiences and musings to culture and heritage.

Here's to another 100 years and beyond!
Down the DU Lane: Memories of Dhaka University

In commemoration of the centenary of Dhaka University, we are excited to present to you video stories featuring a number of DU alumni, who have shared with us their cherished memories of the university.

Beautiful stories emerged as they

reminisced — funny, exciting, inspiring, and even downright quirky!

We hope you will enjoy listening to their stories from their university life, as much as we enjoyed recording them. Tune in to Star Lifestyle's and The Daily Star's Facebook pages. Coming out soon!

— **LS Desk**

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সোপ

রূপচর্চায় আভিজাত্য...

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL



The "REAL" alumni debate

WISDOMTOOTH

SANIA AIMAN
Sub-Editor, Lifestyle
The Daily Star



It is natural to feel possessive about things we love, and the sentiment applies to people, things and universities, and everything in between. Thus, it is natural that the thousands of students of the centenarian University of Dhaka will have similar emotions about their beloved alma mater. However, just like all other aspects of life, the emotion is often not problematic, but it's degree or form of expression might become so.

Every time a few (or any number) of DU related people converge or form a group or association, the familiar debate of "real" vs "fake" students of DU raises its head. The usual arguments start with claims that only those who were regular students of the actual university and completed their bachelors there are the "true" students of DU.

This leaves out the numerous master's degree holders, some regular and some executive/evening courses, also run by the university on its actual campus! In theory, this also excludes the alumni who pursued their master's at DU at departments which, at that time, did not even offer bachelors programmes yet, and of course makes no sense. Banal arguments range from 'they do not love DU as much as we do,' 'we struggled harder and deserve this, they don't,' 'we deserve it as we were here longer.'

Of course, there is a certain level of legitimate pride to be taken in making it through the tough competition to

the Dhaka University, to sometimes misleadingly imply that they are ex-students of the main DU as well. How much of it is to falsely benefit from the prestige associated with the country's premier university, and how much from the intent to avoid the derision sometimes faced otherwise, is of course a case by case issue.

My personal observations as a graduate of DU, with the obvious limitations of scope, leads to the conclusion that a significant number of people adamant about not letting others claim DU studentship often take heritage pride to a toxic level. Here, it appears that the DU community becomes a microcosm of the national situation, where



through a tough competition is what makes public university education unique/prized. Secondly, buying a degree with money and claiming to be a student of the university is unacceptable, said one H. Sikder, in the same thread.

The fallacy of the statement is self-evident. If a student is enrolled in a university, sit through the curriculum, and is awarded a degree, regardless of whether or not they paid for it, they are literally students of the same university!

On the other hand, although they are studying at Dhaka University against the fees paid, but none of them are receiving the degree without completing the curriculum or sitting for and passing



ASM Fakhru Islam, an alumni of the Applied Chemistry said that the entire debate arises due to two factors — the prestige associated with being a student of Dhaka University, and the tendency of some people to deceive others by claiming to be so. For example, he cites the example of some doctors writing MBBS (DU) as their qualification. Yet, upon inspection, it appears that they are not graduates of the Dhaka Medical College as they intended to indicate, rather some other less aspirational medical college also considered under Dhaka University, and that is just deception.

On the other hand, all students of Dhaka University are technically ex-students at some point. But a reality relevant to Bangladesh is some people's tendency to take false pride and if possible undue advantage, he added.

I agree. Of course students from colleges and institutes affiliated with Dhaka University are not direct students of the university in the traditional sense. But the elitisms and toxic pride against any direct students of the university is a reflection of extreme narrowmindedness. Your place of pride or devotion etc. does not give you the right to deny a formal student in any capacity their right to belong to the university. There is of course a legitimate argument for clear demarcation of who can claim studentship of Dhaka University, and that line is frankly quite evident to every student who went there, and everyone who did not. It all comes down to personal ethics.

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed



secure admission to the university. But an observation of many proponents of this stance will show that a large number carry a toxic level of pride and sweeping disdain for those who "failed to enter DU" and went to other public universities, or god forbid, to a private one.

On the other side, there lies a tendency in many others, who complete education from the various colleges affiliated with

justified national pride is often conflated with toxic jingoism.

In case of the university, I feel it is perfectly exemplified with the phrase, "Agey bharti hoye dekhao," roughly translated as "you are a loser cuz you could not get admission/I am superior cuz I did." The worst of all discriminating attitude seen in a large section of "regular" ex-students of DU with the kind of vitriol spewed against the same university's students who enrol in the evening courses, which are much more expensive than the "day" or regular courses.

Graduation is what matters. So only those who pursue professional or evening courses should not be considered real ex-students of the university, one A. Rahman said in a public discussion within a Facebook group of ex-DU students. His is one of the less vitriolic comments. "Firstly, the very fact admissions have to be won

the exams. The university has offered and executed the course, so why should the students be discriminated against, said Aharar Hossain, an alumnus of DU Journalism, on the same thread.

Ironically, even regular DU students do pay a certain fee, although it is a paltry amount, as most expenses are subsidised. Consider this from one M. Khan then: To give one member of the family an opportunity based on merit and the other based on money is unacceptable. In that case, securing a job by bribing recruiters is also fair, and not just jobs, but all else as well.

I assume he meant the larger DU community with his use of the word "family."

However, hearteningly, amidst the large number of often conceited and otherwise narrow minded individuals I have come across online and offline, there are plenty of reasonable ones as well.

Once upon a time, when I was at DU

A university is often referred to an alma mater, literally a kind and nurturing mother. Just like our relationships with our mothers, each student also has a unique relationship with their university. Often, this relationship is imbued with joys of discovery, learning, and of course growing up. For many others, it is a time of intense struggle, both financial or personal, bullying, and in terms of universities in South Asia, often marred with dirty politics. And yet, the institution and its legacy is always larger than the sum of its parts.

As an alumnus myself, the greatest take from university is a group of wonderful people I call friends, and some lifelong lessons but not the academic kind, as I scarcely remember anything from the complicated derivations and theories, and the horrors of exams. I am not alone in cherishing the other side of university life. For many, the time has yielded lifelong relationships, and beautiful memories. Here are a few, of the mischief and carefree nature of youth, a young man's quest for kodomo blooms for his beloved, and a student's journey to becoming a mother, all around the DU campus.

Compiled by **Sania Aiman**

MIDNIGHT MANGOES

We had just started living at the Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Hall then, fresh first year students, minds full of mischief. About 20 of us gentle folk were stuffed into the 121 Mass(Gono) Room meant for four, and I could probably name all of them accurately if I tried. But the following tale might leave them a bit embarrassed, so I won't!



On this particular night, after wrapping up our "Guest Room" activities, which often included long-winded "talks" from political seniors about things most young students don't care about, we suddenly had the urge to go roam around the campus.

After walking about randomly for a while, shouting tongue-in-cheek slogans about some "boro bhais," someone suddenly suggested we must go find a mango tree and get our hands on the sweet summer fruit. The closest mango tree we spotted happened to be just adjacent to the Shamsunnahar Hall, opposite to the TSC swimming pool, and inside the boundary walls of the Teachers' Bungalow. The only apparent hurdle – obviously closed gates of the compound!

But that was no real deterrent. Coming

to the base of the tree, we realised there were others smarter than us around, two of these legends were already on high up on the tree, picking off the choicest of mangoes. Even though our first reaction was to contemplate herding them off with shouts of "Stop! Thief," the two parties with the same goals came to an understanding. They would have free choice of mangoes first, and then lend us their prized make-shift fruit picker, which we would later return to them at their Hall.

A couple of us quickly climbed over the wall, ignoring the barbed wiring on top, and some others climbed up like monkeys trained for the job. The mangoes kept falling as the rest of us on the ground filled our bags. As holding a bag too, and standing in a position I felt was

optimum— to make a run for it in case the need arose... Suddenly, a gentleman in a T-shirt and half pants coughed to get our attention, and sombrely asked, "Who are you all?"

I replied in an equally brash tone, "We are from this campus! Who are you?" He said, "From the campus? Do you have ID cards with you?" Upon being assured of our identities, his manner became more amiable. Taking a bunch of keys out of his pocket, he opened the bungalow gate, and said, "Lock the gate once you are all done, but please do not be too loud, my father is a cardiac patient, and startling him at this hour could be dangerous."

At that moment, he felt like a kindred spirit. I took out a couple of mangoes from my bag, and handing those to him, said, "Bhai, please take these for bhabi." He seemed fairly pleased with the unfairly small portion of the mangoes stolen possibly from his own tree. "You must be new on campus, which is why you don't know which trees yield the best fruit here. Try the mangoes of the tree inside bungalow number 11, they are the sweetest around."

We never got around to vet his claim, within a short time all of us were assigned our own rooms and became former Mass Room roommates, and off to what felt like new adventures at TSC, Fuller Road, Library and the nameless yet beloved nooks of the campus. I too, have been off in search of my own adventures since.

Alal Ahmed

Session: 2009-2010

Department: Department of English

CONTINUED TO PAGE 10

HOROSCOPE



ARIES
(MAR. 21-APR. 20)

Ask for help if needed. Jealous co-workers may attempt to sabotage your work. Don't turn down any invitations. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



TAURUS
(APR. 21-MAY 21)

Don't lose your patience. Help elders with their work. Find ways to make more money. Your lucky day this week will be Thursday.



GEMINI
(MAY 22-JUN. 21)

Take extra care of your possessions when travelling. Invest in your own small business. Don't jump to conclusions. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



CANCER
(JUN. 22-JUL. 22)

Put your efforts into home improvement projects. Join humanitarian groups. Use your charm when dealing with new clients. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



LEO
(JUL. 23-AUG. 22)

Opportunities for romance are high this week. Residential moves will be beneficial. Keep your calm amidst volatile situations. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



VIRGO
(AUG. 23-SEP. 23)

Avoid lending or borrowing. Loved ones may not side with you. Avoid getting involved with co-workers. Your lucky day this week will be Tuesday.



LIBRA
(SEP. 24-OCT. 23)

Social activities will be enjoyable. Expect changes in your financial situation. Catch up on correspondence. Your lucky day this week will be Sunday.



SCORPIO
(OCT. 24-NOV. 21)

Don't overspend on entertainment. Children will be a handful. Keep your guard up with new contacts. Your lucky day this week will be Saturday.



SAGITTARIUS
(NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Watch out for insincere gestures of friendliness. Involvement in groups will be worthwhile. Pamper yourself. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



CAPRICORN
(DEC. 22-JAN. 20)

Make changes that will enable you to advance financially. Go after your goals. Don't gossip. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



AQUARIUS
(JAN. 21-FEB. 19)

Do more research before making any final decision. Find something constructive to do. Your innovative ideas will attract attention. Your lucky day this week will be Monday.



PISCES
(FEB. 20-MAR. 20)

Don't use emotional blackmail. Make plans to travel. Don't let emotions interfere with work. Your lucky day this week will be Friday.



#TECHNOLOGY

Vision AC: The cool that you need

It's the rainy season now and Bangladesh being the colourful country that it is, offers us a special opportunity of experiencing six different seasons each year. That is truly extraordinary, but it also means that we go through a roller-coaster of a weather each year.

With the summer concluded, the warmest days of the year are gone. Perhaps you were thinking of installing an AC at your home due to the excessive heat, but now that summer is gone, maybe you are reconsidering. But the question is — is air conditioning only useful for hot summer days?

Take the next two months for example. It's the monsoon and there will be times when it rains for a few days, even weeks at a time. It will be very humid; the air will grow moist and the rooms will start to feel rather damp. If only there was a solution for such an issue.

Consider VISION Air Conditioners for your need. Their built-in dehumidification feature, combined with Air Moisture removal system will deal with the humidity and dampness of your room so you don't feel all worked up and irked. With the heating option available along with cooling system, you can use the AC to keep your



room at a comfortable temperature even in winter.

An AC will be helpful in keeping your room safe and comfortable in more ways than one. For example, it will filter out the dust and mites, reducing parasites and insects and decreasing the health hazards induced by them. Less dust and mite mean that you will breathe more easily. Since the AC units come with Golden fins, there will not be any rust inside. And the built-in self-cleaning technology will make things easier for you as a user. In addition to that, by using smart WIFI, one can control the AC with their smartphones.

You can install VISION AC in a large room and it would still meet your demands due to its long-distance air flow. The low noise and low vibration means no more stepping outside to take any urgent phone call. Remember those days when you could not speak on the phone because of the loud ceiling fan? It's time to say goodbye to those memories and get comfortable with VISION AC, which is capable of operating even at low voltage.

If you are starting a new business, you should consider installing an ac at your office. Not only will it make the working environment comfortable, it will result

in increased productivity. But remember, industrial ac's are different from domestic ac. Consider your needs and think about which type of ac will suit you better.

There's also the issue about split ac and non-split ac. If you don't have space for an outdoor unit, getting a split ac could be an issue. Think about your accommodating ability before you make a choice. VISION has both kinds of ac in their collection and there are a number of options for you to choose from.

With dual drainage system and the IP motor being rain and dust proof, VISION offers air conditioners that are not only practical, but easier and convenient to maintain. All you have to do is make a choice and your days of worrying are over. With their free home delivery service and free installation along with free connecting accessories, all you have to do is sit inside and enjoy the cool.

As far as aftersale services go, Non-inverter ACs come with a warranty of 5 years and Inverter ACs with 10 years.

For more information, visit their website: <https://vision.com.bd/>

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: VISION



The date 1 July, 1921 shall forever be marked as a turning point, as it was the time when Dhaka University was born. But the city is obviously a lot older, and hence, as we celebrate the institution's birth centenary and look back into its past, the curious mind wonders: what exactly was there in the present campus grounds before the university came into existence?

What was there in the DU area in PRE-DU TIMES?

To answer that, we have to travel much further back in time than the last century, before genesis (of the university) if you will. It's hard to imagine, the large area of land that we have always known to be Dhaka University, as something else! But let's try, with some hints and prompts, to stretch our imagination as we pull time backwards and form a picture of the pre-DU days. Let's start by erasing from our mind many of the establishments and structures — expect a few, examples of which we will come to later. So, most buildings of the university are gone. Similarly, there is no Shaheed Minar, and Aparajeyo Bangla, and so on.

Instead, think gardens and greenery and palatial buildings — and even a zoo! But yes, Musa Khan's Mosque was still there — the area was once known as Bagh-e-Musa Khan — and so was Haji Khwaja Shahbaz Mosque. These are two majestic Mughal-era structures in or around the DU campus worth visiting. The Sikh temple located in Nilkhet Road, too, pre-dates Dhaka University. As for Nilkhet itself, we may think of indigo plantations or warehouses, owing to its etymology, but this is only an educated guess. There is of course the small and elegant Greek memorial, which now falls under the current TSC premises. On the other hand, our beloved Madhur Canteen, too, need not be omitted when we are imagining pre-university days. It was not Madhur Canteen yet, but a Jalshaghar or Durbar Hall of the Nawab family, and seeing an old photograph will tease your mind of how similar today's Madhur Canteen premises and yesteryears' Durbar Hall looks.

Perhaps it is an irony that the area of Madhur Canteen and the campus at large, a melting pot of politics, was politically significant even before Dhaka University's birth: the area is seen in history as the place where All India Muslim League emerged from. Neither do we need to exclude Curzon Hall. During his Dhaka visit in 1904, Lord Curzon laid its foundation. What was the area like around that time, you ask? These few lines, written more than a century ago, may evoke the ambience in your mind:

*"Where once the owl did hoot
The jackal yell,
In thickets dwarf and tall,
There stands today, in state
A sentinel-*

The splendid Curzon Hall!" Hard to imagine the buzzing DU campus like this! If it's any consolation though, amidst the wilderness, with the 'new' Curzon Hall in place (planned to be used as a town hall), Lord Curzon prophesised that soon, the city in the near future will replace all those jungles.

He stayed at Ahsan Manzil as the guest of Nawab Salimullah; and although today, we see Ahsan Manzil as the main embodiment of the Nawab family, the dynasty actually had a lot of properties in the area that we now associate with Dhaka University.

Shahbagh (literally meaning imperial garden) was a palatial affair, with one splendid Ishrat Manzil as the main building.

There was also a zoo owned by the Nawabs in one area of the garden. Renowned historian and physician Hakim Habibur Rahman himself visited it in 1888, where he saw a number of animals, including tigers and bears.

The Nawab family used to organise a festival at Shahbagh in celebration of the New Year of the Gregorian calendar.

Rahman left an anecdote of a tragedy that he witnessed in his childhood during one of those festivals. There was a bridge at Shahbagh across a pond, and during a performance, the bridge collapsed, snatching away a number of lives.

Today, when looking back, a curious historical footnote in his book informs that the place he was referring to is in fact a pond in Charukala!

What do we know of the overall area which we now refer to as Dhaka University, though? Dhaka's history is hazy, and there is no direct answer, but there are hints to tease the brain.

To exemplify, the name Shahbagh itself is reminiscent of Bagh-e-Badshahi; so, a royal garden. Shahbagh, historians believe, was probably a part of it.

Another name which pops up when we look through the history lens at the campus is Ramna. Don't immediately limit yourself to Ramna Park. 'Ramna' was

once, in its own right, a large place spanning Ramna Park, Nilkhet, Minto Road, Curzon Hall, etc. Archaic names, possibly all parts of Ramna, boggle the mind further — Ramna Racecourse and residential areas of the olden times, Mohallah Chistiah and Mohallah Shujatpur (as well as the original structure of the iconic Ramna Kalibari which was torn down in 1971 by the Pakistan army).

To make some sense of it, we can refer to DU's website, which says, "The University was set up in a picturesque part of the city known as Ramna on 600 acres of land."

So, these would be some sporadic imagery of the campus grounds pre-dating the university. Of course, limited by the shackles of time and vagueness of Dhaka's history, a clear view is arguably out of reach.

Haziness also arises on how you visualise the historical structures which still exist today in the campus. Don't be fooled thinking that all looked the way we see them today.

Haziness is part of the charm; the romance of the forgotten past. Dhaka University is soaked in history, and as we celebrate its century-long journey so far, let's also cherish the history of the area that pre-dates the university itself.

By M H Haider
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

References: 'Dacca: A Record of its Changing Fortunes' by Ahmad Hasan Dani; 'Photographic Album of Old Dhaka' edited by Iftikhar-ul-Awwal; 'Dhaka Panchas Baras Pahle' by Hakim H abibur Rahman, translated by Mohammad Rezaul Karim; 'Dacca: History and Romance in Place Names' by Azimussahan Haider; 'Dhaka: Smriti Bismritir Nagari (Volume-1)' by Muntassir Mamoon; 'Banglapedia.'





#HISTORY & HERITAGE

Tour de DU

University of Dhaka — the name that's uttered with reverence and love all across the country. The gravity of this institution is not to be taken lightly. Which is exactly why every citizen of Bangladesh should visit the Dhaka University campus at least once in their lifetime. The first time I visited the DU campus, I was perplexed. I had no idea where to go, what to do. I was intimidated by its grandeur and exuberance. But after spending five years at the campus, I dare say I have a much better idea about it now and I am here to guide you on a day's tour at DU.

What to see?

The Dhaka University campus is filled with historical points of interests. We will start from Madhur Canteen. One of the most commonly heard names in our country. Essentially, it is a cafeteria; but its significance needs no explanation. Situated right beside the Social Science faculty and DUCSU, it played a vital role in the Language Movements of 1948 and 1952 and many more movements since then.

Standing right across the canteen, you can see the sign that says Dhaka University Central Students' Union or commonly called DUCSU. It is called the second parliament of Bangladesh. You can ponder on its importance while taking a quick tour of Collection Centre at the ground floor of this building. It's open for all.

Stepping out from DUCSU Collection Centre, you will have to walk for a minute to reach the entrance of the Arts faculty. Here, you will encounter Aparajeyo Bangla. Arguably the most well-known sculpture in the campus (maybe even in the country) right beside Raju vaskorjo or Anti-Terrorism Raju Memorial Sculpture to be exact, which is situated right at the heart of TSC roundabout. Raju Memorial Sculpture has

become a national symbol of movements these days. Take your time at both of these places.

If you step out on the road and walk for another two minutes, you will reach the Memory Eternal under the shade of a great tree facing the VC building. Built on



26 March, 1995 and renovated in 2015, Memory Eternal displays the names of teachers, students and staffs who were killed in the Liberation War. It's a place that will remind you of the heavy cost of our freedom.

Speaking of sacrifice, do not forget the

Shaheed Minar. The history of the language movement is not unknown and as an homage to all languages in the world, one should walk in the premises of Shaheed Minar. The Central Shaheed Minar is right beside Dhaka Medical College Hospital and on your way to the Doyel Chottor, which is another familiar sculpture. Doyel Chottor is facing the Curzon Hall.

Curzon Hall is the building that

represents the image of Dhaka University. The Burgundy building is an amazing piece of architectural specimen that blends both British and Mughal style. Sitting on the grass in front of Curzon Hall and staring at the magnificence should definitely be on your bucket list.

You can end your tour by quickly popping in Suhrawardy Udyan. Its historical value needs no introduction, the famous speech of 7th March happened right here, in this very ground. You can also visit the Mausoleum of Three Leaders standing next to Suhrawardy Udyan and on your way to Shahbagh, before you pass Charukala, you can walk by Mausoleum of National Poet Kazi Nazrul Islam and master of art, Zainul Abedin.

What to eat?

The DU campus is humongous. And we are on a day-long trip, so it's natural to get hungry. It's only fair that one gets to try out the special foods and snacks that DU has to offer.

If you are looking for an early morning snack, TSC cafeteria should be your go-to place. TSC cafeteria offers a number of light snacks at a very reasonable price. And you will find lemon tea — albeit in a small cup but take my word for it — you will savour every sip of it. DUCSU cafeteria offers a very similar menu.

Stepping out from TSC, you will notice street hawkers. Focus your attention to finding those who are selling pickles or that sort of spicy food. Usually, they stand with a van full of supplies so they are easy to spot. There's a very special item here. Known as kacha kola bhorta or mixed bhorta. Your mouth will be watering just at the sight. Wait till you take your first morsel. It's an explosive treat of flavours that will paint every tastebud in your mouth.

There will be no shortage of fuchka and chatpati here and there; hawkers are scattered all over the campus. If you are genuinely hungry and need a proper meal of rice, you should resort to one of the Hall Canteens, but since we are discussing memorable food; I urge you to walk around Jagannath Hall and visit the different canteens there in different buildings. So many items and such delicacy will entice you to come back for more. Try their special khichuri for size.

But if you want a real treat, you will have to wait till the evening. Start with the famous luchi-daal at Campus Shadow. Campus shadow is on the other side of the Arts Building. The steaming daal, combined with instantly fried luchi is the perfect snack after your long day at the campus. Fair warning though, its appetizing nature has



made it a high demand food and you might have to wait in line. But it's totally worth it. Once you finish your share and soothe yourself with a lemonade that's available at the same shop, you will probably order a second serving.

That's not all. Wanna try something even more savoury? Walk past Madhur Canteen and Social Science and the library, all the way out to Charukala. Here, you will find a campus favourite — chicken fry! Sure, they are not huge chunks like in the restaurants but that's not why we are here. This item too is of high demand and you will get them steaming hot. The taste? You can be the judge of that, but chances are you will be coming back for more.

Don't miss —

With all the historical places and foods to try, you will barely have time to cover everything before it gets dark. But if you

can manage, why not enjoy a little bit of adda? There are certain places in the campus that might not have such historical gravity but still worth a visit.

Take Mol Chottor for example. Right behind Campus Shadow, this is a place filled with trees and grass and chirping birds any time of the day. Have a cup of tea and sit on the grass, feel the nature and enjoy the buzz.

Once you walk past Memory Eternal, you will find yourself in Fuller Road. This place is known to be a quiet and soothing place for a walk. Or Social Science Faculty Garden — a place to sit with your friends and have coffee and discuss the effects of capitalism on recent literature.

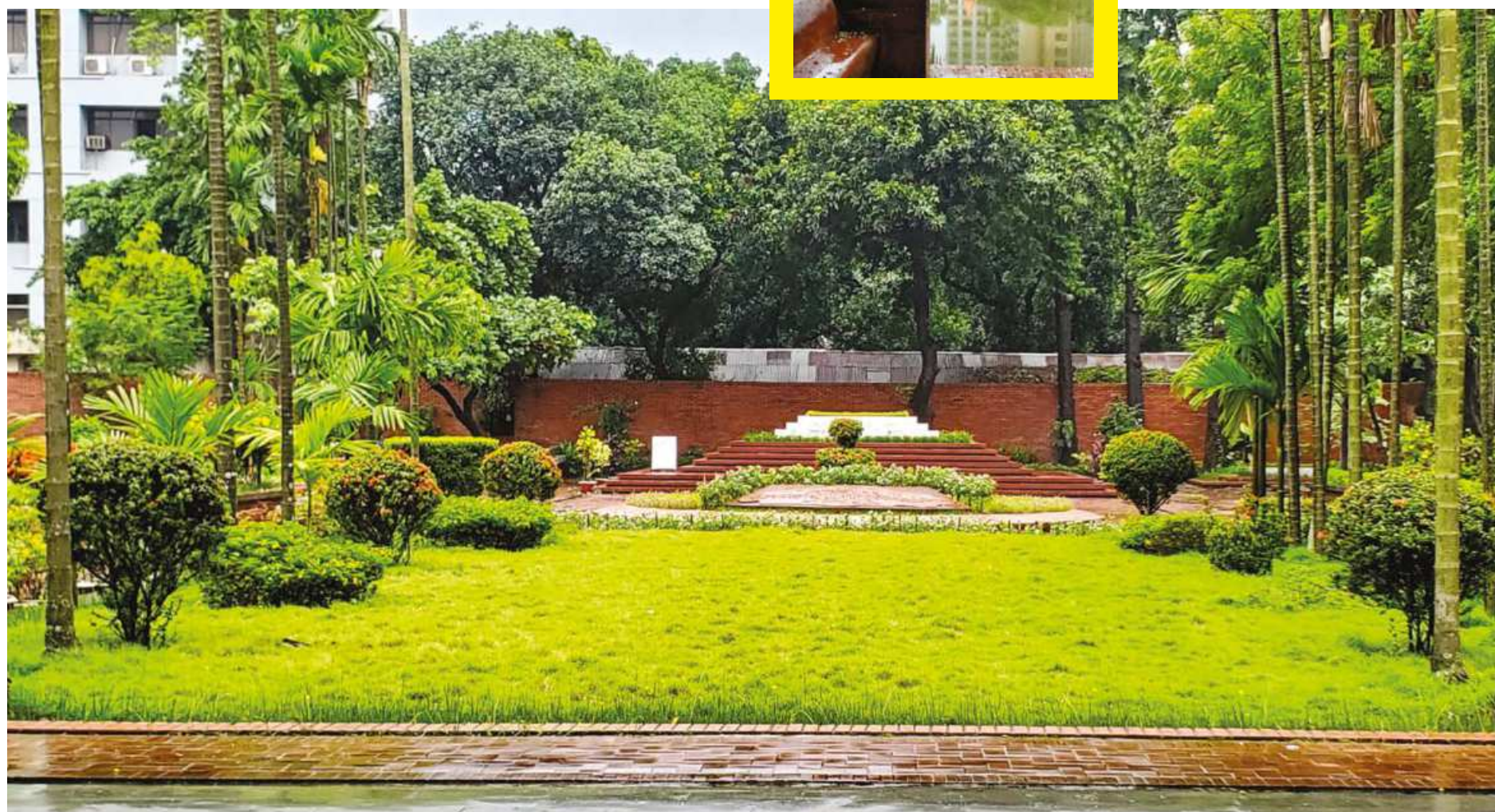
Walk a bit further from the central library and you will end up in Hakim Chottor. The age-old trees have this place covered in shade that will bring you peace. Alternatively, you can cross the road and have a seat right behind DUS.

The TSC has always been a very animated place and the go-to for a hangout for generations of youth, and it remains ever so vibrant to this day. There's a Greek memorial inside TSC, in a corner of the field where you can just sit down and take it all in while the group next to you might tease their guitar to raise a smooth tune.

After spending the most important years of my youth in this campus, I can vouch that this place is not only brilliant, vibrant and full of passion but it also leaves a permanent mark in the canvas of your mind. Every single person of this country should visit DU at least once, and if you are a student with dreams of arriving here one day — I implore you to come visit as soon as possible.

We'll be here.

By Ashif Ahmed Rudro
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed



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CONVERGENCE TO A 'JORA KODOM'

Kraaaakzzz! Bommmmm!! The drizzle suddenly burst into a shower outside of the 'Kola Bhaban' at DU. Oh, how sumptuously grey-darkened the sky were, already pulling me towards it, with raga "megh" playing at the back of my head. But alas! I was trapped in the market workings of some cows and goats and or fish perhaps, conjectured in weird combinations, trying to converge on some dynamic path! What cow or goat or fish ever does that? I dunno. After two hours – which certainly felt much longer – of staring at the piece of paper in front of me in a huge hall of a classroom, I was relieved by the grace of the 'time's up' bell.

Friendly faces all around were waving their hands, heads, eyebrows, and bags (!) pretty excitedly. Judging from their tones, we all had the same adventure through this LA LA Land and came out empty-handed. But it was still pouring outside, and I was looking for a particular pair of eyes in the crowd, a pair unusually big, droopy, dreamy, floaty, and silent. Suddenly, I caught a sight of them, albeit in the usual solitary despair. The rain wasn't helping either. I tracked



the pair down the stairs as usual. They shot one last glance at me and drove off in a chauffeur driven car.

Must do something, I thought. By then, I knew that a pair or 'jora' kodom could augment the clouds, cut through the sorrow of those eyes and bring down a light that brightens everything without burning. Just the thing I need, but how... Whoosh! I was already out in front of the Central Library at Dhaka University. There went a boy... "Hey boyo! Got any Kodom?" I asked. The half-naked brat laughed and said "Naikka, shash." Time's running out, need to calm those eyes with kodom—the 'pholer moto phool ar phooler moto phol'. I started walking towards the Suhrawardy Udyan, thinking in the rain. Damn those cows and goats and fishes!

The Udyan was naturally devoid of its usual midday crowd on account of the rain. "Sir, cha khaiben?" A sudden shout came from a boy from his stall nearby the tree I was resting underneath. I walked up to him and had a cuppa while babbling my sorrows to the captive kid for no good reason. "Oidai to kodom gachh," came the kid's only sage reply at the end of my saga. Hearing that, my Dhakaite soul, despite its inability to identify or climb trees, jumped with joy. And then I jumped, actually jumped, over and over again, until I victoriously pulled down two kodoms from the rain drenched boughs, for those eyes!

The next half hour was through more rain, ending in that warm dusk light, although it was only a watery noon yet. While I stood outside, the owner of those eyes that had me captive came out of her hollow, and at the sight of the 'Jora Kodom', broke out a blushed 'jora' dimpled laughter! May be that's how one buys one's way to heaven... A lot of rain and clouds have passed since then, but I remain forever a captive of those eyes that delight at the sight of 'Jora Kodom.'

Tahsin (Full name withheld)

Arts Faculty
Session 2007-08

THAT RAINY DAY

It was a rainy morning of 2008. We, the second-year students of Social Science Education department of Institute of Education and Research (IER), had some free time between classes. All the girls from our class decided to take a walk in the rain. I was super excited and led the parade. We walked down the stairs, enjoying the light rain. We continued walking and went out to Mol Chattar from IER.

When we were in the middle of the field, suddenly, it started to rain heavily and in the blink of an eye, most of our group ran back to shelter at the IER. It was only I and my best friend Nusrat. We looked at each other, and continued walking towards the Arts Faculty compound and Aparajeyo Bangla.

Rain-drenched and giggling like children,

we turned left towards Shadow (canteen). It felt great, until we looked around and saw everyone staring. Every. Single. Person. Every student taking shelter at Shadow, everyone from the opposite photocopy shops and every cha-wala mama. It was like they were watching a freak show!

In an instant, all our excitement faded and we started to feel self-conscious. But what's done is done, and so, we kept walking, just not as excited, and returned to our compound, running late for class. We entered the classroom from the back door, sat at the last bench, drenched and shivering, our friends laughing at us. Never again did my friend Nusrat agree to any of my adventure plans!

But the plethora of emotions felt in that single day, from joy, to a bit of carefree rebellion, ending with a little bit of self-conscious embarrassment, will remain a fond memory forever.

Iffat Naomee

Session 2006-07
Institute of Education and Research (IER)

MY DU BABY

My days at Dhaka University were cocooned in kindness and love, from my teachers and friends. We used to spend time behind the Arts Faculty, chitchatting with friends during the gaps between classes. The surrounding area was quite neat and tidy, clean, and covered in greenery. Today, there are a lot more buildings in the same area, and a much less open space, although many of the tall trees of Mol Chattar (open field in front of the Registrar Bhaban) still remind me of the greenery we had back then. The campus is still quite verdant, but to us, it felt less rushed and more peaceful. I cherish the friends I made there, and the times we spent sitting around the environs of the Arts Faculty. We also used to go to British Council to watch the movies screened by our department. I had so many revered teachers, including Dr Benazir Durdana, Dr Fakhru Alam and many more, from whom we gathered some wonderful insights and perspectives, and I'm lucky as a student

that some of them were very fond of me as well.

But my happiest day on campus was a bit unusual, unrelated to studies. After a few year's break, I had earlier restarted my education at the University's English department. By the day I speak of, I was a Master's student attending a class by Dr Kashinath Roy. Suddenly, I started to feel unwell, nauseated and such, my head spinning. I did not realise then, but that was the first indication that I had conceived my first child, after 8 years of being married!

Throughout my pregnancy, everybody around me at the university was very kind. I remember one of my friends brought a number of home cooked meals that I liked from far off Munshiganj, all the way to university! Others were always asking about how I felt or if I needed a break, or even accompany to the ladies' room. Their care and love has stayed with me.

My daughter was born at the then PG hospital in Shahbagh, near the university. On the day we were to bring her home, my mother picked up our tiny bundle of joy, and said, she wants to take her granddaughter around the university campus first! So before going home, we stopped off at Rokeya Hall, where my friend was staying as a student, and tarried on campus a while.

My mother said that day that her granddaughter will also study at the same university one day. Decades later, my daughter graduated as a fine student of her class from the Economics Department at DU. She is now married to another DU alum and faculty, and my husband is also a DU English alumnus. We, as a family of DU graduates, share a common love for the university and its campus from our shared but individual experiences of this university— seeped into the sweet memories of the different phases of all our lives.

Latifa Noor

Batch of 1984
Department of English

Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

#TOURISM

SHAHANA HUDA



Dhaka University Campus Green in the urban jungle

If the pandemic lockdowns make you feel trapped and you feel like visiting some place within Dhaka, the University campus is a safe bet. You would be hard pressed to find such a wonderful environment inside the city. The University is closed now, so the area is peaceful and quiet. The krishnochura trees are in full bloom, the roadsides shrubs are covered in different flowers as well. The jarul flower's purple colour brightens up the surroundings. The tall banyans, jackfruit, and hijal trees bring coolness to the hot summer days.

From the well-known environs of the Shaheed Minar, leaving behind Salimullah Hall, you could go to the Arts Faculty. Right in front of the main gate, there is a large old banyan tree, with the base surrounded by an elevated platform. A perfect place to sit and chat while the little ones in the group run around and play: a perfect opportunity to introduce children to nature.

The rows of trees in the large ground in front of the Registrar building have grown some more in this year and a half, creating a lot of shade and breeze there. Although the student-favourite fuchkawala and



jhalhuriwalas are not there at the moment, but small ice cream vans, green coconut peddlers, and perhaps peanut sellers might be there. As very few cars go there at the moment, there is practically no noise, rather a lot of birdsong. You will suddenly catch a whiff of a sweet fragrance, and on looking about, will find a hasnahena or kamini in bloom nearby, and the Aparajeyo Bangla standing proud right ahead.



Those who studied at this university know well, but so do others. The history of this university is resplendent with memories of happiness, grief, struggles, festivals et al. On days of national or cultural significance like Victory Day, Pahela Baishakh, Ekushey February, the campus is crowded with students and visitors. But you can enjoy a relatively peaceful and fun visit on holidays and during the afternoons, even when the university is open for classes. The entire Hakim Chatter, library area, cafeteria is all abuzz with youngsters spending time.

The way you can enjoy Hakim Chatter now would not be possible when classes are ongoing, as the chatter and footfall of hundreds of students from not only the Arts Faculty but all other departments as well as those of BUET and the nearby Dhaka Medical College changes the atmosphere here completely.

A little further ahead lies TSC. Although the entrance to the actual building remains close, the enclosure outside has people hanging about—the tea sellers with their various flavours of tea, and of course the jhalhuri and bootwalas. It is a good time to take some pictures in front of it, as this building, along with the millions of memories it houses, has been earmarked for



demolition and replacement with a multi-storey one.

Our time in Dhaka university, around 1985-1990, was a politically active one. The movement against Ershad's military dictatorship was going strong, and the centre for all resistance was this TSC, standing for the Teacher Student Centre. It is more popularly known by its acronym, and not just by students and teachers, but all strata of general people as well.

TSC was not the centre of resistance for the movement against Ershad, with cultural resistance through songs, poetry, dance and drama, but also played a similarly significant role during the Liberation War, as well as all other movements of national importance. It remains a cultural hub, and still houses the offices of university's photography club, tourist society, chess club, Rover Scouts,

blood bank, etc.

The TSC was built in 1961 so that teachers and students could come together to not only study but also to socialise and interact, for community building. The building, with its well-known dome, was designed by



architect Constantinos Apostolos Doxiadis.

Within the TSC compound, amidst the green field, stands a small Greek mausoleum, dating back to 1915, built in the Doric tradition of Greek architecture. It is a witness to the few Greek families that lived in Dhaka in the 19th century. It's a good idea to visit, and to show your children, as it will be demolished as well in a few days.

My father used to commute through the campus often. Every time we saw the Aparajeyo Bangla sculpture, he felt alive. It was the same for us too. The campus was all-present in our sub-conscious, be it for hangouts, fun, journalism, debate, anti-Ershad resistance, the Ekushey book fair. These were a big part of our university life.

When general people of the country thought of the campus area as being dangerous, given the reports of rallies, processions, and violent shootings, we still felt it was the safest place for us. So we return here often, roaming around under the shade of the tall green trees, and so, you are welcome to it too. But fair warning, better leave the area before dark.

By Shahana Huda
Translated by Sania Aiman
Photo: Sazzad Ibne Sayed

এখন ফাস্ট ওয়াশ
ডিটারজেন্ট পাউডার
১ কেজির সাথে
১ টি ৫৭০ লব্ধীসোপ ফ্রী!

Fast wash
DETERGENT POWDER
১ টি ৫৭০ লব্ধীসোপ ফ্রী!

KOHINOOR CHEMICAL

#LS EDITOR'S NOTE

On the winding N2 highway

Bangladesh is gorgeous in Monsoon; the trees are happy sporting their green foliage, and the cloudy sky gives a respite from the stifling summers. The incessant rain or even the light drizzle quenches the scorched brown earth and our parched, fatigued souls.

I am sure you all will agree with me that once you reach the outskirts of our beloved metropolis Dhaka, Bangladesh becomes even more beautiful. The change in landscape gives us an instant relief; the rolling fields of paddy reaching onto the horizon, the crop in season swaying in the breeze — these undoubtedly make us relive the golden Bengal synergy.

I love monsoon; so much so that I will always go on a long drive on my favourite highway, route N2 towards Sylhet or Habiganj or Sreemangal, simply to hear the sounds of the rains.

N2 is shaded on the either side by a canopy of foliage from large trees. As soon as you cross Narsingdi or enter the municipality, you will find villagers sitting by the roadside in makeshift bamboo stalls, selling seasonal fruits or vegetables grown on their homestead. Pineapple, coconuts, local dates, and so many other interesting bits and pieces of their livelihood are on display for you to buy.

Just this weekend, I went on this romantic ride on N2 highway and fell in love once again with our nature. It is the season of the *lotkon*, a sour-sweet fruit in lime yellow colour with a faint rusted orangish hue. Found in Narsingdi during rainy season, *lotkon*, which contains high amounts of vitamin B, is called Burmese grape in English,



and scientifically called *Baccaurea motleyana*.

The roadside bazars were filled with a bumper harvest of *lotkon* this time around, and the heaps of the lime yellow stacked in mounds lend the rain-soaked bazars a beautiful yellow light.

Going towards the outskirts of Narsingdi, the scene changes like that of a theatre; as if you are watching a drama staged by Monsoon itself.

The bazars are piles with *kakrol*, the lesser favourite emerald green spiky vegetables. The villagers, sitting in vans, were carrying baskets full of *kakrol* or Teasele gourd, as it is called in English. The bright green vegetable,

which is not liked by many, is actually divine in taste once cooked in a light soup with potato and carp fishes.

It can be made into fritters also, but the hot favourite, especially with farmers is its *bhorta* or mashed recipe, seasoned in mustard oil, onions, and green chillies with a dash of salt. However, the trick is to poach it, while boiling rice, until soft; the starch adds an extra flavour.

The villagers are simple and will not go the extra mile to sell to you in retail. They are in the market to sell the harvest to middlemen or wholesale dealers. You have to look around a little to find the farmer's

markets selling fresh vegetables and fruits.

Retail therapy or not, these long rides are indeed soothing and we must indulge in these whimsical rides just to keep the spirits high.

This week is special here at Star Lifestyle, because we are celebrating 100 years of Dhaka University. Read our exclusive stories, watch our interesting videos on DU alumni reminiscing about their days in the university. And all these, while romancing monsoon.

— RBR
Photo: LS Archive

What students don't say

While most alumni of Dhaka University will tell you that they cherish the time spent there, our memories are tinted pink, through our glasses fashioned of nostalgia. While students, at least in the last two and a half decades and perhaps more, students of Dhaka University have and continue to face some common problems. Let us make a handy list, for anyone with deep pockets who feels inclined to take up a pet project, like perhaps the government!

The Website

There is a University of Dhaka website, and it has fairly updated information about the contact information of faculty members of various departments. But other than that, in terms of other details, the website is woefully barebones, and not up to par with the prestige associated with the country's largest and premier public university. There are entire faculties of students and expert teachers with the requisite skills to improve the website. The project could even be fashioned into an internship programme.

The classrooms, common spaces and washrooms

The Dhaka University campus is very large, with numerous buildings, many of these new. Yet, compared to the number of students, the facilities remain inadequate.

Although work has been steadily going on to improve the infrastructure, a marked disparity can be seen in the facilities available to students of the well-off departments versus those of the less in-demand subjects. Class times overlap, and there is a real need for more study spaces like common rooms and reading rooms.

For the lucky departments with strong alumni networks, funds are relatively easier to manage, and hence they can offer better infrastructure to their students. But for the other departments the quality and quantity of classrooms remain a problem. Washrooms also need further improvement, better and timely maintenance, and ensured cleanliness.

The residential halls

The problems beleaguering the residential halls of Dhaka University are perhaps the most commonly known. There is still an alarming shortage of rooms compared to the number of students, and thus issues regarding overcrowding persist. To make matters worse, there is a vice grip of politically involved students on those who are non-political, and assignment of rooms is something young student can be blackmailed or bullied for. There are many instances of first year students being thrown

out of the halls entirely, by these so-called student leaders.

Toxic culture

There is also a toxicity in the senior-junior culture apparent in DU, where a lot of times egos are larger than those who house them! The relationship between seniors and juniors is supposed to be that of cordial camaraderie peppered with respect, but in many places the meek or soft spoken, and sometimes the young and restless, get abused because of inflated egos and so called 'disrespect.' This problem affects the students staying at the halls far more than it does those who have homes in Dhaka or live in rented accommodations.

Food

The quality of food at the hall kitchens and TCS and DUCSU have ample room and scope for improvement. The items offered, the quality and quantity per serving are all areas that students have concerns over. Increased transparency in the day to day running can also help improve things.

Career and Student Counselling

Apart from the career fairs organised by student bodies or associations, there should also be a faculty-wide career counselling office for students to access throughout the year. Apart from that, mental health

counselling is also becoming of paramount importance given the ways things have progressed in the last few years.

Quality and number of buses

The university's fleet of buses is inadequate compared to the sheer number of students it needs to serve. Some of the buses also need refurbishment and better interiors with intelligent design to sufficiently improve the commuting experience.

Complicated bureaucracy and accountability

The DU bureaucracy is notoriously complicated, and slow to boot. The processes need to be streamlined, and information about all the steps needed for various tasks should be posted clearly on the website, and updated on a regular basis. Officials, and also a section of the teachers need to be accountable for the completion of their duties at the university, and timeliness of classes needs to be ensured.

Dhaka University is a place of pride for Bangladesh, and her students too, but to claim this pride with a right, steady and consistent improvement across the board are a demand of the times.

By Sania Aiman