



JAMAICA, NY:

**A slice of
Bangladesh
away from it**



#PERSPECTIVE

It was the summer of 2013, I was strolling along Jamaica's Hillside Avenue and turning my neck every time I was hearing someone utter something in Bangla. It was my first time in Jamaica, a neighbourhood in New York city's borough of Queens, which boasts a large population of Bangladeshi Americans and is considered one of the most ethnically diverse places on the planet.

Jamaica is a slice of Bangladesh away from it. With 'deshi' men and women speaking Bangla on the streets in traditional garbs like panjabi, pyjama

and shalwar kameez, streets lined with Bangladeshi-owned restaurants and grocery stores selling your favourite 'deshi' vegetables, halal meats, and foods ranging from shingara-samosa, chotpoti-fuchka, naan-kabab, doi-mishti, and halua-paratha to kachchi biriyani, tehari, Haji-r biriyani and bhat-mach-bhorta, Jamaica is an instant reminder of the country you have left behind.

For a second, you might even forget that this place is very much a part of the continental US, and not somewhere in South Asia. Bangladeshis from all over America and even tourists visiting the US from Bangladesh, visit Jamaica for a taste of their homeland.

The cleanliness and customer service at Bangladeshi-owned stores and restaurants in Jamaica may not meet your expectations, especially if you are visiting from other parts of the US, but if your heart is craving 'deshi' food and

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'deshi' vibes, this is the only place besides Jackson Heights that you would want to explore.

Jamaica is heavily populated by Bangladeshi Americans, many of whom or their immediate or extended family members arrived in New York after winning the Diversity Visa lottery in the 1990s and 2000s. The lottery winners brought with them their spouses and children under 21 years; the winners subsequently sponsored other immediate family members under family preference immigration categories, resulting in a large population of first-generation Bangladeshi immigrants calling Jamaica their home. Although Bangladesh is no more eligible to participate in the DV program, hundreds of people immigrate to the US from Bangladesh every year under family preference immigration categories.

Yasmin, 66, came to the US a decade

ago after her brother sponsored her Green Card under a family preference immigration category. She currently resides in Jamaica. Asked what she feels about living in the neighbourhood, she said, "Everything is pretty much right outside your door, including the bank, post office, halal grocery stores, subway station, and bus stop."

"For someone like me who came to America in her 50s, this sort of convenience was necessary for survival," she added.

For Bangladeshi immigrants who come to the US in the later years of their lives, limited English proficiency is often the biggest hurdle to overcome. In a place like Jamaica, however, you do not need to worry about your English fluency.

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**স্বাস্থ্য পরীক্ষা
ঘরে বসেই**

ল্যাবএইড হোম কেয়ার (রোগীর স্যাম্পল সংগ্রহ ও রিপোর্ট ডেলিভারি)

আপনার অথবা রোগীর সুবিধার্থে, ডায়াগনস্টিক অথবা প্যাথলজিক্যাল পরীক্ষার স্যাম্পল সংগ্রহ ও রিপোর্ট ডেলিভারির জন্য ল্যাবএইডের এই হোম সার্ভিস সুবিধা।

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