



PHOTO: RAJIB RAIHAN

KAZIR DEWRI STADIUM PARA

From quiet neighbourhood to bustling food hub



Visitors of the scenic CRB area also swing by this place to enjoy a cup of tea with snacks on holidays and weekends. Hundreds gather around this place from evening till midnight, enjoying the creamy malai tea, Ratan's special peyaju (fritters), fresh fruit juices, and fuchkas on the roadside.

MD ABBAS

About a decade ago, very few people were seen roaming around Kazir Dewri's Stadiumpara in Chattogram city.

Once a quiet deserted neighbourhood, the place is now bustling with food stalls and people engaged in lively conversations. This transformation took place over the last couple of years, as numerous carts, restaurants and tea stalls have been set up in the area.

However, the main source of life for this place has been its Mukta Mancha, located at the heart of Stadiumpara.

Being close to MA Aziz Stadium, children often visit the spot to play in the outer stadium during afternoons, and cheer teams while enjoying games in the evenings.

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malai tea, Ratan's special peyaju (fritters), fresh fruit juices, and fuchkas on the roadside.

During a recent visit to the area, this correspondent saw locals, mostly young ones, singing and performing at the Mukta Mancha, while others were busy with friends at the stalls. Foreigners, looking to explore local food, were also seen roaming the area.

"We gather here and catch up over a cup of tea after work everyday. The malai tea and peyaju here are unbeatable while Royal Hat's Chicken Chap and parathas sometimes make it to our tables," said Ajmain Ullah, who was sitting at one of the tables with his friends Saer Bin Isfat and Ahtash Zakir.

At least 35 famous food chains, including Taqdeer, Rodela Bikel, Sakura Kebab, Darul Kebab, Red Chili, and Sub Zero, have set up stalls here, making it a hub for the youth, added Ajmain.

"About 200 dishes, including delicacies of Mexico, India and Thailand, are available in our restaurant," said Abdullah Al Mamun,

owner of Taqdeer Restaurant.

Alongside local and continental dishes, Little Lobster, a restaurant enroute to CRB area, is a go-to pick for seafood lovers.

"Visitors can enjoy squids and octopus, crustaceans, and grilled fish here. It also has an amazing ambience," said Altaf Zakaria, who was visiting the restaurant with his wife Farhana Nasrin.

In absence of vehicles honking, this place a delight for those who prefer tranquility while the cultural performances at Mukta Mancha add to the vibrancy of the area, mentioned Farhana.

Among its numerous tea stalls, one that stands out is Chakhor.

"About 1,000 cups of tea are sold here daily, alongside others snacks like biscuits, breads, and cakes," said its owner Md Anwar Hossain Rasel.

While the place has emerged as a preferred tourist location, the carts and stalls, set up occupying a significant portion of footpaths and roads, often lead to congestions.

The absence of parking spots further add to the menace.

"We enjoy the place no doubt, but it needs renovation. Properly set up stalls and parking spaces can help solve the issue of traffic jam,"



said Rabiul Hasan, a passerby.

"With strategic planning and collaborative initiatives between authorities and local businesses, Stadiumpara can become even more charming as a bustling yet pedestrian-friendly hub, ensuring the enjoyment and convenience of all who frequent its streets," said Sujoy Chowdhury, a local.

OPEN WASTE-BINS IN PORT CITY

A nuisance that makes no sense

ARUN BIKASH DEY

Classmates Trisha Biswas and Salma Akter, both ninth graders, always return from school together to their homes in Katalganj Residential Area of Chattogram city.

On the way, they face a nuisance every day near Nava Pandit Vihar area -- an open waste-bin by the roadside.

"The stench that comes out of the bin makes it difficult for us to breathe. Sometimes when conservancy workers collect waste from the bin, dirt gets on our clothes. We feel utterly helpless while passing by the waste-bin, especially if there is traffic congestion there," said Salma.

"The open waste-bin has been causing public nuisance for years, but the authorities concerned have yet to take any initiative to relocate it," she added.

Schoolteacher Susmita Basak, also a resident of Katalganj area, said, "A dustbin cannot be placed beside a busy road in a civilised country.



Chattogram City Corporation's conservancy department is creating public nuisance instead of addressing it."

A similar situation was observed in Chatteshwari Road area where an open dustbin, in all its glory, lies on the roadside in front of Almas Cinema Hall for years.

According to a study conducted in 2022 by civil engineering department of Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, the port city produces around 3,000 tonnes of domestic wastes daily.

Officials of CCC conservancy department shared that a total of 1,350 open dustbins and 96 container dustbins were in the port city until the CCC started removal of dustbins from the city and initiated door-to-door waste collection from January 2017.

To this end, CCC provided about 9,00,000 bins to households, shops, kitchen markets, businesses and other establishments under its 41 wards.

Although the CCC was supposed to remove all the roadside waste-bins by March 2017, many are still there even seven years after the initiative.

"Almost all open dustbins have been removed from the city, while the container bins are being used as secondary transfer stations (STSs)," said CCC chief conservancy officer Commander Latiful Haque Kazmi.

"The CCC conservancy workers collect domestic wastes from door to door and transfer those to STS. Later, CCC's dump trucks collect the wastes from STSs and dump those to landfills," he also said.

"However, many residents still throw their wastes in the few open dustbins that still remain, which is the root of this nuisance," Kazmi added.

Contacted, Dr Swapan Kumar Palit, professor of Cuet's civil engineering department, said the STSs should be relocated from busy roads and localities to avoid public nuisance.

"The CCC should find some places outside localities to relocate STSs, or opt for an alternative way to collect wastes, such as setting up underground waste collecting stations," he added.

Asked why the STSs are placed on busy roads, Kazmi said currently there is no alternative to it.

"The CCC does not own any land to set up STSs at present. It has sought land to Railway authorities to this end...it will take time," he added.

SIFAYET ULLAH

While working as a day labourer around six years ago, Abul Kashem struggled to make ends meet for his five-member family with his limited income.

The situation got worse during the pandemic, when there was hardly any work for day labourers like him.

Finding no other way, Kashem leased 1.2 acres of land in Shikalbaha union under Chattogram's Karnaphuli upazila, and began cultivating different varieties of grass, and sold the grass used as fodder for livestock in local markets.

Over time, the simple yet ingenious initiative turned Kashem's wheel of fortune.

"I am now doing financially well by cultivating grass. Now I am planning to lease more land and expand my venture," said Kashem, 45.

Like him, over 1,000 people in the upazila are engaged in commercial

cultivation of grass. They have not only become financially solvent, but are also helping the local dairy farms increase milk production, according to the livestock department in the upazila.

Currently, local farmers are cultivating German and Napier varieties of grass on around 1,500 acres of land.

Finding it profitable, some paddy farmers in the upazila are also switching to grass cultivation.

According to information of the livestock department and Chattogram Dairy Farm Association, over 25,000 animals in 1,500 farms in the upazila produce around 60,000 litres of milk daily, meeting the demand of consumers in the port city.

During a recent visit to Karnaphuli upazila, this correspondent observed some people levelling fields to plant grass saplings. Some were also seen cultivating grass in the yards of their homes due to lack of land.



"I am cultivating grass on 0.6 acres of land leased from a neighbour. The initiative improved my financial situation,"

said Zahangir Alam of the upazila.

Farmers said they can sell grass at Tk 6-7 per kilogramme to the dairy farmers.

Dairy farmers in the upazila revealed the local grass cultivation is a boon to their businesses.

"By buying grass as fodder for out cattle, I managed to reduce the cost of milk production in my farm, thereby making better profit," said Habibur Rahman, owner of Shah Islamia Dairy Farm in the upazila.

Contacted, CDFA president Nazim Uddin Haider said, "The local grass producers usually deliver grass door-to-door after processing. This has been reducing production cost of milk, helping dairy farmers to boost their businesses."

"Without feeding grass regularly, rearing cattle for milk production is not possible," said Ruman Talukder, Karnaphuli upazila livestock officer.

"As such, dairy farmers are dependent on buying grass for fodder, which in turn has popularised commercial grass cultivation in the upazila," he added.