



OLD DHAKA'S HIDDEN GEMS

Where history meets crumb mutton chops

RBR

Last Friday, I was strolling through Mohini Mohan Das Lane in the nostalgic neighbourhood of Farashganj in Old Dhaka. I love the old architecture of the area, and often go on such random excursions whenever I need to unwind.

The history of old heritage buildings intrigues me, and in my imagination, I try to refabricate the thriving times, and the beautiful people residing in those grand residences; daydreaming is one of my favourite pastimes, as you might have guessed by now.

I went to Mangal Abash (home of good omens) of Mohini Mohan Das; he was the nephew of the well-known Ruplal Das. Mangal Abash is currently the only residential hall of Kabi Nazrul Government College. Even in its dilapidated state, the mansion bears a grandiose look that is hard to describe.

The narrow lanes of Farashganj are dotted with beautiful buildings boasting old French architecture and a rich history, like Ruplal House, Northbrook Hall, Laxmi Villa, Bihari Lal Jee Mandir, Bibi ka Raoza, Shiv Mandir, and Gokul Roy's Samadhi.

While on the stroll, I stumbled upon an old gem of a café. With a white and green louvered ceiling, yellow walls, and a very basic wooden table and chairs, New Cafe Corner has a rustic yet retro vibe.

You will find New Cafe Corner, which



boasts its birth since the British period, as you walk down North Brook Hall Road. It is quite a famed joint in the locality, and anyone can help you find the place if you simply ask, "Which way to the crumb chop place?"

New Café Corner's crumb mutton chaap or mutton chops is a single piece of bone-in meat that is chopped into mince and marinated in ginger, garlic, and the café's secret ingredients, and then coated in crumb and deep fried. It is served with a side of cucumber and onion salad.

"We are the only place in the whole of

Dhaka that carries this crumb mutton chops, a British recipe followed to the tee by our cooks, since handed down from the original chef Joseph," says the smartly dressed maître d'hôtel, Md Shah Alam.

The current head chef, Md Mohsin, in service since 1989, was standing beside Shah Alam, in a typical Bengali baburchi or chef's attire of lungi, a t-shirt, and a gamcha tied around his waist. He says, "My ustad or teacher was Chef John, a direct disciple of Chef Joseph. They were Christian, and worked in English households



and embassies, from where Joseph ustad honed the crumb mutton chop recipe. It is our best-selling snack, and we even get orders from offices, and for parties. Besides, we do not carry

any beef items; we have crumbed lamb cutlets, shrimps, and potato croquet with mutton mince stuffing. Late afternoons and evenings are our snack time."

New Café Corner opens its door at 6:30am and serves customers till 10:00pm. Their breakfast menu of luchi, paratha, semolina halwa, mutton curry, and chicken giblets is very sought-after. But their egg station makes runny omelettes seasoned with aromatic spices, and poached eggs are so special that the café sells approximately 500 to 700 orders of eggs each morning. Unbelievable as it might sound, but when a regular for 25 years vouches for the menu and the taste, you are inclined to believe it.

Initially owned by a Hindu landlord, the outlet changed its name, adding the word 'New' to Café Corner after the Liberation War. The current owner, Haji Md Solaiman Mollick, runs the café with 18 staff, out of which 10 are sous chefs and chefs. "We get paid daily, after the accounts is closed. Our food and lodging in rented flats are taken care of by our owner. We have a steady flow of customers and business is good," chimes in the manager, Md Enamul Huq.

Sitting on the wooden benches and sipping on their strong milk tea with pastry-like fluffly hot Mughlai paratha, my weekend was spontaneous and fun.

Youth hacked to death in Mohammadpur

UNB, Dhaka

Nasir Biswas, a 22-year-old youth, was hacked to death near the Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard in Mohammadpur yesterday evening.

The attack occurred around 6:30pm near Gate-1 of the graveyard.

Nasir's relatives took him to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where he died from his injuries around 8:45pm.

His elder brother Islam Biswas said Nasir used to live in the Rayerbazar Baroikhal area of Hazaribagh and work as a mason. He left home in the evening to visit the graveyard. Later, the family was informed that unknown assailants attacked him.

Inspector Md Faruk, in charge of the DMCH police camp, said Nasir's body was sent to the morgue for autopsy.

Mohammadpur police are investigating the murder, he added.

5 journos among 46 sued for attacking student protesters

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Moulvibazar

Forty-six individuals, including five journalists and former state minister for civil aviation and tourism Mahbub Ali, were sued for attacking students and setting fire to government dak bungalows (rest houses) and vehicles in Moulvibazar's Madhabpur upazila.

The complaint was lodged on Thursday night by Aminur Rahman, the former sports secretary of Jubo Dal's Madhabpur upazila unit, confirmed Madhabpur Police Station OC Abdullah Al Mamun.

The accused journalists are Mohammad Alid Miah, upazila correspondent for Dainik Amader Somoy, Md Ershad Ali from Daily Sangbad; Shankar Paul Chowdhury, correspondent for Daily Janakantha; Md Nahid Miah from Daily Janani; and Mizanur Rahman from Daily Pratidindin Bani.

According to the case statement, during the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, Awami League leaders and activists attacked student protesters and set fire to the government dak bungalows at the orders of Mahbub Ali.

He added that the case is currently under investigation and no arrests have been made so far.

Former minister Mahbub Ali is already in police custody in a separate case in Dhaka.

8 JU students sued CHT tense as 4 killed in violence

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of history department and organising secretary of JU unit BCL, was attacked near the Prantik Gate of the university around 5:50pm on September 18.

On information, the university's proctor and the proctorial team arrived at the scene, rescued Shamim, and took him to the proctor's office for safety. The proctor informed the university administration and Ashulia Police Station, seeking immediate police assistance to take Shamim into custody.

The statement added that during this time, a group of individuals forcibly took Shamim to the university's security office without notifying the proctorial team. Upon realising this, the proctor intervened, removed the group, and locked the collapsible gate of the security office.

Some individuals, however, entered the security office by breaking open the collapsible gate and assaulted Shamim again. A police team reached the spot around 7:30pm, and said Shamim stood accused in several criminal cases.

Around 8:00pm, the proctorial team and security staffers escorted Shamim to a police vehicle. On the way to Ashulia Police Station, Shamim's condition worsened, and he was rushed to Gonoshasthaya Hospital, where doctors declared him dead around 9:00pm, the case statement added.

'Culprits behind violence will be brought to book'

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of life following the mob beating of an individual on September 18," it read.

The authorities have been instructed to ensure proper medical care for all the injured.

All law enforcement agencies have been instructed to exercise maximum restraint and to ensure the safety of all residents in the three hill districts. The government is committed to ensuring peace, harmony, and unity in the region, the statement said.

Everyone is urged not to take the law into their own hands or engage in destructive activities. Taking the law into one's own hands and destroying any property is a heinous crime and a punishable offence, it added.

Police warn

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regarding the mob beating, it said.

Seeking cooperation from all to prevent further incidents of lynching, the PHQ urged everyone to refrain from taking the law into their own hands.

Police are dedicated to maintaining law and order and ensuring the safety of the public, it adds.

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several others injured during an exchange of fire as the army retaliated in self-defence when UPDF (main) members fired on an army patrol team in the Swaniwar area of Khagrachhari town on Thursday night.

"An army patrol team of of Khagrachhari zone while taking a critically wounded patient [to safety] came under a gun attack by UPDF terrorists," the ISPR added.

Besides, an unidentified man aged around 20 was brought dead to Rangamati General Hospital. The man was hit in the head during a clash between indigenous and Bangalee people.

Ahsan Habib Palash, deputy inspector general at Chattogram Range Police, said, "Police and security forces are jointly patrolling the areas to keep the situation under control. Gunshots were heard in Khagrachhari town [on Thursday night]."

Adhunik Sadar Hospital's Resident Medical Officer Ripal Bappi Chakma said, "Nine injured individuals from Dighinala and Sadar upazilas are now admitted here. Four others were referred to Chattogram Medical College Hospital for better treatment."

Sources said the four were shot in the leg, waist and abdomen.

Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir last night in a statement said the people have been freed from the "Awami

fascist regime", but the country remains unsafe due to violence.

"Perpetrators are desperate to destabilise the country. This is why people are being brutally attacked, killed, or seriously injured. The incidents of casualties in Khagrachhari and Rangamati are a cruel manifestation of this," he said.

Fakhrul also called for the immediate arrest and exemplary punishment of those involved in the attacks, urging authorities to restore peace and security.

RANGAMATI VIOLENCE

Indigenous people and students were marching yesterday morning in Rangamati town in protest of the attacks on properties of indigenous communities in Dighinala.

The clash began after a group of Bangalees attacked the procession at Bonorupa Bazar around 10:30am, witnesses said.

Both groups then engaged in fierce clashes hurling bricks at each other. Several shops, vehicles, and businesses were vandalised and set on fire in the neighbourhoods where indigenous communities are predominant.

The neighbourhoods include Kalindipur, Bijon Sarani, Dewan Para, and Tridip Nagar.

The CHT Regional Council office was also ransacked and set on fire. Vehicles parked on the premises were torched. Attackers also vandalised and looted Maitri Bihar, a temple at Bonorupa of the indigenous people,

around 12:00pm.

Tritimoy Chakma, a member of the temple management committee, said a box in which people put money for monks was looted.

Sowkat Akbar, RMO at Rangamati General Hospital, said, "At least 54 people were taken there and a man aged around 20 was declared dead. Nineteen of the injured needed inpatient care while three others with serious injuries were sent to Chattogram."

Khagrachhari Deputy Commissioner Sahiduzzaman said, "Gunshots were heard in Panchhari and several other areas. Our teams are working to maintain law and order. Army, BGB and police are patrolling the streets."

The ISPR said that on Thursday a procession denouncing the killing of a man by a mob was passing through the Boalkhali market area when members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) attacked the protestors, firing 20 30 bullets. The enraged crowd then set fire to several shops in the Boalkhali market.

Clashes began after that, and the situation was brought under control when an army patrol arrived at the scene.

Following the incident, tension spread across Khagrachhari town, Dighinala, Panchhari, and nearby areas.

The ISPR urged everyone to maintain peace and harmony in the hill districts.

DU, hall officials failed

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Chhatra Union and Samajtantrik Chhatra Front also demonstrated on the DU campus, protesting against mob justice.

Provost Prof Masum admitted that he was not present at the scene on Wednesday night.

"Had I known about the incident, I would have gone there," he told this correspondent last night.

He said he stayed at his official home on the hall premises on Wednesday night.

The house is one minute's walk from the main building of the dormitory.

Proctor Saifuddin said he came to know about the assault on Tofazzal around midnight on Wednesday and that he went to the DMCH around 4:00am on Thursday.

EIGHT FOUND INVOLVED

A probe committee, led by Prof Alamgir Kabir, a house tutor of Fazlul Huq Muslim Hall, primarily found eight DU students involved in assaulting Tofazzal, said sources in the university.

The committee has submitted its report to the university authorities.

The university may disclose the names of the suspects today and take punitive action against them.

In another development, six DU students yesterday confessed to their involvement in torturing Tofazzal, Sub-Inspector Saifur Rahman told The Daily Star.

The six are Muhammad Jalal Mia, a student of physics; Suman Mia, a student of soil, water and environment; Mottakin Shakin, a student of the Institute of Nutrition and Food Science; Ahsanullah, a student of mathematics; and Al Hussain Sajjad and Wajibul Alam, both students of geography and environment.

Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Saddam Hossain recorded the confessional statements of the six in the Tofazzal murder case, the SI said.

The magistrate later sent the accused to jail.

Tofazzal was buried at his family graveyard in Char Duani village of Barguna's Patharghata upazila yesterday morning, said his family.

The grieving locals demanded exemplary punishment for those involved in the murder.

Decision to halt politics at DU undemocratic

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In a statement yesterday, Bangladesh Chhatra Union (Ragib Rokibul) said that suspending student politics at DU is part of a plot to "turn the university into a cantonment".

The statement, signed by Office Secretary Main Ahmed, said almost all student organisations took to the streets under the banner of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, alongside the masses, going beyond their organisational framework to make the uprising successful.

The organisation warned the government that if it follows in the footsteps of the previous autocratic regime, it will face the same fate.

It also called on the Dhaka University authorities to immediately remove the syndicate members who collaborated with the former autocratic government and plotted to curtail the students' constitutional right to be involved in student politics.

They also demanded student union elections immediately.

Speaking to this newspaper, Salman Siddiqui, president of Samajtantrik Chhatra Front, said the suspension of student politics and taking away the right to protest and assemble go against the aspirations of the student-led uprising and restrict the people's freedom of expression.

"This is undoubtedly undemocratic. When people are denied the right to organise and express themselves, discussion and

debate in a healthy democratic environment come to a halt.

"This creates the foundation for a fascist rule, and diverse opinions are suppressed by force."

Mashiur Rahman Richard, president of Chhatra Federation, said politicisation, not student politics, should be banned.

"The decision to suspend student politics is suicidal and contradictory to the spirit of the mass uprising. Most of the university syndicate members were collaborators of the previous fascist regime, and thus, they have no moral right to suspend student politics."

He added that the decision came at a time when Tofazzal, an outsider, was beaten to death at Dhaka University, which is one of the worst incidents in the history of the university.

"This proves that if politics is officially banned, the culture of torture and oppression against the general people continues."

Despite repeated attempts, this newspaper could not reach any leaders of the Chhatra League, the pro-AL student body, for comments.

Meanwhile, Samajtantrik Chhatra Front and Bangladesh Chhatra Union (Mahir Shuvo faction) demonstrated in front of Shoparjito Shadhinota at DU yesterday, protesting against the suspension of student politics.

They also demanded fair trials of the killings at Dhaka and Jahangirnagar universities.



Burnt vehicles after an arson attack on CHT Regional Council Office in Rangamati.

PHOTO: COLLECTED