

MY DHAKA

5 fun things to do in Dhanmondi other than eating out

JANNATUL BUSHRA

Dhanmondi, a vibrant high-end neighbourhood in Dhaka, is known for its heavy traffic, loud noises, and a delectable array of eateries!

But amidst all that, there are still some corners where you can escape the sensory overload and find respite from the overwhelmingly fast-paced atmosphere of urban life. From the serene lakeside walkways to the elaborated Mughal heritage, Dhanmondi has its own unique delights to offer beyond its buzzing dining scenes. We have shortlisted five activities that are a must-do to experience Dhanmondi's genuine appeal.

1. ANGLING IN DHANMONDI LAKE

In this tech-driven urban jungle, fishing on a lakeshore can be a great way to block out digital distractions. In fact, it's a form of meditation for many people.

Dhanmondi Lake is a great place to spend the weekend with a fishing rod if you're yearning for some serenity! You can simply purchase a ticket to reserve a designated spot on the banks of the lake for a day. Fishing is permitted in this area on Fridays and Saturdays. So, take advantage of this healing experience to unwind and spend some



PHOTOS: JANNATUL BUSHRA

2. ROWING IN DHANMONDI LAKE

The knots, kits, casting and then waiting patiently for hours; fishing, can feel like a lot of work! And if you are not ready to remember all these steps and master this art yet, fear not! You can still enjoy the serenity of Dhanmondi Lake by boat!

time in nature, away from the bustle of the city.

Paddling a boat before sunset or early in the morning can be a magical experience! The reflection of the vibrant sky in the lake water and the surrounding greenery will definitely put your anxious soul at ease.

3. DHANMONDI SHAHI EIDGAH: A PORTAL THROUGH TIME

For anyone who feels fascinated by history and heritage, a quick visit to Dhanmondi Shahi Eidgah is like stepping back in time to one of

the capital's most iconic Mughal architectural masterpieces. This historical grandeur was constructed in 1640AD, during the reign of Subahdar Shah Shujah, the second son of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.

You may often find kids playing here in the evenings. Whether you are a history buff or a casual visitor, Dhanmondi Shahi Eidgah will offer you a rare opportunity to experience the rich legacy of the Mughal era in Bangladesh.

4. REDISCOVERING BIOSCOPE

A few steps from the Shahi Eidgah, in front of Anam Rangs Plaza at Dhanmondi 6/A, sits Muhammad Hiru, with his iconic red-covered bioscope box, almost every weekday after 5:00pm. You can consider giving Hiru a chance to take you back in time with his songs and images if you're sick of digital entertainment platforms. Hiru, in his clown costume, would do anything but disappoint you!

5. DIVE INTO THE WORLD OF ART GALLERIES

If you are an avid admirer of art and culture, then there are art galleries in Dhanmondi that can save you from the hustle of the outside world. One such art gallery is Gallery Chitrak, founded by Muhammad Muniruzzaman. Another notable one is the Bengal Gallery of Fine Arts. Both these places offer a wide range of art pieces from local to international artists that will make you ponder for hours.

I did not know anything about case' Plaintiff says about 'false claim' of husband's death

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Savar

A Dhaka court placed the plaintiff of a murder case under family custody yesterday after recording her statement.

The plaintiff, Kulsum Akhter, 21, stated that she had no involvement in filing the case in which her husband was falsely declared dead, said Abu Bakar Siddique, officer-in-charge of Ashulia Police Station.

On Thursday, Ashulia police took Kulsum, along with two others, Ruhul Amin, 64, and Shafiuuddin, 40, into custody in connection with the case.

Kulsum told police that she was lured with a job offer and was threatened by Ruhul Amin and Shafiuuddin that she would face capital punishment if she denied the filing of the case.

The case was filed at the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court of Dhaka on October 24, accusing 130 people of killing her husband during the mass uprising on August 5.

The court ordered Ashulia Police Station to record the case, and it was officially registered on November 8.

Hearing the news, Kulsum's husband Md Al Amin contacted Moulvibazar's Juri Police Station on November 13 and sought help.

Juri police communicated with Ashulia police that later took necessary actions.

Quoting the plaintiff, police said Kulsum lived with her husband in South Surma of Sylhet. She travelled to Manikganj on August 28 to search for work.

She met Shafiuuddin on a bus, who gave her his phone number.

A few days later, Shafiuuddin informed Kulsum that he had managed a job for her. He asked for her birth certificate.

Subsequently, Shafiuuddin and Ruhul Amin took her to Dhaka and told her that she was made the plaintiff of a case filed over the death of a man on August 5.

Kulsum told investigators that she did not know the accused.

Meanwhile, after hearing the news that Kulsum was brought to the police station, an accused, Liaqat Dewan, visited the police station yesterday.

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Arrears, subsidies

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UNFAIR CONTRACTS

The national committee to review the power sector contracts has found that more subsidies were needed as the previous government kept raising power generation capacity in an unplanned manner.

Power generation capacity was raised without ensuring a source of fuel, said a member of the community.

In 2023-2024, the subsidy allocation for the power sector was Tk 34,000 crore, which was between Tk 3,000 crore and Tk 9,000 crore from 2018-2022.

The capacity charge the previous government paid to the power plant companies was estimated at Tk 32,000 crore last fiscal year, up from around Tk 10,000 crore in 2020.

A committee member said contracts with different independent power companies including Adani were not signed keeping national interest in mind.

Bangladesh has to purchase overpriced power from them, he said.

Under the contracts, the government has to pay independent power companies a 9 percent service charge to purchase fuel, which is nothing but corruption, he added.

Another committee member said a modern power plant was built in Rupsha, Khulna, with an objective that natural gas extracted in Bhola would be its fuel. But the plant has yet to start production because the pipeline from Bhola is not there.

Besides, a coal-fired power plant has been built in Payra, but the cost of supplying coal there using the Payra sea port is high because large vessels cannot anchor there, he added.

Zahid Hussain, former lead economist at World Bank's Dhaka office, said power related contracts were unfair to Bangladesh, giving producers the leverage to overcharge.

"Some of the ways these arrangements have been made look like daylight robbery," he said. "We have to pay them whether we purchase power or not. The fuel costs are also overbilled, either by playing with prices or with fuel grades and types."

Zahid, also a member of the national committee to review the power sector contracts, said the previous government used to blame the international fuel prices for the increasing costs of power, a narrative created to hide their corruption.

The previous government bragged about increasing the power generation capacity to 27,000 megawatts. "How many of those megawatts are available for use?"

Regarding bill arrears, he said, "It's a recurring issue, the bills keep ticking. We have accelerated the payments. The burden is huge, but the bottom line is, the arrears are reducing, and we have to go towards zero."

BNP to propose balancing president

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Commission has asked the political parties to submit their proposals in writing.

The commission has already begun consulting prominent citizens and other stakeholders.

It has set a deadline of November 25 for interested individuals or organisations to make recommendations, and give opinions and proposals.

Prof Riaz said earlier that the government will discuss political parties' proposals, while the commission will hold discussions with the other stakeholders.

Major (retd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, a member of the Standing Committee

The BNP formed committees to make proposals for constitutional, electoral, police, civil administration, judiciary, and anti-corruption reforms in line with the six reform commissions established by the interim government on September 11. The commissions are expected to submit their reports by December 31.

At the Standing Committee meeting, the BNP also discussed the progress in finalising its proposals for reforms to the Election Commission and the police.

Major (retd) Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, a member of the Standing Committee

and head of the police reform committee, submitted their report to the party's top leadership.

Reports from the constitutional reform and Election Commission reform committees, headed by Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain and Abdul Moyeen Khan, have also been finalised, sources said.

The Standing Committee experts have also blamed some unscrupulous Wasa staffers for stealing water by manipulating the metering system.

This wastage has also caused severe water supply shortages for many of Chattogram Wasa's 89,508 customers.

"I get water once a week, but I still bailed around Tk 600 every month under the minimum billing system," said Habib Ullah, a resident of the port city's Cement Crossing area.

Faruq Hossain, who lives in the Mokbul Ahmed Society area of Patenga, said people of his locality get water 8-10 times a month.

"We only receive 8-12 units [1 unit = 1,000 litres] of water each month, but we are being charged for 30 units under the average billing system," said Faruk.

Sajjad Hossain, a revenue officer at Chattogram Wasa, acknowledged that many consumers are being billed for more water than they actually use.

Consumer rights activist SM Nazer Hossain said Wasa's inefficiencies are placing a financial burden on customers who are forced to pay extra.

"System losses directly affect consumers. If these losses were reduced, Wasa would generate more revenue and wouldn't need to hike prices," said Nazer, vice president of Consumers Association of Bangladesh (CAB).

He accused some unscrupulous Wasa staffers of manipulating meters to steal water.

"The system loss will persist unless authorities take firm action against those involved."

Maksud Alam, chief engineer of Chattogram Wasa, admitted that metering errors are the primary way water is stolen.

"System loss occurs in all water supply agencies across the country, but

Tk 100cr lost every year to 'system loss'

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Officials have attributed the huge revenue loss to leakages in the pipelines, illegal connections, and errors in metering.

Consumers and water resource experts have also blamed some unscrupulous Wasa staffers for stealing water by manipulating the metering system.

This wastage has also caused severe water supply shortages for many of Chattogram Wasa's 89,508 customers.

"I get water once a week, but I still bailed around Tk 600 every month under the minimum billing system," said Habib Ullah, a resident of the port city's Cement Crossing area.

Besides, old pipelines stretching 150 km were replaced under the Chittagong Water Supply Improvement and Sanitation Project at a cost of Tk 1,539 crore, with a Tk 1,265 crore loan from the World Bank.

The Karnaphuli Water Supply Project (phase 2) was carried out at a cost of Tk 3,082 crore to replace 700 km of pipelines, with another Tk 2,451 crore loan provided by the JICA.

These three projects were implemented between 2011 and 2023.

However, despite all these development works, at least 900 million litres of water worth Tk 25 crore is still wasted annually on average due to leakages in pipelines.

Asked why wastage continued to grow despite major development works, Maksud said, "The system loss from leakages in pipelines is 5 percent. The remaining 25 percent loss is caused by other issues that still need to be addressed."

Muhammad Rashidul Hasan, head of the urban and regional planning department at Chittagong University of Engineering and Technology, attributed the huge water wastage to poor planning.

"Chittagong Wasa installed the new pipelines without proper planning, which has led to leakages again."

Chittagong Wasa currently supplies around 45 crore litres of water daily through a 1,300km pipeline. However, 35-40 percent areas of the port city still remain out of its service network.

Dhaka-Benapole train service via Padma Bridge from Dec 2

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new railway line from Kamalapur to Rupdia and Singriya stations has been constructed at a cost of Tk 37,155 crore.

If the Benapole-bound railway line via the Padma Bridge is operational, the distance from Dhaka to Jashore will be reduced by 200 kilometres, which will halve the travel time, said India-Bangladesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry Director Matiar Rahman. Currently, it takes more than eight hours to reach

Jashore from Dhaka.

He also said if the rail route is operational, Bangladesh's trade with India will grow.

Padma Rail Link Project Director Md Afzal Hossain said that the rail line project is the largest for the railway in terms of cost.

More than half of the cost is being provided by China as loan assistance. The Dhaka-Bangla section of this line opened in October last year and five trains are running on this section.



Goods are unloaded to lighter vessels at the outer anchorage of Payra port in Patuakhali as reduced navigability bars ships with a 10.5m draft from reaching the main jetty. Photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: SOHRAB HOSSAIN