



Why everyone's quietly moving to Uttara

RBR

"Uttara is so far away. Oh God, Uttara traffic! Uttara is a gram (village)!"

These are the things I have to constantly hear and bear because I live in this "far off land" called Uttara.

In my imagination, Uttara is like Malificent's garden. A magical forest realm bordering a human kingdom, Uttara is considered a model town within the broader Dhaka metropolitan city.

To the naysayers, know that this planned neighbourhood is one of the divisions within the Dhaka Metropolitan Police, and it is greener and more tranquil than many of the posh urban core areas or city centres.

Living in this beautiful suburb in the northern part of Dhaka has both pros and cons, and I agree with that. The distance does pose a problem for many, but it is only 22 km away from the zero point. It is not that far, if you compare it with the time it takes to travel to other outskirts and neighbourhoods adjoining the capital.

The traffic bottlenecks in Uttara are a result of jams on the Tongi-Gazipur highway or on Mymensingh road; otherwise, there are only a few signals inside this well-organised residential area that hamper the flow of traffic.

In my two decades of living here, I can say that Uttara has become a thriving hub of economic, social, and cultural activities, which was not the case a few years ago.

Thoroughfares and avenues like Rabindra Sarani, Jashimuddin Avenue,

Sonargaon Janapath, Gareeb-e-Nawaz Avenue and Gausul Azam Avenue, which were lacklustre when I came to live here, are now boozing with restaurants, cafes, rooftop eateries, shopping malls, hotels and offices.

With most of the happening cafes opening their branches in Uttara, the after office hours, evenings, and weekends have become a routine social activity filled with fun, adding to Uttara's vibrant nightlife.

North End Coffee Roasters at Liberty Tower, which is a 13-story posh commercial building located beside the



PHOTO: STAR

Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Uttara; Gloria Jeans in Navana Centroid, another modern architectural infrastructure in Gareeb-e-Nawaz



Avenue; KOI Thé Bangladesh, a fancy bubble/boba tea store in Sonargaon Janapath; are all favourite spots for families and young adults.

Besides regular restaurants, Uttara flaunts two unique options for eating outside -- Yama Hotpot and Grill in Gausul Azam Avenue, which is probably the first of its kind in Dhaka; and Huaxing Chinese Food, which is a hole-in-the-wall kind of authentic Chinese eatery. They do not have fancy or modern ambience, but they are popular for their authentic flavours and affordable prices.

The warm ambiance of green rooftop cafes, offering a panoramic view of the open fields -- and with their diverse culinary menu, has all added a fun factor to Uttara's soul.

Besides eating out, thrift shopping in Uttara is an added plus point. The street behind Rajlaxmi Complex, the underground markets, and footpath

markets have given a new meaning to cheap street shopping. Uttara residents are crazy for the various van markets selling unusual ceramic crockery, bed sheets, curtains, clothing, costume jewellery, etc.

Urban villages on the outskirts of Uttara make its farmers' market one of the best in town. Villagers sell an array of homegrown vegetables and leafy greens with an organic tag.

The colours and tempo of this laid-back but contemporary and versatile residential area give you a calm yet energetic vibe. Uttara is set to become the next commercial and social hub of Dhaka because of its prime location near the MRT and elevated expressway.

This emerging satellite town is a shade of all the fun colours -- yellow, green, blue, black, and pink. And wait till Uttara Third Phase develops, you will all want to get a piece of this coming-of-age suburban area.

Hunger strike, class boycott

FROM PAGE 1

Prof Rais said threats would not deter them and that the university would remain "shut" until the authorities fulfilled their commitments.

At a press conference, he recalled Wednesday's clashes and said he, on behalf of the teachers' association, had expressed their sorrow to the information and broadcasting adviser. "The adviser himself is a former student ... Our students have been peacefully protesting for two days now, yet the government has shown no response. This government was formed on the blood of the July revolutionaries, and now it discriminates against them.

Initially, the protesters had

placed a three-point demand: the introduction of a housing allowance for 70 percent of students from the 2025-26 fiscal year until residential facilities are ensured; approval of JNU's proposed FY26 budget without cuts; and the approval of the construction of a second campus at the next ECNEC meeting as a

priority project.

Yesterday, they added a

fourth demand, calling for

the punishment of police

personnel who attacked

students and teachers on

Wednesday.

On Wednesday afternoon,

violence broke out when

police intercepted the

students' "Long March to

Jamuna" from the university's

Shaheed Minar. Around

12:40pm, police charged

batons and lobbed tear

gas shells near Kakrail as

protesters attempted to

break barricades.

Over 50 people, including

teachers, students, and

journalists, were injured. At

least 38 individuals were taken to

Dhaka Medical College

Hospital for treatment.

Following the incident,

protesters staged a sit-in at

Kakrail, blocking nearby

roads. JNU Vice Chancellor

Prof Rezaul Karim and other

teachers later joined the

demonstration.

At 10:10pm, Information

Adviser Mahfuj Alam visited

the protest site, stating that

the government had

instructed police to refrain

from using force and to engage

in dialogue. However, tensions

escalated when students

began chanting "Bhua,

Bhua" (fake, fake). Amid the

commotion, a plastic water

bottle struck the adviser on

the head, prompting him to

leave.

At least 300 teachers and

students, including the vice

chancellor, spent the night

in front of Kakrail mosque.

In a late night notice, JNU

authorities postponed all

examinations scheduled for

yesterday.

Notably, amid the ongoing

demonstrations, the Dhaka

Metropolitan Police yesterday

imposed a ban on public

gatherings, processions,

and rallies near the official

residence of the chief justice

and the surrounding areas

until further notice. The

specified location is near the

JNU protest site.

Contacted yesterday, University

Grants Commission Chairman Prof

SMA Faiz told this newspaper

that the government is

seriously considering creating

an emergency fund to address

the university's long standing

residential crisis.

He said he had met with

university officials and

discussed how temporary

housing could be arranged

on the seven bighas (2.314

acres) of land owned by JNU.

He added that the immediate

priority was arranging

accommodation for students.

Prof Faiz further stated

that the government plans

to hold discussions with the

university's VC and treasurer,

the education and finance

advisers, and the Planning

Commission to arrange the

fund. "We hope to launch this

initiative immediately."

Regarding the housing

allowance demand, he said, "If

approved, this demand won't

remain limited to Jagannath

University; it will spread to

other institutions," adding,

"This crisis [the students

are facing] didn't develop

overnight. Students couldn't

raise their voices before

because they were denied the

opportunity."

"They have shown

intelligence and sacrifice, but

I urge them to act responsibly

and not cross the limits of

decency."

In the 2025-26 fiscal year until

proper residential facilities

are ensured.

At Kuet, the stalemate

began on February 18 when

students were injured in an

assault allegedly carried out

by outsiders. The government

later relieved the VC of his

duties after a hunger strike by

the student protesters.

Academic activities were

scheduled to resume on May

4, but the teachers declared

a boycott of academic

duties, insisting that those

responsible for assaulting

teachers during student

protests must be brought to

justice first.

In the cases of other

universities, a proper follow-up

was required after

decisions were made, he said.

PROTESTS

At Dhaka University, no

classes and examinations

took place yesterday as a

group of students protested

against the killing of Shahriar

Alam Shamma, a DU student