



The Atia Mosque and the People Who Keep Its Legacy Alive

I wasn't even sure I was on the right road. Bright yellow mustard fields stretched endlessly on both sides as I walked through Gomjani village in Delduar, Tangail, in search of the Atia Mosque. My phone signal was weak, and the path ahead felt uncertain. Somewhere between the fields and the village road, without even realising it, I had already stepped into Atia village.

When I asked a few locals about the mosque, their faces lit up instantly. "You're here to see our mosque?" one of them asked with a smile. Before I could answer properly, I was already being guided forward by strangers who felt like hosts. At that moment, I knew I had reached the right place.

A road shaded by trees opened into a wide, quiet space. A pond lay calmly on one side, and behind it stood the Atia Mosque, surrounded by trees. The water reflected the landscape like a mirror. The mosque appeared serene, as if the beauty of the sky, the water, and the trees had gathered there

to protect it. The Atia Mosque did not announce itself loudly, it welcomed with grace.

Near the mosque, I met an elderly man in his eighties who volunteered to show me around. He introduced himself as the former cashier of the mosque. "I was the cashier of the mosque for 12 years," he shared. "After I fell ill, I now spend my days walking around, eating, and playing with my grandchildren. And when I hear the adhan, I come here to pray."

He carefully pulled out something laminated in plastic: an old Tk 10 note. Printed on it was the image of the Atia Mosque. "Look," he said, pointing at the bank note. "This mosque was once on our currency. When visitors come, I show them this. It reminds them how important this place is."

Situated about 10 kilometres from Tangail Sadar, the Atia Mosque was built

in 1609 by Said Khan Panee. The mosque reflects a blend of Sultanate and Mughal architectural styles.

The mosque's structure remains a major attraction for visitors every year.

Four large octagonal minarets rise from its corners, each topped with a small dome. The main prayer chamber is covered by a large central dome, accompanied by three smaller domes. Built primarily of brick, the mosque features curved cornices and terracotta ornamentation.

For the people of Atia, the mosque is not just an old architectural structure, it is part of their identity. Despite official restoration efforts, the villagers feel a deep sense of ownership over it. The former cashier expressed mixed feelings about the restoration work. "Department of Archaeology works on restoration, true, but they don't always take our opinions," he said. "For us, this mosque feels like our own. Whatever we think of it is for its betterment, you know."

He also shared that a major restoration of the mosque was carried out in 1837 by Rowshun Khatoon Chowdhurani, a member of a zamindar family. The zamindar bari once stood nearby, but today, nothing remains — no gate, no sign — nothing.

Standing by the pond, watching the domes ripple in the water's reflection, I realised this mosque is not frozen in time, it lives and breathes with the village. I came looking for a mosque, but what I also found was a community keeping its legacy alive.

As I walked back through the mustard fields, I felt I was carrying a piece of Atia with me, not just knowledge, but the spirit of the village itself. The mosque offers more than architectural beauty, it shows how heritage lives through the people who care for it. More than four centuries on, the Atia Mosque remains a living landmark, sustained by faith and the quiet guardianship of a village.

"This mosque is our own," the elderly man expressed, and I could see the pride radiating from him.

By Jawwad Sami Neogi
Photo: Jawwad Sami Neogi

